

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Resolution 8

In Support of Sharing Interpreter Resources through Establishing a Shared National Court Video Remote Interpreting Network and National Proficiency Designations for Interpreters

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) have long recognized the importance of ensuring access to justice through the availability of qualified court interpreter services for limited English proficient individuals accessing the state courts; and

WHEREAS, the COSCA White Paper, *Court Interpretation: Fundamental Access to Justice* (2007), acknowledges the shortage of trained court interpreters in the many languages spoken by those accessing the state courts and recommends considering the feasibility of establishing regional or national pools of interpreters, as well as a strategy for promoting recognition of interpreter certification status among the state courts; and

WHEREAS, the Call to Action from the 2012 Summit on Language Access supports the establishment of a shared national court video remote interpreter (VRI) network as a key national language access priority of the state courts; and

WHEREAS, following the Summit, COSCA's Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) considered the establishment of a shared national court VRI network; and

WHEREAS, as a result of that review, LAAC recommends that a shared national court VRI network be established in order to promote the sharing of interpreter resources among state courts, as well as to enhance the quality, efficiency, and consistency of interpreter resources available to all state courts; and

WHEREAS, to establish the “pools” of interpreters for that network, LAAC developed a method for categorizing court interpreter qualifications on a national basis, or the National Proficiency Designations for Interpreters structure (NPDI), which sets forth a tiered-qualifications structure for foreign language and sign language court interpreters based primarily on court interpreter oral examination scores (using tests developed through the work of the former Consortium on Language Access in the Courts and the NCSC); and

WHEREAS, the NPDI tiered structure is intended to assist state courts by establishing parameters for VRI services so that states entering into agreements with VRI service providers can be assured that they can access court interpreter resources that best meet their needs; and

WHEREAS, the NPDI structure will not control or affect how states manage court interpreter certification within their own states; and

WHEREAS, the NCSC has agreed to maintain the shared national court VRI network on behalf of CCJ and COSCA;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators:

1. Authorize LAAC, with the assistance of the Council of Language Access Coordinators, to promulgate and amend as necessary the National Proficiency Designations for Interpreters tiered structure to further efforts to establish a shared national court VRI network; and
2. Express appreciation to the National Center for State Courts for its willingness to maintain the shared national court VRI network on behalf of the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators, and for its overall efforts to promote the availability of effective VRI solutions for state courts.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Access, Fairness and Public Trust Committee at the 2013 Annual Meeting on July 31, 2013