

INCREASED FUNDING IS CRITICAL FOR FUNDAMENTAL ACCESS TO QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS

The Washington Judiciary is requesting \$2.1 million for the state Interpreter Reimbursement Program to allow more courts in all parts of the state to access funding.

INCREASED DEMAND, INSUFFICIENT LOCAL RESOURCES

State funding has been flat since 2008, yet a recent study of Washington courts found that the costs of providing interpreters is increasing. Increased funding will help additional courts, especially rural and small courts, access the Interpreter Reimbursement Program and support interpreter recruitment and testing to increase the number of qualified interpreters.

DUE PROCESS AND PROTECTION OF LEGAL RIGHTS

Individuals face severe and costly consequences affecting their safety, health, families, property, and finances if they're unable to access qualified interpreter services. Providing qualified interpreters from the beginning of a case can resolve minor legal issues before they become bigger ones.

LIFE-ALTERING CONSEQUENCES

Without access to qualified interpreters, victims often face many negative impacts such as emotional stress, delayed response or no assistance, and conflicts of interest. For victims who are seeking resolutions to high-risk situations, such as a protection order, a court interpreter can be a matter of life and death.

THE FACTS



59%

A recent survey revealed that 59% of courts experienced delays in proceedings when interpreter services were needed and unavailable.

165

The number of languages courts must accommodate has increased 30%, with one court reporting 165 languages.

50%

Approximately 50% of courts report exceeding their interpreter budgets. Small and rural courts often face a shortage of qualified interpreters in their communities, which can lead to unexpected interpreter travel costs that break the bank.

“

Without an interpreter, my clients would not be able to address the court or understand what was happening. It is crucial for interpreting services to be available — especially in court — which is already an intimidating setting and communication is particularly important.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMUNITY ADVOCATE



www.courts.wa.gov

CONTACT Jeanne.Englert@courts.wa.gov (360) 705-5207