

American Sign Language in Connecticut State Courts



The Connecticut Judicial Branch has long been committed to carrying out the objectives of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Title II of the Act requires public entities, such as the Branch, to accommodate individuals with disabilities by providing equal access to their services, programs, and activities. That includes the provision of American Sign Language (ASL) and Certified Deaf Interpretation (CDI), subject to §17a-838 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The Centralized ADA Office is a unit of the Superior Court Operations Division. Its function is to provide, at no cost, access to services for people with disabilities to ensure meaningful access to the courts. This includes the delivery of ASL and CDI via highly qualified interpreting services to Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing persons. This is extended to every person who accesses the courts, whether as parties to a case, victims, witnesses, jurors, probationers, attorneys, and the public. ASL interpretation and CDI are provided in-person and remotely by qualified interpreters in both court and court-related matters.

The Judicial Branch does not employ ASL or CDI interpreters; rather, it contracts with vendors to provide these essential services. Connecticut state law requires all interpreters to register annually with the Department of Aging and Disability Services, which maintains a public list of qualified interpreters.

What types of proceedings are ASL and CDI services needed for?

ASL and CDI are provided in a variety of proceedings in Connecticut courts, including:

- Juror orientation, which may include questioning by attorneys and a Judge.

- Criminal arraignments, including meetings with public defenders, prosecutors, and Bail Commissioners.
- Witness interviews, including those in the presence of a victim advocate.
- Pre-trial conferences with attorneys, judges, and parties.
- Confidential juvenile proceedings, including juvenile delinquency and child protection proceedings.
- Family Services meetings with parties to custody and divorce actions, including interviews with Family Relations Counselors, conflict resolution conferences, and comprehensive family evaluations.
- Foreclosure and eviction mediations.
- Probation meetings.
- Civil, criminal, family, and juvenile trials.
- Assisting patrons in a Court Service Center.

As the list above demonstrates, not all Judicial Branch assignments are in the courtroom and indeed, many are conducted remotely. Furthermore, many in-person proceedings can be covered by a remote interpreter.

Resources and additional information

- [Connecticut Judicial Branch Americans with Disabilities Act homepage](#)
- [Connecticut Judicial Branch Case Look-up](#)
 - Many non-family civil cases are available to the public via this remote link.
- [Connecticut Judicial Branch Livestreams](#)
 - Many non-family civil case proceedings are livestreamed every day, which can be viewed by the public.
- [Connecticut Laws and Court Rules](#)
- [C.G.S. Sec. 17a-838: Registration of persons providing interpreting services. Required qualifications.](#)

- [Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreter Registry](#)
- [University of Northern Colorado / Project CLIMB](#)
 - [Toolkit for Legal Interpreters](#)
 - [Legal Terminology Dictionary](#)
 - [Webinars](#)
- [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **Is the Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L), previously offered by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, required in order to accept an interpreting assignment from the Connecticut Judicial Branch?** No. The SC:L certificate is not required in order to accept an interpreting assignment with the Connecticut Judicial Branch.

Connecticut law merely requires that an individual hold one of the following certifications: 1) a comprehensive skills certificate from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2) a certificate of interpretation and a certificate of transliteration from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 3) a level five certification from the National Association of the Deaf, 4) a reverse skills certificate or is a certified deaf interpreter under the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 5) for situations requiring an oral interpreter only, an oral certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 6) for situations requiring a cued speech transliterator only, certification from the National Training, Evaluation and Certification Unit and has passed the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf written generalist test, 7) a National Association of the Deaf-National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf national

interpreting certificate, or 8) the credential of Approved Deaf Interpreter by the Massachusetts Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

2) How do I register with the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability?

If you would like to work as an interpreter in the state of Connecticut, you must complete the [Registration Form](#) and email it along with appropriate documentation to the Department of Aging and Disability Services at ADS.Interpreting@ct.gov. You can also mail a hard copy to the Department of Aging and Disability Services Interpreting Registry, 55 Farmington Avenue, 12th floor, Hartford, CT 06105, although e-mail is preferred. Interpreter Registration must be completed annually. The Judicial Branch's Centralized ADA Office staff is available to assist with this process, if needed. For assistance, please e-mail us at ADAProgram@jud.ct.gov.

3) I am a freelancer. Can I provide services to the Connecticut Judicial

Branch? If the Judicial Branch's contracted vendors are unable to provide the necessary services, it can seek services from out-of-contract individuals. To be considered, you must be certified and registered with the state (as noted above). If you would like to be considered, please provide your contact information, proof of certification and state of Connecticut registration, to the Centralized ADA Office at ADAProgram@jud.ct.gov. Please also indicate whether you would be able to provide services in-person, remotely, or both.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact the Judicial Branch's Centralized ADA Office (CAO) at ADAProgram@jud.ct.gov or 860-706-5310.

Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you!