



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Contract Certified Spanish Court Interpreters

FROM: Kara J. Mann, OLAS Manager *KJM*

DATE: October 21, 2022

SUBJECT: Contract Rate Increases and Other Policy Changes

Over August and September 2022, contract certified Spanish interpreters emailed an open letter and petition to the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC). In response to the concerns raised, the Office of Language Access Services (OLAS) and Fiscal Services Division (FSD) collected data points, including expenditures, market survey comparisons, and projected costs. After multiple discussions reviewing the collected data and interpreter policies, NCAOC Director Andrew T. Heath has approved the following changes.

I. Contract Rates

Effective November 1, 2022, the hourly contract rates for certified Spanish interpreters will increase by 10 to 12.5% as follows.

Credentialing	Current Hourly Rate	New Hourly Rates
Level A1: Master Certified	\$50	\$55
Level A2: Certified	\$40	\$45

It is important to note that the judiciary does not operate under an unlimited budget, but rather only by what is fiscally allotted by the General Assembly each year. Funding a 10-12.5% increase is expected to cost an additional \$170,000 - \$180,000, which was not in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget. It is because the NCAOC recognizes the critical role court interpreters have within the judicial system that previously earmarked funds were reappropriated for this rate increase.

II. Review of Contract Hourly Rates

An hourly rate review policy will be implemented and added to the *Standards for Language Access Services ("Standards")*. Under the new policy, the Director of the NCAOC, or his designee, will review the hourly rates for contract Spanish court interpreters every three years. This policy change is in response and recognition of the need to have a contract rate review mechanism in place as discussed at the meeting held between the NCAOC and contract Spanish interpreters on September 13, 2022.





III. Cancellation Policy

Section 14.11 of the *Standards* will be amended to clarify the cancellation notification excludes weekends and holidays.

NCAOC recognizes that critical role court interpreters have in the administration of justice. You ensure equal participation and due process for limited English proficiency parties in North Carolina state courts. We appreciate having these concerns brought to our attention, and I personally appreciate the dialogue.

