

Qualification Guidelines for Court Interpreters

AO Certified Interpreters

Otherwise Qualified Interpreters

Professionally Qualified Interpreters

Language Skilled Interpreters

AO Certified Interpreters

An interpreter who has successfully completed the Federal Court Interpreter examination for a language in which an examination is currently available. At this time examinations are available for the Spanish, Navajo, and Haitian Creole languages.

Otherwise Qualified Interpreters

When a certified interpreter is not reasonably available, the court may use an "otherwise qualified interpreter" (28 U.S.C. §1827(b)(2)). Otherwise qualified interpreters consist of the following two categories:

- professionally qualified interpreters (languages other than Spanish, Navajo, and Haitian Creole); and
- language-skilled interpreters (all languages).

Professionally Qualified Interpreters

To be included on the Director's master list of interpreters who are "professionally qualified", an interpreter must demonstrate to the local court:

1. Prior existing employment as a conference or seminar interpreter (staff or freelance) for the Office of Language Services of the United States Department of State, or the United Nations, or related agencies for which examinations are a condition of employment; or
2. Membership in good standing in a professional interpreters association whose by-laws and practices at a minimum require as follows:
 - a. An application specifying a minimum of 50 hours of conference experience in the native language(s) of expertise; and
 - b. The sponsorship of three active members in good standing who have been members of the same association for at least two years, whose language(s) are the same as the applicant's, and who attest to having witnessed the performance of the applicant, as well as the accuracy of the statements on the application.

Interpreters wishing to be included on the master list of professionally qualified must submit a resume to the local district court detailing education, training, experience, current telephone number and mailing address, and when applicable, membership accreditation as required by this section.

Language Skilled Interpreters

Interpreters who do not qualify as "professionally qualified" interpreters or certified interpreters, but who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the court their ability to interpret court proceedings from English to a designated language and from that language to English, will be placed on the court's local list and will be included on the Director's master list as a "language skilled interpreter."