

NOTICE TO THE BAR

Directive #3-04

Questions or comments may be directed to (609) 984-3150 or (609) 984-5024

To: Assignment Judges

From: Richard J. Williams

Subject: Interpreting Standards

Date: March 22, 2004

On February 26, 2004, the Judicial Council [approved the attached Standards for Delivering Interpreting Services](#) in the New Jersey Judiciary. For the most part, the Interpreting Standards incorporate practices presently in use in most of the Vicinages.

The Standards are grounded in four basic tenets: (1) that people who are limited in their ability to speak and understand English or who are deaf or hard of hearing should have the same access to the courts as those who are neither; (2) that only qualified interpreters may ordinarily interpret; (3) that all costs for interpreting are to be borne by the Judiciary except in very limited instances; and (4) that team interpreting should be used for events of more than two hours. The Standards address as well the use of deaf jurors and also incorporate by reference the previously issued Operational Standards for Telephone Interpreting (which were promulgated by Directive #14-01).

As noted, for the most part the Standards formalize existing practice. In a few Vicinages, some changes will be required, particularly in the areas of team interpreting (using two interpreters for proceedings of more than two hours) and proceedings interpreting (providing an interpreter in non-criminal as well as criminal cases to sit with a party at counsel table and interpret what is being said in the courtroom). Therefore, some Vicinages will already be operating under these Standards, while others may have to develop an implementation plan.

I would ask that by May 1, 2004, you advise me in writing whether your Vicinage is in compliance with the Interpreting Standards. If not, please identify the elements with which the Vicinage is not in compliance and provide a plan for implementation, including the date by which the Vicinage will be in compliance with every Standard.

Thank you for your efforts on implementing this program and your continued support of the Judiciary's standardization efforts. Any questions or comments about the Interpreting Standards may be directed to Patricia Shukis Fraser, Assistant Director, Programs and Procedures, at (609) 984-3150 or Robert Joe Lee, Language Services Section, at (609) 985-5024.

R.J.W.