California Rules of Court, Rule 2.893. Appointment of interpreters in court proceedings

California Rules of Court, 2026 edition

(a) Application

This rule applies to all trial court proceedings in which the court appoints a spoken language interpreter for a limited English proficient (LEP) person.

(Subd (a) amended effective January 1, 2025.

(b) Definitions

As used in this rule:

(1) “Designated language” means a language selected by the Judicial Council for the development of a certification program under Government Code section 68562;

(2) "Certified interpreter" an interpreter who is qualified by the Judicial Council to interpret in a designated language as defined in (b)(1). A certified interpreter has passed the English written exam and the Bilingual Interpreting Exam.

(3) “Registered interpreter” means an interpreter who is qualified by the Judicial Council to interpret in a language that is not a designated language as defined in (b)(1). A registered interpreter has passed the English written exam, an Oral Proficiency Exam in English, and an Oral Proficiency Exam in the target language, if available.

(4) "Relay interpreter" means a person who interprets between two non-English spoken languages.

(5) “Noncertified” or “nonregistered” interpreter means a person providing interpretation services:

(A) In a language designated for certification by the Judicial Council, without holding a certification to provide interpretation in that language; or

(B) In a language identified as a registered language by the Judicial Council, without holding registered status to interpret in that language, under the procedures and guidelines adopted by the Judicial Council; or

(C) In two non-English languages, as a relay interpreter.

(Subd (b) amended effective January 1, 2025.)

(c) Appointment of certified or registered interpreters

If a court appoints a certified or registered court interpreter, the judicial officer in the proceeding must require the following to be stated on the record:

(1) The language to be interpreted;

(2) The name of the interpreter;

(3) The interpreter's current certification or registration number;

(4) A statement that the interpreter's identification has been verified as required by statute;

(5) A statement that the interpreter is certified or registered to interpret in the language to be interpreted; and

(6) A statement that the interpreter was administered the interpreter's oath or that he or she has an oath on file with the court.

(Subd (c) amended effective January 1, 2025.)

(d) Appointment of noncertified or nonregistered interpreters

(1) A noncertified or nonregistered interpreter may be appointed to provide interpretation services as follows:

(A) Under a provisional appointment as described in (e); or

(B) Under a temporary appointment as described in (f).

(2) In all cases in which a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter is appointed, the judicial officer in the proceeding must require the following to be stated on the record:

(A) The language to be interpreted;

(B) A finding that good cause exists to appoint a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter;

(C) The name of the interpreter;

(D) A statement that the interpreter is not certified or registered to interpret in the language to be interpreted;

(E) A finding that the interpreter is qualified to interpret in the proceeding as required in (e) or (f), with any other findings required under those subdivisions; and

(F) A statement that the interpreter was administered the interpreter's oath.

(Subd (d) amended effective January 1, 2025.

(e) Provisional qualification and appointment of noncertified or nonregistered interpreters

(1) When permissible

If, after a diligent search, a certified or registered interpreter is not available, the judicial officer in the proceeding may appoint a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter who has been provisionally qualified under this subdivision.

(2) Provisional qualification

(A) A noncertified or nonregistered interpreter is provisionally qualified if a judicial officer of a superior court finds the noncertified or nonregistered interpreter to be provisionally qualified to interpret in a specific language or languages and signs the order allowing the interpreter to be considered for appointment on Provisional Qualification of Noncertified or Nonregistered Spoken Language Interpreter (form INT-110).

(B) A provisional qualification is valid for one year from the date of judicial officer signature on form INT-110.

(C) Interpreters seeking a third or subsequent provisional qualification period after January 1, 2025, must demonstrate their efforts to achieve certified or registered status, by providing the following information to the court, either orally or on form INT-110:

(i) Whether they have completed the Judicial Council's online self-paced court interpreter ethics training within the past two years; and

(ii) Whether they have made at least two attempts to pass a qualifying exam in the past two years, if such a qualifying exam exists. Interpreters, including relay interpreters, working in a language for which an Oral Proficiency Exam exists must attempt that exam.

(D) When an interpreter seeks a third or subsequent provisional qualification period after January 1, 2025, the judicial officer must find that the interpreter has made the efforts required in (C) or must indicate that good cause exists to appoint the interpreter in form INT-110's Provisional Qualification Finding and Order of the Court.

(3) Required record

In addition to the matters that must be stated on the record under (d)(2), to make a provisional appointment of a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter, the judicial officer in the proceeding must state on the record:

(A) A finding that a certified or registered interpreter is not available and a statement that Certification of Unavailability of Certified or Registered Interpreter and Availability of Provisionally Qualified Interpreter (form INT-120) for the language to be interpreted is on file for this date with the court administrator;

(B) A finding that the interpreter has been provisionally qualified to interpret in the required language or languages, following procedures adopted by the Judicial Council (see forms INT-100-INFO and INT-110);

(C) A finding, if applicable, that there is a necessity to appoint the interpreter beyond the time ordinarily allowed in (4); and

(D) Whether a party has objected to the appointment of the proposed interpreter or has waived the appointment of a certified or registered interpreter.

(4) Limits on provisional appointment

(A) Unless the judicial officer in the proceeding determines there is a necessity, a noncertified interpreter who is provisionally qualified under this rule to interpret in Spanish may not interpret in a superior court for more than 45 court days or parts of court days within a calendar year.

(B) Unless the judicial officer in the proceeding determines there is a necessity, a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter who is provisionally qualified under this rule to interpret in a language other than Spanish may not interpret in a superior court for more than 75 court days or parts of court days within a calendar year.

(Sub (e) amended effective January 1, 2025.)

(f) Temporary appointment of noncertified or nonregistered interpreter

(1) When permissible

If the judicial officer in a proceeding finds that a certified or registered interpreter is not available, a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter may be appointed to interpret for a single, brief, routine matter before the court in order to prevent burdensome delay or in other unusual circumstances.

(2) Required record

A noncertified or nonregistered interpreter may be appointed on a temporary basis, if, in addition to the requirements of (d)(2), the judicial officer in the proceeding finds on the record that:

(A) The LEP person has been informed of their right to an interpreter and has waived the appointment of a certified or registered interpreter or an interpreter who could be provisionally qualified by the judicial officer in the proceeding, as provided in (e);

(B) Good cause exists to appoint an interpreter who is not certified, registered, or provisionally qualified; and

(C) The interpreter is qualified to interpret that proceeding, following procedures adopted by the Judicial Council (see forms INT-100-INFO and INT-140).

(3) Limits on temporary appointment

The appointment of an interpreter under this subdivision is limited to a single, brief, routine matter before the court. The use of the interpreter in this circumstance may not be extended to subsequent proceedings without again following the procedure set forth in this subdivision.

(Sub (f) adopted effective January 1, 2025; previous subd (b) repealed effective January 1, 2025.)

(g) Appointment of relay interpreter

(1) When permissible

If, after a diligent search, a certified or registered interpreter is not available to interpret between English and the language required for a court proceeding, the court may appoint a relay interpreter to interpret between two non-English spoken languages and a second interpreter who can interpret between one of the relay interpreter's languages and English. A relay interpreter may be appointed provisionally as described in (e), or on a temporary basis as described in (f).

(2) Required record

(A) If the relay interpreter is appointed as a provisional interpreter, the judicial officer must make the record required for all appointments of noncertified and nonregistered interpreters in (d)(2), must follow the rules for provisional qualification in (e)(2), and must make the record required in (e)(3).

(B) If the relay interpreter is appointed as a temporary interpreter, the judicial officer must make the record required for all appointments of noncertified and nonregistered interpreters in (d)(2) and the record required in (f)(2).

(3) Limits on appointment of relay interpreters

(A) A relay interpreter who is qualified for a provisional appointment described in (e) is subject to the time limits for appointment set forth in (e)(4).

(B) A relay interpreter with a temporary appointment described in (f) is subject to the limits on temporary appointment to a single, brief, and routine matter before the court.

(Sub (g) adopted effective January 1, 2025.)

Rule 2.893 amended effective January 1, 2025; adopted effective January 1, 2018.

Advisory Committee Comment

Subdivision (c) and (d)(2). When a court reporter is transcribing the proceedings, or an electronic recording is being made of the proceedings, a judicial officer may satisfy the "on the record" requirement by stating the required details of the interpreter appointment in open court. If there is no court reporter and no electronic recording is being made, the "on the record" requirement may be satisfied by stating the required details of the interpreter appointment and documenting them in writing—such as in a minute order, the official clerk's minutes, a formal order, or even a handwritten document—that is entered in the case file.

Subdivision (f). This provision is intended to allow for the one-time use of a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter who is not provisionally qualified to interpret for an LEP person in a courtroom event. This provision is not intended to be used to meet the extended or ongoing interpretation needs of LEP court users.

When determining whether the matter before the court is a “brief, routine matter” for which a noncertified or nonregistered interpreter who has not been provisionally qualified may be used, the judicial officer should consider the complexity of the matter at issue and likelihood of potential impacts on the LEP person’s substantive rights, keeping in mind the consequences that could flow from inaccurate or incomplete interpretation of the proceedings.

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