



## Minnesota Judicial Branch Policy

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### Court Interpreter Program

#### I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, pursuant to M.S. 546.43, subd. 1 and 611.32, subd. 1, the Minnesota Constitution, and Minnesota Court Rules, to provide accurate interpretation of court proceedings so that non-English speakers and those disabled in communication are afforded equal access to justice. To further this policy the Minnesota Judicial Branch seeks to provide interpreter services in a timely and fiscally responsible manner.

#### II. DEFINITIONS

- A.** Court Proceedings – The court session itself, plus interpreting for the parties, attorneys and witnesses immediately prior to the court session, during breaks in the court session, or immediately after the court session.
- B.** Distance Court Interpreting (DCI) – Technology that works through the audio system and a standard telephone allowing an interpreter to interpret simultaneously from a remote location.
- C.** Remote Interpreting - Spoken or sign language interpretation conducted by an off-site interpreter using technologies available to the court, such as telepresence / ITV (Interactive Video Teleconference), telephone, and sound-system based DCI (Distance Court Interpreting).
- D.** Telepresence – Technology such as high definition audio, video, and other interactive elements that enable people to feel or appear as if they were present

in a location which they are not physically in.

### **III. REMOTE INTERPRETING**

The following guidelines apply to courts using remote technology:

- A. Length of Court Session:** Court sessions should be approximately 30 minutes or less in duration. When court sessions last longer than 30 minutes, the court should provide the interpreter with adequate breaks to alleviate fatigue and facilitate the provision of high-quality interpreting.
- B. Circumstances:** The presiding judicial officer has the discretion to determine if remote interpreting is appropriate but the use of remote interpreter services must be considered in the following situations:
- 1) when it is more fiscally responsible to obtain the services by remote than by using an in-person interpreter and the quality of the interpretation is not compromised; or
  - 2) urgent or unexpected situations where no in-person staff or freelance interpreter is reasonably available.

### **IV. IN-PERSON INTERPRETING**

Priority for in-person interpreting will be given to the following case types and hearings:

- A. Felony jury trials
- B. Other criminal jury trials, including extended juvenile jurisdiction trials
- C. Juvenile termination of parental rights trials
- D. Civil jury trials
- E. Juvenile delinquency trials
- F. Court trials
- G. Court hearings at which witnesses testify under oath
- H. Civil motion hearings

### **V. IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY**

Implementation of this policy shall be the responsibility of the State Court Administrator and the Chief Judges of the Judicial Districts.

### **VI. EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS**

The State Court Administrator will administer the Court Interpreter Program in accordance with the General Rules of Practice, Title I, Rule 8.