

## **Court language interpreter seminar set for Oct. 9-10 in Tupelo**

September 15, 2014

The Mississippi Administrative Office of Courts is seeking bilingual speakers to act as interpreters in state court proceedings.

AOC will conduct an Ethics and Skill Building Seminar for individuals interested in becoming court interpreters on Oct. 9-10 at the Community Development Foundation, 398 East Main Street in Tupelo. Seminar presentations are scheduled 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days. Participants should arrive by 8 a.m. Oct. 9 to sign in.

Advance registration is required. The registration deadline is Sept. 26. The fee to attend the seminar is \$75. A seminar registration form is available at <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/forms/Application%20for%20Seminar%20%20OCTOBER%202014.pdf>.

Court interpreters must understand court proceedings as well as be fluent in English and a second language. To be successful, interpreters must have a high level of mastery in two languages and be highly skilled in all modes of interpreting. The seminar will introduce prospective foreign language interpreters to interpreting in legal settings including the courtroom, depositions and other legal proceedings.

Administrative Office of Courts Deputy Director Ta'Shia Gordon will give an overview of Mississippi's Court Interpreter Credentialing Program. Seminar presenters are Certified Spanish Court Interpreters Georgina Barvie' and Arlin Lang of Gulfport, who have 20 years of combined experience in the field of interpreting and translating. The seminar agenda is at <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/forms/AGENDA-OCTOBER2014.pdf>.

The AOC developed the Mississippi Court Interpreter Credentialing Program to assist the courts in Mississippi in their endeavor to provide equal access to justice for limited English proficiency individuals. The AOC program will provide judges in all state courts with a list of language interpreters who have demonstrated proficiency in oral and written translation of court proceedings.

Gordon said, "Language access in the courts is vital to preserving the integrity of our legal system. Individuals with limited English proficiency must have access to an interpreter to understand court proceedings and their legal rights."

The seminar is the first step in the program which will train, certify, and test individuals who wish to serve as interpreters in the courtrooms of Mississippi. The seminar will outline the requirements to achieve credentialing as a registered or certified courtroom interpreter.

The credentialing program will provide two levels of proficiency: registered and certified. Language interpreters may be included on the list after having completed the AOC's credentialing program. Registered and certified court interpreters will be required to renew credentials after three years. Interpreters must complete Continuing Interpreter Education hours to renew credentials. Continuing education will assist interpreters in maintaining interpreting skills as well as integrating new skills.

Written and verbal testing as well as background checks are required.

AOC officials hope to train and issue credentials to interpreters in many languages. The biggest need is for those who speak Spanish or Vietnamese.

Seven interpreters have been certified since AOC conducted its first training workshop in November 2011. Two people from Gulfport and one each from French Camp, Memphis, Tenn., Nashville, Tenn., and Cordova, Tenn., are certified as Spanish language interpreters, and one from Goodlettsville, Tenn., is certified in Mandarin Chinese. Three others from Brandon, Jackson and Newton are registered Spanish interpreters. The searchable registry is at this link: <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/registry.html>.

AOC adopted Standards for Court Interpreters and a Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters on Oct. 17, 2011. The rules for court interpreters apply to municipal court, justice court, youth court, county court, circuit court, chancery court and grand jury proceedings. Rules regarding certification are at this link: [http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/rules\\_on\\_standards.pdf](http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/rules_on_standards.pdf). Other information about the interpreter program may be found here: <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/resources.html>.

The AOC standards and code of ethics are modeled on standards for language interpretation adopted by the National Center for State Courts' Consortium for Language Access in the Courts. The Mississippi AOC is a member of the Consortium. Court interpreters who are certified in other Consortium member states may seek reciprocity.

For additional information, contact Ta'Shia Gordon at 601-576-4632.

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