

Pay Rates for Translation of Documents

Over the years, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts has provided the courts with suggested rates for translation services based on the rates used by the State Department. In FY 2009, the State Department rates for translation of documents are as follows:

General Document: \$150 per 1,000 words

A document that lends itself to fairly rapid translation by an experienced translator because it contains little or no specialized terminology.

Semi-technical Document: \$155 per 1,000 words

A document that contains some specialized terminology and requires a fair amount of research by an experienced translator.

Technical Document: \$170 per 1,000 words

A document that is replete with highly specialized or esoteric terminology and thus requires special expertise and/or painstaking and lengthy research by an experienced translator

Most documents to be translated for the courts by an experienced translator of court documents would be of a general nature. The language of the original document does not affect the rate. It would be extremely rare that a document would have to be translated from English into a foreign language, since the language of the courts is English. If a non-English-speaking defendant or other participants in a court proceeding need to be advised of the content of an English-language document, this should be done by means of a sight translation, where an interpreter orally renders the document into the foreign language. For sight translation, the interpreter rates would apply.

It should be noted that Federally Certified Court Interpreters are not tested for translation ability and may not always be experienced translators. To find translators who are accredited by the American Translators Association, you may search the membership listing at: http://www.americantranslators.org/tsd_listings . In most instances, the translation of documents is an expense that the parties must bear. The use of the general authorization is not appropriate for payment of document translations.