

Bulletin for Interpreters on the Texas ASL Court Interpreter Certification, 2024



Effective January 1, 2024, the California judicial branch now recognizes two credentials for American Sign Language (ASL) court interpreters:

- **Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L)**, formerly offered by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)
- **Texas Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Certification (CIC)**, offered by the Texas Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)

You can find the council report [here](#) that led to the acceptance of the Texas BEI CIC credential.

This bulletin is designed to assist (1) ASL interpreters interested in taking the Texas BEI examination for court interpreter certification and (2) existing holders of the Texas BEI CIC who want to apply to the California Court Interpreters Program (CIP) for reciprocity and be added to the Judicial Council [Master List](#) of California Certified Court and Registered Interpreters. It also includes information on compliance, continuing education, and training.

I. Information for Persons Wanting to Take the Texas BEI CIC Examination

Candidates who do not hold the SC:L or Texas BEI CIC and wish to be considered certified in California must study for the Texas BEI CIC and travel to Austin, Texas at their own expense to take the required examination(s). For information about the CIC, visit the Texas CIC [webpage](#).

Eligibility Requirements

To sit for the Texas BEI court performance test, the candidate must meet Texas' established [eligibility requirements](#) for court certification. Once eligibility requirements have been met, you must contact BEI at dhhs.bei@hhs.texas.gov to begin the application process.

A candidate must already be BEI certified at the Advanced or Master level or hold a RID certification (Comprehensive Skills Certificate, Certificate of Interpretation/Certificate of Transliteration, Reverse Skills Certificate, Certified Deaf Interpreter, Master Comprehensive Skills Certificate, National Interpreter Certification Advanced, or National Interpreter Certification Master).

In addition, the candidate must have passed the Texas or California court interpreter written test before being eligible to sit for the signing/performance test. See also below for more information on the written examination.

If the candidate does not have RID or BEI certification (Advanced or Master level), the candidate may opt to pursue BEI general certifications. The general certification process includes a written exam (Test of English Proficiency (TEP)) and then a performance test (Basic,

Advanced, and Master). For out-of-state candidates seeking a Texas BEI general certification, there are two options. A candidate can choose to apply for and schedule a TEP written test first (traveling to a designated testing site within Texas), then upon passing, apply to take the performance test (traveling to Austin, Texas). A second option is to join a waitlist for a special two-day, back-to-back testing session (TEP one day, performance test the next day). Texas tries to offer these special testing sessions in Austin twice a year (often around March and August).

Written Examination

CIP staff have confirmed that the Texas written examination is the same National Center for State Courts (NCSC) written examination administered to aspiring interpreters in California, and candidates may take the written exam in California and submit their scores to Texas as long as they score 80% or higher. The candidate will need to provide a copy of the written examination test results to the BEI office when scheduling the court performance test.

Certified Deaf Interpreters

Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs) are eligible to take the BEI CIC examination. CDIs who also possess the BEI CIC credential may apply to be added to the council's Master List.

Taking the Test

Individuals who apply to take the Texas BEI CIC test can expect to be scheduled for a test date approximately 4-6 months after their application is considered complete (prerequisites met, payment received, background check complete, etc.). In most instances, test results are released within 90 days of the test date. There is a helpful study guide on the Texas BEI CIC located [here](#).

II. Information for Persons Who Already Hold the Texas BEI CIC

Reciprocity

Individuals who hold the Texas BEI CIC and are in good standing with Texas may apply for reciprocity and are highly encouraged to do so. CDIs who also possess the BEI CIC credential may also apply to be added to the council's Master List.

To be considered certified in California, persons with the BEI CIC will need to apply to CIP for reciprocity to be officially added to the Master List. The reciprocity application is available at <https://languageaccess.courts.ca.gov/court-interpreters-resources/become-court-interpreter/american-sign-language-interpreter>. Once individuals successfully apply to CIP and are added to the Master List, they will be eligible to work in the California courts as a certified ASL court interpreter either in-person or remotely.

Enrollment and Annual Fee

Effective January 1, 2024, there is a fee of \$100 for new ASL court interpreters to be enrolled with the council and added to the Master List. Thereafter, a \$100 annual renewal fee is due for each year. In the November 2023 council report, staff recommended that existing ASL court interpreters and new ASL interpreters added through reciprocity pay the \$100 annual renewal fee so that the program can more accurately track the number, status, and contact information of ASL court interpreters who are on the Master List. Fees collected will be deposited into the Court Interpreters' Fund, which gathers annual renewal payments from California certified and registered interpreters and supports interpreter training and other program efforts.

III. Continuing Education, Training, and Exemption Period

Continuing Education

Interpreters who hold the Texas BEI CIC will need to comply with Texas' continuing education and any other of its requirements to maintain their certification. The Texas policy manual covering eligibility, training requirements, renewal process, and the like can be found [here](#).

The council does not have continuing education requirements for ASL court interpreters. However, ASL court interpreters will need to stay compliant with the continuing education and other requirements from their certifying body (either RID or the Texas BEI).

Online Training

The NCSC, under contract with the council's Language Access Services Program, developed an online course that will be available for certified ASL court interpreters who are enrolled with the council. The course is anticipated to be available in early 2024, through a new learning management system for credentialed interpreters.

Exemption Period

The recommendations approved by the council were to create a temporary exemption of at least four years to recognize the Texas BEI CIC. Prior to the end of the four-year exemption period, the Court Interpreters Advisory Panel (CIAP) will provide a status update and recommend to the council whether to extend recognition of the Texas DHHS BEI as an approved testing entity for ASL court interpreter certification for another four-year period. Persons who possess the BEI CIC and are added to the Master List through reciprocity will not need to reapply for reciprocity at the end of the four-year period, if they remain in good standing.

IV. Additional Information

If you need additional information, please contact the Court Interpreters Program at courtinterpreters@jud.ca.gov.