

**IN RE: ADOPTION OF MODEL CODE
OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
FOR INTERPRETERS IN THE JUDICIARY**

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**ORDER ADOPTING CODE OF
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The report of the Supreme Court Fairness and Equality Committee having been made to the Court recommending adoption of a Model Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters, and the Court having considered and approved the same;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that the Model Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Judiciary be, and the same is hereby, adopted to read as follows:

**Model Code of Professional Responsibility
for Interpreters in the Judiciary**

PREAMBLE

Many persons who come before the courts are partially or completely excluded from full participation in the proceedings due to limited English proficiency or a speech or hearing impairment. It is essential that the resulting communication barrier be removed, as far as possible, so that these persons are placed in the same position as similarly situated persons for whom there is no such barrier. ⁽¹⁾ As officers of the court, interpreters help assure that such persons enjoy equal access to justice, and that court proceedings and court support services function efficiently and effectively. Interpreters are highly skilled professionals who fulfill an essential role in the administration of justice.

APPLICABILITY

This code shall guide and be binding upon all persons, agencies and organizations who administer, supervise use, or deliver interpreting services to the judiciary.

CANON 1: ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS

Interpreters shall render a complete and accurate interpretation, translation, or sight translation, without altering, omitting, or adding anything to what is stated or written, and without explanation.

CANON 2: REPRESENTATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Interpreters shall accurately and completely represent their certifications, training, and pertinent experience.

CANON 3: IMPARTIALITY AND AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Interpreters shall be impartial and unbiased and shall refrain from conduct that may give an appearance of bias or impropriety. Interpreters shall disclose to the presiding judge any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest. Interpreters shall not accept remuneration, gifts, or gratuities in excess of their authorized compensation in the performance of their official interpreting duties.

CANON 4: PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

Interpreters shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the dignity of the court and shall be as unobtrusive as possible.

CANON 5: CONFIDENTIALITY

Interpreters shall protect the confidentiality of all privileged and other confidential information.

CANON 6: RESTRICTION OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Interpreters shall not publicly discuss, report, or offer an opinion concerning a matter in which they are or have been engaged, even when that information is not privileged or required by law to be confidential, except upon court approval.

CANON 7: SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Interpreters shall limit themselves to interpreting, translating, or sight translating and shall not give legal advice, express personal opinions to the court, counsel, or individuals for whom they are interpreting, or engage in any other activities which may be construed to constitute a service other than interpreting or translating while serving as an interpreter.

CANON 8: ASSESSING AND REPORTING IMPEDIMENTS TO PERFORMANCE

Interpreters shall assess at all times their ability to deliver their services. When interpreters have any reservation about their ability to satisfy an assignment competently, they shall immediately convey that reservation to the presiding judge.

CANON 9: DUTY TO REPORT ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

Interpreters shall report to the presiding or administrative judge any effort to influence or impede the performance of their duty or their compliance with any legal requirement, provision of this code, or other official policy governing court interpreting and legal translating.

CANON 10: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Interpreters shall continually improve their skills and knowledge and advance the profession through activities such as professional training and education, and interaction with colleagues and specialists in related fields.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that this Order and this adoption of the Model Code of Professional Responsibility for Interpreters in the Judiciary shall be effective on **November 1, 1998**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that the Clerk of the Court shall cause this Order to be published in one issue of the *Advocate*.

DATED this 25th day of September , 1998.

By Order of the Supreme Court
/s/ _____
Linda Cople Trout, Chief Justice

ATTEST: /s/
Frederick C. Lyon, Clerk

1. A non-English speaker should be able to understand just as much as an English speaker with the same level of education and intelligence would understand.