

GOVERNMENT CODE

TITLE 2. JUDICIAL BRANCH

SUBTITLE D. JUDICIAL PERSONNEL AND OFFICIALS

CHAPTER 57. COURT INTERPRETERS

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 57.001. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter and for purposes of Subchapter B:

(1) "Certified court interpreter" means an individual who is a qualified interpreter as defined in Article 38.31, Code of Criminal Procedure, or Section 21.003, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, or is qualified in accordance with the communication access realtime translation services eligibility requirements established by the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of the Health and Human Services Commission, to interpret court proceedings for a hearing-impaired individual.

(2) "Department" means the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

(3) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

(4) "Hearing-impaired individual" means an individual who has a hearing impairment, regardless of whether the individual also has a speech impairment, that inhibits the individual's comprehension of proceedings or communication with others.

(5) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 42, Sec. 3.01(4), eff. September 1, 2014.

(6) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1223, Sec. 4, eff. June 14, 2013.

(7) "Court proceeding" includes an arraignment, deposition, mediation, court-ordered arbitration, or other form of alternative dispute resolution.

(8) "Communication access realtime translation" or "CART" means the immediate verbatim translation of the spoken word into English text by a certified CART provider.

(9) "Certified CART provider" means an individual who holds a certification to provide communication access realtime

translation services at an advanced or master level, including:

(A) a level I through level V certificate of competency issued by the Texas Court Reporters Association;

(B) a certified realtime reporter, certified realtime captioner, or other equivalent certified CART provider certificate of competency issued by the National Court Reporters Association; or

(C) a certificate of competency issued by another certification association selected by the department.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 42 (S.B. 966), Sec. 3.01(4), eff. September 1, 2014.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1223 (S.B. 1620), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2013.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1223 (S.B. 1620), Sec. 4, eff. June 14, 2013.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 861 (H.B. 3474), Sec. 9.005, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 57.002. APPOINTMENT OF INTERPRETER OR CART PROVIDER; CART PROVIDER LIST; PAYMENT OF INTERPRETER COSTS. (a) A court shall appoint a certified court interpreter or a certified CART provider for an individual who has a hearing impairment or a licensed court interpreter for an individual who can hear but does not comprehend or communicate in English if a motion for the appointment of an interpreter or provider is filed by a party or requested by a witness in a civil or criminal proceeding in the court.

(b) A court may, on its own motion, appoint a certified court interpreter or a certified CART provider for an individual who has a hearing impairment or a licensed court interpreter for an individual who can hear but does not comprehend or communicate in English.

(b-1) A licensed court interpreter appointed by a court

under Subsection (a) or (b) must hold a license that includes the appropriate designation under Section [157.101\(d\)](#) that indicates the interpreter is permitted to interpret in that court.

(c) Subject to Subsection (e), in a county with a population of less than 50,000, a court may appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a licensed court interpreter.

(d) Subject to Subsection (e), in a county with a population of 50,000 or more, a court may appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a certified or licensed court interpreter if:

(1) the language necessary in the proceeding is a language other than Spanish; and

(2) the court makes a finding that there is no licensed court interpreter within 75 miles who can interpret in the language that is necessary in a proceeding.

(d-1) Subject to Subsection (e), a court in a county to which Section [21.021](#), Civil Practice and Remedies Code, applies may appoint a spoken language interpreter who is not a licensed court interpreter.

(e) A person appointed under Subsection (c) or (d):

(1) must be qualified by the court as an expert under the Texas Rules of Evidence;

(2) must be at least 18 years of age; and

(3) may not be a party to the proceeding.

(f) The department shall maintain a list of certified CART providers and, on request, may send the list to a person or court.

(g) A party to a proceeding in a court who files a statement of inability to afford payment of court costs under Rule 145, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, is not required to provide an interpreter at the party's expense or pay the costs associated with the services of an interpreter appointed under this section that are incurred during the course of the action, unless the statement has been contested and the court has ordered the party to pay costs pursuant to Rule 145. Nothing in this subsection is intended to apply to interpreter services or other auxiliary aids for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have communication disabilities, which shall be provided to those individuals free of charge pursuant to federal and state laws.

(h) Each county auditor, or other individual designated by the commissioners court of a county, in consultation with the district and county clerks shall submit to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System, in the manner prescribed by the office, information on the money the county spent during the preceding fiscal year to provide court-ordered interpretation services in civil and criminal proceedings. The information must include:

- (1) the number of interpreters appointed;
- (2) the number of interpreters appointed for parties or witnesses who are indigent;
- (3) the amount of money the county spent to provide court-ordered interpretation services; and
- (4) for civil proceedings, whether a party to the proceeding filed a statement of inability to afford payment of court costs under Rule 145, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, applicable to the appointment of an interpreter.

(i) Not later than December 1 of each year, the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall:

(1) submit to the legislature a report that aggregates by county the information submitted under Subsection (h) for the preceding fiscal year; and

(2) publish the report on the office's Internet website.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 584 (H.B. [1642](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. [2200](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 921 (H.B. [3167](#)), Sec. 7.002, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1198 (H.B. [4445](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1341 (S.B. [1233](#)), Sec. 12, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1223 (S.B. [1620](#)), Sec. 3, eff.

June 14, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 516 (S.B. 43), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 144 (S.B. 380), Sec. 1, eff. May 23, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 144 (S.B. 380), Sec. 2, eff. May 23, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 861 (H.B. 3474), Sec. 10.006, eff. September 1, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 861 (H.B. 3474), Sec. 10.007, eff. September 1, 2023.

SUBCHAPTER B. INTERPRETERS FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

Sec. 57.021. COURT INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. (a) The department shall certify court interpreters to interpret court proceedings for a hearing-impaired individual.

(b) The department may contract with public or private educational institutions to administer a training program and by rule may provide for suspension of training offered by an institution if the training fails to meet requirements established by the department.

(c) The department shall maintain a list of certified court interpreters and other persons the department has determined are qualified to act as court interpreters and shall send the list to each state court and, on request, to other interested persons.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1223, Sec. 4, eff. June 14, 2013.

(e) The department may accept gifts, grants, or donations from private individuals, foundations, or other entities to assist in administering the court interpreter certification program under this section.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1223 (S.B. 1620), Sec. 4, eff.

June 14, 2013.

Sec. 57.022. CERTIFICATION; RULES. (a) The department shall certify an applicant who passes the appropriate examination prescribed by the department and who possesses the other qualifications required by rules adopted under this subchapter.

(b) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission by rule shall provide for:

(1) the qualifications of certified court interpreters;

(2) training programs for certified court interpreters each of which is managed by the department or by a public or private educational institution;

(3) the administration of examinations;

(4) the form for each certificate and procedures for renewal of a certificate;

(5) the fees for training, examinations, initial certification, and certification renewal;

(6) continuing education programs under this subchapter;

(7) instructions for the compensation of a certified court interpreter and the designation of the party or entity responsible for payment of compensation; and

(8) administrative sanctions enforceable by the department.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.023. EXAMINATIONS. (a) The department shall prepare examinations under this subchapter that test an applicant's knowledge, skill, and efficiency in the field in which the applicant seeks certification.

(b) A person who fails an examination may apply for reexamination at the next examination scheduled after the date the person failed the original examination.

(c) Examinations shall be offered in the state at least twice a year at times and places designated by the department.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.024. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSIONER. (a) The commissioner shall enforce this subchapter.

(b) The commissioner shall investigate allegations of violations of this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.025. DENIAL, SUSPENSION, OR REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATE. (a) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall adopt rules establishing the grounds for denial, suspension, revocation, and reinstatement of a certificate issued under this subchapter. The department may revoke or suspend certification under this subchapter only after a hearing.

(b) The department may reissue a certificate to a person whose certificate has been revoked if the person applies in writing to the department and shows good cause to justify reissuance of the certificate.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.026. PROHIBITED ACTS. A person may not interpret for a hearing-impaired individual at a court proceeding or advertise or represent that the person is a certified court interpreter unless the person holds an appropriate certificate under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2002.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 57.027. CRIMINAL OFFENSE; ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY.

(a) A person commits an offense if the person violates this subchapter or a rule adopted under this subchapter. An offense under this subsection is a Class A misdemeanor.

(b) A person who violates this subchapter or a rule adopted under this subchapter is subject to an administrative penalty assessed by the department.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1139, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2002.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 614 (H.B. 2200), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2005.