



State Court Administrator Policies for the Oregon Judicial Department's Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Program

Effective November 1, 2022

Court Language Access Services
Office of the State Court Administrator
1163 State Street
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DEFINITIONS AND TERMS:

Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO)	The office which serves the federal judiciary in carrying out its constitutional mission to provide equal justice under the law. The AO administers the Federal Court Interpreting Examination (FCIE).
American Sign Language (ASL)	The language used by many Deaf or hard-of-hearing persons. ASL interpreters transmit spoken English into ASL for Deaf or hard-of-hearing persons and transmit ASL into spoken English for hearing persons.
Cancelled Credential Status	The interpreter credential has been revoked.
Certified Interpreter	An abbreviated reference to an interpreter who holds the Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Credential.
Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Oregon Courts (CPR)	Established according to ORS 45.288(5), the code outlines the interpreter's role as an officer of the court and is binding on all interpreters who provide services in the courts and in adjudicatory proceedings before state agencies (as defined by ORS 183.310). Link to code.
Continuing Education (CE)	An activity that enhances the individual's ability to perform services as a court interpreter and meets OJD criteria. It fulfills continuing professional development requirements in the Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Oregon Courts.
Continuing Education Units (CEUs)	Credits awarded for hours of participation in OJD-approved CE.
Council of Language Access Coordinators (CLAC)	The membership program of state court systems' language access coordinators, reporting to the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) Language Access Advisory subcommittee. CLAC is staffed by the National Center for State Courts. The Council was formerly known as the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification (1995-2014).
Court Interpreting Oral Examination	An oral interpreting examination designed by the National Center for State Courts to measure interpreting knowledge, skills, and abilities in the sight, consecutive, and simultaneous modes of interpreting.
Court Language Access Services (CLAS)	The OSCA program that provides language access services including a program for the certification of court interpreters.
Criminal History Check	A search for criminal convictions through LEDS, including the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) records.

English Language Skills Proficiency Examination	A standardized test to assess functional English-speaking ability in a service environment.
Ethics Examination	An OJD multiple-choice examination testing the knowledge and application of the canons of the Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Oregon Courts.
Ethics-Specific Continuing Education	CE related to appropriate court interpreter ethics and protocol.
Examination Reciprocity	Examination standard met by candidates through achievement of appropriate scores on OJD-approved examinations.
Federal Court Interpreting Examination (FCIE)	The court interpreting examination administered by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.
Fees	According to ORS 45.291(1)(b), the State Court Administrator may establish fees for application, examination, certification, and renewal of certification. The amounts are set by Chief Justice Order.
General Continuing Education	CE that enhances the general knowledge, skills and abilities needed to interpret for the courts.
Independent Study	A preapproved non-instructor-led CE that enhances the general knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to interpret for the courts.
Language-Specific Continuing Education	CE that enhances the language and interpreting knowledge, skills, and abilities in the specific language for which the interpreter is credentialed.
Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS)	A repository of criminal records through LEDS, including the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) records.
Master Level	An abbreviated reference to an Oregon Certified Court Interpreter who has been awarded the Master-Level Designation.
Master-Level Designation	The highest-level designation awarded to an Oregon Certified Court Interpreter. It is awarded to an interpreter who satisfies the Master-Level Designation requirements.
Mentoring Activity	A CLAS coordinated activity during which an interpreter works with a designated CLAS staff member to develop their court interpreting knowledge, skills, or abilities.

National Center for State Courts (NCSC)	An independent, nonprofit court improvement organization. The NCSC Language Access Services Section is charged with providing language access resources to state courts including developing court interpreter examinations and training examination raters.
Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA)	The central administrative support office of OJD and the state courts system under the direction of the Chief Justice and the State Court Administrator.
Oregon Judicial Department (OJD)	The unified system of Oregon state circuit courts (trial courts), appellate courts (Oregon Supreme Court and Oregon Court of Appeals), and the Tax Court, known together as the Oregon Judicial Department.
OJD Interpreter Roster	A public list of OJD Certified and Registered Court Interpreters' names, contact information, language(s) of service, and credential expiration dates.
Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)	A standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability.
Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Credential	The credential awarded by OSCA to an interpreter who achieves appropriate scores on a qualifying interpreting examination or credential and fulfills other requirements established by the State Court Administrator according to ORS 45.291.
Oregon Registered Court Interpreter Credential	The credential awarded by OSCA to an interpreter who achieves appropriate scores on qualifying examinations and fulfills other requirements established by the State Court Administrator according to ORS 45.291.
Orientation to Court Interpreting	A precredentialing requirement that provides information about court interpreting.
Orientation to Interpreting in Oregon's Courts	A seminar for certification candidates who have passed the written and oral exams that covers the ethical, protocol, and administrative expectations for contractors who work for OJD.
Registered Interpreter	An abbreviated reference to an interpreter who holds the Oregon Registered Court Interpreter Credential.
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)	A national membership organization and official list of professionals who hold RID certifications for sign language interpreting and transliterating services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Renewal Cycle	A three-year period in which an interpreter maintains an Oregon credential.
Suspended Credential Status	Suspension for a specified time period of any Oregon court interpreter credential as a result of performance and ethics review, noncompliance with credential standards, or noncompliance with renewal requirements. An interpreter with a suspended credential will not appear on the OJD Interpreter Roster.
Written Examination	A multiple-choice examination of English designed by NCSC to measure general knowledge of the areas of court interpreting: English language, court-related terms and usage, and ethics and professional conduct.

POLICY:

I. STATE STATUTORY POLICY

Court interpreters act as neutral and impartial officers of the court who assist in ensuring that court proceedings and courthouse services are accessible to persons eligible to receive interpreting services according to ORS 45.273.

ORS 45.273 states, "It is declared to be the policy of this state to secure the constitutional rights and other rights of persons who are unable to readily understand or communicate in the English language because of a non-English-speaking cultural background or a disability, and who as a result cannot be fully protected in administrative and court proceedings unless qualified interpreters are available to provide assistance."

ORS 45.291 states that the State Court Administrator shall, subject to available funding, establish a program for the certification of court interpreters. The Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA) manages this program through Court Language Access Services (CLAS).

According to ORS 45.275(9)(c), a "qualified interpreter" is: "a person who is readily able to communicate with the non-English-speaking person and who can orally transfer the meaning of statements to and from English and the language spoken by the non-English-speaking person. A qualified interpreter must be able to interpret in a manner that conserves the meaning, tone, level, style, and register of the original statement, without additions or omissions. 'Qualified interpreter' does not include any person who is unable to interpret the dialect, slang, or specialized vocabulary used by the party or witness."

An interpreter is qualified on the record pursuant to ORS 45.275(8):

"A court, a hearing officer or the designee of a hearing officer shall require any person serving as an interpreter for the court or agency to state the person's name on the record and whether the person is certified under ORS 45.291. If the person is certified under ORS 45.291, the interpreter need not make the oath or affirmation required by ORS 40.325 or submit the interpreter's qualifications on the record. If the person is not certified under ORS 45.291, the interpreter must make the oath or affirmation required by ORS 40.325 and submit the interpreter's qualifications on the record."

Pursuant to ORS 45.292, an interpreter may not assume or use the title or designation "certified court interpreter" or "court certified interpreter" or any other title, designation, words, letters, abbreviation, sign, or device tending to indicate that the interpreter is OJD certified (or OJD registered) for the purposes of providing court interpreter services unless the interpreter has met the requirements outlined in this policy.

The Oregon statutes relevant to court interpreting are found in [ORS chapter 45](#).

II. PURPOSE OF THE STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S POLICIES

The purpose of these policies is to implement the requirements established by the State Court Administrator according to ORS 45.291 and to provide interpreters, courts, and interested persons information about the following:

- Interpreter credentials and requirements.

- The Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Oregon Courts.
- Credential standards and renewal requirements.

Only the State Court Administrator or designee can authorize exceptions to program policies. The State Court Administrator's or designee's decision to grant or deny an exception is final.

III. OREGON COURT INTERPRETER CREDENTIALING PROCESS

Only OSCA can award the Oregon Certified Court Interpreter and the Oregon Registered Court Interpreter Credentials. Oregon residents are eligible to pursue an Oregon Court Interpreter Credential, and out-of-state residents may pursue a credential as resources are available.

A. Application Process

Applications, supporting documentation, and fees are required from Oregon certified and registered credential candidates. The fee is listed on the application (see [Fees](#)).

B. Interpreter Credential Requirements

Requirements to achieve an Oregon court interpreting credential include a combination of prequalifying examinations and activities depending on the desired credential. Not all activities are required for all credentials.

See [section III.D](#) and [Appendix II](#) Initial Requirements for specific credential prequalifying and examination requirements.

C. Deadlines for Completion of Credential Requirements

An interpreter seeking a court interpreting credential in Oregon is expected to meet the timelines established by CLAS. If an interpreter misses a deadline, the credentialing process may be delayed.

D. Criminal History Check

The credentialing process includes a criminal history check using LEDS. Felony convictions may be an automatic bar to obtaining the certified or registered credential. Misdemeanor convictions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be a bar to obtaining the certified or registered credential if the circumstances of the crime are directly related to the duties, responsibilities, and ethical standards of a certified or registered court interpreter.

IV. OREGON COURT INTERPRETER CREDENTIALS

A. Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Credential

The Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Credential will be awarded to an interpreter who meets the following credential requirements:

1. Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Credential

- Achieve a passing [score](#) on the Written Examination and the Court Interpreting Oral Examination, or the Federal Court Interpreting Examination, or hold a valid RID SC:L.
- Achieve a passing score on the Ethics Examination.
- Attend the Orientation to Court Interpreting.
- Pass a criminal history check.
- Submit documentation of 20 hours of interpreting services or observation in state or federal courts of record, depositions, or other state or federal court mandated proceedings where the interpreter is required to swear an oath.
- Submit an application including verification of all credential requirements listed in this section.
- Attend the Orientation to Interpreting in Oregon's Courts.
- Take the Interpreter's Oath administered by an Oregon State Court Judge.

2. Master-Level Designation

Master-Level Designation will be awarded to an interpreter who fulfills the requirements listed in this section and meets one of the following requirements:

- Achieves a passing [score](#) on the Federal Court Interpreting Examination; or
- Achieves an appropriate [score](#) on each segment of the Court Interpreting Oral Examination.

B. Oregon Registered Court Interpreter Credential

The Oregon Registered Court Interpreter Credential will be awarded to a candidate who speaks a language for which an acceptable examination or Oral Proficiency Interview is available and who meets the following credential requirements:

- Achieve appropriate passing [scores](#) on an Oral Proficiency Interview in the interpreter's language and an English Language Skills Proficiency Examination that reflect near-native language proficiency; or
- Achieve an appropriate [score](#) on each segment of the Court Interpreting Oral Examination; and
 - Achieve a passing score on the Ethics Examination;
 - Attend the Orientation to Court Interpreting;
 - Participate in five mentoring activities with OJD;
 - Submit documentation of 10 hours of interpreting services or observation in state or federal courts of record, depositions, or other state or federal court mandated proceedings where the interpreter is required to swear an oath;

- Pass a criminal history check;
- Submit an application including verification of all credential requirements listed in [section IV.A.1](#); and
- Take the Interpreter's Oath administered by an Oregon state court judge.

C. Oregon Examination Reciprocity

Examination Reciprocity: Oregon allows examination reciprocity for certified and registered court interpreters who want to pursue an Oregon court interpreter credential and have taken an interpreting exam or proficiency interview in another state. Examination reciprocity will be awarded to candidates that have achieved an appropriate [score](#) on the:

- Federal Court Interpreting Examination; or
- Court Interpreting Oral Examination; or
- RID Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L) Examination; or
- Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in a Non-English Language; or
- English Language Skills Proficiency Examination.

Once an interpreter has been granted examination reciprocity, they must meet the other credential requirements outlined in [section IV](#) above.

V. CREDENTIAL RENEWAL

A. All Spoken Language Credentials

The interpreter's renewal period is a three-year cycle in which an interpreter maintains an Oregon credential. The expiration date of an interpreter's credential is noted on the OJD Interpreter Roster.

Steps for renewal of an Oregon court interpreting credential includes the following requirements:

- Pass a criminal history check.
 - Felony convictions may be an automatic bar to renewing the certified or registered credential. Misdemeanor convictions will be reviewed for the circumstances of the crime in relation to the duties, responsibilities, and ethical standards of a court interpreter, and may be a bar to obtaining the certified or registered credential.
- Complete CE.
 - Continuing education units (CEUs) must be pre-approved by OJD and meet CE requirements per [section VI](#) CEUs must be completed within a current renewal period. Previous renewal period CEUs may not be carried forward into current renewal cycle.
- Submit completed application, with accompanying fee and supporting documentation.

- Renewal applications, supporting documentation, and fees must be submitted to CLAS 45 days prior to the credential expiration date.

See [Appendix III](#) for specific credential renewal requirements by credential type.

B. Spoken Language Credential Renewal

In addition to the renewal requirements in [section V.A](#) (above), the spoken language certified interpreter must submit documentation of completion of the following:

- 120 hours of interpreting services in state or federal courts of record, depositions, or other state or federal court mandated proceedings where the interpreter is sworn; and
- 25 total OJD-approved CEUs (see [section VI](#)) as follows:
 - Minimum of five (5) ethics-specific credits;
 - Minimum of ten (10) language-specific credits; and
 - Ten (10) general credits, which may include ethics or language-specific credits over the minimum.

1. Oral Exam Retest Option

During one and only one renewal cycle, a certified interpreter may choose to retake the Court Interpreting Oral Examination. If the certified interpreter:

- **Fails to achieve a passing [score](#)** – They will begin a new renewal period during which they only need to document a minimum of five ethics specific CEUs, a minimum of five language-specific CEUs, and five general CEUs which may include ethics or language-specific credits over the minimum.
- **Achieves a passing [score](#)** – They will begin a new renewal period during which they only need to document five ethics-specific CEUs. No language-specific or general CEUs will be required.
- **Achieves appropriate Master-Level [scores](#)** – They will be awarded the Master-Level Designation and they will begin a new renewal period during which they only need to document five ethics-specific CEUs. No language-specific or general CEUs will be required.

VI. CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) REQUIREMENTS

A. Interpreter Responsibility:

The credentialed interpreter is solely responsible for acquiring the CEUs they need to satisfy their credential renewal requirements.

B. OJD Approval – Continuing Education (CE)

- During the renewal cycle, individuals must apply and receive approval for OJD CEUs for non-OJD sponsored CE events using the "[Continuing Education Approval Request Form](#)." OJD recommends applying for approval prior to attending the event.

- CE event providers must apply for OJD CE approval at least 30 days prior to the event using the [“Continuing Education Approval Request Form for Providers.”](#) The event must be approved before it can be advertised as offering OJD CEUs. Approval is valid for one year, at which time, the sponsor must contact CLAS for renewal.
- During the renewal cycle interpreters must apply and receive approval for independent study using the [“Court Language Access Services Independent Study Approval Request Form”](#) at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the activity.

C. Continuing Education (CE) Criteria

CE activities, including independent study, must meet the following three criteria:

- The subject matter is relevant to court interpreting, the work of the courts, or the judicial branch; and
- The education is at least 50 minutes in length; and
- Anticipated learning outcomes are identified before the educational activity.

CE activities must also meet *at least two* of the following five criteria:

- The learning environment is educationally sound and conducive to learning the subject matter;
- The participant receives or has access to all materials and resources necessary to complete the workshop;
- The participant has an opportunity to practice using or applying the new information or skill;
- The participant can interact with knowledgeable faculty or other experts to pose questions or clarify understanding;
- An assessment tool or activity enables the participant to determine whether the skills, abilities, or knowledge gained through the education can be used in the future.

D. Calculation of Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

- 50 to 60 minutes of contact is worth one CEU.
- Teaching or leading any OJD sponsored CE event will earn two CEUs per 50 to 60 minutes of contact.
- Individuals wanting to earn OJD CEUs for teaching or leading a non-OJD sponsored event must submit the [“Continuing Education Approval Request Form for Providers”](#) 30 days prior to the activity and indicate that request on the form.

VII. COMPLIANCE REVIEW

ORS 45.291 provides that the State Court Administrator, subject to the availability of funding, shall establish grounds for renewal, suspension or cancellation of credentials, and a process for receiving comments and input on compliance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Oregon Courts.

A. Noncompliance with Renewal Requirements

1. The interpreter's credential will be suspended if the interpreter fails to comply with the credential renewal requirements before the expiration date.
2. The interpreter's credential will be cancelled if the interpreter fails to comply with the credential renewal requirements within six months after the expiration date.
3. If the interpreter's credential is cancelled due to noncompliance with renewal requirements, the interpreter will be required to restart the credential process should the interpreter seek to regain the credential.

B. Skills Retesting or Oral Proficiency Reassessment

An interpreter credential will be cancelled if an interpreter is required to retake the Court Interpreting Oral Examination or an Oral Proficiency Interview for a measurement of the interpreter's skills and does not achieve acceptable [scores](#).

C. Noncompliance with the CPR

Comments concerning a credentialed interpreter's compliance or noncompliance with the [Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Oregon Courts](#) (CPR) or other program policies may be submitted to CLAS for review and possible action.

Concerns that are not corroborated will be closed without further action. Corroborated concerns will require further review of the interpreter's credential.

1. When CLAS receives a complaint, CLAS will notify the affected interpreter.
2. Upon receipt of the written notification of concerns, the interpreter may provide a written or verbal response to CLAS within fourteen (14) calendar days. The purpose of the response is to give the interpreter an opportunity to address the concerns.
 - Failure to provide a written or verbal response within the 14-day period may result in the loss of opportunity to demonstrate compliance.
3. Depending on the severity and nature of the findings and after review of all information and the interpreter's response, CLAS may take one or more of the following steps:
 - a. Require that the interpreter submit a plan with an implementation timeline to address the concerns and provide an opportunity for the interpreter to show compliance to the Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Oregon Courts and other program policies.
 - b. Require the interpreter to retest for an updated psychometric measurement of the interpreter's skills.
 - c. Recommend suspension or cancellation of the interpreter's credential to the State Court Administrator.

The State Court Administrator or designee, having reviewed all information, will make a decision regarding renewal, suspension, or cancellation of the court interpreter's credential. According to ORS 45.291(k), an adversely affected interpreter who objects to the decision made by the State Court Administrator or designee may submit a written request for further review.

VIII. OREGON CERTIFIED AND REGISTERED COURT INTERPRETER ROSTER

Oregon Certified and Registered Court Interpreters appear on an OJD public list including the interpreter's name, a listing of the language or languages the interpreter provides interpreting services, and credential expiration date. An interpreter's contact information will be listed if they submit a consent form to release contact information on the publicly distributed roster. The interpreter is responsible to keep the information correct and current.

Certified and registered interpreters may update their contact information by sending an email to: Court.Interpreter.Program@ojd.state.or.us.

IX. COURT LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES CONTACT

Certification and Training Program
Court Language Access Services
Oregon Judicial Department
1163 State Street
Salem, OR 97301

503-731-3283

Court.Interpreter.Program@ojd.state.or.us

<http://courts.oregon.gov/CLAS>

Approved:

Nancy J Cozine
State Court Administrator

Date: _____

OJD’s Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Program – APPENDICIES

APPENDIX I — APPROPRIATE PASSING SCORES FOR OREGON INTERPRETER CREDENTIALS

TYPE OF EXAMINATION	Certified	Certified Master Level	Registered
Ethics Examination	70% Overall	70% Overall	70% Overall
Written Examination	80% Overall	80% Overall	Not Applicable
Court Interpreting Oral Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 70% overall, with at least; ▪ 70% on simultaneous section; ▪ 70% on consecutive section; & ▪ A minimum of 65% on each part (2) of the sight translation sections, for an overall score of 70% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 80% overall, with at least; ▪ 80% on simultaneous section; ▪ 80% on consecutive section; & ▪ A minimum of 75% on each part (2) of the sight translation sections, for an overall score of 80% 	May be used instead of the Oral Proficiency Interview and English Language Skills Proficiency Examination
Federal Court Interpreting Examination	80% Overall	80% Overall	Not Applicable
Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in a Non-English Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 65% on Court Interpreting Oral Examination ▪ Superior score on ACTFL ▪ Score of 11 on ALTA ▪ Other equivalent to be determined by CLAS
English Language Skills Proficiency Examination	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Score of 49 on VET ▪ Score of 5 on IELTS ▪ Score of 17 on TOEFL ▪ Score of 56 on TOEFL Total Range Examination ▪ Superior score on ACTFL ▪ Score of 10 on ALTA ▪ Other equivalent to be determined by CLAS

OJD’s Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Program – APPENDICIES

APPENDIX II — SUMMARY OF INITIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OREGON CREDENTIALS

	CREDENTIAL		
	Certified Spoken Language	ASL Certified	Registered Interpreter
Criminal History Check	X	X	X
Written Exam	X		
Orientation to Court Interpreting	X	X	X
Exam or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)	Court Interpreting Oral Examination	RID SC:L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English Language Skills Proficiency Exam, and ▪ OPI <u>or</u> Court Interpreting Oral Exam
Ethics Exam	X	X	X
Application & Fee	X	X	X
Court Observation or Interpreting	20 hours	20 hours	10 hours
Other			Mentoring Activities
Orientation to Interpreting in Oregon’s Courts	X	X	
Oath	X	X	X

* Court interpreting services or court observation hours in courts of record in Oregon or Consortium member states, federal courts of record, or where the interpreter is sworn in and the record can be presented into evidence.

OJD’s Oregon Certified Court Interpreter Program – APPENDICIES

APPENDIX III — SUMMARY OF RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OREGON CREDENTIALS

	CREDENTIAL		
	Oregon Certified Court Interpreter, Spoken Languages	ASL, Oregon Certified Court Interpreter	Oregon Registered Court Interpreter
Criminal History Check	X	X	X
Application & Fee	X	X	
Hours* of Interpreting Services	120 hours	120 hours	Not Applicable
Hours of Continuing Education Units	25 TOTAL (5 Ethics-Specific, 10 General, & 10 Language-Specific)	5 TOTAL (Oregon Ethics-Specific)	10 TOTAL (5 Ethics-Specific & 5 General or Language-Specific)
Other Requirement		Must Continue to Hold RID SC:L	

* Court interpreting services or court observation hours in courts of record in Oregon or Consortium member states, federal courts of record, or where the interpreter is sworn in and the record can be presented into evidence.