



**COMMISSIONERS COURT
COMMUNICATION**

COURT ORDER NUMBER <#CourtOrderNumber#>

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DATE: 1/28/2025

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF THE UPDATED TARRANT COUNTY COURT
INTERPRETER POLICY**

***** CONSENT AGENDA *****

COMMISSIONERS COURT ACTION REQUESTED

It is requested that the Commissioners Court approve the updated Tarrant County Court Interpreter Policy

BACKGROUND

On December 8, 1988, the Commissioners Court, through Court Order #79732, established a payment schedule of \$50.00 per hour for oral court interpreters.

On November 17,2020, the Commissioners Court, through Court Order #134246, established a payment schedule maximum of \$100.00 per hour. Hourly rates above \$100.00 would require an exception from the Commissioners Court.

Staff is requesting that the minimum payment language be removed. The removal will reduce the number of exceptions presented to Commissioners Court.

The Audit Department and Office of Budget and Risk Management will continue to review the invoices to ensure the policy is applied properly.

The Commissioners Court does not have authority to establish a payment schedule for deaf interpreters. This policy has been approved by the Criminal District Attorney's Office and Budget Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

There should be no fiscal impact; however, it should decrease the number exceptions presented to the Court for action.

SUBMITTED BY	Budget and Risk Management	PREPARED BY:	Helen Giese
		APPROVED BY:	Helen Giese



TARRANT COUNTY

COURT INTERPRETER POLICY

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Tarrant County Commissioners Court, being the policy development and budgetary control unit of county government and in accordance with Article 38.30, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, developed a policy related to the payment of court interpreters. A court interpreter serves as a communication bridge for a non-English-speaking person in a criminal court proceeding. A court interpreter is responsible for rendering a complete and accurate interpretation or translation, without altering, omitting, or adding anything to what is stated or written.

II. DEFINITIONS

Interpreter refers to a person who translates orally for parties in the language understood by the person who do not understand and/or speak the English language.

III. POLICY GUIDELINES

- A. Article 38.30, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, allows a commissioners court to set a payment schedule for the services of interpreters in excess of the amounts established in the Code. The Tarrant County Commissioners Court establishes a payment schedule of a maximum per hour shall be \$100.00 for all languages.
- B. The judge hearing the case has the authority to reduce the fee of the interpreter. ~~A minimum payment of one hour may be paid to interpreters. Time exceeding the minimum shall be billed in 15-minute increments rounded up to the next quarter hour.~~
- C. If the judge approves payment of an interpreter invoice that exceeds the payment schedule or other terms of this policy, Commissioners Court approval is required prior to payment.

- D. Notwithstanding Article 38.30(b), Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, the hourly rate does not apply to travel or meal times.
- E. Tarrant County may utilize employees, volunteers, contract services or telephone/video interpreter services when available and appropriate.
- F. Invoices should be submitted within 30 days of the assignment and must include the name of the interpreter, company name, case number, time period (hours billed for), and the language translated. No invoices may be submitted prior to completion of an assignment. The Commissioners Court must approve any exceptions to the billing process. The County reserves the right to adjust or reject invoices for overlapping time periods even though the service may relate to a different court and/or case.
- G. This policy does not apply to Article 38.31, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, related to interpreters for deaf persons.

Court Interpreter Policy

Adopted: Court Order #79732 (December 8, 1988)

Amended: Court Order ##### (November 17, 2020)