

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS**

**GUIDELINES FOR PAYMENT OF INTERPRETER SERVICES**

These guidelines are provided for payment for interpreting services in the Western District of Arkansas by the United States District Court (USDC) and the United States Probation Office (USPO). Payment for interpreting services can only be made in judicial proceedings initiated by the United States (criminal cases and civil cases where the United States is a plaintiff) where the parties or witnesses speak only or primarily in a language other than the English language or suffer a hearing impairment. Payment may not be made for interpreting services for proceedings initiated by private parties, except for providing services to the hearing-impaired and other persons with communications disabilities.

The fees and reimbursable expenses set forth in these guidelines are established by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, pursuant to the Court Interpreters Act, and the Judiciary Staff Travel Regulations, contained in the *Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedures*.

**A. Definitions**

**AO Certified Interpreters:** Interpreters who have successfully completed the Federal Court Interpreter examination in Spanish, Navajo, or Haitian Creole.

**Professionally Qualified Interpreters:** Professionally qualified interpreters (for languages other than Spanish, Navajo, and Haitian Creole) must demonstrate to the local court: 1. Prior existing employment as a conference or seminar interpreter (staff or freelance) for the Office of Language Services of the United States Department of State, the United Nations or related agencies for which examinations are a condition of employment; or 2. Membership in good standing in a professional interpreters association whose by-laws and practices at a minimum require as follows: (a) An application specifying a minimum of 50 days of conference experience in the native language(s) of expertise; and (b) The sponsorship of three active members in good standing who have been members of the same association for at least two years, whose languages(s) are the same as the applicant's, and who attest to having witnessed the performance of the applicant, as well as the accuracy of the statements on the application; 3. Interpreters wishing to be included on the master list of professionally qualified must submit a resume to the local district court detailing education, training, experience, current telephone number and mailing address, and when applicable, membership accreditation as required by this section.

**Language Skilled Interpreters:** Interpreters who do not qualify as certified interpreters or "professionally qualified" interpreters, but who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the court their ability to interpret court proceedings from English to a designated language and from that language to English.

**In-Court Time:** Includes interpreting time associated with court proceedings before a United States District Judge or United States Magistrate Judge, and interpreting assistance provided to the United States Probation Office. Also includes travel time for interpreters with a commuting distance of 30 miles or more one-way from the interpreter's office or residence.

**Overtime:** In-court time in excess of 8 hours (lunch, breaks and travel are excluded).

**Travel Time:** Time in transit where in-court and travel time exceeds 8 hours (time must be submitted in one-half hour increments). Travel time will not be reimbursed for interpreters located within the commuting distance of less than 30 miles one-way from the interpreter's office or residence.

**B. Standard Fee Rates for Interpreting Services (effective 01/02/2008)**

**Certified and Professionally Qualified Interpreters (includes in-court and travel time)**

\$376.00 **full day** (between 4 and 8 hours)

\$204.00 **half day** (4 hours or less)

\$ 53.00 per hour **overtime**

\$ 47.00 per hour **travel time**

**Language Skilled Interpreters (includes time in-court and travel)**

\$181.00 **full day** (between 4 and 8 hours)

\$100.00 **half day** (4 hours or less)

\$ 31.00 per hour **overtime**

\$ 23.00 per hour **travel time**

Fees are cumulative and apply to actual in-court hours while interpreting for **the United States District Court and the United States Probation Office**. Interpreters who work for more than one court unit during the day must show the time for each court unit on the invoice, and bill each court unit separately on a pro rate basis at the **standard fee rate**.

**C. Travel Expenses**

**Travel Involving Overnight Stay:** *Per diem allowance* (\$142.00 in Hot Springs and \$109.00 for all other locations in the Western District of Arkansas); this includes \$39.00 for meals and incidentals each day (\$49.00 in Hot Springs). *An original lodging receipt must be attached to the invoice.* Lodging taxes are not included in this amount, and can be claimed as a miscellaneous travel expense. If hotels are not available at the government rate, and if prior approval is obtained from the USDC or USPO, *actual expenses* may be claimed for up to 150% of the applicable per diem rate, with receipts required for all per diem claims (including meals).

**Travel Without Overnight Stay:** *Actual expenses* for meals not to exceed **\$39.00** where the in-court and travel time exceeds **10 hours**.

---

**Prior Day Travel:** When travel is required on a day prior to court proceedings, the USDC or USPO will pay an interpreter services fee at the **half-day rate** for the travel day, as well as applicable travel and per diem expenses in accordance with the Judiciary Staff Travel Regulations.

**Transportation by Privately Owned Vehicle:** Reimbursement of **58.5 cents per mile** (effective 08/01/2008) for distances of 30 miles or more one-way from the interpreter's office or residence. The USDC or USPO will reimburse the interpreter at the prevailing mileage rate established by the General Services Administration.

**Transportation by Common Carrier:** Reimbursement for the actual cost of a common carrier (including coach bus fare). The cost of reimbursement is limited to the lesser amount of the cost of a common carrier or round-trip mileage by privately owned vehicle. An original receipt must be attached to the invoice.

**D. Cancellation Fees**

Unless prior arrangements are made with the USDC or USPO, if an interpreter is not notified at least one full business day prior to the start of an assignment, the interpreter will be paid compensation at the **half-day** rate.

**E. Payment for Services**

An invoice for services should be submitted to the United States District Court Clerk's Office or the United States District Court Probation Office **within two weeks after the completion of services**. The invoice must include the date and times of service, case number, defendant's name, judge's name (if applicable) and interpreter's name. Claims for travel expenses must also include the times of departure and return to the interpreter's office or residence. Original receipts for lodging and common carrier services must also be provided with the invoice.

The invoices will promptly be processed and paid by the United States District Court and United States Probation Office.

**Please direct any inquiries to:**

John R. Stauffer  
Chief Deputy Clerk  
United States District Court  
Western District of Arkansas  
(479) 783-6833, ext 419  
(479) 783-6833 (fax)

Myron Smith  
Chief United States Probation Officer  
United States Probation Office  
Western District of Arkansas  
(479) 783-8050 ext 430  
(479) 783-5761 (fax)

**Mail invoices to:**

Clerk, United States District Court  
Attn: Tracy Day  
P. O. Box 1547  
Fort Smith, AR 72902-1547

United States Probation Office  
Attn: Heather House  
P. O. Box 1564  
Fort Smith, AR 72902-1564