



NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

Reciprocity Provisions for the NYS Registry of Per Diem Court Interpreters

The New York State Office of Court Administration (OCA) has developed and administers examinations for interpreters seeking to be listed in its Registry of Per Diem Court Interpreters. Presently, the Language Assessment Program offers examinations consisting of a written English proficiency test and an oral exam in 22 designated languages-- Albanian, Arabic, BCS (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian), Bengali, Cantonese, French, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi (Eastern), Russian, Spanish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Wolof.

These tests are used by court administrators to identify competent interpreters for per diem assignments in the New York State Courts. Oral exams are currently being developed in additional languages. Candidates for per diem assignments in languages for which no oral exam is presently available must pass the written English proficiency test and provide verifiable evidence of competency in the indicated language. OCA also conducts a separate competitive civil service examination every four years for the employment of full-time permanent Spanish Court Interpreters.

Interpreters possessing out-of-state court interpreter certification may apply for state reciprocity for the Registry designated languages or other languages subject to specific conditions (i.e., minimum educational requirements, professional training and experience, and a criminal history check). Unless otherwise indicated, examinations that will be considered comparable to tests currently conducted by the NYS Office of Court Administration must evaluate an applicant's proficiency in English and in their preferred foreign language through standardized testing. The oral examination components of these certification tests must include testing in all three modes of interpreting - consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting and sight translation.

Reciprocity

Candidates may apply for reciprocity in any language, without having to take the New York State Court System's examinations (written English test and oral test) if they have been certified by at least one of the following credentialing authorities:

1) Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination Program (FCICE)

Federal Court Certification is awarded by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Certification is presently available only for Spanish, although certification exams were previously available in Haitian Creole and Navajo. For more information about this program please refer to the program's website at: <http://www.ncsc.org/fcice>

2) Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification (Consortium)

State certification examinations are conducted by member states through the National Center for State Courts. New York State became a member of the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification in 2005. OCA will accept the results of a consortium developed examination administered by a member state. Specifically, applicants must have obtained a minimum score of 80% on the Written Test and a minimum score of 70% on each section of the Oral Performance Test. While the Consortium has developed examinations in 20 languages (Arabic, BCS (Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian), Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Ilocano, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Marshallese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish and Vietnamese), not all participating states administer the full range of language tests available. Information about the Consortium testing program and related links can be found on the National Center for State Courts website at: <http://www.ncsc.org/education-and-careers/state-interpreter-certification>

3) National Judiciary Interpreter and Translator Certification (NJITC)

The NJITC program is offered by the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT). Candidates can earn NAJIT certification by passing both the written and oral components of the examination. The certification examination is currently offered only in Spanish. Information about the NAJIT-sponsored testing program, including testing dates, is on the NAJIT website at: <http://www.najit.org>

4) The Judicial Council of California-Master List of Certified Interpreters

The Judicial Council of California conducts a court interpreter program that requires candidates to pass both a written English examination and an oral proficiency examination currently offered in 15 certified languages [i.e., Spanish, Arabic, American Sign Language, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Cantonese, Japanese, Khmer (Cambodian), Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Tagalog and Vietnamese]. Candidates who pass both examinations and register with the Judicial Council are placed on the "Master List of Certified and Registered Court Interpreters." Additionally, California began scheduling registered interpreter candidates to take Oral Proficiency Exams in English and each interpreter's non-English language. These exams are developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and administered by Prometric. Information about California's Court Interpreter program can be found on their website at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/programs-interpreters.htm>

Request for Waiver of the Written English Proficiency Examination Requirement in New York State

As outlined above, Court Interpreters who speak a language other than one of the 22 designated Registry languages must also pass a written English proficiency exam before they can be considered for per diem assignments. As of January 1, 2007, failure to demonstrate English proficiency by an approved examination will restrict an individual from providing interpreter services in the New York State Courts.

Candidates seeking a waiver of New York's written English proficiency examination may submit proof that they have passed an English proficiency test through at least one of the four credentialing authorities identified above (i.e., FCICE, Consortium, NAJIT, and the Judicial Council of California).

OCA will also accept test scores from one of the following as evidence of sufficient English language proficiency:

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT (Internet version) introduced in 2005 and administered by the Educational Testing Service. Candidates must obtain a minimum score of 90 (scores range from 0 to 120) on the TOEFL iBT. Visit the TOEFL Web site at www.ets.org/toefl for more information about this examination;

International English Language Testing System (IELTS), jointly owned by British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment and administered in over 130 countries. Candidates must obtain overall minimum score of 7 (score ranges from 0-9) on the IELTS. Visit the IELTS <http://www.ielts.org/> for more information about this examination.

Applying for Examination Reciprocity or Waiver

Each request for reciprocity or waiver will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Out-of-state certifications must be current in the issuing state or federal program at the time of the request. Abridged examinations and conditional/alternative or temporary certifications will not be accepted. In instances where a request for reciprocity or waiver is not granted, applicants will be required to pass the written English proficiency test and either pass the foreign language oral exam, or provide verifiable evidence of competency in the indicated language, as necessary.

Applicants seeking a request for reciprocity and/or waiver of examination should complete the [Examination Waiver/Reciprocity Form](#) and submit certified copies of examination results, certifications and/or credentials that can be verified along with the [Application for Language Skills Screening \(ALSS\)](#). No fee is charged for this examination waiver review. However, if your credentials are accepted, you will be required to pay a fee for fingerprint processing for a criminal history background check.

Please mail all completed forms to:
Office of Language Access
Office of Court Administration
Division of Professional and Court Services
25 Beaver Street - 8th floor
New York, NY 10004

If you have a question about New York's Court Interpreter Program please call: (646) 386-5670 or visit our website: www.nycourts.gov/courtinterpreter/

revised (12/14)