

Overview of the Court Interpreting Career- posted 6/29/10

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Court interpreters work in a fast-paced environment, using two languages, to accurately interpret what people say in court. This exciting career offers new challenges every day while you work in a professional setting. To become an interpreter, you need to be fully bilingual in both English and a second language, pass the state tests to become certified or registered, and enroll with the Court Interpreters Program (CIP).”*

“There are a lot of things you need to know, so check out this video series and look at our entire website.”

Interpreter Candidate *“My aunt told me I should find out about court interpreting. A lot of people think that if you’re bilingual and know legal terminology, you’ll be ready for court interpreting. Is that enough?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“It’s a step in the right direction, but court interpreting is so much more than that.”*

“Interpreting is done on-the-spot and you have to account for different types of speech and grammar.”

“You’ll need to perform in three modes of interpreting including simultaneous, consecutive and sight translation.”

“It can take years to prepare for a career in court interpreting.”

Interpreter Candidate *“How long will it take me to prepare?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“It really depends on your language ability and your experience in interpreting. Doing a self-assessment is a great way to get started. We have one on our Web site, so click on “prepare” to see if court interpreting might be the right career for you.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“How much do interpreters earn in California?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Full-time staff interpreters work in the courts and earn a minimum of \$68,000 per year plus benefits. Many interpreters in California are independent contractors or part-time staff. Independent contractors earn \$156 for a half-day and \$282 for a full day.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“Are you hiring?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Good question. The Court Interpreters Program doesn’t actually do the hiring; we’re the qualifying body. Once you’ve enrolled with us as a certified or registered interpreter, you are added to our Master List so that the courts can find you. You’ll also be able to contact your local courts at that point to let them know that you are available for work.”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Remember, there are three major steps in becoming a court interpreter: prepare for the profession, pass the state tests to become certified or registered, and enroll with the Court Interpreters Program (CIP).”*