

SECTION 11

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR INTERPRETERS

Interpreters have an obligation to maintain the integrity of Alabama's Unified Judicial System. With the court's knowledge and approval, interpreters may refer a particular case to another interpreter as a result of technical difficulties, cultural biases or personal interests. Also, while interpreters are allowed to advertise, all statements as to the interpreter's qualifications must be truthful. Interpreters may not guarantee a specific result, and an interpreter's statements must be accurate, clear, truthful, and not misleading.

Interpreters must abide by the Foreign Language Interpreters' Code of Professional Responsibility.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS' CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Interpreters serving in Alabama's district, circuit and juvenile courts shall:

- I. Act strictly in the interest of the court during proceedings before the court and with fidelity to the non-English speaker for whom you are providing interpreter services;
- II. Reflect proper court decorum, and act with dignity and respect to court officials and other staff of the court;
- III. Avoid professional or personal conduct that could discredit you or the court;
- IV. Work unobtrusively so that attention is focused on the parties or witnesses, and not yourself as the interpreter;
- V. Accurately provide your qualifications as a court interpreter;
- VI. Refuse any assignment for which you are not qualified or under conditions which could substantially impair your effectiveness;
- VII. Disclose to the court and parties any prior involvement with a case; private involvement with a party or witness; or with others significantly involved in the case;
- VIII. Interpret accurately and faithfully without indicating any personal bias, avoiding the appearance of partiality;
- IX. Preserve the level, style, tone and intent of the language used and the ambiguities and nuances of the speaker, without alteration, omission or addition;
- X. Inform the judge and counsel if the non-English speaker cannot understand the

language level and ask for simplification;

XI. Request clarification of ambiguous statements or unfamiliar vocabulary from the judge or counsel;

XII. Promptly notify the court of any error in your interpretation;

XIII. Continually improve your interpreter skills and knowledge through activities such as professional training and education;

XIV. Maintain impartiality by avoiding undue contact with witnesses, attorneys, interested parties, and jurors before and during the case;

XV. Do not take advantage of knowledge obtained in the performance of your official duties for your own personal gain;

XVI. Do not disclose any information pertaining to court cases unless ordered otherwise by the court;

XVII. Inform the presiding judge should you feel harassed or intimidated by any officer or employee of the court;

XVIII. Immediately report to the court any solicitations or efforts by another to induce or encourage you to violate any law, standard, or any part of this Code of Professional Responsibility;

XIX. Accept no money, gift or other benefit in excess of the authorized compensation for the performance of interpretation duties;

XX. Refrain from expressing your personal opinion in a matter before the court;

XXI. Do not give any kind of legal advice whether solicited or not. In all instances, the non-English speaker shall be referred to the judge or counsel;

XXII. Do not act as an individual referral service for any attorney. If asked by a non-English speaker to refer the speaker to an attorney, direct such individual to the local bar association or to an indigent defense office;

XXIII. Agree to be bound by this Code. Violations of this Code may result in your removal from any qualified interpreter listing maintained by the AOC; and willful violation may result in additional sanctions.