IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Administrative Order No.: 2026-11-Gen

COURT INTERPRETERS OFFICE

(a) Pursuant to Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution and section 43.26, Florida Statutes, the chief judge of each judicial circuit is charged with the authority and power to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice.

(b) Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(3) states the chief judge "ensures the efficient and proper administration of all courts within [this] circuit, considering available resources."

(c) Court proceedings sometimes involve persons who require the assistance of a foreign language or sign language interpreter to facilitate communication between the court and non-English speaking or limited-English-proficient or deaf persons.

(d) Florida Statutes and court rules establish the courts' duties and requirements for providing interpreters for court proceedings, and set forth the qualifications for interpreters appointed by the court. Qualified court interpreters are appointed for court proceedings where a fundamental interest is at stake and the inability of individuals to understand or express themselves in English may prevent full and necessary participation in court proceedings. Such cases include, but are not limited to, circuit and county criminal matters, juvenile delinquency and dependency, paternity, domestic violence injunction, mental health and incapacity proceedings, and any other matters in which the court determines an interpreter necessary to satisfy due process.

(e) The Court Interpreters Office of Court Administration consists of full-time Spanish and Creole staff interpreters, and free-lance interpreters with which the Circuit contracts for Sign Language, Spanish, Creole, and other exotic languages.

(f) In accordance with the authority vested in the chief judge by Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and Florida

Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

(1) The Court Interpreters Office shall operate under the auspices of the Trial Court Administrator who shall be responsible for implementing any and all procedures necessary to meet the requirements and duties established by Florida Statutes or court rules for the provision of interpreters at court proceedings pursuant to section 90.606 and 90.6063, Florida Statutes, and Rule 2.560, Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration.

(2) All foreign language interpreters shall provide services at the central courthouse unless otherwise authorized by the Chief Judge or Trial Court Administrator. If a foreign language interpreter is required for a court proceeding at a satellite courthouse, which is not a trial or complex hearing, the translation shall be provided via the remote interpreter system. If a foreign language interpreter is required for a trial or complex hearing that is pending before a judge located at a satellite courthouse location, the case may be transferred to the central courthouse for further judicial action.

(3) Any interpreter who is a State Courts System employee or contractor with the Circuit shall not interpret any audio or video recording, digital document, or other written evidence that a party is introducing into evidence or referring to at a court proceeding. If an audio recording, video recording, digital document, or other written evidence is offered as evidence or referenced at a court proceeding it is the responsibility of the offering party to have the audio recording, video recording, digital document, or written evidence translated into English at the offering party's expense. The party offering the audio recording, video recording, digital document, or written evidence shall provide to the Court at the trial or hearing the transcript of the English translation.

(4) Interpreter services may only be requested by a judge, judicial assistant, clerk, attorney of record, self-represented litigant, or Court Administration employee. If the services of an interpreter are needed at a hearing, the attorney must so inform the presiding judge or judicial assistant when scheduling the hearing. Opposing counsel must inform the presiding judge or judicial assistant of the need for interpreter services as soon as counsel is made aware of the need. Requests for a spoken language court interpreter must be submitted using the Court's online Interpreter Request Form: https://CMS.17th.flcourts.org/interpreter-request-form. Requests for Spanish or Creole interpreters shall be made no later than two (2) business days prior to the court proceeding. For all other spoken

language interpreters, requests shall be made no less than seven (7) days prior to the scheduled court proceeding. In the event an interpreter is needed and is not requested within these time frames, the requesting party shall submit their request using the online Interpreter Request Form and also call the Court Interpreter's Office at 954-831-7290.

(5) Upon receipt of a request for an interpreter, all efforts are given to locate a certified or other duly qualified interpreter in compliance with Rule 2.560, Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration. However, if after diligent search, a certified, language skilled, or provisionally approved interpreter is not available, the presiding judge, magistrate, or hearing officer, after finding good cause, may appoint an interpreter who is otherwise registered with the Office of the State Courts Administrator in accordance with the Rules for Certification and Regulation of Spoken Language Court Interpreters. No appointment shall be made unless the presiding judge, magistrate, or hearing officer makes a determination, on the record, that the proposed interpreter is competent to interpret in the proceedings.

(6) If, after a diligent search, an interpreter meeting the qualifications under Rule 2.560(e)(1) and (e)(2), Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration cannot be located, the presiding judge, magistrate or hearing officer, after finding good cause under the Rule 2.560 (3), may make an appointment in exceptional circumstances of an interpreter who is not certified, language skilled, provisionally approved, or otherwise registered with the Office of the State Courts Administrator. No appointment shall be made under exceptional circumstances unless the presiding judge, magistrate, or hearing officer makes the findings, on the record, of the exceptional circumstances that given the demands of the case and the interpreter's sworn assertion that he or she is able to communicate effectively in the languages in which interpreter services are required.

(7) When interpreter services are needed to assist in more trials or proceedings than the Court Interpreters Office has personnel to cover, cases will be given priority in the following order: (1) capital cases; (2) cases in which speedy trial has not been waived and the end of the speedy trial period is quickly approaching; (3) by the severity of the offense. In the event of a conflict concerning the severity of the offense, the Chief Judge or the Chief Judge's designee shall decide which case will be given precedence.

(8) Court Administration Spanish staff interpreters will be available for first appearance and other proceedings during weekends and court holidays. If the need

for an interpreter for a language other than Spanish were to arise during the weekend or court holiday, the Spanish interpreter on duty shall contact Language Line Services to secure the required language interpreter. If the Court Interpreters Office is unable to secure a qualified interpreter for a proceeding required to be held by law, the presiding judge shall utilize his or her discretion in determining the appropriate course of action.

(9) The presiding judge shall call cases requiring the use of Court Administration staff or contract interpreters before other matters, but shall not be required to interrupt a proceeding that has already begun. Interpreters shall move to their next assignment if the presiding judge does not utilize the interpreter's services within fifteen (15) minutes of their arrival, or the conclusion of the case immediately before the court, whichever occurs first. Every effort should be made to minimize the length of time the interpreter must remain in the courtroom.

(10) Court Administration staff interpreters shall not be required to provide interpretation services to defendants outside the presence of his or her counsel, unless otherwise directed by the presiding judge.

(11) Court Administration staff interpreters shall only provide interpreting services within the courtroom, which services may include assisting an attorney with a brief "in-custody" client exchange, such as updating or conveying an offer, and shall only occur under circumstances as the presiding judge may deem necessary. When necessary, the presiding judge shall instruct the Court Administration staff interpreter to assist an attorney with communicating with an "in-custody" client once the defendant is brought into the courtroom.

(12) Interpreters shall not accompany defendants or any other non-English speaking individual to the Clerk's office, probation office, or to any other destination.

(13) The use of headsets and microphones shall be used in all venues whenever possible.

(14) Interpreters who contract with the Circuit to provide interpreting services for court proceedings shall be compensated pursuant to their contract and in accordance with any fee schedule approved by the Florida Supreme Court. In the event no interpreters are available to provide services within this payment schedule, upon presentment of an order by the presiding judge indicating an

interpreter is required, Court Administration is authorized to negotiate a reasonable fee for the provision of such services.

(15) Every effort must be made to obtain the most qualified interpreter for each court proceeding. It is the responsibility of the Court Interpreters Office to communicate to the presiding judge, magistrate, or hearing officer the qualifications of any contract interpreter scheduled to interpret court proceedings so that they may render appropriate findings prior to the interpreter's appointment in compliance with court rules.

(16) This Administrative Order supersedes and vacates Administrative Order 2019-27-Gen (Amendment 2).

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida, on this 27th day of March, 2026.

/s/ Carol-Lisa Phillips
Carol-Lisa Phillips, Chief Judge