

To the Honorable Jim Rogers, King County Superior Court Presiding Judge

Dear Judge Rogers:

We are writing on behalf of many Washington State Court Certified and Registered interpreters in our region who are concerned about the pay rates in King County and whose names, email addresses, and working languages appear at the end of this letter. We respectfully request that immediate consideration be given to the following proposals:

1. Increase the hourly pay rate of interpreters to \$70.00 per hour for certified and registered court interpreters.
2. Pay at least a two-hour minimum for all in-person and remote assignments, including afternoon assignments regardless of whether the interpreter worked during the morning. This is already the policy of most other regional courts.
3. Adjust hourly rates for interpreters annually to correspond with the cost of living.
4. Compensate interpreters for the full amount of time reserved for any job, including trials, that is cancelled within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) or disposed of earlier than anticipated for any other reason.
5. Compensate interpreters for round-trip mileage or travel time and parking expenses.

It has been four years since the last hourly pay increase for interpreters who work in King County Superior Court, to \$55.00 per hour. Our request for a rate of \$70.00 per hour is consistent with the increase in the cost of living over the last four years and with what other courts in Washington are currently paying credentialed interpreters. The King County Prosecutor's Office pays certified interpreters \$70.00 per hour and registered interpreters \$65.00 per hour. Many King County Municipal Courts, including Seattle, Tukwila, Des Moines, SeaTac, and Bothell, pay interpreters \$60.00 to \$65.00 per hour. In Thurston, Yakima, and Lewis Counties, interpreters negotiate individual rates, which are generally at least \$65.00 to \$75.00.

King County prides itself on its progressive leadership, not only in Washington state, but nationwide. Equitable access to justice is particularly important in such a populous and diverse county. In King County, both the number of people with limited English proficiency and the number of languages spoken have been increasing over time,¹ and court certified and registered interpreters are more necessary than ever to provide everyone in the county with meaningful access to court proceedings and programs.

As most of us are independent contractors, interpreting full time does not mean we can bill for 40 hours each week, even in the best of times. Court schedules often allow us to schedule only one job in the morning and one in the afternoon. We do not receive benefits and we are responsible for paying our own business expenses. Additionally, our job includes hours of unpaid work such as researching terminology, commuting, and billing.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit independent contractors hard, and court closures during the pandemic took away what had been a reliable source of income for many court interpreters. Some found other

¹ See Office of Financial Management estimate of population with limited English proficiency for the state and counties at <https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/special-subject-estimates>

work. Some moved away. Some of us have retrained and acquired new skills to stay competitive in the new remote-interpreting world.

Private sector rates for certified court interpreters are currently \$85.00 to \$125.00 per hour, and the recent growth of virtual remote interpreting has opened up work opportunities for skilled interpreters all over the world. If King County Superior Court continues paying below market rates, eventually even the most dedicated court interpreters will find court assignments financially unfeasible to accept.

Court interpreters play a crucial role in providing equal access to people with limited English proficiency, and court certified and registered interpreters are among the most highly trained and qualified members of our profession. Many of us have advanced degrees or specialized areas of knowledge, and all of us have spent years mastering a second (or third, or more!) language. King County courts have been leaders in language access and equity issues, and they should keep standards high by paying competitive rates to retain skilled and experienced interpreters. We value our role in the justice system and want to continue our work, but we need to make a living.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Christina Woelz
Spanish
christinawoelz@gmail.com

Laura Hurley
Spanish
hurley.laura.g@gmail.com

Kenneth Barger
Spanish and French
kennethbarger@q.com

Nancy Leveson
Spanish
nancy@levesonlanguage.com

Alejandra Contreras
Spanish
Alejandrasemail@gmail.com

Johannes Voogt
Portuguese
johnnyvoogt@gmail.com

Shannon Murphy
Spanish
Murphylanguageservices@msn.com

Alicia Beatty
Spanish
Alicia_linera_beatty@earthlink.net

Lettie Hylarides
Spanish
lhylarides@gmail.com

Yen Baynes
Spanish
Mendyourlanguagegap@gmail.com

Milena Calderari-Waldron
Spanish
milenacw@live.com

Dimitri Balashov
Russian
dbalashov@msn.com

Ines Venturi
Spanish
wordsigns@gmail.com

Miguel Cadena
Spanish
Miguelcadenadni@gmail.com

David Carl Williams
Vietnamese
David.carl.williams@gmail.com

Lawrence Pang
Cantonese
Lawrencepang888@gmail.com

Carla Dalla Nora
Spanish
carladalnor@gmail.com

Agnieszka KroczeK
Russian
Agniesszka.kroczeK@gmail.com

Sassan Kashfia
Farsi/Persian
skashfia@msn.com

Claudia A'Zar
Spanish
Azar.claudia@gmail.com

Jessica Bishop
Spanish
j.ileanbishop@gmail.com

Santosh Wahi
Hindi Punjabi Urdu
swahi@comcast.net

Laura Maria Gordon
Spanish
lauramariagordon@gmail.com

John Wan
Chinese
Jwan.chinese@gmail.com

Pablo Sepulveda
Spanish
Pablospanish9@msn.com

Lorane West
Spanish
patinowest@comcast.net

Alicia Lanzner
Spanish
alanzner@gmail.com

Rogelio Rigor
Tagalog
Rrigor1@comcast.net

Trinidad Valenzuela
Spanish
Trinidad.cvs@gmail.com

Anne De Santis
Spanish
adinterprets@gmail.com

Jessy Daya-Washburn
Haitian
Jessyacupuncture@gmail.com

Gabriela De Castro
Spanish
gabrieladecastro@me.com

Cesar Garcia Garcia
Spanish
zoogarcia@gmail.com

Puneeta Gulati
Punjabi
Puneeta.gulati@gmail.com

Adrian C. Bradley
Mandarin
adriancbradley@hotmail.com

Lorena Farr
Spanish
lorenafarr@comcast.net

Jessica Dover
Spanish
Jessica@almalunaspanish.com

Diana Meredith
Spanish
dianaemeredith@gmail.com

Linda A. Noble
Russian
La7noble@gmail.com

Elzbieta Pitman
Polish
delmege@comcast.net

Jeremias Chambers
Spanish
jeremy@interperterscoach.com

Samuel Mattix
Laotian, Thai
laothailangsvcs@gmail.com

Rosemary Nguyen
Vietnamese
rosemary@inkstonetranslation.com

Trung Le
Vietnamese
Vn_paradise@hotmail.com

David Neathery
Vietnamese
davidneathery@gmail.com

Jose Luis Molnar
Spanish
busslog@hotmail.com

Angela Henrick
Spanish
henrick@att.net

P Diane Schneider
Spanish
Pdianes25@hotmail.com

Dulce Corazon Pino
Tagalog
dclpino@gmail.com

Ginger Want
Mandarin
Gwang001@msn.com

Grace Yoon Yi
Korean
gyoonyi@gmail.com

Jeanine Horton
Spanish
Jhort9@gmail.com

Etsuko Lee
Japanese
etsukolee@comcast.net

Edward Wung
Mandarin
info@transrelated.com

Ulysses Mangune
Tagalog, Kapangpangan
umangune@yahoo.com

Than Than Win
Burmese
thanthanwin@gmail.com

Raul Aguirre
Spanish
Raulaguirre890@gmail.com

Maria Elena Montes de Oca Ricks
Spanish
interprete@gmail.com

Visochanea Morton

languageicts@gmail.com

Courtney Acostagrates
Spanish
justaspanishpdx@gmail.com

Roxana Gahan
Spanish
Roxanagahan@gmail.com

Chih-Chuan Marissa Hsu
Cantonese, Mandarin
Marissa.hsu@gmail.com

Yoseph Petros
Amharic, Oromo
Yosephpetros14@gmail.com

Alan Lai
Cantonese, Mandarin
alanlai@comcast.net

Vicky Scudder
Spanish
Scuddervicky@gmail.com

Claudia Sibila
Spanish
Claudia.sibila.interpreter@gmail.com

Dubravka Martincic
Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian
M_dubravka@comcast.net

Clarissa Surek-Clark
Portuguese
surekcla@gmail.com

Lingling Martin
Chinese
Lingling@komartin.com

Allison Ostrer
Spanish
Aostrer21@gmail.com

Eunyoung (Sonia) Kim
Korean
Kim@languagehost.com

Chintana Barden
Thai, Lao
jinnybarden@yahoo.com

Adrian Arias
Spanish
interpreterra@hotmail.com

Maria Amado Pittle
Spanish
amadopittlec@yahoo.com

Julie Bryan
Spanish
Juliebryan57@gmail.com

Veronica Barber
Samoan
Veronicabarber1@wavecable.com

Louise Morehead
French
Moreheadlouise@yahoo.fr

Cristina Moldovan do Amaral
Romanian
cristina@traduterra.com

Mychi Doan
Vietnamese
Mychi_doan@yahoo.com

Dierdre Murano
Spanish
deirderemurano@gmail.com

Maria Moscoso
Spanish
pmoscosomaria@gmail.com

Irine Ommen
Swahili
swahilitranslator@gmail.com

Amy Tung
Mandarin
Atung.cls@gmail.com

Montserrat Linkletter
Spanish
mlinklet@yahoo.com

Ismael Mohammed
Somali
Somaliterp@outlook.com

Molly Ajeto
Spanish
moando@comcast.net

Martin Hosseini
Persian, Farsi
Matinjoonam@gmail.com

Prem Gupta
Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali
Prem_gupta@hotmail.com

Hsu-Li "Laura" McGilvra
Mandarin
fanyi@wolfenet.com

Ixtla Malagon
Spanish
Malagonixtla@gmail.com

Mieke Klok
French, Dutch
Mklok@outlook.com

Dolores Santoyo
Spanish
doloressantoyo@msn.com

Anthony C. Basler
Spanish
anthonybasler@outlook.com

Barbara Hua Robinson
Mandarin
Barbara.hua.robinson@gmail.com

Frederick Harriman
Japanese
fred@fredharriman.com

Kalpna Bentner
Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu
kalpna@comcast.net

Tiva Aga
Samoan
Teineoleaeto@gmail.com

Iratxe Cardwell
Spanish
i_cardwell@hotmail.com

Tammera J. Richards
ASL
Tjrichards1@msn.com

Maria Dopps
Spanish
Mariadopps@yahoo.com

Kveta Morgan
Czech
flora@pioneernet.net

Sandra Contreras
Spanish
Csandra9@gmail.com

Michelle Pinto
Spanish
Mpino.interpreter@yahoo.com

Susana Sawrey
Spanish
sstettri@yahoo.com

Copy: Office of Interpreter Services Supervisor Irene Anulacion
Office of Interpreter Services Acting Supervisor Dara Chiem
Court Operations Director Rachael DelVillar
King County Executive Dow Constantine
King County Councilmembers
Judge Mafé Rajul

In Support:



Molly Gilbert, President
King County Public Defense Chapter of SEIU 925

Michael Tabor, President
King County Prosecuting Attorney's Association