



Video remote interpreting expands in the courts

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Providing effective and efficient language access services to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals has always been a top priority for state courts. Historically, this has been through the in-person provision of qualified court interpreters. However, the COVID-19 pandemic required this focus to broaden significantly. In the face of the public health crisis, courts across the nation had to quickly pivot to ensure continued access to justice. For many, this meant moving to virtual courtrooms where all or most of the participants in a proceeding could appear remotely. It also meant considering new and alternative ways to access and use interpreters in a virtual environment.

Almost three years after the widespread establishment of the virtual courtroom, we are now seeing a shift back to in-person court proceedings and operations once again. However, many courts are continuing to find innovative ways to support video remote interpretation (VRI) to provide interpreter services. Some examples include:

- The [Judicial Council of California](#) is meeting VRI training needs by developing live virtual trainings and court clinics to support court staff and court interpreters. Topics cover equipment set-up, preparation, and conducting VRI proceedings and events using various platforms. In addition, remote hearings [resources](#) have been developed for court users. The resources will be available in nine other languages.
- The [Yuma County Justice Center in Arizona](#) has developed an integrated audio and video conferencing system which links Yuma County rural courts to interpreters at the Justice Center.
- The [Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts](#) (AOC) has implemented the use of [VRI services in various courtrooms](#), by appointment, across the state by equipping an interpreter room located in the AOC in Phoenix with the equipment necessary to connect an interpreter based in Phoenix to courtrooms in distance counties.

- The [Judicial Branch of New Mexico](#) has developed [VRI training for court staff and judges](#), as well as [Bench Cards for VRI](#), which address how VRI works for spoken languages and for American Sign Language (ASL).
- Coming soon, the [Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence](#) will be releasing a suite of multilingual videos to help individuals with using Zoom for remote appearances.

Many other states have also posted instructional videos and resources on how to successfully conduct proceedings using VRI.

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) continues to help to support the state courts with their VRI efforts. Its [VRI Resource Center](#) contains a collection of resources for VRI in the courts, including newly added training modules for court interpreters, judges, and court staff. This clearinghouse is updated regularly as new resources are made available and shared.

NCSC is also currently planning to host a series of national informational webinars and hands-on workshops specifically for court interpreters on using Zoom and WebEx for VRI. For more information on these trainings, please contact [Brooke Bogue](#). Is your court expanding VRI? Let us know at Knowledge@ncsc.org or call 800-616-6164. Follow the National Center for State Courts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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