

HOW TO REQUEST AN INTERPRETER

NOTE: If there are any words or terms used in these instructions that you do not understand, please visit Illinois Legal Aid Online at illinoislegalaid.org/lexicon/glossary. For more information about going to court including how to fill out and file forms, call or text Illinois Court Help at 833-411-1121 or go to ilcourthelp.gov.

Who can request an interpreter?

To request an interpreter you must be a:

- party (a person who brings or defends a lawsuit);
- person who brings or defends a case on behalf of a minor or adult disabled party;
- parent or legal guardian of a minor party or minor victim;
- parent or legal guardian of an adult disabled party;
- witness;
- victim in the case;
- juror (sign language only); OR
- spectator (sign language only).

How do I request an interpreter?

Each circuit court uses different procedures. You have options:

- Fill out the *Request & Order for an Interpreter* form, which gives the court information about:
 - who needs an interpreter in court;
 - when the interpreter is needed; AND
 - what language is needed.OR
- Ask court personnel:
 - In Cook County go to the Office of Interpreter Services;
 - In all other counties go to the court administrator's or Circuit Clerk's office to ask for an interpreter; OR
 - Tell the judge or judge's clerk in court that you need an interpreter.

What forms do I need to fill out?

The *Request and Order for an Interpreter*. The email address (if you have one) and mailing address you put on the *Request and Order for an Interpreter* is where important legal documents will be sent to you. You should use an email account that you do not share with anyone else and that you check every day. If you do not check your email every day, you may miss important information, notice of court dates, or documents from other parties.

Where can I find the forms I need?

You can find the forms at: illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.

What costs will I need to pay to request an interpreter?

None.

What do I do if I choose to fill out the *Request & Order for an Interpreter*?

Step 1: File your *Request & Order for an Interpreter* with the Circuit Clerk in the county where the court case is filed.

- You must electronically file (e-file) court documents unless (1) you are an inmate in a prison or jail and you do not have a lawyer, (2) you have a disability that keeps you from e-filing, or (3) you qualify for an exemption from e-filing.
 - You will qualify for an exemption if: (1) you do not have internet or computer access at home and it would be difficult for you to travel to a place where you could use a computer; (2) you have trouble reading or speaking in English, or (3) you tried to e-file your documents, but you were unable to complete the process because the equipment or assistance you need is not available.
 - If you qualify for an exemption, fill out a *Certification for Exemption from E-Filing* found here: illinoiscourts.gov/documents-and-forms/approved-forms.
 - File the original and 1 copy of your *Request and Order for an Interpreter* and the *Certification* with the Circuit Clerk's office in person or by mail.
- To e-file, create an account with an e-filing service provider.
 - Visit efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm to select a service provider. Some service providers are free while others charge a processing fee. For instructions on how to e-file for free with Odyssey eFileIL, see the self-help user guides here: illinoiscourts.gov/self-help/how-to-e-file/.
- If you do not have access to a computer or if you need help e-filing, take your forms to the Circuit Clerk's office where you can use a public computer terminal to e-file your forms.
 - You can bring your forms on paper or saved on a flash drive.
 - The terminal will have a scanner and computer that you can use to e-file your form.

Step 2: Get a copy of your order.

- The *Order* is the bottom part of the *Request & Order for an Interpreter*.

- The judge will fill in this bottom part to show if the request is granted or denied.
- In some cases you will get your *Order* while you wait. But in other cases the *Order* will be mailed to you later. Ask the Circuit Clerk if you should wait for your *Order*, or if it will be sent to you.
- If the request is GRANTED, you can have an interpreter on the dates and times listed in the *Order*. Bring the *Order* with you so that court personnel can get you an interpreter. Ask the Circuit Clerk whether you need to call in advance so that an interpreter can be scheduled for your court date.
- If the request is DENIED, no interpreter will be provided for you.