

California Court Interpreter Workforce Study Highlights

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Study Purpose

- Assembly Bill 1032 (2023) requires the Judicial Council conduct a court interpreter workforce study by January 1, 2026
- Provide recommendations to the Legislature on court interpreter availability and future workforce needs

Study Methodology and Participants

Methodology

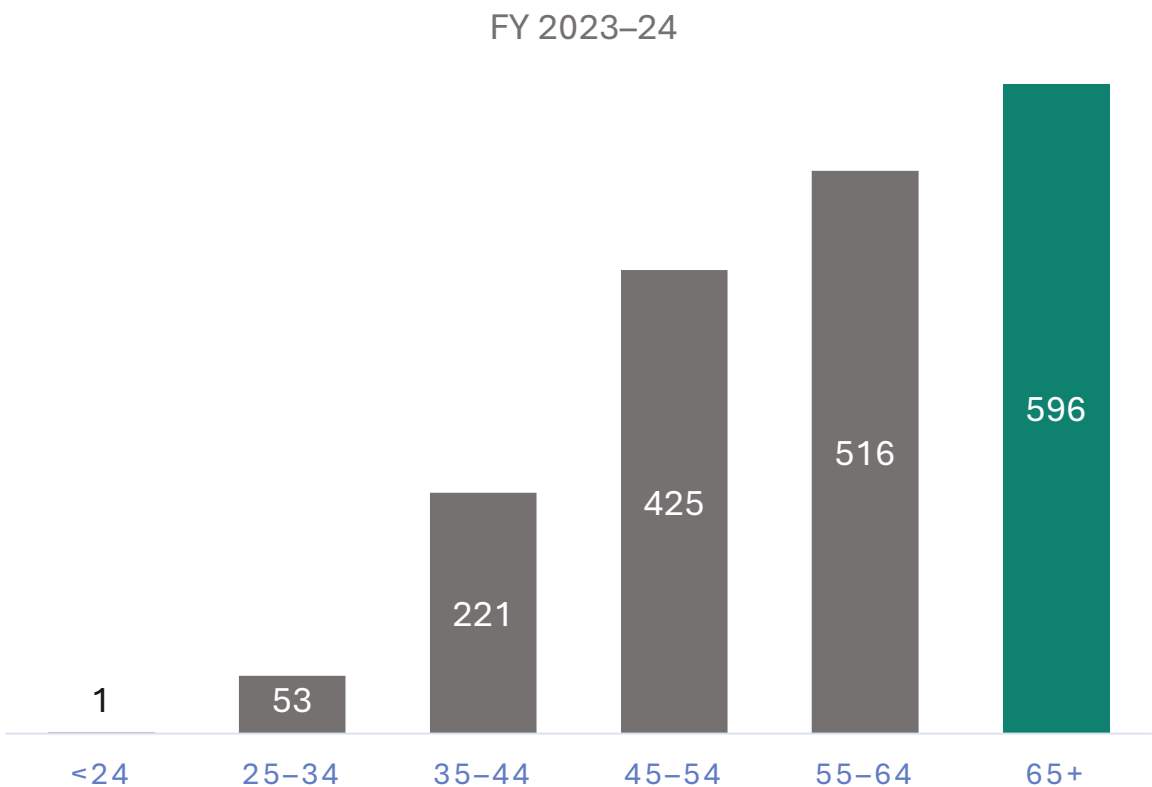
- Quantitative data and qualitative input from focus groups and interviews informed findings
- Each group responded to a core set of questions on challenges and opportunities

Participants

- Court Executive Officers
- Court Interpreters and Court Staff
- Interpreter Labor Organizations
- Language Access Representatives
- Court of Appeal Justice
- Leaders of Court Interpreter Education
- Aspiring or Provisionally Qualified Interpreters

Aging Workforce & Declining Employment

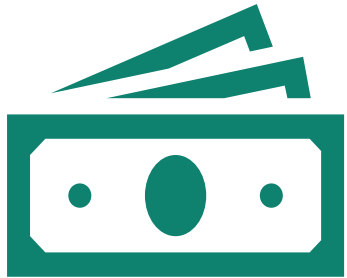
Credentialed Court Interpreters
by Age Group



Number of Court Interpreter
Employees vs. Contractors



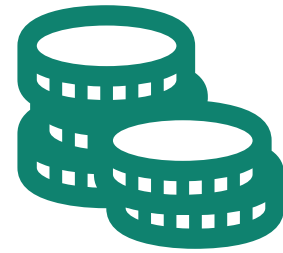
Pay and Flexibility Issues



Interpreter pay is sometimes lower in the state system than in federal and private sectors



However, full-time CA court interpreter employee salary (average \$95,664) is generally high nationally



Benefits also add to court employee compensation, but many individuals prefer flexibility of contracting

Workforce Bottlenecks

Average Pass Rate	Average passage rate for certified interpreter: 11.5%
Near-Passer	Average passage rate for participants in council's near-passer training: 21%
State Bar	State Bar Exam: 55.9% passage rate (February 2025)

Stakeholder Consensus



Ensure adequate funding to ensure competitive compensation



Increase use of mentorships, apprenticeships and carefully structured tiers to assist pipeline candidates



Increase use of video remote interpreting (VRI) to address statewide court interpreter shortages

Legislative Recommendations

- Continue funding/support for interpreter services
- Expand workforce pilot programs
- Adjust legislation to improve access to interpreters
- Promote interpreter career pathways through education and outreach programs

Judicial Council Considerations

- Review exam standards and allow carryover scoring for certified languages
- Develop structured career pathways (tiers, apprenticeships, mentorships)
- Create statewide VRI-trained interpreter directory
- Expand American Sign Language and emerging language access

Court Considerations

- Collaborate with council on pool of VRI-ready interpreters
- Review compensation packages regularly
- Train staff in remote skills and leverage technology
- Recruit and mentor aspiring interpreters

Study Conclusion

- Targeted policies and collaboration will strengthen workforce
- Ensure quality, equitable access
- Serve all Californians, all languages



Questions

