
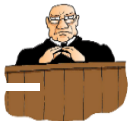







## Verifying Interpreter Credentials and Having them Stated for the Record

Members of the bench, bar, and other stakeholders can verify interpreter credentials and qualifications by following these five simple steps:

1.	When hiring a court interpreter, <b>your state may have a registry or directory of certified, licensed, qualified, or approved interpreters.</b> You can search the state's database and, depending on the nomenclature, verify that their credentials are valid and up to date. Contracting an interpreter from such lists ensures you always have an interpreter with the <b>proper credentials.</b>	
2.	<p><b>When working with languages other than Spanish (LOTS), for which testing may not be available,</b> you may seek other courts' and government entities' recommendations, particularly from the National Court Interpreters Database (NCID) maintained by the federal courts. You may also request résumés from interpreters to ascertain their qualifications before any proceeding<sup>1</sup> begins. <b>If approved by a judge as an <i>ad hoc</i> interpreter, the record should reflect that it is not a blanket approval. The interpreter will be qualified only for that particular procedure.</b></p> <p>For suggestions on questions to ask interpreters, see page two of this infographic.</p>	
3.	Before contracting an interpreter, verify the language requested with the person needing the service and whether the person speaks a particular <b>dialect or regional variation</b> of that language. Ensuring that the correct language interpretation is being provided will avoid delays in the process.	
4.	Once the Court swears in the interpreter <sup>2</sup> , <b>ask them to state their full name and qualifications for the record,</b> including their license or certification number (if your state issues one). Credentials should be put on the record if there is a licensing or credentialing scheme in the specific state or jurisdiction.	
5.	For more information on the <b>Interpreter Statutes and Rules that govern your state,</b> visit your state's office of court administration website, the NCSC language access section at <a href="https://www.ncsc.org/services-and-experts/areas-of-expertise/language-access/resources-for-program-managers">https://www.ncsc.org/services-and-experts/areas-of-expertise/language-access/resources-for-program-managers</a> or the NAJIT Resources page at <a href="https://najit.org/resources/">https://najit.org/resources/</a>	

**This protocol also applies to Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), Over the Phone Interpreting (OPI), and Depositions.**

<sup>1</sup> If a proceeding is going to last more than one hour, every effort should be made to have two interpreters working as a team, in keeping with the profession's best practices. Doing so will minimize interpreting errors on the record arising from interpreter mental fatigue and safeguard the interpretation's overall integrity, which may serve to protect a defendant's right to due process and the effective assistance of counsel.

<sup>2</sup> Protocol varies by jurisdiction. Some courts might swear interpreters only once a day or for the entire duration of the proceedings.



## **Suggested Voir Dire Questions**

### **Interpreting and Translating Skills**

1. Have you passed any accreditation or certification exams for legal interpretation or translation? If so, please describe.
2. Have you passed any accreditation or certification exams for interpretation or translation in fields other than legal? If so, please describe.
3. Are you a member in good standing of any professional associations of interpreters or translators? If so, please identify them.
4. Do you attend meetings, conferences, and other gatherings of professional interpreters and translators? If so, please describe how often.
5. Have you ever interpreted in this or any other jurisdiction for a court procedure? If so, please state when and for what type of proceeding?
6. Have you ever been disqualified or removed from your duties as an interpreter in any court or administrative proceeding? Why?

### **Education**

1. Have you formally studied the English language in school or college? If so, please describe. If not, please describe how you learned English.
2. How did you learn [the foreign language]?
3. Have you formally studied [the foreign language] in school or college? If so, please describe.
4. What is the highest grade or degree of education that you completed?

### **Ethical Considerations**

1. Are you a potential witness in this case?
2. Do you know or work for any of the attorneys, parties, or witnesses in this case?
3. Have you read and understood the NAJIT Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters? Do you agree to abide by that code?  
OR
4. Have you read and understood the Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters of our state? Do you agree to abide by that code?
5. Have you ever been disciplined for conduct that violates the Code of Professional Responsibility approved in this or any other state?

### **Examples of how to inquire about possible language variations:**

1. Does the language that you speak have any dialect or regional variations?
2. If so, what are the dialects or regional variations that you can speak and understand?
3. Do you need time to briefly communicate with the LEP in the presence of the Court to see if you can both understand each other?

**Visit <https://najit.org/resources/the-profession/#benchbar> to find more information on court interpreting by credentialed court interpreters and sign language interpreters.**