



Benton County Office of Public Defense

Request for Qualifications Interpreter Services Benton County Superior and District Courts

The Benton County Office of Public Defense (OPD) requests qualifications from interested interpreters to provide public defense interpreting services in Benton County Superior and District Court for indigent persons charged with crimes, alleged victims and witnesses. This RFQ may be updated periodically and is for contracts to be awarded on a continual basis.

Mandatory Requirements for Interpreter Contracts with OPD

1. **Generally applicable requirements:**
 - a. Court certified for interpreting by Washington State Administrative office of the Court;
 - b. One (1) year of direct experience in providing interpreting services for use in legal proceedings;
 - c. has not been a party to an agreement to provide criminal defense-related Interpreter services that was terminated due to Interpreter's conduct, errors, or omissions;
 - d. has not been censured, admonished, or otherwise formally disciplined for past conduct or behavior as an Interpreter that would negatively reflect on Interpreter's duty and ability to effectively and competently render services hereunder;
 - e. does not have any complaints or lawsuits filed and/or pending against him/her relating to, or arising from, Interpreter's past conduct or behavior as an Interpreter.
2. **Compliance with Public Defense Standards.** All applicants are responsible for personally reviewing, understanding, and meeting all interpreter standards applicable to interpreting in Washington and as promulgated by the Washington State Administrative office.
3. **Qualification as an Independent Contractor.** All interpreters awarded contracts, shall meet all requirements under federal IRS rules and Washington State regulatory rules related to classification as an independent contractor. These include:
 - a. Must have Washington Department of Revenue tax account;
 - b. Must have required local business licenses (at least city of Kennewick license since that is where courthouse is located);
 - c. Must provide own equipment (including computer equipment) and needed supplies;
 - d. Must have location for working from, the cost of which would be eligible for a business expense tax deduction; and,
 - e. Must keep a separate set of books for business.
4. **Technology.** OPD conducts much of its business digitally. This includes videoconferencing, and a digital means of filing claims for compensation and requesting funding for professional services. Contractors must have basic technology literacy and equipment (at least a computer and a high-speed internet connection) and agree to conduct business with OPD using its technology tools.

5. **Insurance.** Professional Liability Insurance in the amount of \$250,000 per claim and \$250,000 in the aggregate. Verification of Workers Compensation and Stop Gap Liability coverage in the amount of \$1 million is required for employers.

Specific Qualifications:

Interpreting:

Contractors are responsible for providing full-service court interpreting to indigent clients with criminal charges in Benton County Superior and District Courts.

Duties:

Benton County's public defense attorneys sometimes have a need to interview mono-lingual, Spanish-speaking indigent persons charged with crimes, alleged victims and witnesses and therefore require the assistance of court certified interpreters in the Spanish language. Interpreter contractors are qualified to provide interpreting services.

Compensation:

- Monthly Flat Fee of \$2,500.00 for up to 20 hours of interpreting services rendered.
- \$135.00 per hour over 20 hours

Hours of Availability - General availability pursuant to the following schedule:

- Mondays from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm; 2:30 pm to 7:00 pm
- Tuesday through Friday – 11:30 am to 12:30 pm; 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm
- Saturday – am as needed, with prior notice

Mandatory Qualifications:

- Court certified for interpreting by Washington State Administrative Office of the Court.
- One year of direct experience in providing interpreting services for use in legal proceedings.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Specific experience practicing in Benton County Superior and District Court.
- Prior criminal jury trial experience.

Interested parties should send a cover letter and resume addressed to:

Keith Johnson
Public Defense Director
Benton County Office of Public Defense
Attn: Interpreter Services RFQ
OPD@co.benton.wa.us

By their submission of any application material in response to this Request for Qualifications, all parties agree to be bound by the following terms and conditions:

This request for qualifications constitutes a request for interested parties to provide notice of their interest and a summary of their qualifications only. This is not an offer to any particular person or to the general public and cannot be accepted so as to create a contract binding upon Benton County, its elected officials, employees or agents. Only upon execution of a contract whether pursuant to this RFQ or otherwise, will Benton County have any contractually binding obligations. Benton County reserves the right to change the terms and conditions of either this request for qualifications (including timeframes, deadlines and any other aspect it deems appropriate to change) or the terms and conditions of the contract to be offered, with or without notice and without recourse by applicants or any other party alleged in any way to be negatively affected.