



ABOUT COURT REPORTING

Court reporters are highly trained professionals who share a unique ability to convert the spoken word into information that can be read, searched and archived. This specialization has created new career paths for reporters, including broadcast captioning and realtime translation services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

WHAT DO COURT REPORTERS DO?

Court reporters, also known as guardians of the record because of their impartiality and role within the judicial process, capture the words spoken by everyone during a court or deposition proceeding. Court reporters then prepare verbatim transcripts of proceedings. The official record or transcript helps safeguard the legal process. When litigants want to exercise their right to appeal, they will use the transcript to provide an accurate record of what transpired during their case. During the discovery phase, attorneys also use deposition transcripts to prepare for trial. By combining their skills with the latest technology, some court reporters can provide realtime access to what is being said during a trial or deposition for the benefit of all involved parties. A court reporter providing realtime, which is the only proven method for immediate voice-to-text translation, allows attorneys and judges to have immediate access to the transcript, while also providing a way for deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans to participate in the judicial process.

OTHER REPORTER CAREER PATHS

More than 70 percent of the nation's 35,000-plus court reporters work outside of the court. Because court reporting involves a highly specialized skill set, reporters have a variety of career options:

Official Reporter

Official court reporters work for the judicial system to convert the spoken word into text during courtroom proceedings. The reporter also prepares official verbatim transcripts to be used by attorneys, judges, and litigants. Official court reporters are front and center at controversial or famous cases – criminal trials, millionaire divorces, government corruption trials and lawsuits – ensuring that an accurate, complete, and secure record of the proceedings is produced. Official court reporters may also provide realtime during a courtroom setting to allow participants to read on a display screen or computer monitor what is being said instantaneously.

Freelance Reporter

Freelance reporters are hired by attorneys, corporations, unions, associations and other individuals and groups who need accurate, complete, and secure records of pretrial depositions, arbitrations, board of director meetings, stockholders meetings and convention business sessions.

Broadcast Captioner

Broadcast captioners, also called stenocaptioners, use court reporter skills on the stenotype machine to provide captions of live television programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers through realtime technology that instantly produces readable English text. Captioners work for local stations and for national channels and networks captioning news, emergency broadcasts, sports events, and other programming.

CART Provider

A version of the captioning process called Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), also known as live-event captioning, allows court reporters to provide more personalized services for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. CART providers accompany deaf and hard-of-hearing clients as needed -- for example, to college classes -- to provide an instant conversion of speech into text using the stenotype machine linked to a laptop computer.

Webcaster

Webcasters are reporters who use their training to capture financial earnings reports, sales meetings, press conferences, product introductions, and technical training seminars and instantly transmit the captions to all parties involved via computers and the Internet. As participants speak into telephones or microphones, the words appear on everyone's computers, accompanied by any relevant documents or graphics.

WELL-PAID, HIGHLY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

Court reporters (including deposition reporters and captioners) earn an average of nearly \$64,000 a year. Income varies according to the area in which a person lives, certifications earned, the kinds of reporting jobs, and experience of individual reporters.

The knowledge and skills to become a court reporter or stenocaptioner are taught at more than 150 reporter training programs, including proprietary schools, community colleges, and four-year universities. Many of these programs offer distance learning options.

Upon graduation, court reporters can further their marketability and earn recognition for achieving high levels of expertise in particular reporter markets by pursuing certification. The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) offers the following professional certifications:

- Registered Professional Reporter (RPR)
- Registered Merit Reporter (RMR)
- Registered Diplomat Reporter (RDR)
- Certified Realtime Reporter (CRR)
- Certified Broadcast Captioner (CBC)
- Certified CART Provider (CCP)
- Certified Legal Video Specialist (CLVS)
- Certified Reporting Instructor (CRI)
- Master Certified Reporting Instructor (MCRI)
- Certified Manager of Reporting Services (CMRS)

AN EVOLVING CAREER CHOICE

The role of reporters continues to evolve from serving as information managers in complicated trials, to capturing depositions and business proceedings in digital format, to assisting millions of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons through advanced captioning technology. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that job opportunities in this field will grow 10 to 20 percent through 2012. Also, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires that by 2006 100 percent of all new programming in the top 25 markets must be captioned, establishing a high demand within the profession.