

COURTROOM OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

1. Candidates should observe proceedings in person. The proceedings can be interpreted or non-interpreted. There is value in observing both. The program recommends to start in municipal or county courts. Municipal and county courts in the State of Ohio have very active dockets. These courts have jurisdiction over traffic and non-traffic misdemeanors. They also hear civil cases in which the amount of money in dispute does not exceed \$15,000. Both municipal and county courts have the authority to conduct preliminary hearings in felony cases. Judges sitting in these courts, like probate judges, also have the authority to perform marriages.

You may also try other trial courts like common pleas general division, probate, domestic relations or juvenile. Avoid mayor's courts as they are not trial courts. Mayor's courts are not a part of the judicial branch of Ohio government and are not courts of record.

2. Courtroom observation hours may be obtained by personally observing courtroom proceedings without actively participating in them so that careful and directed attention is paid to the proceedings.

3. Observation in the federal courts may also be counted toward the total recommended. Make sure you personally observe the proceedings.

4. Language-specific observation is not necessary. An applicant seeking a court interpreter designation in one language may count toward the recommended proceedings interpreted in any language.

5. If you happen to observe proceedings when an interpreter is being used, beware of the level of skill of the interpreter. Unskilled, uncertified and unqualified interpreters may demonstrate improper technique, incorrect skills and/or lack of understanding of the Code of Conduct for Court Interpreters and Translators.