

Supreme Court of Nevada
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

KATHERINE STOCKS
State Court Administrator



JOHN MCCORMICK
Assistant Court Administrator

**Judicial Council of the State of Nevada
Certified Court Interpreter Advisory Committee**

September 12, 2025

12:00 p.m.

Summary prepared by: Amanda Walker

Members Present

Katherine Stocks, Chair
Napoleon Buenrostro
Judith Jenner
Judge Danielle Johnson
Alicia Lerud
Kristina Mortensen
Mariteresa Rivera-Rogers
Judge Gloria Sturman

AOC Staff Present

Amanda Walker
Kymberly Williams
Kathleen McCloskey

I. Call to Order

- Ms. Stocks called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.
- Ms. Stocks announced Ms. Williams' move into another position within the AOC, and Ms. Walker's move to the position of Language Access Program Administrator.
- Ms. Walker called roll. A quorum was present.

II. Public Comment

- Ms. Stocks asked if there were any members of the public that would like to address the committee or if there were any written comments.
 - Ms. Walker stated there were none.

III. Review and Approval of January 10, 2025, Meeting Summary

- Ms. Stocks asked if there was a motion regarding the meeting summary.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers made mention of 2 typos and made a motion to approve the January meeting summary.
 - Ms. Lerud seconded the motion. The January meeting summary was approved unanimously with consensus of change.

IV. New Members

- Ms. Stocks recognized new member, Judge Danielle Johnson.
 - Judge Johnson introduced herself as being from Esmeralda Justice Court.
- Ms. Stocks recognized new member, Ms. Kristina Mortensen

- Ms. Mortensen introduced herself as being from Elko Justice and Municipal Courts.

V. Workshop Discussion

- Self-Assessment
 - Ms. Walker informed the committee of the self-assessment that was created and made available to court interpreter candidates on the website.
 - The self-assessment includes a questionnaire for candidates to assess their own skill level, and sample questions for the written exam.
- Orientation Workshop Redevelopment
 - Ms. Walker shared information about the workshops, for both the written and oral exams, that were added to the steps required to become a Nevada Certified Court Interpreter. The Orientation Workshops must be completed prior to taking the respective exams.

VI. Program Updates

- Spring Exam Information
 - Ms. Walker reported that 27 written exams were administered, with 9 candidates passing. Additionally, 25 oral exams were administered, with no candidates passing. Two interpreter candidates became eligible for conditionally approved status: one for Spanish and one for Portuguese.
- Fee Changes
 - Ms. Walker detailed the updated fee changes:
 - An exam appeal fee - \$50
 - A late renewal fee - \$100
 - A reinstatement fee - \$100
 - This fee is codified; it is required by law that we have a fee for anyone whose certification has expired past the six-month grace period and they are requesting reinstatement.
 - Mr. Lewis had emailed prior to the meeting and voiced concerns regarding the added fees and stated that he felt those fees should be halved.
 - Ms. Walker explained that the late renewal fee and reinstatement fee were avoidable as the program sends out a reminder notice, approximately 3 months prior to expiration date, and allows for a six-month grace period past the certification expiration date.
- Code of Professional Responsibility Changes
 - Ms. Walker discussed updates to the Code of Professional Responsibility. Interpreters must always maintain a respectful and professional demeanor, not only in court.
 - Ms. Stocks clarified that the reason for this was related to the treatment of staff, not just in the courtrooms, but regarding AOC employees as well. This change will also relate to social media activity that is unbecoming, and that could put into question the qualifications of the interpreter's objectivity. She stated that staff within the AOC and at the trial court level have dealt with significant issues. The social media piece is preventative, as there haven't been any issues yet, but it is a common step taken in Human Resources.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers agreed that there should always be civility, inside and outside of the courtroom.

- Judge Sturman asked how confidentiality plays a role in interpretation during confidential situations.
 - Ms. Stocks stated that court interpreters are not employees of the court, but the rules of professional conduct are clear. The program would look at the totality of the circumstances, and while there isn't due process or an employment relationship, interpreters are an agent of the court. In that capacity, it would be whether the action casts a negative light or impugns the credibility of the court.
- Ms. Jenner asked if there was any data about how many ethics complaints the courts receive about certified interpreters.
 - Ms. Stocks explained that the program doesn't currently keep that statistical information, and that there are very few ethical occurrences. The AOC doesn't know how often the trial court issues are handled internally. There is a potential to request statistics from courts.
 - Ms. Lerud stated that her court handles any issues internally. She explained that they also don't keep a statistical model, but that they easily could keep them. Most of their court interpreters are independent contractors, and when they have repeated issues or one significant issue, they just don't rehire them. She stated this is something that they could track moving forward.
- Ms. Jenner asked whether ethical complaints could be tracked monthly or annually. She is aware that it is relatively rare, but she is curious if it's because it's not occurring or if it's not being reported or tracked. She explained that she tells her students that if they stick to the code of ethics, they should have nothing to worry about.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers added that she would also tell her students that it is best practice not to comment on or talk about their cases to avoid revealing information that was thought to be public but was in fact confidential.
 - Judge Sturman asked if it would be an additional burden on the different court agencies to monitor the ethical issues, and whether there should be policies in place, or within the contract agreement for independent contractors.
 - Ms. Stocks stated that it would take some time to figure out internally how different records are kept and what would need to be recorded or tracked.
 - Ms. Lerud agreed that it would take time to decide what to track, but there is utility in it because of the number of courts in Nevada. It would be something like the vexatious litigant list. If there have been multiple complaints against one individual, then other courts could make the decision not to contract with them.
- Ms. Walker mentioned that other states have a requirement for a Code of Professional Responsibility test that they administer before the oral exam.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers stated that she agreed with the potential for administering an ethics test with some data from other states and working out logistics.
- Ms. Lerud voiced concern about a situation that arose where the bailiffs expressed concern over seeing an interpreter talking with a defendant prior to court but could not understand what was discussed during the interaction. The court's in-house interpreter explained that there may be legitimate reasons for an interpreter to talk to a defendant beforehand, such as establishing dialect. Ms. Lerud asked if there was a way to incorporate these situations into a future update of the Code of Professional Responsibility.

- Ms. Rivera-Rogers and Ms. Jenner discussed that it is best practice to let someone in charge know when an interpreter is going to address a defendant, regardless of the reason.
- Continuing Education Opportunities Status
 - Ms. Walker discussed each of the continuing education courses that were to be offered during the 2025-2026 Fiscal year.
 - Medical Terms Most Found in Court Cases
 - Immigration Law and Terminology
 - Ethical Dilemmas Encountered in Legal Settings
 - Habits of Successful Interpreters
- Justice Index Benchmarks
 - Ms. Walker stated that the current Justice Index Benchmark is from 2020. It was noted that Benchmark 35 which was mentioned in the previous meeting, had some interest, but the program lacks funds, and there were no grants found. No new changes can be made due to non-unification.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers stated that it seems as though all the benchmarks that the program has been unable to achieve are because of lack of funding.
 - Ms. Stocks explained that it is more than a lack of funding. The State of Nevada is a decentralized judiciary, and the cost would be on individual courts to reprogram their case management systems to collect these statistics. Currently, the AOC does not have the financial ability to fund the money for the courts to meet these benchmarks, and it would be a burden to ask the courts to spend the thousands to get the benchmarks programmed in and tracked.
- State Court Administrator Guidelines Updates
 - Ms. Walker discussed the updates to the State Court Administrator Guidelines
 - Code of Professional Responsibility section regarding professional demeanor in and out of the courtroom.
 - Updated credentials for Certified and Registered interpreters to add orientation workshop requirements prior to both the written and oral exams.
 - Addition of Conditionally Approved status for Registered interpreters. A score of at least 7 on the ALTA test, or at least an Advanced Low on the ASTFL test.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers questioned the policy that the program has for the written and oral exam expiration.
 - Ms. Williams confirmed that the policy is correct, the written exam scores are good for seven years and the oral exam passing scores are good for two years.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers asked about the current reciprocity requirements, and why there is no longer a requirement of Nevada courtroom observation.
 - Ms. Walker clarified that the requirement was changed to either 40 hours of Nevada courtroom observation or a letter of good standing from their credentialing state.
 - Ms. Rivera-Rogers wanted to know if that meant that there was no requirement for interpreters credentialed via reciprocity to take a Nevada workshop.
 - Ms. Williams stated that she received feedback from CLAC (Council of Language Access Coordinators) that the majority of that class for the orientation workshop repeat information that the interpreters already know. This is why the program moved to accept a letter of good standing as proof that the interpreter knows what they're doing. There was consideration of requiring a criminal procedure class, but it has not been followed up on yet.

- Ms. Stocks added that part of what the program is trying to do is get more interpreters into Nevada. These interpreters are in good standing in another state and have a letter stating that they're doing a good job in another court in another state. There are nationwide groups, CLAC and LAAC (Language Access Advisory Committee), which is part of the Conference of State Court Administrators. Nevada is a member state in the national organization, and if we get a letter of good standing from another state, the program is going to respect that the state finds that the individual is qualified to be in our courts. We are trying to address the ongoing interpreter shortage crisis, and remove hurdles, to get people credentialed so that we have more qualified interpreters available in Nevada courtrooms.
- Ms. Rivera-Rogers expressed concern that other states may not qualify interpreters at the same level as Nevada.
- Ms. Stocks stated that this goes back to the question of level of certification. Whether conditionally certified, fully certified, or not certified at all, when the trial courts need someone to interpret, the courts face difficult decisions, especially in rural communities. The program is making its best effort to help our courts, and to help people have meaningful access to justice.
- Ms. Rivera-Rogers explained that bringing in these requirements is not to create barriers, but to make sure that interpreters are qualified. She felt that the old workshop taught interpreter candidates how things are done in Nevada, gave them an overview of what it takes to be an interpreter, and what they needed to prepare for. Ms. Rivera-Rogers reiterated the program's purpose, to ensure that an interpreter is qualified to be interpreting for an LEP (Limited English Proficiency) individual.
- Ms. Walker assured the committee that reciprocity candidates are still held to the same requirements as those being credentialed in Nevada. Reciprocity candidates must still pass the written and oral exam to our state's standards.
- Ms. Rivera-Rogers asked whether the court interpreter email, located at the end of the guidelines, belonged to Ms. Walker.
 - Ms. Walker confirmed she is the one that answers those emails.
 - Ms. Stocks clarified that the AOC has a CO-OP system, where redundancies are built-in so we have general email addresses that ensure that not just one person is required to always be in to answer emails.

VII. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Stocks at 12:52pm.