

# American Sign Language (ASL) Credentialing Review

November 19, 2021

NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS



# Project Overview



**Goal:** *To provide research and recommendations on credentialing options, 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 credential 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



# California ASL Use and Need



## Judicial Council 2020 Language Need and Interpreter Use Study

- Covered fiscal year 2014-15 through fiscal year 2017-18
- The top ten most interpreted languages for the study period were (in order of prevalence) Spanish, Vietnamese, **American Sign Language**, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Arabic, and Farsi
- 38,460 total ASL interpretations for the four-year study period

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# 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)



# 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 Active BEI Credentialed ASL Court Interpreters**  
National: 124 (BEI Public List)



# 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**
- Per publicly available information, **7** states also recognize **BEI Court Interpreter Certification**
  - Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Wisconsin



# National Review - Preliminary Findings



## Other Credentialing Options:

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



# National Review - Preliminary Findings



## **ASL Court Interpreter Non-Testing Components in Use by Some States:**

- Orientation to court interpretation
- ASL legal interpreter training
- Interpretation skills-building sessions
- Court interpretation observation
- Demonstrated experience

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# Next Steps — 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



# Next Steps — Interviews and Focus Groups

## Proposed Interview and Focus Group Participants:

- State Language Access Programs
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)
- RID Legal Credentialing Task Force and RID Legal Interpreter Members Subgroup
- Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters (CASLI)
- National Association of the Deaf (NAD)
- National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA)
- Mano a Mano, Inc.
- Project CLIMB (ASL Legal Training)
- ASL Court Interpreters

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Questions?

