



# Reciprocity Provisions for Per Diem Court Interpreter Candidates

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 24 designated languages – Albanian, Arabic, BCS (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian), Bengali, Cantonese (Traditional & Simplified), French, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin (Traditional & Simplified), 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. The development of oral exams in additional languages is under consideration. Per diem interpreter candidates for languages in 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 target world 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.

Applicants can request that the New York State Unified Court System's Office of Court Administration grant reciprocity or a written examination waiver.

## REQUEST FOR RECIPROCITY

Candidates may apply for reciprocity, without having to take the NYS Unified 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 provided 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: [Federal Court Interpreters | United States Courts \(uscourts.gov\)](https://uscourts.gov/federal-court-interpreters)

#### 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 (Amharic, Arabic, BCS (Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian), Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, 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:

[Court Interpreter Resources | NCSC](#)

#### 3. **National Judiciary Interpreter and Translator Certification NAJIT**

Candidates who earned NAJIT certification in Spanish by passing both the written and oral components of this organization's examination may apply for reciprocity

#### 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 and an oral proficiency examination currently offered in 13 certified languages [i.e., Arabic, Armenian (Eastern), Cantonese, Farsi (Persian), Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, 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. 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: [Court Interpreters Program - court\\_interpreters \(ca.gov\)](https://www.courtinterpreters.ca.gov)



## **NYS UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM'S REQUIREMENT FOR WAIVER OF THE WRITTEN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY EXAM**

Candidates may apply for a waiver of the written English proficiency examination  
[Per Diem Court Interpreter Application](#)

1. If they have been certified by at least one of the following credentialing authorities: FCICE, National Center for State Courts Interpreter Certification, NAJIT, and/or the Judicial Council of California
2. Based on earning a minimum score of 90 on the TOEFL iBT (internet version) introduced in 2005 and administered by the Educational Testing Service.
3. Based on earning a minimum score of 7 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

## **APPLYING FOR EXAMINATION RECIPROCITY OR WAIVER**

If you are interested in becoming a per diem court interpreter, you may apply to take the exam, request reciprocity or a 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 exam and either pass the oral exam in the target language or provide verifiable evidence of competency in the indicated language, as necessary.

**Applicants seeking to submit a request for reciprocity and/or waiver of examination should:**

1. Complete the online Per Diem Court Interpreter Application for language skills screening.
2. Complete the Reciprocity/Waiver of Examination section on the online application.
3. Upload certified copies of examination results, certifications and/or credentials that can be verified.

**Note:** 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.

**Contact The Office of Language Access with questions about our Court Interpreter Program:**

- Email: [OLAperdiemtest@nycourts.gov](mailto:OLAperdiemtest@nycourts.gov)
- Phone: (646) 386-5670
- Website: [www.nycourts.gov/courtinterpreter](http://www.nycourts.gov/courtinterpreter)
- Address: 25 Beaver Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10004



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