

# Summary of Legislative Updates to RCW 2.43

During the 2025 session, the Legislature passed E2SHB 1174 updating RCW 2.43. This RCW is the primary statute governing the use and appointment of, as well as, reimbursement for spoken language court interpreters. This document highlights the elements that most impact court practices and procedures. The updates are effective on July 27, 2025. Please refer directly to the [bill](#) for a complete listing of changes.

Types of changes include aligning state law with federal requirements, court rules, and current practices, increasing flexibility in some policy and increasing, protections for limited English proficient individuals.

## Terminology Updates

**Terminology throughout the statute was modernized to align with what Washington Courts are currently using.**

The most significant change replaced the terms *certified* and *registered* with the umbrella term *credentialed*. The requirements related using *certified* and *registered* interpreters treat both categories of interpreters in the same way. This update does not change those requirements; it streamlines the terminology for ease of understanding. The terms *certified* and *registered* are still actively used in other policies and contexts.

## Payment of Interpreters

**LEP individuals may no longer be charged for interpreters in any type of legal proceeding.**

Until this change, state law permitted courts to charge LEP individuals for interpreters in civil cases in some circumstances. However, doing so is a violation of federal requirements and most courts have already discontinued this practice.

**Increased flexibility for reimbursement of interpreter and language access services.**

Since 2009 the Legislature has allocated funding to the AOC to partially reimburse courts for eligible interpreter expenses for and other language access services. Changes in RCW 2.43 allow more flexibility in determining eligibility requirements. The AOC is reviewing its reimbursement program policy to identify how it can implement this flexibility.

## Appointment of Interpreters

**The process to qualify non-credentialed interpreters was updated.**

Updates include further defining good cause and refining the process to qualify a non-credentialed interpreters including for remote proceeding. The benchcard for spoken language interpreters is being updated to reflect the changes.

**Courts are required to provide a team of interpreters as described in General Rule (GR) 11.4.**

Courts have been required to provide a team of interpreters by [General Rule \(GR\) 11.4](#) since December 2020. This requirement is now codified in statute.

## Language Access Plans and Notification of Services

**Courts are required to submit their most recent language access plan (LAP) to the AOC every two years starting January 1, 2026.**

All trial court have been required to develop an LAP since 2008. This new language adds a requirement for courts to maintain their LAPs and to submit their most recent plan to the AOC every two years.

**Several small changes were made to the language regarding the required content in LAPs.**

The statute includes elements that are required in all language access plans. A number of minor changes were made. Many of the changes are already reflected in the current version of the template LAP developed by the AOC provided to the courts. The AOC is updating the template LAP with all new requirements.

**Courts are required to provide multilingual notification on websites regarding language access services.**

Courts are required to make available on their websites information that informs the public how to access a court's language access services and programs. This information must be in five or more languages. The AOC is preparing template language that will be translated into the top languages of jurisdictions across the state to support courts in meeting this requirement.

## Additional Resources

- [RCW 2.43](#) *(Please note that the Legislature may not place the updated language on the website until October or later. See the webpage for [E2SHB 1174](#) for the new language).*
- [E2SHB 1174](#)
- [GR 11.4](#) (Team Interpreting)
- [Benchcard](#)
- [LAP Deskbook](#) and [LAP template](#)
- [Court Interpreter Program](#)
- [Interpreter and Language Access Commission \(ILAC\)](#)
- [Inside Courts](#) (AOC Resources > Court Resources > Court Interpreters) *Requires access to Inside Courts, which is available to court employees*