



Step 4.1- COURTROOM OBSERVATION Requirement

Virginia Court Interpreter Certification/Qualification Program

Summary of Requirements

Effective January 1, 2025

Interpreter candidates working toward certification or qualification must complete **15 hours of courtroom observation** and submit an **approved reporting form** to be eligible for work in Virginia courts as a non-certified or qualified interpreter (designation for non-certifiable languages).

Observation Guidelines

- **Where to Observe:**
Candidates must observe Virginia circuit and/or district court proceedings, see detailed breakdown below.
- **How to Observe:**
Observations must be passive. Candidates may not participate in proceedings so they can give full attention to courtroom dynamics and interpreter performance.
- **Required Breakdown of Hours:**
 - **Minimum 2 hours** observing court proceedings with a **certified interpreter** in either circuit or district court.
 - **Minimum 3 additional hours** observing **circuit court** proceedings, with or without an interpreter. These hours must be separate from the observation hours above.
 - The remaining hours may be completed in any combination of circuit or district court proceedings. Take every opportunity to observe and understand the key components of a variety of court proceedings. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Arraignments
 - Circuit court pleas
 - Bond hearings
 - Preliminary hearings
 - Motions hearings
- **Language Requirements:**
While language-specific observations are preferred, they are not required. Candidates may observe proceedings interpreted in any language.
- **Verification of Hours:**
All observation hours must be completed in a courthouse where a Foreign Language Services staff member can verify your attendance.

Once hours are complete, you will be interviewed by a member of the certification team. Be prepared to provide a summary of your observation hours.