



National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators
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ph: 404-566-4705

September 27, 2022

Andrew T. Heath
Director
North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts
901 Corporate Center Drive
Raleigh, NC 27607-5045

Dear Mr. Heath:

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators promotes professional standards in court interpreting and legal translation. Our members include interpreters and translators, judicial officers and administrators, language service providers, academics, and interpreting and translation students.

We are in receipt of correspondence from certified contract court interpreters in the North Carolina state courts asking us to support their request for compensation commensurate with the profession's knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). Your [Standards for Language Access Services](#) makes it clear that the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is committed to removing barriers that hinder equal access to justice by providing language access policies, services, and resources that enhance the quality and availability of interpreting and translation services in North Carolina state courts. We trust that this also means you are committed to providing appropriate levels of compensation to the professionals upon whom you are so dependent.

We respectfully encourage you to conduct your deliberations being guided in part by the following considerations. First, court interpreting is a highly skilled profession whose competencies are widely underappreciated and undervalued. The fact that statistics on court interpreter certification exams reveal failing rates ranging from 80-95% is an indication of how extensive the knowledge, skills and abilities are and how so few candidates possess a sufficient mastery of those KSAs to pass the test. The low passing rate reflects the sophistication of the profession, not the level of difficulty of the test—which is a valid and reliable measure of one's ability to demonstrate performance of the requisite aspects of the work at the most basic, entry level.

You may find it helpful to consult two empirical studies of court interpreter compensation. The first study's data were collected in late 2013. While they may be somewhat dated, these data constitute the only national analysis of court interpreter compensation for staff and/or contract court interpreters. A summary of the findings, "Interpreter Compensation in the Courts," was published in the Winter 2016 issue of [Court Manager](#) (see especially pp.14-15) and a detailed

listing of contract interpreter payment practices in the nation's courts (see Tables 21 and 22 in "Listings and Statistics") may be found in Part Two of this [Compensation Database](#).

The second study focused on a variety of approaches for assigning value to the professional tasks that court interpreters perform, using the New York State Unified Court System as a case study. While the analysis focuses on staff court interpreters, some of the considerations reported there may be helpful in determining what would be appropriate compensation of contract interpreters. You can find that study [here](#).

Thank you very much for considering our input. We wish you the very best as you seek the course of action that will best benefit your courts, the LEP community you serve, and the professionals on whom you rely. If there is any assistance we might provide, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

The NAJIT Board of Directors

cc: andrew.t.heath@nccourts.gov
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