

**New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts
Language Access Services
Court Interpreter Code of Professional Responsibility
(Approved by the Language Access Advisory Committee – July 11, 2014)**

Introduction

Interpreters ensure due process guaranteed under the New Mexico and United States Constitutions by placing a party whose first or primary language is not English in a comparable situation to a party whose first or primary language is English.

Scope

These Standards of Professional Responsibility are binding on all Certified Court Interpreters and Justice System Interpreters who provide services to the New Mexico Courts.

Standard 1: Interpreters interpret faithfully and accurately.¹

Interpreters recognize that their function is to facilitate language access between two or more participants in the justice system who do not speak the same native language. Interpreters do everything possible to remove the linguistic barrier between the judiciary and the person(s) whose first or primary language is not English.

Standard 2: Interpreters confine themselves to interpreting.²

Interpreters are fully occupied with conveying meaning from one language to another and understand that removing the linguistic barrier is their sole function within the judicial process.

Standard 3: Interpreters act strictly in the interests of the court they serve.³

Interpreters conduct themselves as officers of the court, upholding the dignity of the justice system. Interpreters remain impartial at all times and protect their actual and perceived neutrality.

Standard 4: Interpreters are language access professionals.⁴

Interpreters are expected to stay abreast of evolving language use and trends in the profession of interpreting. Interpreters accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, communication mode, setting, and consumer needs. Interpreters constantly strive to increase their knowledge of all their working languages and of the cultures that use their languages. Interpreters are expected to collaborate with colleagues to foster the delivery of effective interpreting services. Interpreters recognize their role as representatives of the interpreting profession.

As an AOC-recognized interpreter as defined above, I accept and agree to these Standards.

I understand complaints may be filed and sanctions imposed for violations thereof, in accordance with the *Procedures for Processing Complaints Regarding Interpreter Conduct and Performance*.

Signature

Date

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¹ *Illustrative behaviors for **Standard 1. Interpreters interpret faithfully and accurately.***

- Interpreters convey the message from one language to another without addition, omission, or changes of meaning.
- Interpreters preserve the register of the language used.
- Interpreters preserve speakers' ambiguities and nuances.
- Interpreters analyze objectively any challenge to their performance and correct any errors of interpretation.
- Interpreters request clarifications of ambiguous statements or unfamiliar vocabulary.

² *Illustrative behaviors for **Standard 2. Interpreters confine themselves to interpreting.***

- Interpreters work unobtrusively.
- Interpreters maintain impartiality and avoid giving even the appearance of partiality.
- Interpreters avoid undue contact with witnesses, attorneys, parties and their families, and any unauthorized contact with jurors.
- Interpreters refrain from expressing personal opinions or offering procedural advice.

³ *Illustrative behaviors for **Standard 3. Interpreters act strictly in the interests of the court they serve.***

- Interpreters reflect proper court decorum.
- Interpreters treat court officials, staff, the public, parties, and other interpreters with dignity and respect.
- As officers of the court, interpreters may provide neutral, non-substantive information (e.g. the location of a particular judge's courtroom).
- Interpreters neither accept nor offer remuneration, gifts, gratuities, or valuable consideration in excess of their authorized compensation.
- Interpreters strive to avoid conflicts of interest or even the appearance thereof. They inform the court immediately of any actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- Interpreters disclose to the court and to the parties any prior involvement with the case or any personal involvement with the parties or others significantly involved in the case (in or out of court).
- Interpreters do not take advantage of knowledge obtained in the performance of official duties, or by their access to court records, facilities, or privileges, for their own or another's personal or professional gain.

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- Interpreters fairly and correctly represent their professional qualifications.
- Interpreters respect the need for confidentiality and secrecy as protected under applicable state and federal law.
- Interpreters shall inform the court of any impediment to fulfilling their responsibilities to ensure equal linguistic access to justice.
- Interpreters have a duty to report violations of these standards to the NMAOC.

⁴ *Illustrative behaviors for* **Standard 4. Interpreters are language access professionals.**

- Interpreters educate themselves as to current best practices in the field of judiciary interpreting and support and employ such practices. This includes but is not limited to matters of team interpreting and equipment use.
- Interpreters prepare themselves for all assignments they accept, via research on the case and subject matter, consultation with teammates, and necessary contact with clients.
- Interpreters decline any assignment for which they are not qualified and request to withdraw as soon as possible if it becomes apparent they are not qualified for an assignment already in progress.
- Interpreters support other interpreters by sharing knowledge and expertise with them, to the extent practicable, in the interests of the court.
- Interpreters have the duty to call to the court's attention any factors or conditions that adversely affect their ability to perform their duties.
- Interpreters are discreet and respect the privacy of those they interpret for, even when such information is not bound by rules of confidentiality.