



Press Release

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Alaska Court System Yup'ik Interpreter Passes National Exam

Anchorage, Alaska, September 26, 2016: Alaska Court System employee and Bethel-based Yup'ik interpreter Crystal Garrison recently passed the National Center for State Courts' *Court Interpreter Written Exam*. The written exam tests an interpreter's knowledge of court-related terms and usage, the ethical standards court interpreters are required to uphold, and English proficiency.

To prepare for the written exam, Crystal completed several years of training, including Yup'ik language classes at the University of Alaska Kuskokwim campus taught by language expert Sophie Alexie; intensive orientation to the interpreting profession and courtroom interpreting; one-on-one mentoring in Yup'ik vocabulary; and self-study using interpreter resources provided by the National Center for State Courts' Language Access Section.

Crystal is the first Alaska Court System employee to be recognized as a professional on-staff courtroom interpreter. In addition to her interpreting duties, she identifies parties who need courtroom interpreting services regardless of the language needed. Most recently, Crystal assisted in creating and recording two new arraignment videos informing defendants of their rights in the criminal process in Yup'ik and English.

Crystal was born in Bethel, Alaska to Johnny and Olive Hawk. Her parents spoke both English and Yup'ik in the home. She was immersed in the English language at age 10, as her family moved to Anchorage and enrolled her in the Anchorage School District.

According to figures assembled by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Alaska Native Language Center there are about 10,000 Native speakers of Yup'ik. It is the primary language for many residents in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region.

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