



**Judicial Branch of Arizona
in Maricopa County**

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Superior Court Faces Challenges in Hiring Interpreters

Court Seeking Language Interns to Help Build Court Interpreter Community

PHOENIX (February 28, 2023) – With retirement on the horizon for some seasoned interpreters, the demand to hire the next generation of court professionals to help limited English proficient litigants and defendants navigate the court system is higher than ever.

The Court Interpretation and Translation Services Department (CITS) is now recruiting college students, recent college graduates and candidates who have completed a court interpreter professional program as language interns for its 2023 summer internship program. Apply at www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/jobs by March 24 to get hands-on experience and learn how to become a court interpreter and translator.

“The demand for interpreters is driven by the diversity in our multicultural county. We also find it difficult to recruit because the court’s standards for interpreters and translators is rightfully high. The court requires staff interpreters to hold an Arizona Supreme Court Credential at a Tier III or IV level,” Court Interpretation and Translation Services Administrator Dr. Christopher Bleuenstein said. “This essentially guarantees a very high standard of professionalism and competence, but the downside is that the credentialing process is very rigorous and therefore few candidates have the standard we are looking for.”

To meet the high standards, the Court provides interns with significant training and familiarization with the Court to perform at the required level. Interns receive key training in their very own jurisdiction, which improves their chances of passing the credentialing exam and drastically reduces their learning curve if they are hired.

“It’s important for us to continue recruiting credentialed court interpreters. We have the best staff in the nation, and before they reach their tenure, we would like them to share their knowledge with incoming candidates,” Dr. Bleuenstein said.

In 10 weeks, from May 30 to Aug. 3, students will learn how to successfully interpret, converting oral information from one spoken language to another, or translate, changing written materials from one language to a different language, in a court setting. Language interns will work on-site for 40 hours a

week and receive \$16 an hour. The program allows them to shadow senior court interpreters, observe court hearings and participate in instructional sessions.

Students who have participated in the program in the past have roughly a 50% rate of passing Arizona's Supreme Court Interpreter credential certification, a rate that is 34% higher than those who did not participate in the Court's internship program.

"Interns in our program get the opportunity that cannot be found in a classroom, they gain invaluable experience. We had very positive feedback from last year's group and plan to implement this year the suggestions they made at the end of their experience," Dr. Bleuenstein said.

In addition, interns will be given the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Arizona legal community by participating in workshops and visiting historical sites, local museums and detention centers. They will also be given the chance to delve into fascinating and complex topics like firearms, ballistics, accident reconstruction, and regional and dialectic nuances of language.

As a language intern, candidates will be supporting the fourth largest general jurisdiction court in the United States and gain first-hand insight into a meaningful language-access model serving more than 170 judicial officers and more than four million residents. The court helps in more than 110 languages with Spanish as the most predominant. The Court employs 21 Spanish interpreters and two Spanish translators. CITS also oversees the practice of lesser used languages through a contract system.

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The Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County is comprised of Superior Court, Adult Probation and Juvenile Probation, which includes juvenile detention. The Judicial Branch in Maricopa County is the fourth largest trial court system in the nation and, along with its 3,300 employees, is dedicated to providing a safe, fair and impartial forum for resolving disputes, enhancing access to services, and providing innovative, evidence-based practices that improve the safety of the community and ensure the public's trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch. For more information, visit www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov.