

Supreme Court of Nevada  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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**Certified Court Interpreter Program**

***I) SUGGESTED VOIR DIRE TO DETERMINE QUALIFICATIONS OF A PROPOSED INTERPRETER***

Before appointing a non-certified interpreter, the appointing authority shall make a finding that the proposed non-certified/non-registered interpreter appears to have adequate language skills, knowledge of interpreting techniques, familiarity with interpreting in a court or administrative hearing setting, and that the proposed non-certified/non-registered interpreter has read, understood, and agreed to abide by Nevada's Code of Professional Responsibility. The decision to appoint a non-certified/non-registered interpreter is one left to the discretion of the trial court; but the court should enter its findings on the record after *voir dire* of the proposed interpreter. Asking open-ended questions will assist the court in evaluating the level of expertise in English and communication skills of the interpreter. The following questions are some suggestion for the court's use.

**Ethical Considerations**

1. Are you a potential witness in this case?
2. Do you know or work for any of the attorneys, parties, or witnesses in this case?
3. Have you read and understood the Code of Professional Responsibility for Nevada Court Interpreters? Do you agree to abide by that code?
4. Have you ever been disciplined for conduct that violates the Code of Professional Responsibility approved by the Nevada Supreme Court, another state judiciary, or any professional interpreters or translators association?

**Communicative Compatibility**

1. Have you had an opportunity to speak with the person for whom you will be interpreting?
2. Did you have any difficulty understanding everything that person says?
3. Does that person have any dialectal or idiomatic peculiarities that you do not understand or which you cannot interpret into English? Are you able to communicate despite these idiosyncrasies?
4. Do you speak the same language?
5. Do you need time to review any documents in this case?

### **Knowledge of the Languages and General Education**

1. How did you learn English?
2. Have you formally studied the English language in school or college? If so, please describe.
3. How did you learn *[the foreign language]*?
4. Have you formally studied *[the foreign language]* in school or college? If so, please describe.
5. What is the highest grade or degree you completed?

### **Interpreting and Translating Skills**

1. Have you passed any accreditation or certification exams for interpretation or translation? If so, please describe.
2. Are you a member in good standing of any professional associations of interpreters or translators? If so, please identify them.
3. Do you attend meetings, conferences, and other gatherings of professional interpreters and translators? If so, please describe how often.
4. Have you ever interpreted in Nevada's jurisdiction? If so, please state when and for what types of proceedings?
5. Have you ever been disqualified or removed from interpreting in any court or administrative proceedings? Why?

If the court is satisfied that the proposed interpreter has the skills and knowledge to perform the duties of court interpreter, the court should make such findings on the record and have the interpreter sworn in open court.

## **II) *SUGGESTED VOIR DIRE FOR DEFENDANT REQUESTING A LANGUAGE OF LIMITED DIFFUSION***

1. Please tell me where you were born (country and city or town).
2. What is the official language of the country where you were born?
3. Please describe your formal education. (Did you attend school? Where? For how long?)
4. What was the highest grade you completed in school?
5. What was the language of instruction in school?
6. Can you read and write your native language? Do you read and write English?
7. What language(s) do you speak at home? If you have children, what languages do you speak to them in?
8. Do you read books regularly? In what languages do you read?
9. Do you regularly read any newspaper or magazines? Of what language(s)?
10. Do you watch television? In what language are the shows you watch?
11. Do you listen to the radio regularly? What language is the program in?
12. How have you communicated with your attorney in the pretrial phase of this case? Have you had any communication problems?
13. When you have appeared in court before in this case, has an interpreter been provided for you?
14. Have you requested previously that an interpreter be provided for you?
15. Have you gone over and discussed the discovery material with your attorney? (If yes, in what language?)
16. In what year and at what age did you arrive to live in the U.S.?

17. Do you have a job? What language do you routinely speak for your work?
18. If you think you need an interpreter, do you understand that the role of an interpreter is not to “explain” the proceedings to you but only to repeat what is said in the courtroom in another language?