

Court Reporting School FAQs

The best advice when looking for a court reporting program is to do your homework. Scams abound, and schools exist that don't give their court reporting programs the resources they need to be successful. The good news is that there are also schools that are dedicated to producing good court reporters. Spend a little time looking into different programs, and you will soon have a good understanding of which programs are legitimate and successful. A school should have admissions staff that will spend as much time as necessary in answering all of your questions. If not, the school is not focused on providing a quality court reporting education. Your experience with a school's website and their admissions staff will be a good gauge of what you can expect from the overall program.

Are there any court reporting schools in Idaho?

There are not currently any court reporting schools in Idaho. However, there are numerous online court reporting schools.

How long does court reporting school take?

It takes an average of 36 months to graduate from court reporting school. This can vary based on how long it takes you to get up to the speed necessary for graduation. Some students finish in as few as 18 months; it takes other students several years. A lot of it depends on other factors in your life that dictate how much time you are able to devote to practice.

How much does court reporting school cost?

This is something that you just need to shop around for. Prices for tuition vary greatly. Just keep in mind that you get what you pay for. At a bare minimum, you are probably looking at \$25,000. It can cost upwards of \$30,000 - \$40,000 depending on the school you choose.

Are there prerequisites required before I can begin a court reporting school?

Generally, there are not prerequisite courses that you must complete before entering court reporting school.

Is there financial aid available?

There is financial aid available. To find out the specific details, you should

talk to the financial aid staff at a couple different schools.

Can I work full time and still go to court reporting school?

Yes. Most court reporting online schools are set up to cater to people who are working. They often offer night classes and recorded classes to accommodate everyone's schedule.

How much time do I need to devote to court reporting school per week?

You must devote 15 to 20 hours a week at a minimum to be successful in court reporting school. Most of that time is spent on your steno machine.

What kind of equipment will I need for court reporting school?

You will need a steno machine. A new student machine is about \$1600. You will need a computer. And you will need the software for translating steno into a computer file. Student software is about \$600. Some online programs also require a headset with headphones and a microphone. These can be purchased for about \$30-\$40 at a store like Office Depot or Best Buy.

What kinds of things should I look for in a good online court reporting school?

- Is the school accredited by the National Court Reporters Association? You can check at <http://www.ncra.org/>
- How long has the school been teaching court reporting? How long has the school had an online court reporting program?
- Does the school have a functional, well-designed website? (If a school claims to have an online program, but doesn't have a good website, this is not a good sign!)
- Does the school have a legitimate street address and business presence?
- Does the program invest in the latest technology for online learning? For example, does it have a Blackboard, Moodle, or other interactive online learning system?
- Does the school have a full-time admissions staff to answer your questions?

- How much interaction is there between students and instructors on a weekly or daily basis either through live online classes, emails, or phone calls?
- What kind of resources does the school offer as far as dictation materials? Are you expected to find your own? Does the school have live dictation or recorded dictation? Does your school have other options available for dictation?
- What is the average length of time it takes students to complete the program?
- What percentage of students go on to complete the program?
- Does the program include classes on grammar, punctuation, court reporting procedures, medical and legal terminology, and transcript preparation?
- How much does it cost?
- Does the school offer job placement assistance?

Is court reporting a threatened profession?

Digital recording has replaced some court reporters in courtrooms throughout the country. However, this is not true of every state. In addition, some courtrooms have returned to court reporters after being unsatisfied with digital recordings. Deposition reporters are still in demand. Another growing field for stenographers is captioning for television and internet. There are also opportunities to provide live translation for hearing-impaired individuals. This is called Communication Access Realtime Translation or CART. For the latest information on the future of employment opportunities in the court reporting field, visit the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/court-reporters.htm>

What is the median pay for a court reporter?

The median pay, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics is \$47,700 per year. However, court reporters can make much more than this depending on how hard they are willing to work.

Are there certification tests required after school that you need to work in Idaho?

After you are finished with school, certification involves taking a competency exam that shows you can write machine shorthand at the required speeds and then transcribe it correctly. Depending on which state you live in, the requirements for certification vary. Here in Idaho, you must

either pass the state certification exam or the national exam. If you pass the national exam, the state will accept that in lieu of the state exam.

If you have further questions, you may email Rachelle Cahoon at racahoon@gmail.com.