Legal Interpreting Ethics
Sample Code of Ethics

Note: Eight states have adopted these canons, or slight variations of them.
The code is taken from from Court Interpretation: Model Guides for Policy and Practice in the State Courts, by William E. Hewitt and staff, State Justice Institute.

Canon 1: ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS

Interpreters shall render a complete and accurate interpretation or sight translation, without altering, omitting, or adding anything to what is stated or written, and without explanation.

Canon 2: REPRESENTATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Interpreters shall accurately and completely represent their certification, training, and pertinent experience.

Canon 3: IMPARTIALITY AND AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Interpreters shall be impartial and unbiased and shall refrain from conduct that may give an appearance of bias. Interpreters shall disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest.

Canon 4: PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

Interpreters shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the dignity of the court and shall
be as unobtrusive as possible.

Canon 5: CONFIDENTIALITY

Interpreters shall protect the confidentiality of all privileged and other confidential information.

Canon 6: RESTRICTION OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Interpreters shall not publicly discuss, report, or offer an opinion concerning a matter in which they are or have been engaged, even when that information is not privileged or required by law to
be confidential.

Canon 7: SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Interpreters shall limit themselves to interpreting or translating, and shall not give legal advice, express personal opinions to individuals for whom they are interpreting, or engage in any other activities which may be construed to constitute a service other than interpreting or translating while serving as an interpreter.

Canon 8: ASSESSING AND REPORTING IMPEDIMENTS TO PERFORMANCE

Interpreters shall assess at all times their ability to deliver their services. When interpreters have any reservation about their ability to satisfy an assignment competently, they shall immediately convey that reservation to the appropriate judicial authority.

Canon 9. DUTY TO REPORT ETHICAL VIOLATIONS

Interpreters shall report to the proper judicial authority any effort to impede their compliance with
any law, any provision of this code, or any other official policy governing court interpreting and legal translating.

Canon 10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Interpreters shall continually improve their skills and knowledge and advance the profession through activities such as professional training and education, and interaction with colleagues and specialists in related fields.