



ACCESS TO JUSTICE
Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts

LANGUAGE SERVICES IN THE MARYLAND COURTS

FISCAL YEAR 2023



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COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM UPDATES



Greetings! In fiscal year 2023 the Court Interpreter Program continued to work diligently on expanding existing services and adding new resources aimed at improving language access in the Maryland courts. It has been a busy year with new initiatives implemented and existing projects expanded. More than 19,000 interpreter assignments were filled; forty (40) newly qualified interpreters were added to the Registry; eleven (11) qualified interpreters became certified; three (3) new Spanish staff interpreter positions were created, bringing the total number of staff interpreter positions to thirty-four (34); and eighteen (18) judiciary clerk positions were reclassified as Qualified Spanish Bilingual in the Montgomery County Circuit and District Court. These are just a few accomplishments the Court Interpreter Program has achieved in fiscal year 2023. I am privileged to work with such a dedicated team who works tirelessly to ensure the limited English proficient population in Maryland have equal access to court services.

Ksenia Boitsova

Court Interpreter Program Administrator

BILINGUAL STAFF

In fiscal year 2023 the Maryland Judiciary implemented a bilingual staff pilot program in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County and the District Court in Silver Spring. Six (6) District Court and twelve (12) circuit court public-facing judiciary clerks passed the language testing requirements to be qualified as Spanish language bilingual employees. They attended a three-hour webinar on best practices and procedures in serving Spanish speaking customers. During the webinar, the bilingual clerks were trained on how to distinguish legal information from legal advice; develop legal glossaries; provide cultural brokerage; provide simple interpretation; and many other relevant topics. They look forward to serving Spanish-speaking customers in their new capacity.

The qualified bilingual staff at the Montgomery County District Court in Silver Spring and circuit court can be easily identified by the “I Speak Spanish” badge.



FIGURE 1. QUALIFIED BILINGUAL STAFF BADGE

INTERPRETER RECRUITMENT

In fiscal year 2023, the Court Interpreter Program has received a record number of applications (408) from bilingual individuals and accepted two hundred and twenty (220). Accepted candidates are required to pass the rigorous court interpreter written exam that tests their knowledge of general vocabulary, legal terms, idiomatic expressions, and court interpreter ethics. They are also required to pass the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in foreign languages. The interview tests candidates' fluency in foreign languages. Upon the completion of the vetting and testing process, forty (40) new interpreters in a variety of languages were added to the Court Interpreter Registry. As demonstrated by the low number of candidates who make it through the process, the Court Interpreter Program maintains high screening, acceptance, and testing standards.

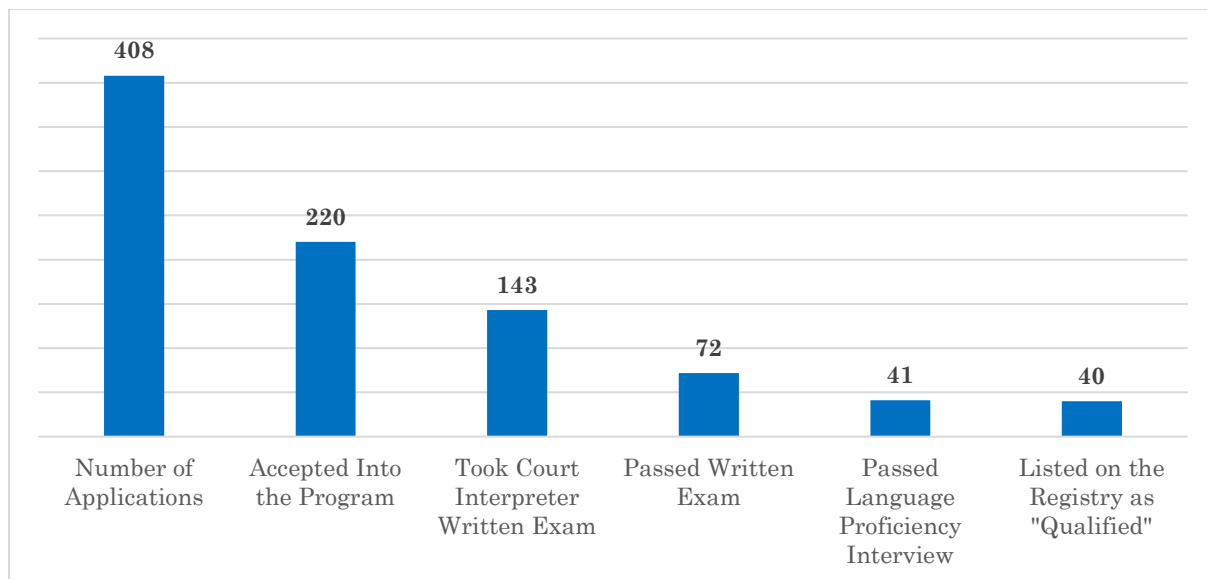


FIGURE 2. COURT INTERPRETER RECRUITMENT

Qualified interpreters in sixteen (16) certifiable languages are required to sit for the certification exam within two years of being listed on the Registry. The Court Interpreter Program conducts interpreter certification exams twice a year. Passing the certification exam is not easy and a true testament to the interpreter's superior interpretation skills in the three modes of interpreting: sight translation, consecutive interpretation, and simultaneous interpretation. In accordance with Rule 1-333 courts are required to contact certified interpreters first before contacting qualified interpreters.

We are proud to report that in fiscal year 2023 eleven qualified registry interpreters passed the certification exams and became certified: Arabic (1), BCS (1), French (2), Haitian-Creole (1), Russian (2), and Spanish (4).

The Maryland Judiciary maintains a public listing of Maryland court certified and qualified interpreters who have given permission for their name, e-mail address, and phone numbers to be released to users of interpretation services outside of the Maryland Judiciary.

Individuals looking for an interpreter for a private assignment outside of the Maryland Judiciary can check the [Judiciary Interpreter Public Listing](#) to see if there are interpreters listed under the requested language. The Administrative Office of the Courts is not responsible for any interaction between the interpreter and outside agencies or companies.

The Court Interpreter Program actively recruits interpreter candidates in all languages and grants reciprocity to out-of-state certified interpreters for onsite and video-remote proceedings on a case-by-case basis.

Individuals interested in information on how to become listed on the Maryland Judiciary Court Interpreter Registry can visit the website at:

<https://www.courts.state.md.us/interpreter>

**CONGRATULATIONS TO NEWLY
CERTIFIED MARYLAND COURT
INTERPRETERS!**

Christine Fattouche - Arabic

Tanja Morris – BCS (Bosnian-Croatian- Serbian)

Antonia Feldman – French

Judith Levy – French

Francia Desir Clarke – Haitian Creole

Olga Madison - Russian

Alina Sokol – Russian

Bianca Giosa – Spanish

Candra Hodges - Spanish

Junior Batista Rojas – Spanish

Maria Villatoro – Spanish

STAFF INTERPRETERS

Maryland’s high-volume courts rely on full-time Spanish staff interpreters to provide interpretation services throughout the day. In fiscal year 2023, three new staff interpreter positions were added to the staff interpreter roster bringing the total number of staff interpreters to 34 positions. Staff interpreter positions are open to state and federal court-certified interpreters in Spanish. Court-certified Spanish interpreters can apply by visiting the Judiciary Career page at: <https://www.courts.state.md.us/careers>

Court Interpreter Program staff conduct regular meetings with staff interpreters. These meetings are opportunities to keep staff interpreters apprised of program and policy changes, to ensure best practices, and to provide ongoing training.

TABLE 1. STAFF INTERPRETER POSITIONS (SPANISH) IN MARYLAND COURTS

DISTRICT COURT	CIRCUIT COURT
Anne Arundel (2)	Anne Arundel (2)
Baltimore City (3)	Baltimore City (2)
Baltimore County (1)	Baltimore County (2)
Howard (1)	Frederick (shared with District Court) (1)
Montgomery (5)	Howard (1)
Prince George's (5)	Montgomery (6)
	Prince George’s (3)

ACCESS TO JUSTICE GRANT FOR CIVIL LEGAL AID PROVIDERS

In fiscal year 2023, Access to Justice renewed its grant to Ayuda, a legal non-profit organization which has been providing free-of-charge interpreter and translation services to civil legal aid organizations in Maryland since 1973.

During fiscal year 2023, funding from the Maryland Judiciary helped Ayuda to fill 137 interpreter assignments and 32 translation requests. Most requests came from legal providers in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. Other counties served include Baltimore County and Charles’, St. Mary’s, Howard, and Talbot counties. Languages

included Amharic, Dari, Farsi, Indonesian, Hausa, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

Services were used in client meetings for family law cases, client interviews for domestic violence cases, immigration intakes, a prosecuting attorney's meeting with a victim, meetings regarding family law cases, divorce and custody cases, pro-bono legal clinic intakes, and for assistance drafting letters.

This is the fourth year that the Maryland Judiciary has awarded a grant to Ayuda to help the organization to continue its mission. The Judiciary appreciates the important work that Ayuda does in providing paid interpreter services to legal aid providers in Maryland.

LANGUAGE PORTALS

In response to changing technology and website user habits, the Maryland Judiciary has transitioned from hosting language portals in favor of a translation feature embedded into the website. Every page on the Judiciary website hosts a dropdown menu with a list of languages for selection. When a language is selected, the web page is translated into that language, powered by Google.

The previous language portals used a translated page as a port of entry into further translated content. The Judiciary transformed those port-of-entry pages into welcome pages that inform users of how to use the translation feature and provide information on court interpreters. The welcome pages are available in the five priority languages identified in the Judiciary’s language access plan: Chinese, French, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. The Judiciary has retained translated forms and informational resources, such as video content in the Court Help Video Library.

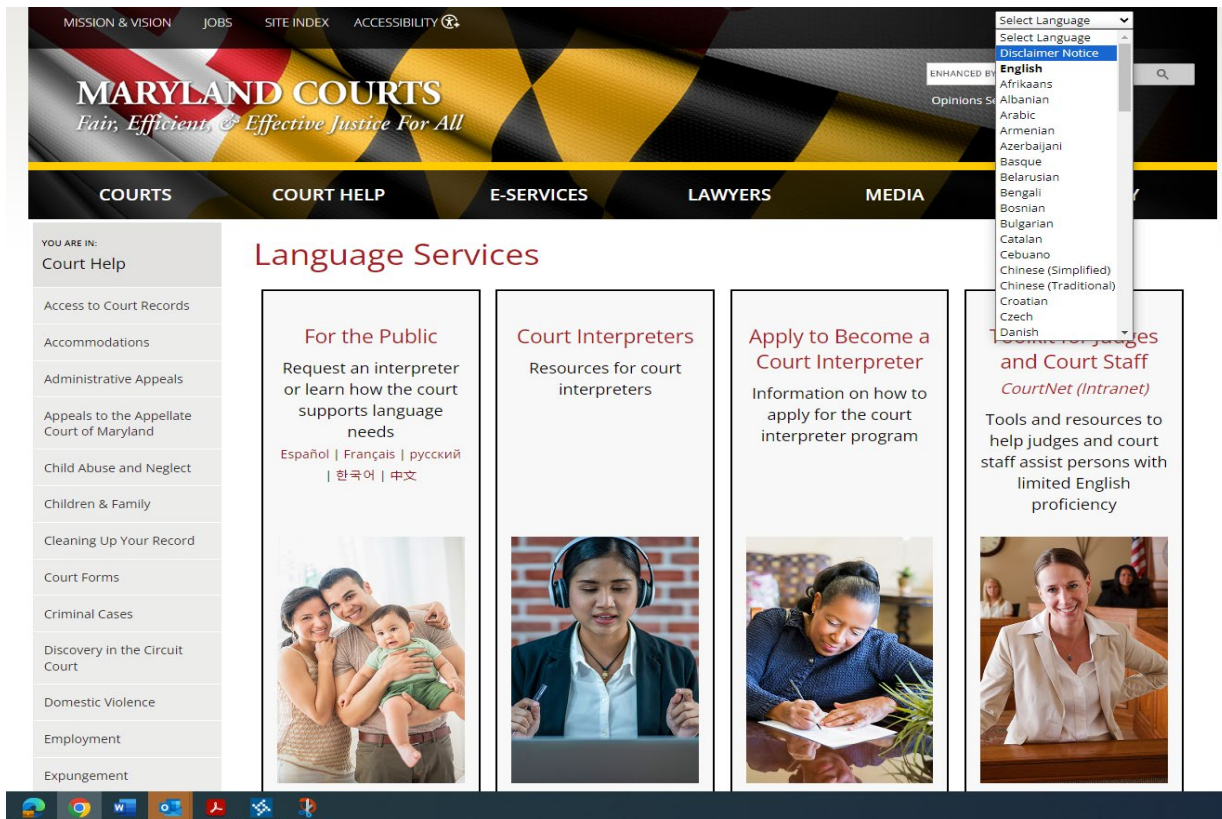


FIGURE 3. GOOGLE TRANSLATE DROP DOWN MENU

COURT INTERPRETER CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Court Interpreter Program continues to offer a variety of courses to help registry interpreters earn the required continuing education credits. In fiscal year 2023, the Court Interpreter Program sponsored or conducted thirty-three (33) continuing education courses for a total of 1,146 attendees.

TABLE 2. LIVE ONLINE CEU COURSES OFFERED – FY 2023

CLASS TITLE	NUMBER OF LEARNERS
Medical Terminology	18
Crime Scene Descriptions, Part 1	37
Human Trafficking	84
Simultaneous Interpreting	45
Skills Building for Court Interpreters	41
Medical Malpractice	15
Crime Scene Description, Part 2	32
Central American Slang (Spanish)	22
Child Protective Services	46
Gun Terminology	33
Advanced Grammar for Spanish Speakers	21
Tools Used as Weapons (Portuguese)	3
Written Exam Preparation for Interpreter Candidates	55
Proceedings in Juvenile Court	40
Terminology Used in Psychiatric Evaluations	9
Domestic Violence Terminology	36
Conquering Nerves: You're the Best Interpreter there Ever Was	35
Testimony for Forensic Biology, Serology and DNA	46
Ethics for Court Interpreters	40
Business Skills for Freelance Interpreters	60
Cryptic Messaging	26
Skill Building for Court Interpreters	20
Mindfulness for Court Interpreters	32
Real Estate Terminology	40
State Court Interpreter Oral Exam Preparation – Spanish	23
Coroner & Medical Examiner Terminology for Court Interpreters	48
Skills Building for Court Interpreters Part 2 – Spanish	13
Civil Claims Part 1: Construction-Related Claims - Spanish	16
Court Interpreter Ethics Part 2	44
Sight Translation Skills in Family Law	21
Ethical Dilemmas for Court Interpreters	49
Written Exam Preparation	29

CLASS TITLE	NUMBER OF LEARNERS
Stress Management & Vicarious Trauma (for staff interpreters)	17
TOTAL 33	1,146

INTERPRETER SPOTLIGHT

ANN JIRAPORN HUYNH, QUALIFIED THAI REGISTRY INTERPRETER



Growing up in a bilingual household, Ann was able to use both Thai and English language in her day-to-day life. After living on four continents, she came to the United States which has become her forever home. Following the birth of her daughter in 2010, Ann was looking for opportunities to change her career direction and what she thought would be a part-time job became a career that she is now passionate about. After being accepted into the Maryland Judiciary Court Interpreter Program in 2015, Ann passed the testing and workshop requirements and became listed as a freelance interpreter on the Court Interpreter Registry. Since there were not that many assignments in Thai with the courts, Ann immediately branched out. Being listed on the Public Listing opened many opportunities and led Ann to become a United States Department of State Conference Interpreter (US DOS) for her language pair (Thai <> English). Ann's assignments include high-level meetings within the United States government, international conferences, business negotiations, and other interesting assignments in various settings. Although now Ann works mostly as a conference interpreter, she told us that she always considers Maryland courts to be her home and alma mater. When a Maryland court assignment is offered, Ann is always pleased to accept it and proudly wears her first-ever interpreter's badge "Maryland Judiciary Court Interpreter." Ann's story is one of our many success stories and an example of how joining the Maryland Court Interpreter Program can be a life-changing experience for bilingual

PROGRAM USE

The data below reflects the number of interpreter assignments in the circuit and District Courts. This data does not include the number of assignments performed by staff interpreters. The “assignments” reflected in the data may include multiple cases, especially for Spanish and other languages that are in high demand.

In fiscal year 2023, the overall number of assignments in the circuit courts and the District Court increased by 9% from the prior year.

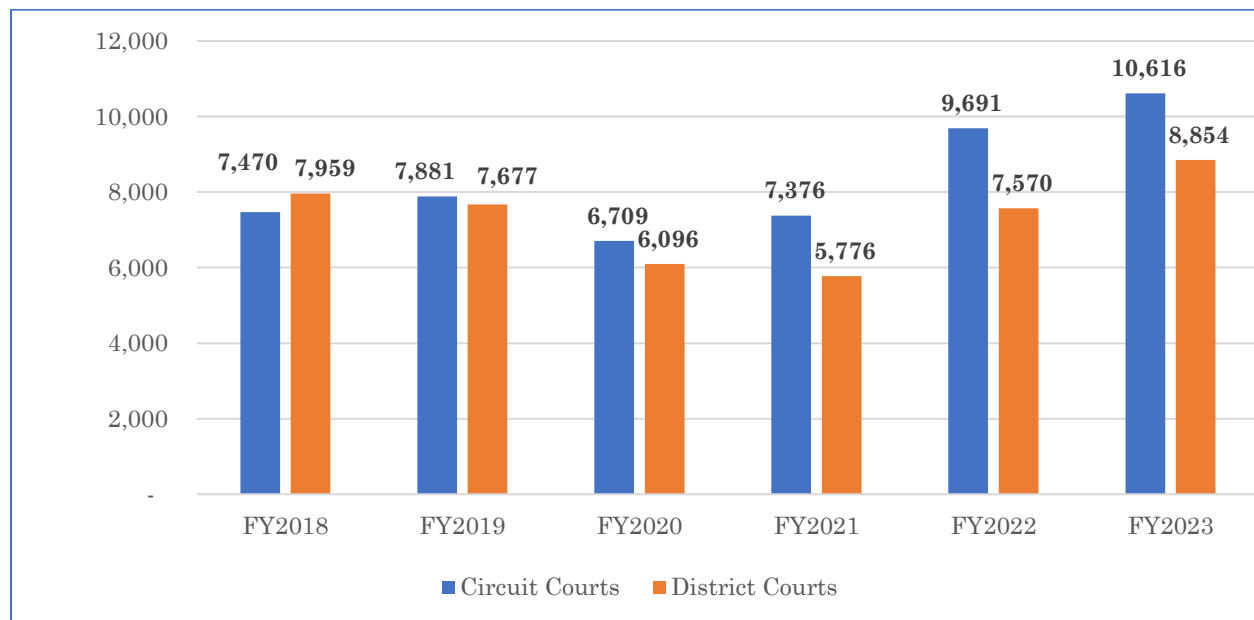


FIGURE 4. INTERPRETER ASSIGNMENTS - FY 2018 - FY 2023

CIRCUIT COURT USAGE

Prince George’s, Baltimore City, Montgomery, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel counties continue to dominate interpreter usage in circuit courts. Prince George’s County continues to be the largest user of registry interpreters with 1,815 assignments in fiscal year 2023.

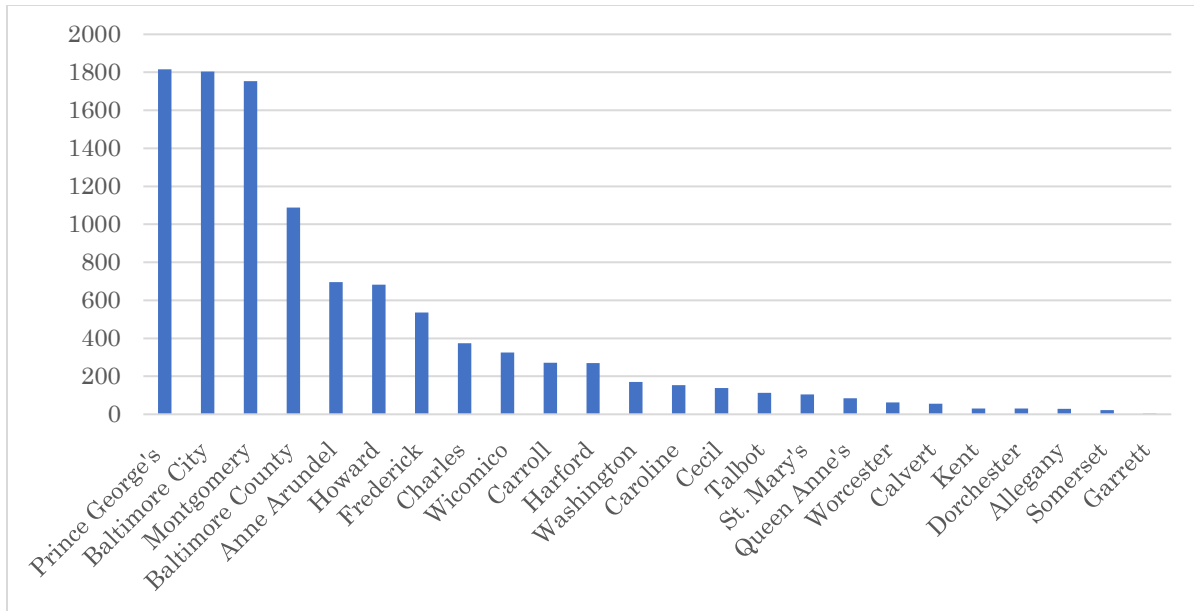


FIGURE 5. CIRCUIT COURT ASSIGNMENTS BY JURISDICTION - FY 2023

As shown below, Spanish remains the most frequently requested language throughout the state with American Sign Language (ASL) as the next most frequently requested language in the Maryland courts.

Montgomery County remains the most linguistically diverse court jurisdiction. During fiscal year 2023, the circuit court alone assigned interpreters in 49 distinct languages. Overall, circuit courts provided interpretation in 72 languages during fiscal year 2023

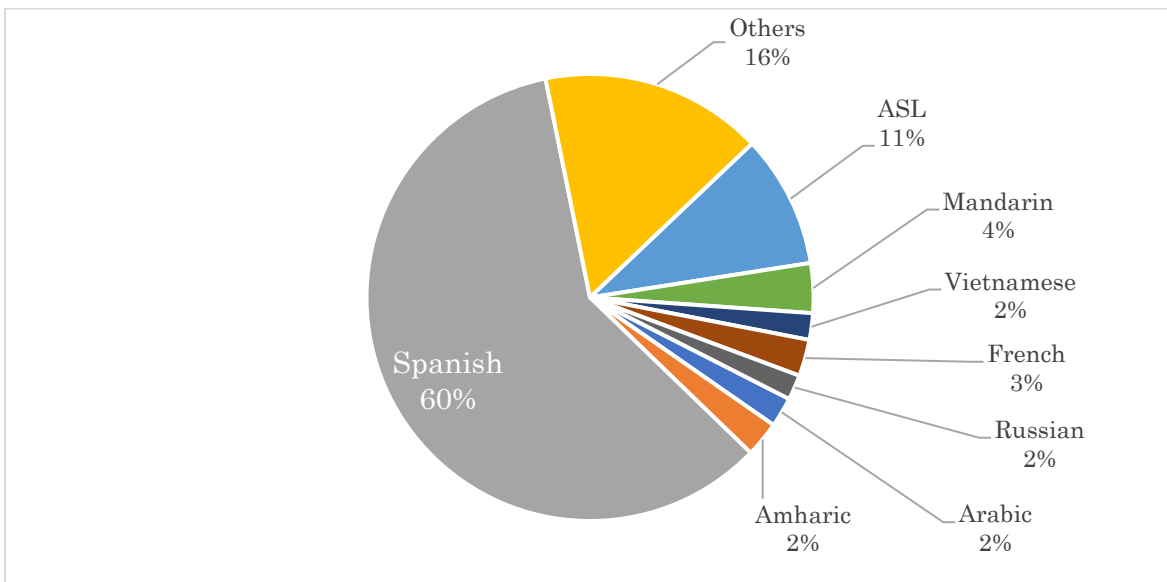


FIGURE 6. CIRCUIT COURTS INTERPRETER ASSIGNMENTS BY LANGUAGE - FY 2023

Certified vs. Qualified

Courts must contact and assign certified interpreters first before assigning qualified interpreters. In fiscal year 2023, the use of certified interpreters in circuit courts decreased to 57% compared to the prior year (66%). The use of qualified interpreters in languages for which a certification exam is available increased to 23% from 15% the year prior. These findings may be attributed to the following:

- The overall number of assignments in all Maryland courts increased by 9%.
- In fiscal year 2023, the number of Spanish language assignments in the circuit courts increased from 5,584 to 6,325.
- In fiscal year 2023, the Court Interpreter Program added eleven (11) certified interpreters and forty (40) qualified interpreters to the registry. Since the number of interpreter requests has gone up, courts had to contact qualified interpreters to fill assignments to meet the growing demand.

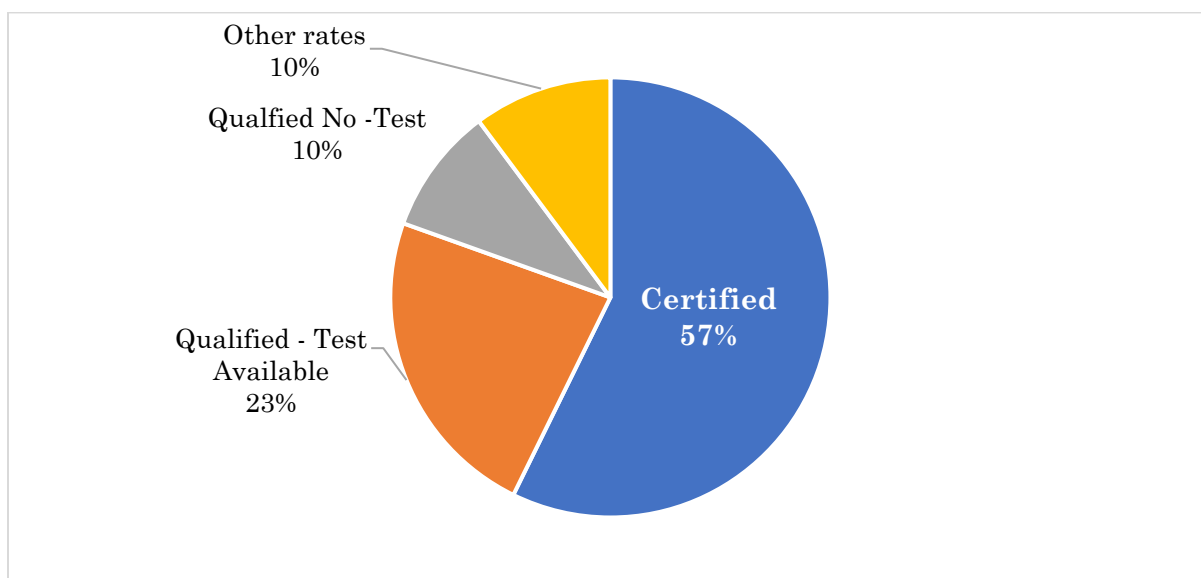


FIGURE 7. CIRCUIT COURT ASSIGNMENTS BY INTERPRETER QUALIFICATIONS - FY 2023

Types of Court Events

Maryland Judiciary provides interpreters for various events such as courtroom proceedings, jury selection, and court-referred services. In fiscal year 2023, the number of court-referred services for which interpreters were requested has increased by 49% as shown in the table below.

TABLE 3. COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM EVENT TYPES - CIRCUIT COURTS - FY 2023

EVENT TYPE	EVENTS FY 2022	EVENTS FY 2023
Court-Referred Service	221	413
Courtroom Proceeding	8,914	9,602
Juror	551	599
Other	5	2
Total	9,691	10,616

Types of Proceedings

Court interpreters are provided for a full range of circuit court case types. There has been an increase in the number of requests in all case types in fiscal year 2023, but the overall distribution of requests remains consistent with prior years.

TABLE 4. COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM CASE TYPE - CIRCUIT COURTS - FY 2023

CASE TYPE	EVENTS	PERCENT
Civil - Family	5,650	53%
Civil - Non-Family	811	8%
Criminal	2,472	23%
Juvenile	913	9%
Unassigned	769	7%
Total	10,616	100%

DISTRICT COURT USAGE

The District Court in Baltimore County continues to be the largest user of registry interpreters with 1,745 assignments in fiscal year 2023.

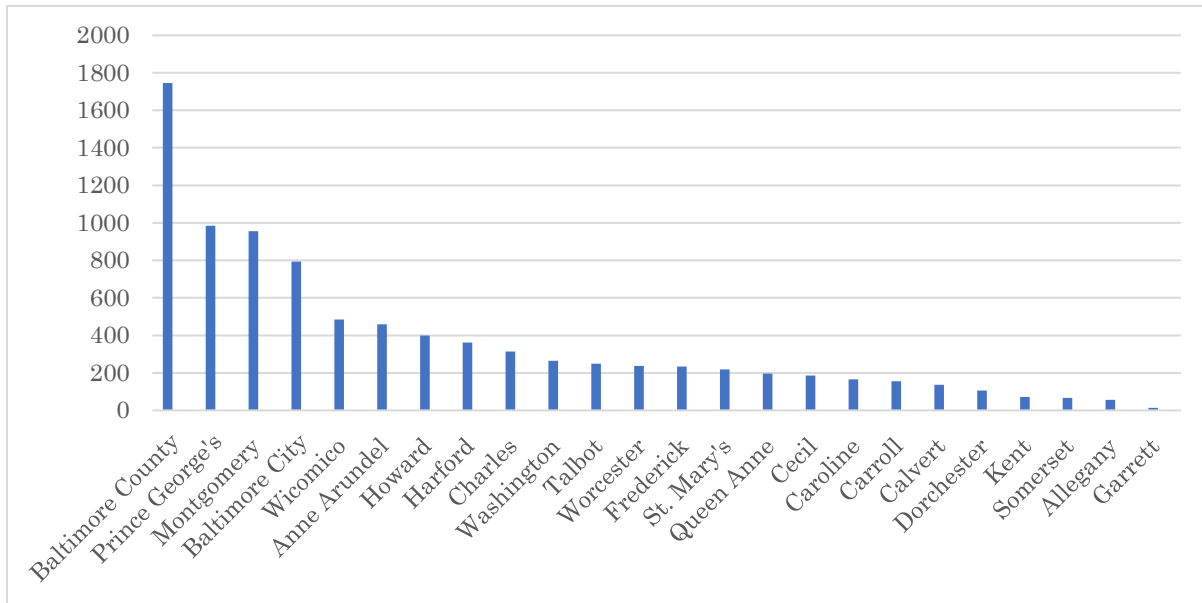


FIGURE 8. DISTRICT COURT INTERPRETER ASSIGNMENTS BY JURISDICTION - FY 2023

As in circuit courts, the demand for in-person interpreters is highest for Spanish, which represents 58% of all assignments in District Court locations. American Sign Language (ASL) remains the second most requested language in the District Court. Interestingly, Amharic language made it into the top ten most requested languages in the District Court in fiscal year 2023.

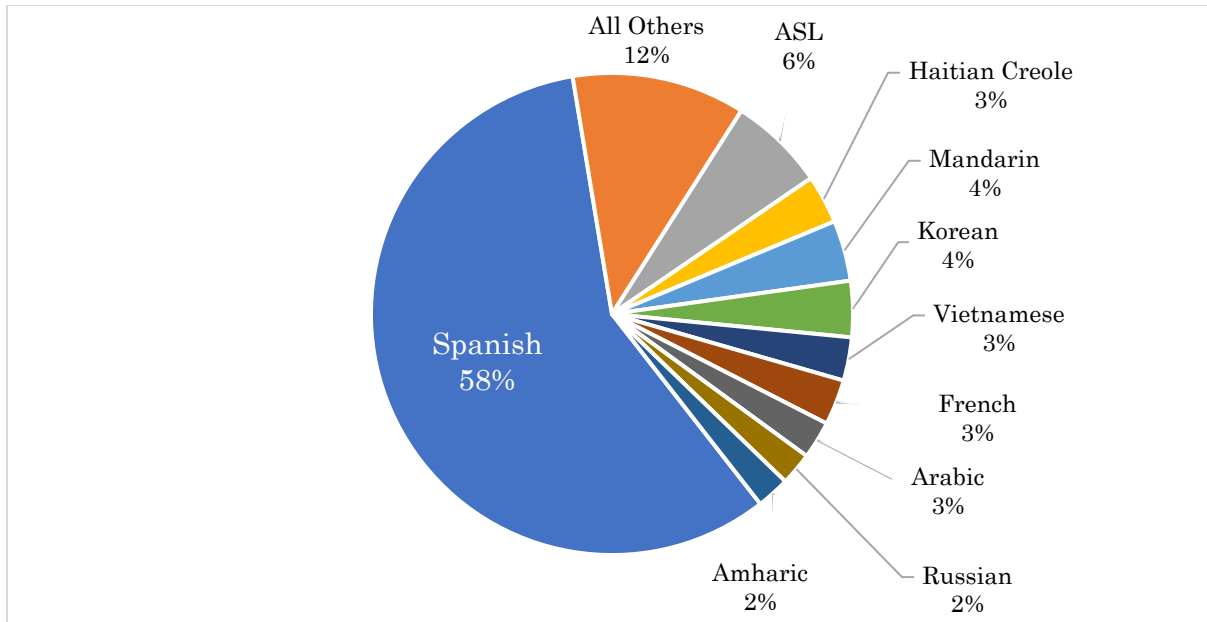


FIGURE 9. DISTRICT COURT INTERPRETER ASSIGNMENTS BY LANGUAGE - FY 2023

In fiscal year 2023, the number of courtroom proceedings where interpreters were provided has increased by 15% from the prior year. It should be noted that the number of requests for in-person ASL interpreters by commissioners continues to decline due to the availability of on-demand video remote ASL services. The data below includes the commissioners’ use of ASL in-person interpreters in fiscal year 2023.

TABLE 5. COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM EVENT TYPES – DISTRICT COURT – FY 2023

EVENT TYPE	EVENTS 2022	EVENTS 2023
Court Referred Service	17	20
Courtroom Proceeding	7,539	8,824
Commissioners (ASL only)	9	7
Other	7	3
Total	7,572	8,854

Certified vs. Qualified

In fiscal year 2023, the District Court assigned certified interpreters to 74% of cases.

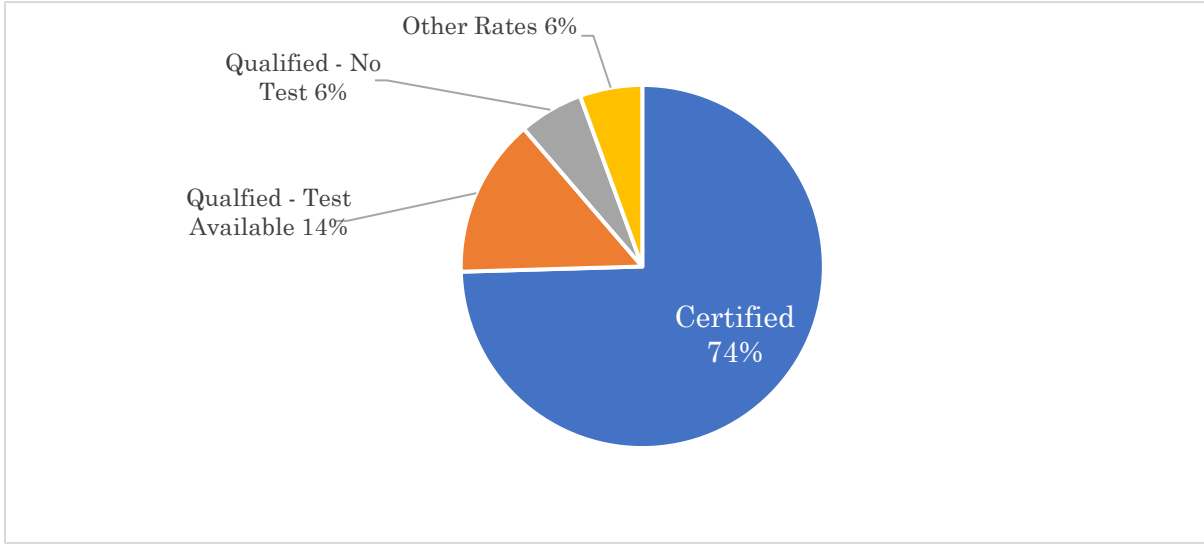


FIGURE 10. DISTRICT COURT ASSIGNMENTS BY INTERPRETER QUALIFICATION - FY 2023

Court interpreters are provided in a full range of District Court case types. In fiscal year 2023, the number of case types for which interpreters were provided remained consistent with the prior years.

TABLE 6. COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM CASE TYPES - DISTRICT COURTS – FY 2023

CASE TYPE	ASSIGNMENTS	PERCENT
Civil - Family	501	6%
Civil - Non-Family	1,968	22%
Criminal	2,131	24%
Juvenile	2	0%
Traffic	3,757	42%
Unassigned	495	6%
Total	8,854	100%

TRAVEL COSTS

With the decline in video remote interpreted proceedings, travel costs in the circuit courts have increased by 18% compared to fiscal year 2022. On the other hand, District Court travel costs have slightly declined. In fiscal year 2023, to help the courts assign interpreters in accordance with their proximity to the court location, the Court Interpreter Program added a custom feature in the scheduling platform, ScheduleInterpreter. The new feature allows court staff to see interpreters' one-way distance and travel time to the court location and assign interpreters within a reasonable geographic area.

TABLE 7. CIRCUIT COURTS AND DISTRICT COURT INTERPRETER TRAVEL COSTS - FY 2023

COURT	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY 23
Circuit Courts	21%	20%	14%	16%	19%
District Court	31%	32%	34%	37%	36%

CANCELLATIONS

Current Judiciary policy provides that an interpreter is entitled to payment if the assignment is cancelled within 24 hours of the court event. To help court staff use interpreter resources effectively, the Court Interpreter Program staff added a custom feature to ScheduleInterpreter. The new feature places those interpreters whose assignments are cancelled within 24 hours on “standby.” The feature allows court staff to utilize the standby interpreters who are already “on the clock” and assign them to last-minute requests.

TABLE 8. CIRCUIT COURTS AND DISTRICT COURT ASSIGNMENT CANCELLATION COSTS - FY 2023

COURT	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Circuit Courts	9%	9%	8%	11%	11%
District Court	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%

TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION SERVICES



As the number of limited English-proficient customers seeking court services continues to increase, court staff are prepared to assist them with the help of Language Line telephonic interpreters. Interpreters are available in more than a hundred languages on-demand or with short notice.

Language Line telephonic interpretation services are reserved only for interpretation services in the clerk's office and other public points of service. Should parties need interpretation services in the courtroom, the court will appoint a certified or qualified registry interpreter.

TABLE 9. TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION ASSIGNMENTS – FY 2019 - FY 2023

Program User	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	Δ from FY22
Circuit Courts	3,677	3,821	4,048	5,008	4,048	-19%
District Ct - Commissioners	14,371	11,744	9,659	11,170	11,944	7%
District Ct - Clerks	2,536	2,358	2,762	3,616	3,853	6%
District Ct – Help Centers	2,544	2,517	3,220	5,170	5,846	13%
Total Assignments	23,128	20,440	19,689	24,964	25,691	3%

In fiscal year 2023, the use of telephonic interpretation for District Court clerk's offices, District Court commissioners' offices and Maryland Court Help Centers continued to grow due to the overall increase in court operations.

The use of Language Line services in the circuit courts has decreased by 19% compared to the prior year even though the overall number of interpreter requests has increased.

CIRCUIT COURTS

Historically, the Circuit Court for Montgomery County has been the highest user of Language Line services. In fiscal year 2023, the use of Language Line services in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County decreased from 2,374 calls to 2,175.

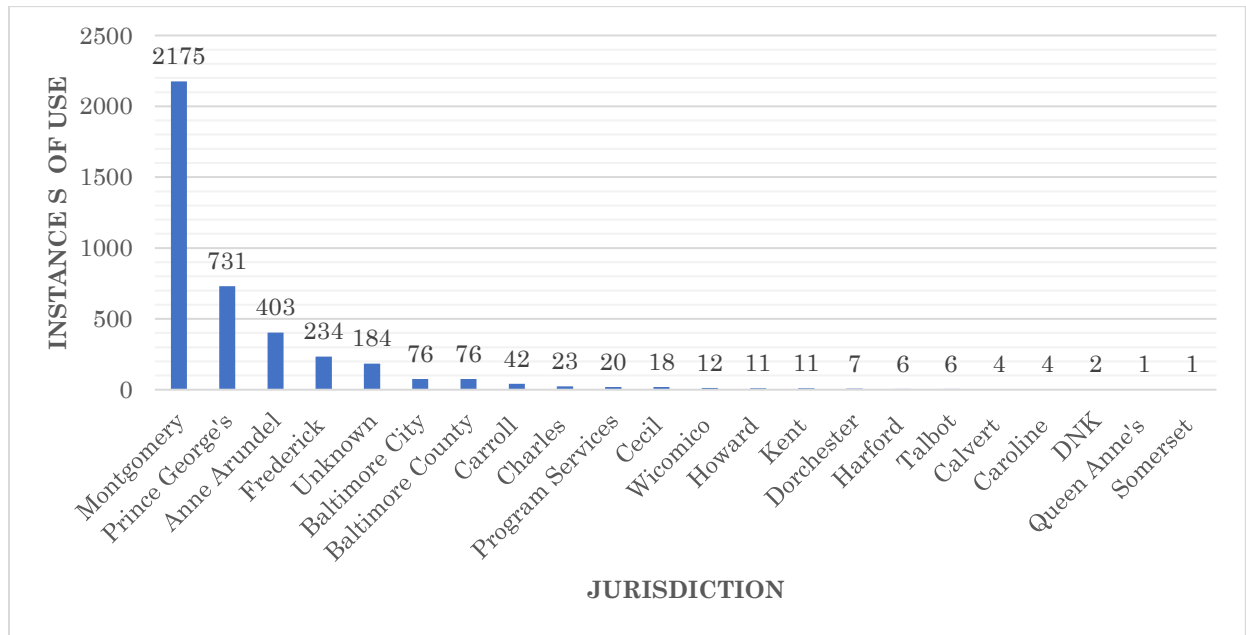


FIGURE 11. CIRCUIT COURTS - TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION BY JURISDICTION – FY 2023

Most telephonic interpretation is provided for Spanish speakers. In fiscal year 2023, Spanish telephonic interpretation represented 88% of total expenditures.

DISTRICT COURT

District Court continues to use telephonic interpreting extensively in commissioners’ offices, at clerk’s counters, and the Maryland Court Help Centers, including the latter’s statewide call center that aids litigants via phone and live chat and provides assistance in all civil case types.

The use of telephonic interpretation by District Court commissioners in fiscal year 2023 has increased by 7% compared to the prior year.

Location-based information for commissioners’ use of telephonic interpretation is reflected in the chart below.

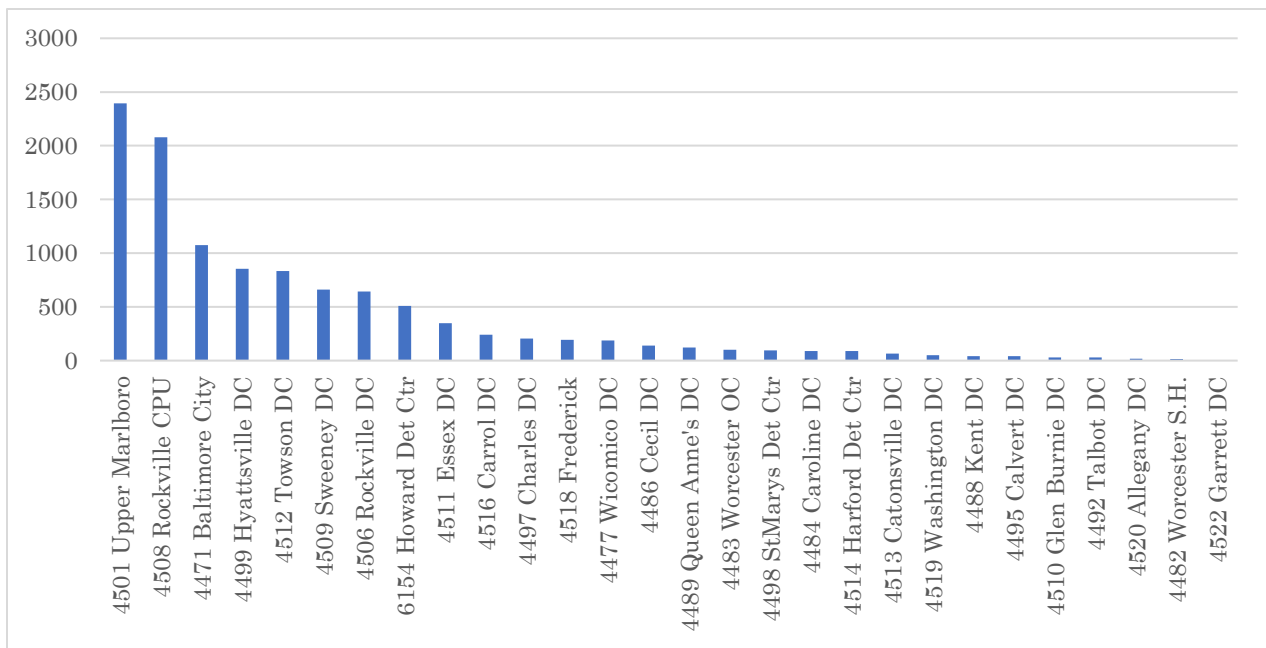


FIGURE 12. DISTRICT COURT COMMISSIONERS - TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION ASSIGNMENTS BY LOCATION - FY 2023

Clerk’s office usage more closely represents the language diversity evident in the in-person program.

COURT HELP CENTERS

Maryland Court Help Center walk-in locations use telephonic interpretation to serve individuals with limited English proficiency seeking help that day. The call center has a Spanish-language queue and uses telephonic interpretation extensively to aid a broad range of program users.

In fiscal year 2023, telephonic interpretation usage by court help centers increased by 13% compared to the prior year. In total, these centers used telephonic interpretation for 5,846 interactions in fiscal year 2023.

VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING (VRI)

In fiscal year 2023 the number of court hearings where video interpreters were used continued to decline. While the number of all assignments increased in all courts, the number of VRI proceedings decreased by 15% in the circuit courts and 26% in the District Court.

The Circuit Court for Prince George’s County continues to lead in the use of remote technology. In fiscal year 2023, the court conducted significantly fewer (864) VRI events compared to 1,184 in fiscal year 2022. While some circuit courts scaled down on VRI, others increased their VRI usage from last year or conducted interpreted proceedings remotely for the first time.

TABLE 10. CIRCUIT COURT VRI ASSIGNMENTS – FY 2023

Court	FY2021	FY2022	FY 2023	Δ from FY2022
Allegany	0	4	3	-25%
Anne Arundel	131	153	189	24%
Baltimore City	198	433	284	-34%
Baltimore City Juvenile Center	106	326	295	-10%
Baltimore County	242	366	422	15%
Calvert		12	20	67%
Caroline	0	0	2	200%
Carroll	13	1	23	2200%

Court	FY2021	FY2022	FY 2023	Δ from FY2022
Cecil	2	1	7	600%
Charles	136	102	80	-22%
Dorchester	3	1	1	0%
Frederick	4	23	38	
Harford	104	82	32	-61%
Howard	224	170	203	-19%
Kent	0	0	4	400%
Montgomery	891	472	325	-24%
Prince George's	1172	1184	864	-27%
Queen Anne's	18	16	23	44%
Wicomico	1	3	7	133%
Total	3,245	3,333	2822	-15%

TABLE 11. DISTRICT COURT VRI ASSIGNMENTS - FY 2023

Court	FY2021	FY2022	FY 2023	Δ from FY2022
Allegany	2	3	4	33%
Anne Arundel	1	14	23	64%
Baltimore City: Fayette	7	5	12	140%
Baltimore City: Patapsco	24	28	60	114%
Baltimore City Wabash		19	49	158%
Baltimore County: Catonsville	6	3	9	200%
Baltimore County: Towson	6	7	13	86%
Carrol	1	1	2	100%
Cecil	24	14	22	57%
Frederick	3	11	25	127%
Howard	1	2	1	-50%

Court	FY2021	FY2022	FY 2023	Δ from FY2022
Montgomery: Silver Spring	10	4	4	-0%
Montgomery: Rockville	12	33	32	-3%
Prince George's: Hyattsville	29	24	2	-92%
Prince George's: Upper Marlboro	487	217	7	-97%
St. Mary's	6	4	4	-0%
Talbot	16	6	7	17%
Total	635	374	276	-26%

REMOTE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE SERVICES

Remote ASL services are available in clerks' offices, court help centers, and anywhere in the courthouse deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals may need assistance to communicate on-demand with court personnel.

In fiscal year 2023, the use of the video remote ASL services increased by 36%.

TABLE 12. REMOTE ASL SERVICES PROVIDED IN ALL COURTS - FY 2019 - FY 2023

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY 23	Δ from FY22
Calls	64	106	54	146	180	23%
Minutes	1,917	2,996	1,603	4,253	5,792	36%

TRANSLATION SERVICES

Access to Justice provides translation services to the courts. These services are limited to the translation of official court forms, signs, brochures, video scripts, court instructions, and court web pages. To ensure quality and consistency in the translation process, an outside vendor handles all translations.

TABLE 15. TRANSLATION PROJECT REQUESTS – FY 2023

Requesting Court / Department	No. of projects FY 2023
Access to Justice	99
District Court Headquarters	346
Circuit Court for Cecil	1
Circuit Court for Charles Co.	1
Circuit Court for Frederick Co.	5
Circuit Court for Howard Co.	2
Circuit Court for Talbot Co.	1
Total	455

TABLE 16. TRANSLATION PROJECT TYPES - COMPLETED – FY 2023

Document Type	No. of Projects Completed
Brochure	32
Form	310
Notice	18
Publication - Other	18
Video Script	27
Web Content	47
Total	455

TABLE 17. TRANSLATION PROJECTS BY LANGUAGE – FY 2023

Language	No. of Projects
Amharic	1
Arabic	1
Chinese	82
French	82
Haitian Creole	2
Korean	82
Portuguese	1
Russian	82
Spanish	126

RECOMMENDATIONS

SPANISH STAFF INTERPRETERS

The data in this report suggest that the Maryland Judiciary should consider adding staff interpreters in the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County and the District Court in Baltimore County. These two jurisdictions have the highest interpreter usage in the state, but not enough staff interpreters to help with the volume of requests and walk-ins. Adding a staff interpreter will help these courts deal with emergency matters and last minute requests onsite or via video and will allow the court to respond more effectively to the needs of persons with limited English.

TABLE 13. RECOMMENDED STAFF INTERPRETER POSITIONS

Jurisdiction	Current Staff Positions	FY23 Spanish Costs	Recommended Additional Positions
Circuit Courts			
Prince George’s	3 (1 vacant)	\$ 489,035	2
District Court			
Baltimore County	1	\$ 257,080	2

BILINGUAL STAFF ROLL-OUT

The Bilingual Pilot Program was implemented on October 12, 2023, at the Circuit Court for Montgomery County and the District Court in Rockville. It will be evaluated for effectiveness and further expansion in spring of 2024. If it is determined that the program is successful and should be expanded, the Judiciary should consider the following jurisdictions as the next rollout locations:

- Circuit Court in Baltimore City
- Circuit for Baltimore County
- Circuit Court for Frederick County
- Circuit Court for Prince George’s County

- District Court in Baltimore City
- District Court in Baltimore County
- District Court in Frederick County
- District Court in Prince George’s County

These jurisdictions have the highest number of Spanish language interpreter requests for court events. While the services of court interpreters are essential for events that require participation and understanding by parties, qualified bilingual judiciary clerks will assist customers in their native language at the various points of service in the courthouse.

VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETATION

The use of video remote interpreting in the Maryland courts continues to decline. When onsite interpreters are not available, courts tend to postpone hearings rather than making arrangements for a video interpreter.

The initial implementation of videoconferencing was prompted by the pandemic in 2020. We encourage the continued use of video remote technology in court proceedings, when possible.

The benefits of video remote proceedings include:

- Increased access to certified and qualified interpreters, especially in languages of lesser diffusion.
- Allowing limited English proficient litigants the ability to participate in a physical or virtual court hearing with the assistance of a court-appointed interpreter without extended delay.
- Allowing limited English proficient litigants with disabilities, transportation issues, and other impediments to make a court appearance remotely.

The Judiciary is well-positioned to maintain and expand video technology-based court events, including, but not limited to, certain types of court hearings, mediations, court help centers, appearances before commissioners, and other events deemed appropriate. The Court Interpreter Program staff have trained hundreds of registry interpreters and court staff on the use of Zoom for Government technology in full and hybrid remote settings. Staff are working on creating additional educational resources for judges on how to work with interpreters in video remote proceedings.

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

Over the coming year, the Access to Justice, Court Interpreter Program, intends to collaborate with the Judicial College and Maryland State Bar Association, State's Attorney's Office, and Maryland Office of the Public Defender to plan educational opportunities for court staff, judges, and attorneys.

Judicial College Courses. In 2024, the Court Interpreter Program will teach two one-hour long webinars on the following topics:

- *How to Assist Limited English Proficient Customers and Cultural Sensitivity*
- *How to Assist Hard of Hearing Customers*

Additionally, Access to Justice plans to create professional videos for judges on best practices working with court interpreters. Each video in the series will be approximately five minutes in length and address the following topics:

- *Basic Tips on How to Conduct Interpreted Proceedings*
- *Managing Objections to the Interpretation*
- *How to Work with American Sign Language Interpreters*
- *Team Interpreters in Trials*
- *Interpretation of Audio/Video Evidence*
- *Interpreters for Self-Represented Litigants*
- *Interpreters in Video Remote Proceedings*
- *Relay Interpretation in Indigenous and CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreters) languages*