



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

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Regulations and Fees Approved for Court Interpreters

HARRISBURG, April 5, 2010—The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has approved regulations governing the appointment and use of court interpreters to assist persons with limited English skills or who are deaf or hearing-impaired during court proceedings.

"As Pennsylvania's population continues to diversify, interpreters are called upon many times each day to assist in legal proceedings in Pennsylvania's courts," said Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille. "These new regulations are designed to ensure that trained and certified interpreters will be used when and where they are needed in courtrooms in all corners of the state."

The regulations are designed to complement the Interpreter Certification Program established by the Supreme Court in 2004 within the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).

The program and the regulations are intended to meet an often unfulfilled need within the courts for qualified interpreters. Pennsylvania's courts are routinely confronted with individuals who speak more than 50 languages or are hearing impaired. The most common demand is for interpreters of Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, Arabic and sign language.

The new regulations spell out training, examination and certification requirements, an ethics code, disciplinary procedures, and a procedure for securing interpreter services.

The AOPC maintains a "Pennsylvania Interpreter Roster" on the Web site of the Pennsylvania Unified Judicial System with names and contact information for interpreters who are certified or are seeking certification under the Interpreter Certification Program.

Zygmunt A. Pines, Court Administrator of Pennsylvania, said the interpreter roster provides a master list for judges throughout the Commonwealth to draw from when they need interpreters with foreign language or sign language skills to assist witnesses or litigants during court proceedings.

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"Our interpreter program is up and running," said Pines. "These regulations will help us as we move forward, expanding training, providing guidance on the effective use of interpreters, and increasing the numbers of certified interpreters. The regulations have been so well crafted that they are being studied by court systems in other states."

To be qualified, language interpreters are required to participate in a two-day orientation workshop and to take and pass written and oral examinations. They are required to speak English fluently, to be fluent in one or more foreign languages, to be familiar with court procedures and legal terminology and to be trained in ethics.

Under a court-approved fee schedule, a certified interpreter is permitted to charge up to \$330 for a full day's work, up to \$180 for a half day and between \$45 and \$60 per hour when hired on an hourly basis.

A copy of the regulations for interpreters and the Pennsylvania Interpreter Roster can be found on the Web site of the Unified Judicial System at the following link:

<http://www.pacourts.us/T/AOPC/CourtInterpreterProg/>

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