

# Career in Court Reporting

## What is a Court Reporter?

A court reporter, sometimes called a stenographer, captures the spoken word at proceedings, such as court hearings, depositions, arbitrations, township hearings, and other meetings where a verbatim transcript is needed or where text is needed, for example, to help a hard of hearing person. A Court Reporter uses a stenotype machine that uses symbols in combination with CAT software to translate the symbols to English. The income of a Court Reporter can vary depending on the kind of work and hours worked. There are Court Reporters that make a six figure income, if they work hard and do the right kind of work. Most Court Reporters make between \$40,000 and \$60,000.

## Is it a good fit for me?

Court reporting may be a good career choice for you if you have the following qualities:

- \* Good English, spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- \* Self-motivated, dedicated to continue with a task and not quit
- \* Excellent listening skills
- \* Work well under pressure and deadlines
- \* Ability to concentrate for long periods of time
- \* Willingness to continually learn software and computer updates

## Career Path Choices

There are several different types of Court Reporters.

- \* Freelance Court Reporters do a variety of work, including depositions, arbitrations, township hearings, court hearings, and other meetings where a verbatim transcript is needed. Their schedule varies from day to day and the location of their job assignment varies from day to day. Most Freelance Court Reporters work in the legal field. If you like change, this may be the job for you.
- \* Official Court Reporters typically work at one or two courthouses. They work set hours and sometimes work overtime. Often they work with the same judge. They work for the government, either with the county, state, or federal. It is a more routine schedule where they work set hours each day. Official Court Reporters often have benefits, such as vacation and health insurance.
- \* CART Providers attend hearings, schools, meetings, or whatever needs a hard of hearing person may have. They sit with the hard of hearing person and share their computer screen so the hard of hearing person can read the words as they are spoken. CART stands for Communication Access Realtime Translation.
- \* Captioners do captions for television that scroll along either the bottom or top of a TV program. Captioners are also used in group settings to caption a graduation or meeting with a group of hard of hearing people.

\* Webcasters or Internet Information Reporters capture sales meetings, press conferences, product introductions, and technical training seminars and instantly transmit the words via the Internet.

## Work Environments

\* Official Court Reporters have an office and desk at the courthouse where they do their transcript work, if a transcript is ordered of a proceeding. A small amount of the work they do is transcribed. They are usually in and out of the courtroom and their office all day. Typically there will be several Court Reporters working at one location.

\* Freelance Court Reporters typically have an office in their home where they will do their transcript work. Most of their work is transcribed. Freelance Court Reporters work at home on transcripts and go to wherever their job assignment is, whether it is a courthouse, law office, township building or municipal building, or even a manufacturing plant.

\* CART Providers work wherever their hard of hearing client needs them. It may be at a school, doctor's appointment, office, or meeting. They do not transcribe their work. The hard of hearing person reads the words on the computer screen, because they are unable to hear the words. CART Providers typically do not print or edit their work. Oftentimes the text is deleted after the hearing.

\* Captioners work either remotely, such as from their home, or at a captioning office. Remote Captioners use the Internet to transmit words to the TV program.

## Preparing for a Career in Court Reporting

Court Reporting is offered at many community colleges or technical schools. It is typically an Associate's Degree program that takes two or three years to complete. Some students need the third year to reach the necessary word per minute speed to graduate. High school students can prepare themselves to be successful Court Reporters by becoming proficient in spelling, typing, English, and music.

## Future Prospects

The demand for Court Reporters is projected to grow over the next several years. Job opportunities are excellent and, in some cities, the number of job openings exceeds the number of job seekers.

## Resources to Learn More

To get more information about Court Reporting, contact your state court reporting association, the National Court Reporters Association, or your local court reporting school.

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