

U.S. News & World Report Lists Court Reporting among Top 50 Careers

Best Careers 2011: Court Reporter

As one of the 50 Best Careers of 2011, this should have strong growth over the next decade

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The rundown:

Known as "guardians of the record," [court reporters](#) are charged with recording every word that's spoken during a deposition or courtroom proceeding—quickly and accurately. Reporters typically use a stenotype machine to create verbatim transcripts, and sometimes they provide immediate voice-to-text translation. Court reporters can venture down a range of career paths. Of the more than 50,000 court reporters in the United States, more than 70 percent work outside of the courtroom, according to the National Court Reporters Association. Some reporters work as webcasters, recording company events such as financial earnings reports and press conferences; others work as broadcast captioners, using a stenotype machine to post captions on television programs for deaf viewers. Court reporters may also be self-employed.

[See a list of [The 50 Best Careers of 2011.](#)]

The outlook:

Excellent. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that jobs in this field will grow 18 percent between 2008 and 2018—a good deal faster than the average for all occupations. Bolstering demand is the growing need for live television captioning and translating services for the hearing impaired.

Money:

Although pay varies by specialty, experience, and certification, the median annual earnings for court reporters was \$47,810 in 2009. At the low end, reporters earned less than \$25,410, and the most highly compensated pulled in more than \$89,240, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Aside from a salary, official court reporters earn a per-page fee for transcripts.

Upward mobility:

One route to [career advancement](#) is to establish expertise with a certification. Types of certifications include registered diplomate reporter, certified legal video specialist, and certified broadcast captioner.

Activity level:

The nature of the work—transcribing the spoken word—means that court reporters might remain sedentary for long periods. But the work can be exciting, especially when it involves a high-profile case such as a criminal or government corruption trial.

[See a list of [the best social service careers](#).]

Stress level:

The pressure to record every spoken word quickly and accurately can weigh heavily on court reporters. Eye, back, neck, and wrist strain come with the [job](#), and workers should be mindful of stress injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

Education and preparation:

Aspiring court reporters have more than 150 reporter training programs to choose from, which are offered through community colleges, universities, online, and home-study programs. Most institutional programs take a minimum of two years. After graduating, court reporters may pursue professional certification to establish an area of expertise. Licensing requirements vary by state, but most states require the Registered Professional Reporter certification.

Real advice from real people about landing a job as a court reporter:

Being a court reporter requires an interest in current events, computer literacy, and above-average verbal-comprehension skills. "Typically, the type of person who is successful at court reporting is disciplined, sharp and motivated ... If you have those skills, you will probably fit the mold of a successful court reporter," says Ashley Frazier, member services and information center manager at the National Court Reporters Association.