

NCI CAPABILITY STATEMENT

The National Center for Interpretation Testing, Research and Policy (NCI) is a research and outreach unit at the University of Arizona. NCI is charged with promoting intercultural communication and social justice for language minorities through cutting-edge research, training, and testing for interpreters and translators. NCI was established to meet the needs of a state and nation experiencing dramatic growth in the numbers of limited- and non-English speaking minorities requiring translation and interpretation services. Because these numbers will continue to increase, intercultural/interlingual communication is one of the newest and most critical areas of scholarly interest and public service opportunities for institutions of higher education.

For over 30 years NCI has used its knowledge in support of the local, national and international community to ensure language access for all limited- and non-English members of the community. NCI is committed to achieving this goal in a manner which respects and supports the cultural and linguistic diversity which it sees as a profound asset within any community.

NCI has assisted a variety of agencies in both the private and public sectors in finding empirically sound ways in which to meet the language needs of their clientele by providing quality language services, including interpreter training and testing, translation and interpreting services, and policy and language access research. Some of NCI's client's include:

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| ✓ Administrative Office of the United States Courts | ✓ State of Texas Department of Disability and Assistive Rehabilitative Services – Deaf and Hard of hearing Services |
| ✓ Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (U.S. Department of Education) | ✓ State of New Mexico Institute for Public Law |
| ✓ National Institute for Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) | ✓ City of San Francisco |
| ✓ Memorial Medical Center, New Mexico | ✓ State of Alaska Refugee Resettlement |
| ✓ Tucson Medical Center, Arizona | ✓ Kaiser Permanente |
| | ✓ Tele-Interpreters |

In support of its mission, NCI has three main areas of focus: Training, Testing, and Research.

Interpreter Training

NCI is widely recognized as a national leader in the field of interpreter testing and training and has an exemplary 30-year history of recruiting and training interpreters who represent numerous languages and cultures, including English, Spanish, ASL, Cantonese, Russian, Inupiat, Navajo, and others. All of these training programs have their origins in the intensive pedagogy of the Agnese Haury Institute (now called the Court Interpreter Training Institute, or CITI), which since 1983 has been the premier professional interpreter training program in the country, which rapidly builds interpreters' language proficiency, interpreting skill, and cultural competency and provides students with the tools to continue their development independently. NCI has unparalleled experience and expertise in delivering high-

quality, proficiency-oriented interpreter training and producing valid, reliable, and legally defensible interpreter certification/credentialing tests. NCI is equally adept at providing a 3-hour online webinar and at developing, administering, completing, and evaluating complex multi-year projects to produce new knowledge.

The teaching approach of the Agnese Haury Institute has always been providing practice-oriented instruction focused on actively improving the quality of interpreters’ work, increasing accuracy and reducing error, through intensive language lab small group work and individualized feedback. The Agnese Haury Institute’s language lab work is complemented and magnified by specialized lectures on topics relevant to the court interpreter, but its practice-based orientation has always been at its heart. In fact, pre-/post-testing data at the CITI have consistently shown a roughly 40% reduction in interpreter error as a result of the training—it makes interpreters better.

This teaching approach was implemented, for example, in a series of multi-year projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). These projects are examples of NCI’s capacity to complete complex, innovative projects from conception through evaluation and institutionalization:

- The *Professional Language Development Project (PLDP)*—a three-week training for bilingual high school students to improve their academic engagement and college readiness.
- The *Arizona Initiative*—developed and institutionalized one of the first translation and interpretation postsecondary majors in the U.S.
- *Preparación and Preparación Online*—developed and implemented onsite and online teacher training and classroom curriculum to bring the PLDP’s successes to more students.

The same pedagogy informs NCI’s many other training initiatives. Below is a sample of the breadth and depth of training opportunities NCI has offered:

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| ✓ Advanced Consecutive & Simultaneous | ✓ Medical Skill Building I |
| ✓ Certification Landscape | ✓ Medical Skill Building II |
| ✓ Court Interpreter Training Institute (CITI) | ✓ Medical v. Court Interpreter Ethics |
| ✓ Ethics | ✓ Professional Translation |
| ✓ FCICE Oral Test Preparation | ✓ Skill Building I |
| ✓ FCICE Written Test Preparation | ✓ Skill Building II |
| ✓ Immigration Interpreting | ✓ State Court Oral Test Preparation |
| ✓ Interpreting in Education Settings | ✓ State Court Written Test Preparation |
| ✓ Legal Sight Translation | ✓ The Interpreter and Civil Depositions |
| ✓ Legal Translation | ✓ Transcription and Translation |
| ✓ Medical Interpreter Training Institute (MITI) | ✓ Working as an Independent Contractor |

These trainings can be offered onsite or online. **Even more important, these and other trainings NCI has provided are designed with customization in mind.** The curricula are modular, such that, drawing on existing materials, varied topics can be combined to produce training that specifically addresses a client’s needs.

Finally, NCI offers a variety of self-study options through home language lab-style products to online self-paced courses (coming soon!).

One training participant offered a typical comment on the quality of NCI's training:

[I]t's been the best training I've ever received! Although some of it was really tough stuff, the atmosphere was really friendly. Before starting I wasn't sure I'd profit much from it, because I didn't have sufficient knowledge about court interpreting or the law. But that's exactly why I had such a good time. I was amazed to find myself learning all this stuff (and not just listening, but truly learning) while having so much. And I feel I have improved greatly as an interpreter. Apart from the teaching, the organization of the whole thing was just seamless. You guys rock!

Interpreter Testing

NCI has been successfully engaged in the research and development of interpreter certification and professional language proficiency testing since 1980, and has pioneered the foundational interpreting credentialing and certification instruments and processes universally accepted in the field of interpretation. It is here that NCI truly distinguishes itself. To our knowledge, there is no other organization in the U.S. that has produced as many varied interpreter certification exams from conception to completion. Only NCI has consistently demonstrated excellence in building valid certification exams from the ground up: carrying out job task analyses focused on interpreters' work and using these findings to develop valid, state-of-the-art certification exams consistent with the standards for high stakes employment testing outlined in *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, 1999), and current testing literature. Some of the tests developed by NCI include:

- **The Federal Court Interpreter Certification Exam (FCICE)** was an innovative testing model which has since set the standard for all subsequent interpreter certification tests in the field. The FCICE was developed in Spanish, Navajo, and Haitian Creole by NCI under contract (1980-2000) to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the agency that oversees all U.S. federal courts.
- **The New Mexico-Arizona Navajo Interpreter Certification Exam** was developed and has been used to certify Navajo interpreters at the state level from 1993-2012.
- **The Texas Interpreter for the Deaf Certification Exams** developed the ASL/English interpreting written and performance tests to discern the interpreting competence of practicing interpreters at 3 levels of competence/complexity.
- **The Texas Trilingual Interpreter Certification Exams** were the first ever interpreter certification exams that focus on the ability to interpret between three languages (Spanish, English, and ASL).
- **The Court Interpreter Certificate of Proficiency.** Because state court tests were not universally adopted, some states utilized other means by which to assess interpreter competency. NCI's Court Interpreter Certificate of Proficiency (CICP) was developed to be a functional test of Spanish/English oral interpretation focused on state court

settings which can reliably and validly provide enough information upon which to make a fair decision on interpreter selection.

- **The Medical Interpreter Competency Examination.** The Medical Interpreter Competency Examination (MICE) is an interpreting performance test developed by NCI.
- **Kaiser Permanente Bilingual Physician Certification Exams.** A pioneering professional proficiency test which assesses physicians' ability to perform their duties in Spanish without the aid of an interpreter.
- **Bilingual Interpreter Proficiency Exam.** A credentialing exam developed for the city of San Francisco to assess minimum linguistic and interpreting proficiency required for bilingual emergency personnel's ability to perform their duties in Spanish or in Cantonese, or to act as interpreters in these languages.

NCI develops custom tests for clients' needs by analyzing those needs and applying NCI's testing model to meet those empirically established requirements. This model was developed and validated at NCI through its pioneering work in developing the Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination, now widely considered the gold standard in interpreter testing and emulated by most subsequent interpreter certification tests. The application of this robust, validated model enables NCI to produce valid, reliable interpreter proficiency and special purpose language proficiency tests adapted to a variety of settings and clients.

Finally, NCI's testing knowledge has allowed it to develop tests equivalent to examinations that are used to certify interpreters and to then use them as tools for preparing candidates for certification testing. This kind of test prep training allows candidates to experience a simulated testing environment with a test that is equal to or harder than the real thing.

Research & Policy

NCI assists a variety of agencies in both the private and public sectors in finding empirically sound ways in which to meet the language needs of their clientele by providing quality language access needs analyses, language access plans, as well as research and policy statement development.

The staff at the Center have created a number of studies for agencies that promote the rights of limited- and non-English speakers, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Arizona Hispanic Bar Association.

NCI can bring its expertise to bear to determine organizations' language needs and to produce language access plans that will assist those organizations in meeting their language needs and ensuring compliance with their Title VI language access obligations.