Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
Court Interpreter Orientation and Testing Announcement

2027 SAVE-THE-DATE

PART 1: ORIENTATION

To be placed on the AOIC Court Interpreter Registry, candidates must attend a two-day orientation. This orientation is open to anyone at least 18 years of age with native-like proficiency in English and a second language. It covers the interpreter's role and professional ethics, modes of interpreting used in court, legal terminology, and court protocol.

Candidates may decide whether they'd like to take the written exam before or after the two-day orientation. Self-study is encouraged before taking the written and oral exams to reinforce and expand on what was covered in the orientation.

Sign language and deaf interpreters are only required to attend orientation and will not be tested by the AOIC. Candidates must submit proof of Advanced or Master's level licensure with the IDHHC to attend orientation.

Orientation Fee: $200

Orientation Dates Offered via Zoom:

March 13th and March 20th, 2027
Online via Zoom, held on two Saturdays; must attend both days.

October 16th and October 23rd, 2027
Online via Zoom, held on two Saturdays; must attend both days.

*The deadline is the first of the month, or earlier if maximum capacity is reached. Registration will remain open until capacity is reached (35 individuals).

PART 2: WRITTEN EXAM

The written examination is specifically for foreign language interpreters and may be taken either before or after the two-day orientation. Candidates can decide which step they prefer to complete first, allowing them to either attend the orientation initially or start with the written exam.

Written Exam Fee: $50

Written Exam Dates Offered in Chicago:

January 11th
February 1st
March 8th
April 12th
May 10th
June 14th
July 12th
August 9th
September 13th
October 4th
November 1st
December 6th

Registration and payment deadline: The Friday before each written exam.

OPTIONAL SKILL BUILDING COURSE

If you pass the written exam, the AOIC offers subsidized skill-building courses for those preparing for the oral exam or OPI.

April 15-16th, Two-Day, Spanish Specific
October 14-15th, Two-Day, Spanish Specific

May 7th - One Day, Language Neutral
October 8th - One Day, Language Neutral

PART 3: ORAL EXAM or OPI

Candidates who have attended the two-day orientation and passed the written test may take the NCSC oral exam testing their skills in sight translation, consecutive, and simultaneous interpreting. The exam is offered in 22 languages. Candidates must pass with 70% or higher to be listed on the AOIC Court Interpreter Registry as "Certified." Candidates must pass with a 60% or higher to be listed as "Registered."

If you speak a language that is not offered by the NCSC oral exam, you may be able to take an oral proficiency interview (OPI), if available in your language. You must receive a score of 10 or higher score to be listed as "Qualified."

Oral Exam Fee:
$225 (in-state)
$300 (out of state)

Oral Exam Dates Offered in Chicago:

February 5th, 2027 - CLOSED
Registration and payment deadline: January 1st

July 23th, 2027
Registration and payment deadline: June 1st

July 26th, 2027
Registration and payment deadline: June 1st

November 5th, 2027
Registration and payment deadline: October 1st

All 2028 events will be posted in mid-October 2027

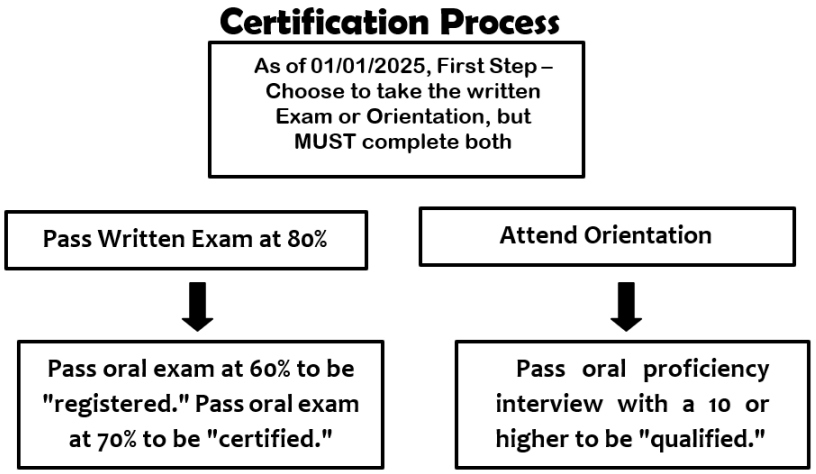
OPI Fee: $130 for all languages

OPI Exam:
Please contact nalawawda@illinoiscourts.gov to schedule the OPI exam. You must contact the AOIC two weeks in advance.

REGISTRATION OPEN: Please visit the AOIC website to register: https://courtapps.illinoiscourts.gov/

Do you have the skills necessary to be a certified court interpreter?

1. Possess educated, native-like mastery of *both* English and a second language;
2. Display wide general knowledge, typical of what a minimum of two years of general education at a college or university would provide; and
3. Perform the three major types of court interpreting: sight, consecutive and simultaneous. **If numbers 1 & 2 describe you, and you are willing to develop the skills for number 3,** court interpreting may be for you.



What materials are used for training and testing?
Illinois belongs to the Council of Language Access Coordinators through the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). Our program is based on their model and uses their recommended practices and exams.

Will the AOIC offer reciprocity?
Yes, Illinois accepts completion of most states' orientation and proof of NCSC exam scores, and proof of federal certification. If all other certification requirements are met, such candidates will be listed on the Registry. Sign language and deaf interpreters must attend the two-day orientation and submit proof of Advanced or Master's level licensure with the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission to be listed on the Registry. Sign language and deaf interpreters are not tested by the AOIC.

Do I have to go through all three phases if I teach language, already interpret, and took several years of language training?
Yes, everyone working toward certification must participate in all three phases.

How much work is there?

It varies by where you are located, where you are willing to travel and your language set. The need for interpreters across the state is high, but funding to hire interpreters varies by county. As an independent contractor, the circuit county courts contact interpreters on an "as needed" basis.

REGISTRATION OPEN
To find out more information and to register, visit:
https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/public/find-a-language-interpreter/
or contact Noor Alawawda, AOIC Senior Program Manager, Language Access, at 217-208-3327 or nalawawda@illinoiscourts.gov.