



**Court Interpreter Services  
U.S. District Court, Central District of California**

**Orientation for Contract Court Interpreters  
TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS**

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Translations are considered legal documents and as such are to be delivered in a professional form suitable for presentation in court. They are to be submitted on white bond paper, typed, or computer-generated. They must be free of typographical and/or grammatical errors. The translation must reflect the source language content without omissions or additions. The level of the source language (register) should be maintained as much as possible. If the meaning of a word or phrase in the source language is unclear, that fact should be indicated by giving a literal translation followed by [sic]. The fact that a word or phrase is illegible or crossed out should also be indicated, either by a translator's note on the bottom of the page or enclosed in brackets following the text in question. Faulty grammar, spelling, and syntax in the source language are **not** to be reflected in the translation, but this fact may be indicated by means of a translator's note at the end. The translation should also include the wording of seals, stamps, and marginal notes, as well as an indication of the position of any photographs or other phenomena that appear in the original document. The word **TRANSLATION** should appear on top of the first page of the translation. All pages should be sequentially numbered, and the file name of the translation should be indicated on the bottom of each page as a footer. Translations submitted in an unprofessional form will be returned, without pay, for re-submission in a more suitable form. Under extraordinary circumstances the material may be reassigned to another translator.

All translation projects involve a due date for submission to the interpreters' office or to the party requesting the translation service. Often these documents are to be presented as evidence in a pending matter or submitted to the court for any of a variety of reasons. The successful prosecution or defense in a case may hinge on the timely presentation of the document. The interpreter who accepts a translation project agrees *de facto* to submit the completed work on or before the due date. A Declaration of Interpreter form must accompany each translation. This form must be filled out completely, and signed. It must include the description of the document, the case name and number, the name of the party requesting the work, the file name, and the number of words of the translation.

On occasion, the translator may be called at a later date to testify regarding the translation, and under certain circumstances the court may issue an order to produce additional copies of the work. The translator should keep either a hard copy of the translation, or maintain a file of



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translations on a floppy or compact disc . These file copies should be kept for a period of no less than one year from the date of submission of the work.

The translation of documents is compensated at the rates established by the court, currently set at \$.20 per target language word (certified languages), and \$.17 per target language word (non-certified languages). Under certain circumstances, hourly compensation may be indicated; the current rates are \$42.00 per hour (certified languages), and \$35.00 per hour (non-certified languages). The appropriate claim form for services (usually a CJA 21 form, or a DOJ Standard Form 1034) needs to be filled out completely by the translator and turned in together with the translation. Incomplete forms will be returned to the translator for completion.

If a translation project payable under the Criminal Justice Act is likely to exceed \$300.00, prior court approval is required. Counsel of record should file an ex-parte application with the court, and a copy of the order approving the expenditure should be given to the translator. Look for it among the materials submitted to you. Do not start work on a translation project that is likely to exceed the \$300.00 limit without a court order. The court order has to be delivered together with the CJA voucher and the Declaration of Interpreter form to Interpreter Services, U.S. Courthouse, Room 541, 312 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, CA 90012. The checks for work payable under CJA should issue 2-3 weeks after you submit your voucher. If there is a greater delay, please contact the office of the CJA supervising attorney at 213 894-4393, and be prepared to furnish the case name and number.

If the translation was requested on behalf of the public defender, a pre-approved public defender CJA voucher has to be obtained, irrespective of the amount of the final invoice.

If the translation was requested on behalf of the U.S. attorney's office, you should have been given a DCN (Document Control Number) for your billing. The U.S. attorney is by law required to issue payments within 30 days of receipt of the voucher. Contact the U.S. attorney's fiscal section at 213 894-7304 if payment is delayed more than 30 days, and be prepared to furnish the name of the assistant U.S. attorney, the case reference, and the DCN number.

Contact interpreter services at 213 894-4370 if you are unsure of any aspect of your translation assignment.