

# CONSORTIUM FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS IN THE COURTS

**Mission: To inspire and enable its members to promote equal access to justice in courts and tribunals by eliminating language barriers for persons with limited English proficiency**

## Member benefits, resources, and responsibilities

### Benefits and resources free with membership:

1. Access to oral performance examinations in sixteen languages
  - Consortium staff at the NCSC maintains the Consortium’s oral examinations, packaging and shipping test materials to members in advance of scheduling testing. Members accept responsibility for the security of test materials while they are in possession of them and return all materials to staff, keeping nothing in their possession.
2. National database of tests and test scores
  - All test results from all members are reported to Consortium staff, who maintains a national database to which members have online access.
3. Access to written examinations
  - The Consortium has two written examinations that assess candidates’ proficiency in English (the exams are not bilingual). Consortium staff maintains these examinations and provide test materials to members in advance of scheduled testing.
4. Subscription to e-mail listserv
  - Members are included in an e-mail listserv through which members exchange interpreter referrals and share challenges, successes, procedures, processes, rules, information, and products.
5. Annual Business Meeting and Professional Conference
  - Members are invited to an annual business meeting and professional conference, offering professional educational development and the opportunity to personally network with and learn from experienced court interpreter and language access program managers from member states and other entities. It also provides an opportunity to participate in the business and development of Consortium priorities, policies, and procedures.
6. Web site
  - Staff maintains and updates the Consortium’s web site, which includes a “members only” site. With a password, members can access Consortium budget information,

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committee meeting and annual conference minutes, and other resources. With an additional member-specific password, members can access the national database of tests.

### 7. Biennial survey

- The Consortium's Professional Issues Committee conducts a biennial survey on the characteristics of the court interpreter/language access programs in member states and entities, and organizes the responses into useful comparative tables. This biennial report provides an excellent resource for members who want to know how other states organize and manage their programs. The survey results are available to members on the "members only" web pages.

### 8. Consultation

- Staff at the National Center for State Courts support and assist Consortium members. Members are provided with test materials for scheduled test events, and staff is available by e-mail and telephone to assist members in any way possible. Staff attends standing committee meetings, prepares minutes, and designs or develops products as directed by those committees.

### 9. Bank of best practices

- Members share best practices as they are developed and designed. The Consortium has developed and adopted ten keys for a successful language access program.

### 10. Statistical data as it becomes available

- Staff conducts statistical analyses that examine the reliability and validity of test forms and other psychometric qualities. In addition, annually, members are provided with a national view of the passing rates, by state and by language.

### 11. Voting rights

- Depending upon membership level, members have the right to cast votes that decide the direction and future of the organization.

## **Benefits and resources available under contract with Consortium staff at the National Center for State Courts:**

### 1. Court staff and judicial training

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- Consortium staff at the National Center can provide training for court staff and judges. They can also recommend other expert consultants who provide training in specific content areas, depending upon member need.
2. Examination development or modification
    - Consortium staff has experience and expertise in the examination development process and can manage and recruit the appropriate consultants to develop new or modify existing examinations, as needed by the member.
  3. Technical assistance
    - Consortium staff can provide members with technical assistance in specific areas as needed; for example, designing a statewide interpreter testing program, test proctor training, or any number of other topics. On occasion, technical assistance can be provided to a member free of charge.

### Responsibilities of membership

1. Fees

New members pay a membership fee that is based upon the population of non-English speaking persons in the jurisdiction, based upon the most recent Census.  
After five years of membership, members are invoiced for an annual supplemental fee in an amount equal to ten percent of the original membership fee.
2. Consortium business and activities

Members are expected and encouraged to actively participate in Consortium committee activities, conferences, and other Consortium business and to respond to requests for information from other members through the Consortium's listserv.
3. Examinations

If the member administers examinations, it must do so in strict accordance with standards

  - Before administering the Consortium's oral examinations, new members must undergo mandatory training.
  - When existing members experience a change or turn-over in the program manager's position, that member must undergo mandatory training.
  - Oral examination administration training is offered during the annual conference free of charge; if a member wishes to administer oral examinations before that time, the

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member must enter into a contract with Consortium staff and pay time and travel for the training.

- Members must agree that they will administer oral examinations in accordance with the training provided.

If the member rates examinations, it must do so in strict accordance with standards

- Members must either enter into contracts directly with Consortium-approved raters or with Consortium staff at the NCSC to have oral examinations rated. In either case, members must comply with Consortium standards and perform necessary tasks to ensure the reliability of the rating process.

If a member state uses examination forms, it must strictly comply with all security and confidentiality requirements

- Members must agree to abide by all security and confidentiality requirements to ensure that no oral or written examinations, or any part thereof, are compromised. In the event that an examination is compromised, the member will be expected to reimburse the Consortium for the cost to either modify the compromised test materials or develop a replacement test.