

## Certified Spanish Court Interpreter Training: Program Overview

Certified and Registered Court Interpreters belong to the Translation profession. Registered and Certified Court Interpreters (CCI) focus on and are authorized by the Illinois Supreme Court to the exclusion of non-certified translators for the translation of all Illinois Circuit Court proceedings and documents. Graduates of this program are prepared to work locally and nationally. As highly-skilled and knowledgeable Registered or Certified Court Interpreters, they are a vital part of the legal and administrative systems. CCIs have broad knowledge of: the Spanish and English written and spoken languages; the usage of college-level Spanish and English (referred to in the industry as “register”); the jargon, syntax, semantics and discursive structures used specifically and exclusively for legal proceedings (legalese); the criminal and civil legal systems; and how to render the most accurate and efficient translations possible. Skills are mastered through classroom, language laboratory, and on-the-job experiences.

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## Program Goals

To prepare students with demonstrated competence of the domains of simultaneous interpreting, consecutive interpreting and sight translation according to the best standards as performed by Certified Spanish Court Interpreters (CCIs).

## Candidate profile

Candidates must possess bilingual proficiency, which will include speaking, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension skills equivalent to those of a native or near-native speaker in both English and Spanish. Candidates must also show metalanguage awareness and intuition in both languages and connections between languages such that the candidate can recognize linguistic equivalents and transfer meaning and intent between the two languages in written and in spoken form. Candidates must show interest and aptitude in translation and an appropriate professional demeanor and behavior. Please see the Judicial Council of California’s complete explanation of NCSC certification expectations at <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/KSAs.pdf>.

## In-Person Coursework

Two levels of translation and sight translation in each language direction, a total of four courses:

1. Translation and sight translation 1: English to Spanish (24 classroom hours)  
Translation and sight translation of general interest texts from English into Spanish. Prerequisite: Admission into certificate program. \$240
2. Translation and sight translation 1: Spanish to English (24 classroom hours)  
Translation and sight translation of general interest texts from Spanish into English. Prerequisite: Admission into certificate program. \$240
3. Translation and sight translation 2: English to Spanish (24 classroom hours)  
Translation and sight translation of technical texts from English into Spanish. Prerequisite: Successful completion of Translation and sight translation 1: English to Spanish. \$240
4. Translation and sight translation 2: Spanish to English (24 classroom hours)  
Translation and sight translation of technical texts from Spanish into English. Prerequisite: Successful completion of Translation and sight translation 1: Spanish to English. \$240

Three levels of consecutive interpreting:

1. Consecutive 1 (32 classroom hours) Introductory course on skills and techniques required to perform faithful bilateral consecutive interpretations. Skills and techniques covered include: active listening, note taking, memory and retention, visualization, division of spoken discourse into units of meaning and verbatim recall in each source language; short (1-25 words) bilateral consecutive exercises of general interest interactions. Prerequisite: Admission into certificate program. \$320
2. Consecutive 2 (32 classroom hours) Intermediate course on skills and techniques required to perform faithful bilateral consecutive interpretations. Skills and techniques covered include: active listening, note taking, memory and retention, visualization, division of spoken discourse into units of meaning and verbatim recall in each source language. Long (26 to 40 words) bilateral consecutive exercises focusing typical courtroom interactions. Prerequisite: Successful completion of Consecutive 1. \$320
3. Consecutive 3 (32 classroom hours) Advanced course on skills and techniques required to perform faithful bilateral consecutive interpretations. Skills and techniques covered include: active listening, note taking, memory and retention, visualization, division of spoken discourse into units of meaning and verbatim recall in each source language. Long (41+ words) bilateral consecutive exercises focusing on typical courtroom interactions. Prerequisite: Successful completion of Consecutive 2. \$320

Two levels of simultaneous interpreting in each language direction, a total of four courses:

1. Simultaneous 1: English to Spanish (16 classroom hours) Introductory course on skills and techniques required to perform faithful simultaneous interpretations from English to Spanish. Skills and techniques covered include: shadowing, *decalage* activities, active listening, memory and retention. Short (up to 5 minutes) simultaneous interpretations into Spanish of general interest discourse and introductory courtroom discourse at 100 to 120 words per minute. Prerequisite: Admission into certificate program. \$160
2. Simultaneous 1: Spanish to English (16 classroom hours) Introductory course on skills and techniques required to perform faithful simultaneous interpretations from Spanish to English. Skills and techniques covered include: shadowing, *decalage* activities, active listening, memory and retention. Short (up to 5 minutes) simultaneous interpretations into English of general interest discourse and introductory courtroom discourse at 100 to 120 words per minute. Prerequisite: Admission into certificate program. \$160
3. Simultaneous 2: English to Spanish (32 classroom hours) Advanced course on skills and techniques required to perform faithful simultaneous interpretations from English to Spanish. Technical discourses in the areas of advanced courtroom discourse. Length of discourse increases to up to eight uninterrupted minutes and speed increases, ranging from 120 to 140 words per minute. Prerequisite: Successful completion of Simultaneous 1: English to Spanish. \$320
4. Simultaneous 2: Spanish to English (32 classroom hours) Advanced course on skills and techniques required to perform faithful simultaneous interpretations from Spanish to English. Technical discourses in the areas of medicine, law, economics and current affairs. Length of discourse increases to up to eight uninterrupted minutes and speed increases, ranging from 120 to 140 words per minute. Prerequisite: Successful completion of Simultaneous 1: Spanish to English. \$320

### Profile to obtain a certificate of completion and to be sponsored for certification exams

Students will be prepared to take and pass NCSC written and oral exams, becoming Certified or Registered as an Interpreter by demonstrating the following proficiencies and skills:

1. Translate 250 word texts from English to Spanish
2. Translate 250 word texts from Spanish to English
3. Sight translate 225 word texts from Spanish to English within 6 minutes
4. Sight translate 225 word texts from Spanish to English within 6 minutes
5. Interpret consecutively from English to Spanish and Spanish to English spates

- of discourse (850-950 word scripts) with segments of up to 40 words
6. Interpret simultaneously from Spanish to English spates (up to 8 minutes) of discourse of up to 120 wpm
  7. Interpret simultaneously from English to Spanish spates (up to 8 minutes) of discourse of up to 120 wpm

Having met or exceeded the above goals, turned 18 or older and reviewed AOIC's criminal background check guidelines, students may be ready to take and pass the written and oral exams to become certified or registered. Students assessed as ready for certification can receive sponsorship by this program to pay for both exams, one time each. In addition, students are encouraged to apply for the AOIC's new scholarship at <https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/public/find-a-language-interpreter>, which would cover the orientation and 50% of the cost of any retakes, and will receive help in their application process.

## Program Outcomes

The National Center for State Courts provides the standardized board examination for certification as a CCI (<https://www.ncsc.org/education-and-careers/state-interpreter-certification>). State Supreme Courts, through their respective Administrative Offices of the Courts (AOCs) and/or Judicial Councils, administer these exams, accredit individual CCIs and maintain a roster, master list or registry of interpreters for the respective state. Illinois's certification program information can be found at <https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/public/find-a-language-interpreter/language-interpreter-getting-certified/>.

This educational program seeks to provide training that meets and exceeds the minimum skill domains to become Certified or Registered as a Spanish CCI. To achieve this end, it utilizes an 'outcomes based' process. Programmatic outcomes are performance indicators that reflect the extent to which the educational goals of the program are achieved and by which program effectiveness is documented. Students who successfully complete the program are eligible to earn the credential of a Spanish Registered or Certified Court Interpreter (CCI).

While there is no national or statewide accreditation for CCI educational programs, this program offers classes that have all been proactively and voluntarily submitted for review by, and are recognized for, accredited Continuing Education Credits by the American Translators Association at <https://www.atanet.org/certification/continuing-education-requirement/>. When ready, this program aims to seek additional accreditation through the Illinois State Board of Education (<https://www.isbe.net/cte>) and this program currently voluntarily abides by these regulations.

## Wages, Careers and Growth

Like all professions, the field of translation has a salary range. Illinois's median annual wage (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes273091.htm#st>) falls in line with the national 50th percentile in the below chart. Interpreters working for the government earn a median annual wage of \$62,390 (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/interpreters-and-translators.htm#tab-5>). However, distinguishing oneself by passing the NCSC Court Interpreter Certification Exam (or their components, for registered status) positions interpreters into the 75th to 90th percentiles, with Federally Certified Spanish Court Interpreters (FCICE) starting above the 90th percentile if working full-time for Federal Courts.

Bureau of Labor Statistics's percentile wage estimates for Interpreters and Translators (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes273091.htm>):

Percentile	10%	25%	50% (Median)	75%	90%
Hourly Wage	\$14.11	\$18.38	\$23.61	\$36.51	\$47.00
Annual Wage (2)	\$29,360	\$38,230	\$49,110	\$75,940	\$97,760

As far as growth, based on population proportionality, comparing IL to a state with a more established interpreter certification programs (CA) for which CCI cover not only in-court proceedings but also: civil depositions, workers compensation depositions, administrative hearings and court ordered medical examinations, immigration hearings and federal court (the latter two have their own certification standards) the best estimate of Illinois's need is 428 Spanish CCIs. Currently, IL has 70 fully certified Spanish CCIs and 29 provisionally qualified (registered) Spanish court interpreters.

This program's long-term aim is to educate and train enough students to add 328 Spanish CCIs to the Illinois registry *to meet current needs* and to add an additional 86 to meet the 20% projected growth over the next decade (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/interpreters-and-translators.htm#tab-6>). Illinois needs 414 high income CCIs trained and educated through this program and you can be one of them!

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