

CJA Quick Guide: Interpreter Services and CJA 21 Voucher Preparation

When a court-appointed attorney (CJA) needs pre-trial interpretation and/or translation services to represent his/her client, the attorney may hire an interpreter for out-of-court services. The interpreter's claim for services will be submitted by the CJA attorney on a CJA 21 Voucher for Expert and Other Services and paid through CJA funding. Payment to the expert/interpreter comes from the U.S. Treasury in Washington, D.C., NOT the U.S. District Court, District of Maine.

When first contacting an interpreter, a CJA attorney is encouraged to negotiate reasonable hourly rates for interpreting and or translation services depending on the market. In no event may the rates exceed those set forth below, without Court approval. If the estimate of services required is expected to exceed \$800.00, exclusive of expenses, prior Court authorization to obtain services should be obtained by the attorney of record by submitting an *ex-parte* CJA 21 Voucher which serves as a motion to the Court for authorization. The judge will review the motion/voucher and may set specific parameters in the Court Order section of the CJA 21. **The court strongly suggests that counsel seek prior authorization in each instance expert services are required.**

Maximum Compensation Rates for Interpreting - effective 6/1/2012

For work performed on or after June 1, 2012, interpreters procured by CJA-appointed counsel will be paid at the following rate only for the actual hours worked unless otherwise ordered by a Judge of this Court. AO certified or professionally-qualified interpreters may be paid up to \$55.00 per hour, not to exceed the current "full-day rate" for such interpreters as established by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (currently \$388). Non-certified or language-skilled interpreters may be paid up to \$35.00 per hour, not to exceed the current "full-day rate" for such interpreters as established by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (currently \$187).

In summary, the Court has adopted the following presumptively reasonable maximum hourly rates for CJA interpreters:

Certified: \$55/hour - Amount per day cannot exceed \$388
Non-Certified: \$35/hour - Amount per day cannot exceed \$187

Compensation Rates for Translation – effective FY 2012

The U.S. District Court in Maine has adopted as reasonable the following rate schedule recommended by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and set by the United States Department of State. Translation of documents is to be billed on a per-word basis only.

Type of Material	Cost/Words	Description
General	16.5¢ per word	Fairly rapid translation containing little or no specialized terminology
Semi-technical	17¢ per word	Some specialized terminology & requires a fair amount of research by an experienced translator
Technical	18.5¢ per word	Replete with highly specialized or esoteric terminology requiring special expertise and/or painstaking & lengthy research by an experienced translator

Submitting the CJA 21 for payment of services

When the case has ended, or the CJA attorney is certain the interpreter's services are complete and will not be used again in the case, follow these steps:

1. The attorney will send the original CJA 21 voucher to the interpreter.
2. The interpreter will prepare his/her invoice to be attached to the CJA 21. The invoice should describe in detail:
 - the service provided e.g. "Met with attorney and defendant at County Jail"
 - the dates of service
 - the amount of time spent (in hours and tenths of hours), and
 - the basis for the fee claimed as negotiated by the attorney and the interpreter
3. On the CJA 21 form, the interpreter completes Boxes 16 and 17, signs and dates the voucher and RETURNS the voucher and invoice to the CJA attorney.
4. The CJA attorney will review the interpreter's invoice and information in Box 17 of the voucher and sign in Box 18 -Certification of Attorney certifying that the services were rendered for this case.
5. The attorney mails/delivers the CJA 21 voucher to the Court for review and approval.

The Statutory Case Maximum for Expert Services is \$2,400.00

Even if prior authorization for services has been obtained for the interpreter's services in an amount that exceeds the statutory case maximum of \$2,400.00, Circuit Court approval must be obtained; and the attorney must provide a letter in support of the excess claim.

For questions or further information, forms, and form instructions, refer to our website:

<http://www.med.uscourts.gov/cja-criminal-justice-act>

or call us: in Portland 780-3356; in Bangor 945-0575