



## Commission on Interpreters Supreme Court of Georgia

### **Requirements for Licensure as a Court Interpreter in the State of Georgia**

Georgia is a member of the National Center for State Courts, Council of Language Access Coordinators (NCSC-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**

The Certified Interpreter license designation is the highest certification for a court interpreter on the state level. Certified Interpreters must renew their licenses annually by paying a fee of \$ 125. All persons seeking to become a Certified interpreter must comply with the following licensing requirements:

- 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 a criminal history background investigation

#### **Conditionally Approved Interpreters**

All Conditionally Approved interpreters must pay an annual fee of \$125 to renew their license. All persons seeking to become a Conditionally Approved interpreter must comply with the following licensing requirements:

- 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 a criminal history background investigation

#### **Registered Interpreters<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This category is only available to those who speak a language for which there is no NCSC-CLAC oral exam. If the National Center for State Courts create an oral exam in the specific language for which the interpreter is registered, the registered interpreter MUST take the NCSC-CLAC oral exam.



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A registered court interpreter license can only be sought or maintained in languages that 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. The Commission requires a score of Superior for each interview. Registered Interpreters must renew their licenses annually by paying a fee of \$ 125 to the Commission. All persons seeking to become a Registered interpreter must comply with the following licensing requirements:

- Orientation Workshop
- English Written Exam
- Court Observation Hours
- Two Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI), one in English and the other in the language for which the candidate interpreter wishes to be registered.
- Successful completion of a 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 also receive detailed information on the content and composition of the language proficiency examinations during the Orientation Training Session. Interpreters must attend the orientation before taking the Court Interpreter Written Exam which is offered by the Commission four times per annum. 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-hour 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 to pass the exam. All persons registered to take the written exam must complete the orientation training session must be before taking the Court Interpreter Written Exam. The cost of the English written exam is \$50.



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### Step 3. Court Observation

Before 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 necessary if a certified interpreter is not present. All candidates must log their court observation hours on the Court Observation Form provided by the Commission and then said candidate must upload the form directly to their Georgia Courts Registrar profile.

### Step 4.

#### Oral Certification Exam

Candidates must pass all three parts of the exam in one sitting 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<sup>2</sup>

The Oral Proficiency Interview is only required if you wish to interpret in a language that 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. Before registering and paying for the OPIs, please contact the Commission office to determine if you are 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 more information, please contact ACTFL-OPI at (800) 486-8444 or on their [WEBSITE](#).

### Step 5:

Upon receiving passing scores on the oral certification examination or oral proficiency interviews, candidates must apply for a license to become certified, conditionally approved

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<sup>2</sup> OPI Required only for languages without an oral certification exam



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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:**

Candidates must demonstrate good moral character by satisfying the Commission's fitness requirement. The Commission investigates the candidate's criminal background history to determine if a candidate is fit to become a licensed interpreter.

The Commission determines if an individual is of good moral character if one has not committed or received a conviction for:

- 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 imprisonment or conviction.

All candidates must pass a criminal background history check. If, after reviewing the candidate's background check, the Commission or its staff determines that the individual does not have good character, 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. The Commission requires that any individual who holds an interpreter license must renew the same every year. 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.



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### **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). The Commission may allow reciprocity to those interpreters who are certified by states that are active CLAC members. The Commission may grant reciprocity may to those persons who:

- A. Completed a 16-hour training court offered by the credentialing state.
- B. Took and passed the CLAC written exam with a score of 80% or more.
- C. Took and passed the CLAC oral exam with a score within our licensing categories (see licensing categories above for more information)

The Commission may extend reciprocity to those individuals who started the process in another state only if the requirements of the state in which the candidate began the process are similar to Georgia. For example: if the applicant attended an orientation workshop at the state where they started the licensing process and that state requires a candidate to participate in a training that is shorter or radically different than Georgia's, the Commission will ask the candidate to attend the orientation workshop in Georgia.

Please note: All candidates seeking reciprocity in Georgia must have completed the oral exam in ONE seating and not more than one seating. 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 the same.

Once staff receives the request, staff will contact the state from which you are seeking reciprocity asking for verification of the three requirements above. Candidates will receive a notification upon completion of said verification so the candidate may proceed with attaining their Georgia license.