

Superior Court Announces Schedule to Expand Interpreter Services

For many years now the Superior Court in Pima County has enjoyed the benefits of a talented and dedicated staff of interpreters. In addition to appearing continually in court proceedings, they translate innumerable documents and provide language assistance to the court's administrative departments. The need for language services continues to grow, however, due to the diversity of our community and the increasing numbers of case filings the court experiences. In difficult financial times, meeting this need becomes more challenging.

Printed along with this message is a copy of Superior Court Administrative Order 2010-11, which I entered last month as a means of clarifying the court's intent regarding the provision of interpreter services. It supersedes A.O. 2007-09 and, for the first time, adopts for the court a plan to expand gradually its interpreter services in legal proceedings. The order affirms that the court's interpreters primarily support the court's judicial and administrative divisions and that the court gives priority to criminal cases in the assignment of interpreters.

The most significant change reflected in A.O. 2010-11 is the court's commitment, under its new plan, to expand interpreter coverage to all court hearings in the superior court building beginning this fall, with a projected full-implementation date of June 2011. Many of you will not notice any difference in the availability of interpreters, since the court already provides interpreters for many non-criminal events. In September, family law proceedings will be the first to be fully covered by court-assigned interpreters. Probate proceedings will follow in January, 2011, we hope; and civil proceedings, which offer the most challenge are targeted for June, 2011. As always, we will try to accommodate requests for service that come in before the scheduled rollout dates. It is important to note that, after each bench rollout date, the presumption will be that the court will provide interpreters when needed for a proceeding: with the rarest of exceptions, attorneys will no longer be required or permitted to bring interpreters for their clients or witnesses, as has been occasionally necessary for some non-criminal matters. As always, it will be within the discretion of the assigned judge to make such determinations.

One of the hallmarks of an effective court is that it makes access to its proceedings and processes as open as possible. A major element of accessibility is the provision of language services to those appearing in court with such a need. This new administrative order extends and expands Pima County Superior Court's commitment to providing such services.

Members of the bar and public can help ensure its success by identifying the need for a qualified interpreter and contacting the Court Interpreter Office (740-3888) at least 10 business days in advance of the hearing. More information about the expansion of service can be found [here](#)