



Michigan Supreme Court

State Court Administrative Office
Michigan Hall of Justice
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Jennifer Warner
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 3, 2016

TO: Judges
Court Administrators
Probate Registers
County Clerks

FROM: Robin Eagleson, Management Analyst

RE: Americans with Disabilities Act: ASL Interpreter Policies

On February 22, 2016, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR)– Division of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing released its [policies and procedures for certified interpreters](#) who provide American Sign Language (ASL) services enforcing Michigan’s [Deaf Persons’ Interpreters Act](#) and the [Qualified Interpreter-General Rules](#).

The MDCR’s policies and procedures document outlines the requirements of a qualified interpreter as mandated by the Deaf Persons’ Interpreters Act. To be considered a qualified interpreter, the interpreter must meet the following requirements:

- Possess a valid state-issued certification granted by the division or a valid national certification granted by the registry of interpreters for the deaf (RID);
 - Certification requirements for court ASL interpreters may be found on page 7 of the document.
- Be listed on the [Michigan Online Interpreter System](#) and possess a valid Michigan certification card;
- Comply with standard level requirements, educational, and/or endorsement requirements when accepting interpreting assignments; and
 - Courts and attorneys are listed as a standard level 3. Certification and endorsement requirements for level 3 may be found on page 7 of the document.
- Ensure effective communication is achieved.

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Please note that effective July 7, 2016, qualified interpreters who work in legal settings must have the following two endorsements from the Division of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing:

- A valid Deaf-Blind Endorsement; and
- A valid Legal Endorsement.

A court that provides a properly credentialed interpreter is presumed to have met their legal obligations unless the interpreter is shown to be ineffective. A court shall not provide an interpreter who does not have the appropriate credentials UNLESS it can establish that it was the most effective communication accommodation available in the particular circumstances.

It is recommended that all ADA coordinators review the ASL interpreter policies for further information. The policies and procedures document as well as other relevant information may be found on the One Court of Justice website at <http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/admin/op/access/Pages/americans-with-disabilities-act.aspx>.

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please contact me or Jim Inloes at TrialCourtServices@courts.mi.gov.