

# NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

Contact: Heather Murphy  
Telephone: (602) 452-3656  
Cell: (602) 448-8412  
[hmurphy@courts.az.gov](mailto:hmurphy@courts.az.gov)

February 10, 2016

## **Supreme Court Launches Interpreter Credentialing Program**

PHOENIX – Foreign language interpreters are an essential part of ensuring justice for people who find themselves in court for any reason but lack proficiency in English. Arizona is joining the ranks of 45 other states that offer a credentialing program to ensure equal justice under the law. Courts that employ full-time language interpreters will be required to have their interpreters credentialed by June 30, 2019, or within 24 months of their hire date for those interpreters hired July 1, 2017 or later.

“Our research shows that there are more than 100 interpreters employed by courts across the state,” said Amy Wood from the Administrative Office of the Courts, which is launching the credentialing program. “There are about 500 interpreters in our online registry, many of whom are on-call. The goal of this program is to ensure that court interpreters meet a baseline knowledge of legal concepts, ethics, court procedures, and interpreting skill.”

Before the launch of Arizona’s program, only American Sign Language interpreters had to meet certain standards overseen by the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Interpreters who have earned credentials from the federal courts, other states or through the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators may be eligible to apply for reciprocity in Arizona. Applications for reciprocity are already being accepted.

The first oral exam will be administered in July and it will be August or September before the first group of interpreters will receive their credentials. A skilled court interpreter will be able to complete Arizona’s credentialing program in about six months, Wood estimates.

“For someone with proficiency in a foreign language and English who wants to start interpreting in court, it could take one to two years to build the necessary skills and attain the highest level credentials,” David Svoboda, Language Access Coordinator, explained. “We want to build a robust list of credentialed interpreters. We have a critical need for interpreters who can assist with the indigenous languages of Central and South America as well as certain African dialects.”

More detailed information about Arizona’s interpreter credentialing program is posted at [www.azcourts.gov/interpreter](http://www.azcourts.gov/interpreter). Questions about becoming a credentialed court interpreter should be directed to [interpreters@courts.az.gov](mailto:interpreters@courts.az.gov). A hotline for questions is staffed during regular business hours at (602) 452-3333.

For more information about Arizona’s judicial branch, visit [www.azcourts.gov](http://www.azcourts.gov), or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).