



The Road to Becoming an Alaska Court System Contract Interpreter

The Alaska Court System (ACS) is committed to providing highly qualified interpreters. Below are the first steps to becoming a court interpreter.

1. Get Trained by the ACS

Court Interpreter Online Orientation

Complete the 8-module ACS Interpreter Online Orientation. You will learn the basics of court interpreting including interpreter ethics; interpreter skills, knowledge and abilities; the role of the court interpreter; the flow of criminal and civil cases; and an overview of the state court process.

2. Test your Oral Proficiency

Oral Proficiency Inventory (OPI)

The ACS will schedule a telephonic OPI through ALTA Language Services to test your spoken language skills in English and your other language. You need to pass this exam at a level 12 or superior. The cost of the OPI depends on the language tested and ranges from \$100 - \$160.

3. Test your Interpreting Skills

NCSC Written Exam

The National Center for State Courts has developed a written exam consisting of 135 questions testing your English comprehension, court procedures, and court ethics. The ACS administers the test throughout the year free of charge. You will need a score of 80% or higher to pass this test.

NCSC Oral Exam

The National Center for State Courts offers an oral exam that tests simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and sight translation of legal documents. The ACS administers it once a year. It is not free of charge and the cost depends on the language tested. The test is currently available in 20 languages. You will need a score of 70% or higher in each of the three test sections to pass this test.

4. Get a Background Check

Before you are qualified to interpret, the Alaska Court System conducts a background check free of charge. We usually do this after you have passed your exams. If you are unsure of your status, we can run the test at any time.

5. Practice, Practice, Practice!

You have now started your journey and achieved the minimum qualifications for being a court interpreter. You need to practice, observe court hearings, expand on your glossary, and take more advanced trainings to become an accomplished court interpreter.