



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
Court Interpreter Services

DATE: March 14, 2013:
TO: Freelance Certified Interpreters
FROM: Kelly Mills, Program Manager, Court Interpreter Services
RE: OJD Policy Option Package- Certified Interpreter Raise

Good Morning,

It is another legislative session in Oregon and as in the past, the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) has requested an increase in the certified contract interpreter pay rate to match the public- and private-sector increases. I wanted to explain the process and the OJD's commitment to this very important request. We believe this will improve the retention of highly skilled certified interpreters and make them readily available to Oregon Circuit Courts and other administrative hearings. The Policy Option Package (POP) 213 is under consideration in the OJD 2013-15 Chief Justice's Recommended Budget. The OJD budget is tentatively scheduled for primarily high level overview hearings by the 2013 Legislature the week of March 18, 2013, however, there will be a phase 2 (and maybe 3) when the policy packages have more review. I will keep you in the loop as more information becomes available. The OJD budget has great challenges ahead to attain the necessary dollars for even existing services.

This Policy Option Package is intended to allow for an increase in the hourly rate for contract certified interpreters from the present rate of \$32.50 per hour, which was established on January 1, 1998, to \$45 per hour and includes an annual price index. The mandate to provide interpreters and pay for them at a rate established by the State Court Administrator lies in statutes (ORS 45.272, ORS 45.285, ORS 45.288, and ORS 45.291). The present rate lags behind the Department of Administrative Services rate, Federal courts rate, State of Washington courts rates and the going rate for attorney-client interpreting work. It is estimated that the package will add \$1,476,135 in the OJD's Professional Services General Fund allocation.



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Without certified interpreters, the OJD would not be able to provide interpreters whenever it is necessary (per **ORS 45.275**) to

- (a) To interpret the proceedings to a non-English-speaking party;
- (b) To interpret the testimony of a non-English-speaking party or witness; or
- (c) To assist the court, agency or hearing officer in performing the duties and responsibilities of the court, agency or hearing officer.

In addition, the department has revised our Language Access Plan and is seeking grant funding in 2013 to incorporate strategic plans to meet the needs of limited English proficient court customers.

Best regards,

Kelly Mills
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