



# LANGUAGE ACCESS DEPARTMENT

## Working with OCA Remote Spanish Interpreters

### Overview

The Office of Court Administration's (OCA) Texas Court Remote Interpreter Service (TCRIS) provides **free** Spanish interpreting services:

- by state-licensed court interpreters
- in all case types
- for Texas district, county, justice and municipal courts
- by telephone or videoconference
- for short, non-contested, non-evidentiary hearings of 30 minutes or less in length (magistrations, arraignments, pleas, prove-ups, etc.)
- by advanced scheduling to reserve the interpreter's time or by same-day requests, subject to availability

### Hours of Service

Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm  
(except state holidays)

### Technology Required

**Video Remote Interpreting:** high-speed Internet connection, computer, webcam and speakers

**Telephone Interpreting:** landline speakerphone

### Enrollment Process

1. Log on to [txcourts.gov/tcris](http://txcourts.gov/tcris) and set up your User Account profile in the Online Appointment Scheduler by clicking **SCHEDULE AN INTERPRETER**. When setting up your profile, you will need to choose between remote interpreting by telephone or by video conference.
2. Before scheduling your first hearing with an interpreter, contact TCRIS to schedule a test session to ensure quality service delivery.

### Schedule an Interpreter

1. Log on to: [www.txcourts.gov/tcris](http://www.txcourts.gov/tcris) and click "Schedule an Interpreter" to schedule your hearing with the interpreter and to submit the information needed for the upcoming hearing.
2. If more than one short hearing requiring an interpreter will be heard consecutively, schedule a separate appointment for each hearing (up to a maximum total of 2 hours for all hearings).

Note: An OCA interpreter will confirm, by email, the request no later than the next business day.

### Before the Hearing

1. A few minutes before the scheduled hearing, call the phone number provided in your confirmation email (or, for videoconference systems, follow the connection instructions.)
2. Identify the court to the interpreter and provide the requested information.

## Tips for Successful Remote Interpreting

- If any participants are unfamiliar with the use of a remote interpreter, the judge should instruct them accordingly. *Please refer to the sample instructions.*
- At the beginning of the hearing, the judge should allow the interpreter to introduce himself/herself to the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individual and explain his/her participation in the proceeding, confirming as well that both understand each other clearly. For telephone interpreting, the court should ensure all parties are close enough to the microphone to ensure that they can be clearly heard. For video conference interpreting, the court should ensure the LEP individual is close to the video camera and screen to be clearly heard and seen by the interpreter.
- As the hearing convenes, the judge should ask for and resolve any challenges to the interpreter's qualifications or remote appearance.
- In criminal cases, the judge should ask the defendant and the defense attorney if there is any objection to the interpreter's oath and the interpreter's appearance via telecommunication, either by telephone or videoconference, and, if no objection arises, the judge should ensure this is reflected on the record.
- Upon calling the case, the judge should administer the interpreter's oath. *Please refer to the sample oath.*
- Any document that the court or any participant anticipates using should be sent to the interpreter by email or fax before the scheduled hearing. During the hearing, however, the remote interpreter will neither perform sight translation of any documents nor interpretation of audio or video recordings.

Office of Court Administration  
Texas Court Remote Interpreter Service (TCRIS)  
Phone: (512) 463-5656; Fax: (512) 666-3633  
Email: [interpreter@txcourts.gov](mailto:interpreter@txcourts.gov)  
Webpage: [txcourts.gov/tcris](http://txcourts.gov/tcris)

### ***Sample Interpreter's Oath***

"Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will truly, fairly, accurately and impartially discharge the duties of interpreter in this proceeding before the court, in accordance to the standards prescribed by the Court Interpreters' Code of Ethics, and to the best of your knowledge and ability?"

### ***Sample Instructions***

"Today we will be using the services of a Spanish interpreter who is located at a remote site. The purpose of an interpreter is to allow the flow of communication with this defendant so that he/she may have a meaningful participation in this case now before the Court. Please speak clearly, loudly, and at a moderate speed, so that our voices are heard by the interpreter through the microphone located right here [pointing at it]. As each participant speaks, please pause every two or three sentences to give the interpreter time for his/her rendition. Please speak with the defendant in the first person just as I am addressing you now, and do not address the interpreter. Here is an example: Ask, '*Sir, please state your full name?*' rather than, '*Ask him to please state his full name.*' If any objection to the interpretation arise during this proceeding, the Court will address it accordingly."