

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

ROBERT LIPSCHER
Administrative Director of the Courts



CN-988
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

October 28, 1987

Directive #6-1987

TO: All Municipal Court Judges
FROM: Robert D. Lipscher *RDL*
TITLE: STANDARDS FOR APPOINTING AND SELECTING
STAFF WHO INTERPRET IN MUNICIPAL COURT

The Supreme Court Task Force on Interpreter and Translation Services recommended that the Judiciary "prescribe the qualifications of persons who interpret or translate in or for the courts." This Directive satisfies that recommendation with respect to certain staff who interpret in the Municipal Court.

STANDARDS

1. Any person who is being considered for a full-time or part-time court interpreting position which is not a classified position shall be examined and approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) before being assigned or authorized to perform any court interpreting duties. The AOC will give the appointing authority the names and scores of all applicants tested, indicating which candidates have been approved. The appointing authority may select and appoint any applicant who has been approved.
2. Persons who are hired for positions other than full-time or part-time court interpreter but who will be expected to interpret in court (e.g., Clerk Transcriber/Bilingual) must be examined and approved by the AOC before they may perform any interpreting duties. The test of Spanish proficiency administered by the Department of Personnel (formerly Department of Civil Service) measures only one's ability to communicate in Spanish. It does not measure interpreting or translating skills, so it does not certify applicants as interpreters or translators for court proceedings or any other context.

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ASSISTANCE IN RECRUITING

The AOC will provide assistance in recruiting applicants for full-time and part-time court interpreting positions upon request.

APPLICABILITY OF DIRECTIVE TO OTHER INTERPRETERS

This Directive is not retroactive and does not apply to existing staff who are interpreting at this time. However, appointing authorities are encouraged to have existing staff evaluated by the AOC.

In addition, this Directive does not apply to:

- a. Court interpreters who are not full-time or part-time employees of a court (e.g., free-lance interpreters, friends and relatives brought by litigants to interpret, etc.); or
- b. Full-time court interpreting positions filled in the Municipal Court according to the procedures of the Department of Personnel (i.e., classified positions).

An explanation of the process followed to develop the Directive is appended for background information.

R.D.L.

/rjl

c: Robert N. Wilentz, Chief Justice
Assignment Judges
Trial Court Administrators

APPENDIX

PROCESS LEADING TO ADOPTION OF THE DIRECTIVE

In the summer of 1985 the Supreme Court Task Force on Interpreter and Translation Services released its final report. One major finding was lack of any adequate procedure for screening persons who were seeking to fill staff court interpreting positions. In an effort to address that need the Court Interpreting, Legal Translating and Bilingual Services Section of the Administrative Office of the Courts drafted a proposed policy that was reviewed internally with the assistance of the Trial Court Personnel Unit.

Subsequently, the Department of Personnel was contacted to determine whether any features of the proposal were inappropriate in terms of that Department's policies. Commissioner Eugene J. McCaffrey advised in writing that he supported the proposed policy.

Finally, the proposed policy was distributed to the Assignment Judges and Trial Court Administrators for comment. Their responses supported the development of a Directive.

Contact the Court Interpreting, Legal Translating and Bilingual Services Section of the Administrative Office of the Courts (CN-988, Trenton, NJ 08625; 609-984-5024, -9512) for additional information regarding this Directive.