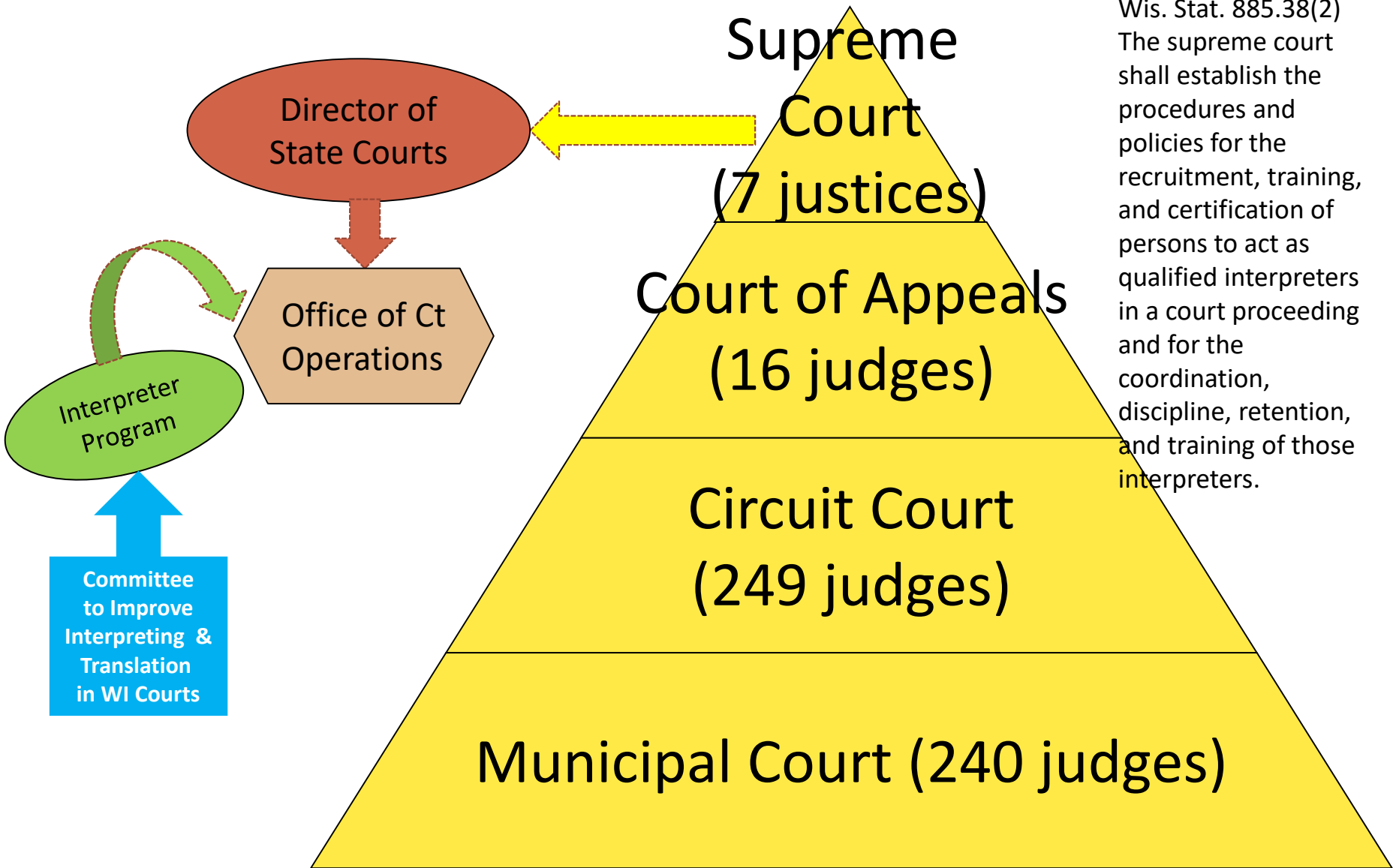


Wisconsin Court System Administration



Wis. Stat. 885.38(2)
The supreme court shall establish the procedures and policies for the recruitment, training, and certification of persons to act as qualified interpreters in a court proceeding and for the coordination, discipline, retention, and training of those interpreters.

Court Interpreter Program Staffing



- Staff of one whose duties include:
 - Training, testing, continuing education
 - Presentations
 - Legislation
 - ADA
 - Translations
 - Interpreter payment program to counties
 - Website, interpreter personnel records, disciplinary complaints, recruitment, roster maintenance, Language Access Plan
 - Media interviews & press releases
 - Staff advisory committee



Things that Worked for Us



- Education, education, education...!
 - Prosecutors, public defenders, victim-witness staff, DOJ, DV advocates, refugee services agencies, bar associations (local & state), specialty bars (e.g. Hispanic Lawyers, Asian Bar), law students, CBOs, police, prisons, social workers...anyone who will listen or invites, not just court personnel
- Link funding incentives to use of certified interpreters
- Implement procedures in program policies (if possible)
 - Rules and statutes are more difficult to pass and modify
- Site visits to courthouses early to meet with judges & court staff
- Collaborate with ASL interpreters
- Advisory committee representing all stake-holders & sectors

Things I wish I had known or done better



- Implement CE requirements sooner
- Implement stricter testing requirements from the start (can always reduce or modify)
 - partial passes vs. full passes of oral exam
 - “just-squeaked-by-with-70%” via partial passing interpreters
- Maintain professional “distance” but be accessible and get out of your office
- Advocate for support staff & delegate

Developing a Language Access Program

Arizona Courts Overview

15 counties, 15 branches of Superior Court (trial courts, general jurisdiction)

83 Municipal Courts and 83 Justice of the Peace Courts (limited jurisdiction)

Roughly 181 courts altogether; over 400 judicial officers

Non-unified court system; AOC does not hire or pay for interpreters

Over 60% of population and resources located in Phoenix area (central Arizona)

Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program

Created January 2016 by Administrative Order

Program policies enacted via Administrative Directive

Not yet included in Arizona Code of Judicial Administration

Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee created in 2016

Program Staffing: 1 Language Access Coordinator & 1.5 Program Specialists

AZ Program Responsibilities

Testing, training,
resources related to
credentialing

Presentations,
court leadership
training, outreach

VRI oversight &
assistance

Translations,
proofreading,
contract
management

Website, Roster,
Registry & records
maintenance

Language Access
Plan & templates

Assistance and
resources for local
courts

Staff advisory
committee

What Has Worked Well

Applying lessons learned from similar programs (Implementation; Court Reporters)

Scoped for sustainability & accessibility (i.e., tiers, weekend testing, partial exams, etc.)

Visiting states with existing programs to observe testing practices

Broad outreach to judges & court administrators

Advisory committee to make recommendations & communicate needs

Starting program via Orders and Directives vs. Code sections

Challenges

Interpreter training initially disapproved; advocate strongly

Resistance by some interpreter agencies and LUL (LOTS) interpreters

Widespread use of “bilingual” staff as interpreters

Paradigm/culture shift; existing relationships (convenience & utility vs. competence)

Extension requests despite 3.5 year grace period

Staff requirement vs. freelance preference



Commission on Interpreters of the Supreme Court of Georgia

Georgia Overview

- 159 Counties.
- 8 Different types of courts (Including Appeals and Supreme Courts).
- Each Court is responsible for their LAP.
- It's hot and sticky in the summer.
- Think traffic is bad where you live? Come to Atlanta during peak hours.
- As GA has a non-unified system, each County pays for interpreters separately. (We're only unified on paper).
- Aside from Metro Atlanta, Macon, and Savannah, the state is rural.

Let's do the numbers

- 176 Licensed Court Interpreters (Certified, Conditionally Approved, Registered)
- About 75% of these interpreters are located around the Metro Atlanta area (30 counties, total population 4,515,419 as of 2017)
- 8.8% of the population in Metro Atlanta speak Spanish at home, 3.9% speak an Indo-European language at home and 2.8% speak Asian languages at home (2008 Figures)

What do y'all do at the COI?

- Training, testing and licensing.
- Maintain registry.
- Instruct Judges in all levels of court on how to work with interpreters.
- Creating a customizable LAP for courts to use independently.
- Create relationships with local professional organizations to develop trainings and assisting these organizations to advertise these trainings.
- Working with other State Agencies to create more working relationships, one of them being the GA Department of Education.
- Contacting Colleges and Universities to create interest with their students to follow interpretation as a profession.



What are we doing well aside from barbecue?

- Educate Judges, Court Administrators, Judicial Attorneys, other Court Staff as to how to effectively work with an interpreter.
- Provide a robust registry to facilitate contacting interpreters, court reporters, neutrals and process servers.
- Provide training opportunities for written and oral exams.
- Advise the Commission on Interpreters regarding policy, propose said policies and be more proactive in the way we do this.
- Creating Bench Cards for the judges to use as a quick reference.
- Become partners with different groups, commissions, committees, etc. to ensure that these groups keep interpreters in mind in their policymaking.

What have we messed up big time?

- Initially providing wide flexibility in qualification and licensing. *You can't tell me what to do!* Having Judges and Court Administrators refuse our assistance in creating a more wholesome LAP.
- Not having enough training opportunities related to interpreters and lack of training for stakeholders.
- Not telling courts that just because someone comes from an interpreting agency, that they are not necessarily ready to be interpreters (We've all heard the horror stories).
- *Go back where you came from!* (aka *Speak English!*) not having sensitivity and cultural training for stakeholders, specially in rural areas.
- Having old/outdated rules that did not sufficiently support the Commission with their assigned task and that did not support interpreters in the field.
- Poor policing, not having a grievance procedure.
- Not having the support of all different Councils of Judges or classes of courts.

How are we fixing things?

- Eliminating flexibility in licensing, following NCSC/CLAC guidelines.
- Fervently encouraging stakeholders to let us assist with interpreter-related issues.
- Creating more training opportunities. Increasing the amount of orientations and testing.
- Educating stakeholders at every possible turn, in every way we can.
- Working with the State Bar other training groups to create sensitivity training related to LEPs
- Updating the rules to strongly encourage any persons interpreting in a court to at least be enrolled with the Commission. Holding agencies responsible for the quality of interpretation that their contractors provide.
- Creating grievance procedures and educating stakeholders on these procedures.
- Reaching out to as many Courts as possible advocating that they should use licensed interpreters.

It's not the easiest path to follow, but it's worthwhile.



Thank you for your time.