

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Foreign language interpreters needed for courts; Supreme Court seeks to ensure those who can't speak English have meaningful access to justice system

LANSING, MI, January 8, 2014 – The Michigan Supreme Court is looking for foreign language speakers from across the state to become certified court interpreters, to ensure that everyone has consistent, meaningful access to the courts.

The state's highest court recently adopted a new rule that requires all courts in the state to provide interpreters. Qualified interpreter candidates must understand both the common slang of witnesses and the technical language of lawyers, police officers, and expert eyewitnesses.

"Michigan needs qualified interpreters in every part of the state," said Justice Bridget M. McCormack, chair of the Supreme Court's Limited English Proficiency Implementation Advisory Committee. "Our goal is to ensure that everyone, no matter where their case is heard or what language they speak, can understand and be understood during court proceedings."

Interpreter candidates must first pass a written English exam, scoring 80 percent or better to be eligible to take an oral proficiency exam. There is no cost for the written exam. Candidates taking the oral proficiency exam must pay a fee, which reflects what it costs the State Court Administrative Office to rate the exams. There is a \$200 fee for the Spanish oral proficiency exam and a \$350 fee for the oral exam for other languages, which include Arabic, Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Ilocano, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

The exam schedule:

- The written English exam will be offered March 25, 2014 and July 29, 2014.
- The Spanish oral proficiency exam will be offered June 19 and 20, 2014 and Oct. 16 and 17, 2014.
- The oral proficiency exam for languages other than Spanish will be Oct. 20 and 21, 2014.

Testing will take place at the Michigan Hall of Justice, 925 W. Ottawa St., Lansing, MI 48915. Pre-registration is required; contact languageaccess@courts.mi.gov or (517) 373-6670.

For details about the certification process, go to <http://www.courts.mi.gov>, put "Interpreter Certification Test" in the search box and click on the first link; online readers may simply click <http://www.courts.mi.gov/administration/scao/officesprograms/fli/pages/certification-test.aspx>.

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