

III. LOCAL GENERAL RULES (LGR)

Local General Rule 11 COURT INTERPRETERS

A. Interpreter Scheduling Requirements. Requests for interpreters must be made to Superior Court Administration for parties to a case and witnesses.

1. A request for interpreter should be made as far in advance as practical for a hearing or proceeding, but never less than of five (5) business days prior to the scheduled date. (Except for Preliminary Appearance Matters and ITAs).
2. For trial (with a scheduled trial priority), interpreter requests should be submitted before end of business on the day trial priority is held and the court called your trial a “go.”
3. If no trial priority, by end of business on the day the court advised your trial is a “go.”
4. All trials estimated to last one-half day or longer require two interpreters.
5. For less commonly spoken languages, including American Sign Language (ASL), additional time may be needed to secure a certified or qualified interpreter.

B. Mode of Interpretation. The Court will make every effort to provide in person interpreters. For short or limited matters, the Court may schedule interpretation by telephone when appropriate.

C. Submitting Interpreter Requests. Interpreter Requests must be submitted via email to: SCRequests@co.benton.wa.us in the timeframes out lined above.

1. The email must include the following:
 - a. Language Required
 - b. Date, Time, & Length of Hearing/Trial
 - c. Case Number
 - d. Interpreter requested to be in person or by WebEx
 - e. Identify who needs the interpreter for (witness/defendant)

D. Notice Required When Hearing is Stricken/Continued.

1. Any party/attorney who has scheduled a hearing for which an interpreter has been requested and noted must promptly notify SCRequests@co.benton.wa.us if that hearing is continued or stricken. The notice must be prior to the scheduled matter and must be forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled hearing.
2. Notice shall be provided immediately to the court at: SCRequests@co.benton.wa.us.
3. The cost of the interpreter services falls to the requesting party when an interpreter is scheduled but not utilized.

E. Interpreter Requirements. Interpreters must submit their invoices for Benton and Franklin Counties to SCRequests@co.benton.wa.us in accordance with each county's Services Rendered Policy. Invoices due within 30 days of the services provided.

F. Cancellation and Reassignment of Interpreters.

1. The court considers forty-eight (48) hours' notice sufficient to cancel interpreter services without incurring costs.
2. If a hearing settles or cancels with less than 48 hours' notice, the court reserves the right to reassign the interpreter to another matter within the bi-county judicial district for the duration of the originally scheduled time.

[Adopted Effective September 1, 2026]

Local General Rule 29
ADMINISTRATIVE PRESIDING JUDGE
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATIVE PRESIDING JUDGE

- A. Election.** The administrative presiding judge and assistant administrative presiding judge shall be elected by a majority vote of the judges. Said elections shall occur at the Fall Judicial Retreat in even numbered years to be effective in the following odd numbered years.
- B. Term.** The administrative presiding judge and assistant administrative presiding judge shall each serve for a term of two years. The terms of the presiding judge and assistant presiding judge shall commence January 1 per GR(a)(2).
- C. Vacancies.** In the event of a vacancy in the office of the administrative presiding judge prior to the completion of the two-year term of the administrative presiding judge, the assistant administrative presiding judge shall serve as administrative presiding judge for the remainder of the un-expired term.
- D. Assistant Administrative Presiding Judge.** In the event of a vacancy in the office of the assistant administrative presiding judge prior to the completion of the two (2) year term of the assistant administrative presiding judge, a new assistant administrative presiding judge shall be elected by a majority vote of the judges at the next regularly scheduled judge's meeting. The newly elected assistant administrative presiding judge shall serve for the remainder of the un-expired term.
- E. Removal.** The administrative presiding judge and assistant administrative presiding judge may be removed by a majority vote of the judges after noting the issue on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled judge's meeting.
- F. Executive Committee.** The Judges of the Superior Court, sitting as a whole as an executive committee, shall advise and assist the administrative presiding judge in the administration of the court.

G. Liaison Judges. Individual judges may be assigned responsibility for certain management areas and court functions. The responsibility of the assigned judge is to act as a liaison between the court and others concerned about matters that fall within the management area or court function. The assigned judge shall keep the administrative presiding judge and executive committee informed about the management area or court function and shall make such reports as are necessary to the executive committee at the regularly scheduled judge's meetings. The court administrator shall maintain the list of the liaison assignments that shall be available, upon request, to the public.

H. Court Administrator. The court administrator shall, under the direction of the executive committee, supervise the administration of the court.

[Adopted Effective September 1, 2026]

Local General Rule 30 ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES AND FILING

A. As authorized by Supreme Court Order No. 25700-B-743, titled Interim Order Permitting the Continued Use of Electronic Signatures, (issued October 23, 2025), Benton & Franklin Counties Superior Court waives the requirements of GR 30 defining "electronic signature."

B. Electronic signatures which comply with GR 30(a)(4) are acceptable for filing.

[Adopted Effective September 1, 2022; Amended & Re-Formatted Effective September 1, 2023; Re-numbered Effective September 1, 2024; Reformatted & Amended Effective September 1, 2026]

Local General Rule 35 AUTHORIZED TRANSCRIPTIONISTS

A. Electronic Recordings and Transcripts. Court proceedings in Benton and Franklin County are electronically recorded in all courtrooms, unless a court reporter is available and assigned. These recordings are maintained by Superior Court.

1. To obtain an official transcript of an electronically recorded proceeding, the requestor must first purchase a digital copy of the recording from the appropriate County Clerk's Office.
2. After obtaining the recording, the requestor must hire a qualified transcriber. Under GR 35, official court transcripts may be prepared and filed only by:

- a. A Certified Court Reporter meeting the requirements of RCW 18.145.080; or

- b. An Authorized Transcriptionist approved by Superior Court to prepare verbatim reports of electronically recorded proceedings.
 - c. Certified Court Reporters may apply to be included on the Authorized Transcriptionist list but are not required to do so.
3. A list of current Authorized Transcriptionists is available on the Superior Court Administration's website. The Court cannot contact transcribers, arrange payment, or defer costs; these obligations rest solely with the requestor.
 4. GR 35 applies only to transcripts of court proceedings. It does not apply to transcripts of interviews, statements, or any out of court proceedings.

B. Court Reporters. For proceedings not digitally recorded, parties may contact the Benton/Franklin Counties Official Court Reporters to request transcripts.

C. Authorized Transcriptionist. Superior Court accepts applications from individuals seeking to become Authorized Transcriptionists. Qualifications are set forth in GR 35. Authorization applies only to transcripts of court proceedings.

1. *Minimum Qualifications.* Applicants must meet at least one of the following:
 - a. Certification as a Court Reporter;
 - b. Certification through AAERT (American Association of Electronic Reporters and Transcribers); or
 - c. Proof of one year of supervised mentorship with a Certificated Court Reporter or Authorized Transcriptionist.
2. *Submission of Application.* Applications must be complete and include all supporting documents. Application materials are available through the Superior Court's Website. Applications shall be submitted to: SCCourtManagement@co.benton.wa.us.
3. *Continuing Authorization.* Authorization remains effective until withdrawn by the Court. Authorized Transcriptionists must promptly notify the Court if they no longer meet minimum qualifications or if any information in their application or supporting documents changes.

[Adopted Effective September 1, 2026]

Local General Rule 40 INFORMAL FAMILY LAW TRIALS (IFLT)

A. Informal Trial. Parties may mutually consent to an Informal Family Law Trial (IFLT).

1. *Required Form and Deadline.* At least thirty (30) days prior to the trial date, each party must:
 - a. Sign the IFLT Selection Form
 - b. File the form in the case

- c. Serve a copy on the other party
 - d. Deliver a copy to Superior Court at: SCCourtManagement@co.benton.wa.us
- 2. *Requesting an Informal Trial.* Once both parties have agreed a request must be made as follows:
 - a. Note the Motion on the appropriate docket, or
 - b. Make the request during the scheduled settlement conference
- 3. *Requests to Modify GR 40 Procedures.* If either party seeks to modify the procedures set forth in GR 40 (including limits on declarations or witnesses), they must:
 - a. Request a special set hearing as outlined in LMR 6.
 - b. The hearing shall occur at least twenty-eight (28) days before the IFLT.
 - c. If parties fail to request modifications, it is presumed to have accepted GR 40 procedures without change.
- 4. *Exhibits and Trial Declarations.*
 - a. Each party shall file a list of exhibits to be considered at trial.
 - b. Provide a copy of each exhibit (organized and not filed with the clerk)
 - c. Exchange exhibits and list at least fourteen (14) days prior to trial
 - d. Any rebuttal evidence or evidence shall be resolved at the discretion of the trial judicial officer.

[Adopted Effective September 1, 2026]