

## **Georgia Public Defender Standards Council Interpreter Program**

### **Policies on Interpreters**

*The Georgia Public Defender Standards Council will pay for interpreters used by our staff. This does not include paying for interpreters needed by the courts for judicial proceedings. We cover the cost of paying for interpreters so our attorneys and staff can communicate with clients and witnesses. There will be occasions when an interpreter may be called on to assist a defense attorney in a court proceeding and GPDSC would be fiscally responsible for the cost. This could arise during plea if the client does not understand the plea colloquy and needs to ask his attorney a question in confidence. Again, this is just an example of where use of the court's interpreter would not be appropriate.*

### **Assignments:**

Interpreters are contacted by the CPD office to interpret for a client or to transcribe a document. A list of Registered, Certified, and Non-Registered Interpreters will be provided to all Public Defender offices for reference. If an interpreter would like to be added to the list, they must fill out an Interpreter Vendor Application available on the GPDSC website. Certified Interpreters should be contacted first, if it is determined that the services of a Certified Interpreter is not available, then a Registered or Non-Registered Interpreter may be contacted.

### **Pre-Approval:**

There is a pre-approval procedure that must be used before the interpreter is used if the cost of service is anticipated to exceed \$500. The procedure is outlined below.

If the anticipated amount is expected to be in excess of \$500, it must be Pre-Approved by Vita Morales, Interpreter Coordinator.

Interpreters are required to provide an approximate cost estimate of the service they will provide to the attorney prior to the start of the work. Once the expense is Pre-Approved, the funds are encumbered for the later payment by the state.

## **Approval of Requests**

The approval of requests usually occurs within 24 hours of receipt of the request for the employment of an interpreter when services will exceed \$500. Once Vita Morales has reviewed the request and made a determination on the level of funds to be encumbered, she will contact the CPD office with the amount of money approved.

The interpreter may not proceed and incur additional costs without pre-approval. If there is a need for additional funds all that is required is a supplemental request, either by telephone or by fax request. The approval of supplemental funds is usually expedited like an emergency request.

## **Emergency Requests:**

It is expected that if there is an emergency request, that the public defender or conflict attorney will call Vita Morales to alert her of the status of the request and secure pre-approval either by fax or over the telephone, accompanied by the submission of the Request for the Employment of an Expert Witness form.

## **Interpreter Fee Claim Form:**

The Interpreter Fee Claim Forms should be submitted to the Circuit Public Defender of the Judicial Circuit in which the work has been performed for review and signature. To locate the appropriate contact information for the Circuit Public Defender, please visit the GPDSC website: [www.gpdsc.org](http://www.gpdsc.org) This site will provide all the CPD addresses, telephone numbers, and the counties served by each CPD office.

Once the interpreter has completed the work, they turn the invoices into the CPD office for the CPD to review the invoice and sign-off on the fee claim form. The CPD office forwards the interpreter fee claim form to Vita Morales for payment processing.

The Circuit Defender and Conflict Case Offices should submit all reviewed and signed interpreter invoices to:

Vita Morales, Interpreter Coordinator  
GA Public Defender Standards Council  
104 N. Main Street  
Swainsboro, GA 30401

**Rate:**

The rate set by GPDSC is \$35.00 per hour for Registered Interpreters and \$45 for Certified Interpreters. Translation of documents are also paid by the hourly rates. Mileage is reimbursed at \$0.445 per mile. Travel time to and from assignments is not paid, only mileage. Other rates have to be pre-approved before the service is rendered.

**Payment Rendered:**

Payment will be rendered 30 days from the date of receipt at GPDSC. Questions regarding payment should be sent to [vmorales@gapublicdefender.org](mailto:vmorales@gapublicdefender.org) or contact Vita Morales at 478-289-2802.