

*The Supreme Court*  
*State of Washington*

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July 20, 2016

Dear Stakeholder,

RE: Seeking Stakeholders Interested in Working to Improve Language in the Courts

Members of the public use the Washington State Courts in a wide variety of circumstances. They may be brought into legal actions initiated by the State or other parties, or they may use courts to protect themselves and their rights. While legal procedure and terminology is difficult and intimidating to most people, it is exponentially more complicated for persons with limited English proficiency. Therefore, language access is a fundamental component of access to justice.

The Washington State Court Interpreter Commission develops policies governing the Washington Court Language Access Program. All interpreters who are certified or registered by the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts are subject to rules and regulations specified by policies set by the Interpreter Commission. The Washington State Supreme Court selects members to serve as liaisons between the court community and the public. Each member is expected to share current information with the constituent groups in which they hold membership or communicate with, as well as bring current issues to the Commission for consideration. It is crucial that the Interpreter Commission involves the input and insight of all stakeholders as we seek to improve language access in the Washington Courts.

A detailed description of the Commission and duties of its members is attached. Please forward names of your family, friends and colleagues who are interested in participating in this important role, along with a copy of their resumes and letters of interest, to the address specified in the attached description, no later than August 30, 2016.

If you have any questions about the work of the Interpreter Commission or its meeting schedule, please contact Robert Lichtenberg at (360) 350-5373 or via email at [Robert.Lichtenberg@courts.wa.gov](mailto:Robert.Lichtenberg@courts.wa.gov).

On behalf of the Commission, I appreciate your attention to this request for nominations.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven González", written in a cursive style.

Justice Steven González, Chair  
Court Interpreter Commission

## **Letter of Interest to Serve**

The Washington State Court Interpreter Commission is seeking letters of interest from individuals interested in serving on the Commission. If you would like to volunteer your time and expertise to help develop policies for the Language Access Program; address issues, complaints and/or requests regarding access to interpreter services in the courts; provide ongoing opportunities for training and resources to judicial officers and court staff regarding interpreting; and assure that qualified interpreters are available to facilitate access to justice for limited English proficient (LEP) court users, please submit a letter explaining your interest and experience to:

**Supreme Court Interpreter Commission  
c/o Robert Lichtenberg  
1201 Quince St. SE  
Olympia, WA 98504**

Interested parties should be aware that submitting a letter of interest does not guarantee appointment. Appointments occur on an as-needed basis. When considering appointments, the Commission may seek to maintain a certain balance in representation. The Commission may consider many factors such as diversity, geography, experience, expertise and education.

### **Description of the Washington State Court Interpreter Commission**

General Rule 11.1 establishes the Interpreter Commission and authorizes it to develop policies for the Court Interpreter Program. The Commission operates via a committee structure. Three committees fulfill ongoing functions related to issues, discipline, and judicial/court administration education.

- 1) The Issues Committee is assigned issues, complaints and/or requests from interpreters for review and response.
  
- (2) The Disciplinary Committee has the authority to decertify and deny certification of interpreters based on the disciplinary procedures for: (a) violations of continuing education/court hour requirements, (b) failure to comply with Interpreter Code of Conduct (GR 11.2) or professional standards, or (3) violations of law that may interfere with their duties as a certified court interpreter. The Disciplinary Committee will decide on appeal any issues submitted by the Issues Committee.

(3) The Judicial and Court Administration Education Committee provides ongoing opportunities for training and resources to judicial officers and court administrators related to court interpretation improvement.

The Commission includes representatives from the following areas of expertise:

judicial officers from the appellate and each trial court level, interpreters, court administrators, attorneys, the Administrative Office of the Courts, ethnic organizations and members of the public.

Generally, the Commission meets in person for a three hour business meeting at the SeaTac Office Center, 18000 International Blvd, in SeaTac four times each year, usually on a Friday. In addition, committees meet by phone as needed.

To learn more about the Commission visit

[http://www.courts.wa.gov/programs\\_orgs/pos\\_interpret/index.cfm?fa=pos\\_interpret.display&fileName=interpreterCommission](http://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/pos_interpret/index.cfm?fa=pos_interpret.display&fileName=interpreterCommission)

### **Appointments**

Documents submitted should address the professional, volunteer and community qualifications of the interested party. Experience related to court interpreting is preferred. The letter should include complete contact information for the individual including, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address. Appointments to the Commission are made by the Supreme Court.

### **Terms of Office**

Generally, an appointment by the Supreme Court to the Commission is for a three year period. Occasionally individuals are appointed to complete the term of someone who resigned.

### **Meetings**

All meetings of the Commission are open to the public. The Commission's regular meeting schedule is posted on the website. Minutes are kept of all meetings and are posted on the website.

### **Attendance Policy**

Members of the Commission are expected to attend meetings on a regular basis. A Commission member should inform the Commission chair or one of the AOC liaisons to the Commission, if he or she is not able to attend either a face-to-face

or phone conference meeting and provide the basis for the absence.

### **Diversity**

In developing procedures and policies, the Commission considers diverse opinions. Therefore, the Commission is interested in members from diverse backgrounds and cultures, those with diverse experience and knowledge, as well as diversity in geographic locations throughout the state of Washington.

### **Compensation**

Members of the Commission are volunteers and cannot be compensated for their time, but are reimbursed for travel and commission related expenses pursuant to State reimbursement policies and rates.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Robert Lichtenberg at [Robert.lichtenberg@courts.wa.gov](mailto:Robert.lichtenberg@courts.wa.gov).