



# JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

COURT INTERPRETERS  
ADVISORY PANEL

[www.courts.ca.gov/ciap.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/ciap.htm)  
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## INTERPRETER LANGUAGE ACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COURT INTERPRETERS ADVISORY PANEL (CIAP)

### MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

November 19, 2021  
12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.  
Videoconference

**Advisory Body Members Present:** Hon. Teresa Magno (Subcommittee Chair), Mr. Mark Crossley, Ms. Jennifer De La Cruz, Mr. Tam "Tyler" Nguyen, Ms. Carol Palacio

**Advisory Body Members Absent:** Mr. Hany Farag

**Others Present:** Mr. Douglas Denton, Ms. Claudia Ortega, Ms. Cynthia Miranda, Ms. Jacquie Ring, Ms. Kelly Mills, and other Judicial Council staff

#### OPEN MEETING

##### Call to Order and Roll Call

Judge Teresa Magno (Subcommittee Chair) called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. and Ms. Cynthia Miranda took roll call.

There were no public comments for this meeting.

#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEM 1)

##### Item 1

##### New Requirements for American Sign Language (ASL) Court Interpreters

The members of CIAP's Interpreter Language Access Subcommittee received a presentation from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) regarding ASL interpreter certifications, currently issued by other entities, that could be accepted by the Judicial Council and required before a new ASL interpreter can interpret for the California court system.

**Presenters:** Ms. Jacquie Ring, Principal Consultant, Language Access Services Section, NCSC

Ms. Kelly Mills, Manager, Language Access Services Section, NCSC

**Discussion:** NCSC provided an overview of plans for the ASL credentialing project, which will include research on how other states are credentialing new ASL interpreters and the conduct of focus group meetings with national and state ASL stakeholders

to determine training needs and trends. NCSC will present the findings of its research in early 2022 to the subcommittee. As part of this project, NCSC will develop a report with findings and recommendations. Recommendations concerning potential credentialing requirements for new ASL interpreters in California will be submitted to the Court Interpreters Advisory Panel in 2022 for its review.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.

DRAFT

# Review of American Sign Language (ASL) Court Interpreter Requirements and Qualifications

March 2022

NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS



# Project Overview



**Goal:** *To provide research and findings on requirements for ASL court interpreters, including the use of existing testing instruments, as well as non-testing options, such as training and portfolio requirements, that may be considered by the Judicial Council for use in California to qualify ASL court interpreters.*



# Project Overview



## Project tasks:

- Conduct national research
- Facilitate interviews and focus groups with language access programs and ASL experts
- Present findings to the Court Interpreters Advisory Panel and its Interpreter Language Access Subcommittee



# Conduct National Research



**Review of state language access program requirements for ASL court interpreters, including:**

- **Testing requirements**
- **Non-testing requirements**
  - ASL court interpreter training
  - Experience or observation hours
  - Required education and references

*National Center for State Courts, March 2022*



# California ASL Use and Need



## Judicial Council 2020 Language Need and Interpreter Use Study

- ASL third most requested language for interpretation statewide
- 38,460 ASL interpretations

*National Center for State Courts, March 2022*



# ASL Exam Background Information



## ASL Court Interpretation Exams:

- **Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L)** – national ASL court interpreter exam developed and maintained by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) until January 1, 2016
- **Number of SC:L Credentialed Interpreters**
  - National: 313 (RID Public List)
  - California: 37 (RID Public List)

*National Center for State Courts, March 2022*





# ASL Exam Background Information



## ASL Court Interpretation Exams:

- **The Texas Board of Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Certification Exam** – Texas court interpreter ASL exam currently administered in Texas
- **Number of BEI Court Credentialed Interpreters** – 149



# ASL Exam Background Information



## Other ASL Interpretation Exams (Non-Court Specific):

- **RID Exams – Generalist Certification**
- **BEI General Performance Exam**
- **Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters, LLC (CASLI) Generalist Exams (formerly RID)**
- **National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Exams (no longer administered)**



# National Review – Preliminary Findings



## ASL Court Interpreter Credentials:

- States across the nation continue to recognize **SC:L for ASL Court Interpreters**
- **7** states also recognize **BEI Court Interpreter Certification**
  - Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Wisconsin



# National Review – Preliminary Findings



## Other Qualification Options:

- Recognition of ASL generalist credentials (non-court specific) – may include different qualification level (i.e., conditionally approved)
- Mandatory or voluntary completion of additional components (i.e., orientation, training, court observation, etc.)



# National Review – Qualification Models

## MODEL 1:

- **Certified:** SC:L
- **Qualified:** Generalist credentials + training and experience (provided by the state courts)



# National Review – Qualification Models

## MODEL 2:

- **Certified:** SC:L and BEI CIC
- **Qualified:** Generalist credentials + training and experience (provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts)



# National Review – Qualification Models

## MODEL 3:

- **Certified:** SC:L and BEI CIC
- **Qualified:** Generalist credentials + training and experience (obtained by interpreters independently)



# Interviews and Focus Groups



## Interview and Focus Group Purpose:

- Learn more about current national and local efforts to qualify ASL court interpreters
- Identify foundational training content that could be considered by the Judicial Council of California for possible ASL court interpreter trainings





# Interviews and Focus Groups



## Interviews Completed:

- RID Legal Interpreting Task Force and RID Legal Interpreter Members Subgroup
- National Association of the Deaf
- California Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Project CLIMB (ASL Legal Training)
- ASL Court Interpreter Trainers
- California Certified ASL Court Interpreters
- California ASL and Deaf Interpreter Candidates

*National Center for State Courts, March 2022*



# Interviews and Focus Groups — Trends



## Training Trends:

- Need for more training and pipeline development
- More court-specific training
- More hands-on/supervised practice (i.e., mentorships)
- Mock scenarios
- Opportunities for feedback from working interpreters, experts, and Deaf community



# Interviews and Focus Groups — Trends

## Programmatic Trends:

- Opportunities should be inclusive of heritage signers and interpreters of color
- Pipeline development should include pathways for Deaf interpreters
- Deaf stakeholders and Deaf individuals should be involved in all levels of development of any possible trainings and requirements for ASL court interpreters



# California Evidence Code sec. 754



(f) For purposes of this section, “qualified interpreter” means an interpreter who has been certified as competent to interpret court proceedings by a testing organization, agency, or educational institution approved by the Judicial Council as qualified to administer tests to court interpreters for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.



# Options for California



- Persons that hold the Texas BEI Court Interpreter Certification could be recognized as eligible for CA court interpreter certification (through reciprocity)
- Determine whether the Evidence Code would need to be amended to allow “qualified” interpreters to also include an ASL interpreter who meets the education, training, and portfolio requirements adopted by the Judicial Council (TBD)



# Considerations for Review



## California Judicial Council – Certified Status

- Continued recognition of SC:L
- Recognition of Texas BEI Court Interpreter Certification



# Considerations for Review



## California Judicial Council – Court Qualified Status

- ASL Generalist Credentials + Training and Experience



# Model Example: Court Qualified Status



## **Court Qualified Status – Baseline Credentials (candidates must possess at least one of the following generalist ASL credentials)**

- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Generalist Certifications
- National Interpreter Certification (NIC) Certifications
- National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Certifications





# Model Example: Court Qualified Status



## Court Qualified Status – Training Requirements

- Completion of an approved online course on legal interpreting
- Completion of 40 hours of RID-approved legal training



# Model Example: Court Qualified Status



## Court Qualified Status – Experience Requirements

- Completion of mentorship
- Completion of live virtual practice sessions with facilitator(s)
- Supervised work experience



# Summary of Potential ASL Qualifications

## ASL Court Certified Status (TBD)

- Continued recognition of SC:L
- Recognition of Texas BEI Court Interpreter Certification

## ASL Court Qualified Status (TBD – may require amending Evid. Code)

- ASL Generalist Credentials + Training and Experience:
  - ASL Generalist credential
  - Completion of approved online legal interpreting modules
  - Completion of RID-approved legal trainings
  - Completion of experience requirements



# Timeline



- **March 2022:** NCSC to present research on ASL requirements for subcommittee background and context
- **Spring/Summer 2022:** Judicial Council staff will work with subcommittee to develop recommendations regarding new ASL requirements for California
- **Summer/Fall 2022:** Recommendations will be developed by staff for CIAP approval to go out for public comment



Questions?

