



Georgia Commission on Interpreters

Requirements for Licensure as a Court Interpreter

Georgia is a member of the National Center for State Courts, Council of Language Access Coordinators (CLAC) and conforms to its testing standards for licensing of court interpreters. In addition to fulfilling test requirements, all interpreters must be at least 18 years of age; of good moral character; and a legal U.S. resident.

Certified Interpreters - This is the highest certification for a court interpreter on the state level. The license application fee is \$125 and must be renewed annually.

- Orientation Workshop
- English Written Exam
- Court Observation Hours
- Oral Certification Exam - Candidates must pass each mode of interpretation (sight, consecutive and simultaneous) with a 70% or higher score in the same sitting. Currently an oral exam exists for the following languages: Arabic, Cantonese, French, Haitian-Creole, Hmong, Ilocano, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- Successful completion of criminal history background investigation

Conditionally Approved Interpreters- This is the latest licensing designation created by the Commission. The license application fee is \$125 and must be renewed annually.

- Orientation Workshop
- English Written Exam
- Court Observation Hours
- Oral Certification Exam- Candidates must receive an overall score of 60% on the exam, with no score in either mode of interpretation falling below 55%.
- Successful completion of criminal history background investigation

Registered Interpreters* only available to those speaking languages where no Oral Certification Exam exists

A registered court interpreter license can only be sought or maintained in languages which do not have an oral certification exam. The oral certification exam is available for the following languages: Arabic, Cantonese, French, Haitian-Creole, Hmong, Ilocano, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Candidates for this designation must complete two Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI), one in English and one in the language the interpreter wants to become licensed. A score of Superior is required for each interview. The license application fee is \$125 and must be renewed annually.

- Orientation Workshop



Georgia Commission on Interpreters

- English Written Exam
- Court Observation Hours
- Two Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI)
- Successful completion of criminal history background investigation

Step 1: Orientation Training Session

As the first step in the certification process, prospective interpreters must attend the Commission's two-day Orientation Workshop. The cost of the orientation workshop is \$200. The session includes 16-hours of training on modes of interpreting, courtroom procedures, legal process, and interpreter's ethics. Federal or State Certified interpreters serve as facilitators at each session and provide candidates with additional resources for study and professional development. Interpreters are also provided with detailed information on the content and composition of the language proficiency examinations during the Orientation Training Session. Interpreters must attend the

orientation prior to taking the Court Interpreter Written Exam which is offered by the Commission several times a year. Refer to the Training and Testing Schedule for information regarding dates, location, and registration. An applicant has two (2) years to complete the licensing and certification process, after attending the 16-hr orientation workshop. If the applicant does not complete the program requirements within two (2) years, the applicant must re-start the certification process by retaking and passing the English written exam and fulfilling all subsequent requirements.

Step 2. Court Interpreter Written Exam

This exam is multiple-choice and includes sections on ethics, legal process, terminology, English grammar, idioms, synonyms, and antonyms. Interpreters must be well versed in the English language and must score 80% or higher in order to pass the exam. The orientation training session must be taken prior to taking the Court Interpreter Written Exam. The cost of the English written exam is \$50.

Step 3. Court Observation

Prior to taking the oral certification exam prospective interpreters must obtain a sufficient number of court observation hours. Three (3) hours of court observation is required if a certified interpreter is present during the proceeding and six hours (6) of observation is required if a certified interpreter is not present. The observation must be logged onto the Court Observation Form provided by the Commission and then uploaded to the Georgia Courts Registrar.



Georgia Commission on Interpreters

***Step 4. Oral Certification Exam or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)**

Oral Certification Exam

Candidates must pass all three parts of the exam in one sitting in order to meet the requirements for Certified licensure. The Commission recognizes federal certification and the oral certification exam offered in a state that is an active member of the National Center for State Courts, Language Access Coordinators if the issuing state administers the oral certification exam as prescribed by CLAC and the candidate passed the exam, at the certified level, in one sitting. The cost of the Oral Certification Exam is \$250.

Oral Proficiency Interview – OPI

Required only for languages without an oral certification exam

The Oral Proficiency Interview is only required if you wish to interpret in a language which does not have a certification exam. The OPI is a telephone interview, which generally takes place at the Administrative Office of the Courts. The interviews are conducted through a vendor and last approximately 25 minutes. Each candidate will be tested in both English and the language you wish to interpret. The exam is designed to evaluate the candidate's foreign language ability, level of knowledge and education. Candidates must achieve a language scale score of "Superior" in both English and the language for which one wants to interpret (target language). The cost of each OPI is \$143. Prior to registering and paying for the OPIs, please contact the Commission office to determine if you required to take this exam. Confirmed candidates will be notified of the date and exact location of the exam. Please keep in mind that Language Testing International conducts exams for various agencies and they have no information as to the purpose of or eligibility of those applying to test.

For further information please contact ACTFL-OPI at (800) 486-8444 or <http://www.languagetesting.com>.

Step 5:

Upon receiving passing scores on the oral certification examination or oral proficiency interviews, candidates must apply for a license to become a certified, conditionally approved or registered interpreter. The license application is accessible through the Georgia Courts Registrar. The application process requires submitting a license application, fee, and criminal history authorization form. Prospective interpreters must pass the criminal background investigation outlined in Step 6.

Step 6:



Georgia Commission on Interpreters

Candidates must demonstrate good moral character by satisfying the Commission's fitness requirement. To determine if a candidate is fit to become a licensed interpreter, background investigations are evaluated against the fitness guidelines below.

An applicant has good moral character if one has not committed or been convicted of:

- a) Felony or misdemeanor crimes involving false statements, fraud or dishonesty; or
- b) Crimes punishable by one year or more; unless it has been more than ten years from confinement or conviction; and
- c) Crimes involving moral turpitude; unless it has been more than ten years from confinement or conviction.

All candidates must pass a criminal background history check. If it is determined that good character does not exist the Commission shall have the authority to: deny a license or certification; suspend or revoke a license or certification; or to impose discipline.

Step 7:

Candidates who successfully pass all licensing requirements will be issued a license and placed on our Court Interpreter Registry. Licenses must be renewed annually. Court interpreters must take the Interpreter's Oath and agree to abide by the Code of Professional Responsibility for Court Interpreters. If the applicant does not complete the program requirements within two (2) years, the applicant must re-start the certification process by retaking the English written exam and fulfilling subsequent requirements.

Any persons seeking reciprocity from another state must note:

Georgia is a member of the National Center for State Courts, Council of Language Access Coordinators (CLAC). Reciprocity may be extended to interpreters who are certified by states that are active CLAC members. Reciprocity may be granted to those persons who

- Have completed a 16-hour training court offered by the credentialing state.
- Have taken and passed the CLAC written exam with a score of 80% or more.
- Have taken and passed the CLAC oral exam with a score within our licensing categories (see licensing categories for more information)

Reciprocity will be extended to those who have started the process in another state only if the requirements of the state in which the candidate has started the process are similar to Georgia. For example: if the applicant attended an orientation workshop at the state where they started



Georgia Commission on Interpreters

the licensing process, and that state requires a candidate to attend a training that is shorter than Georgia's, the candidate will be asked to attend the orientation workshop in Georgia.

Please note that the oral exam must have been taken in ONE seating, and not in different seatings. If you meet these requirements, please create a GCR account and e-mail staff asking for reciprocity and name the state from which you are seeking reciprocity.

Once the request has been received, staff will contact the state from which you are seeking reciprocity asking for verification of the three requirements above. You will be notified once the process has been completed so you may continue with the reciprocity process.