

## Student and Parent FAQ

### **Why is court reporting a legitimate option over a 4-year degree?**

We understand that the concept of a four-year college experience has a lot of attraction for students. But the reality is that many students emerge from college without a defined career path and with crippling debt from tuition of up to \$250,000. Court reporting education, on the other hand, is far less expensive (\$25,000 to \$35,000 overall) and, for those who complete school, there is a virtual guarantee of a great job, a defined career path, and long-term opportunity for career growth.

### **Will the profession be around in 20 years?**

Certainly you'll hear stories of electronic recording in court systems. But court reporters remain the overwhelming preference within the legal system and are the dominant method for creating the record in pre-trial depositions. Pre-trial depositions are far more frequent than trials and hearings in courtrooms and are forecast to increase in the years ahead. The overwhelming – almost exclusive – choice for creating the record in depositions is the stenographic court reporter.

### **If this profession is so great, why is there such a shortage of court reporters?**

There are at least a few reasons. First, for whatever reason, court reporting often is perceived as a blue-collar or clerical position, and that is simply a mischaracterization of a profession that is professional, high-paying, and surrounded with technology. Second, there is another perception that technology will replace court reporters, which is simply a fallacy. There is nothing in our lifetimes that will replace the human brain in synthesizing language and converting it to written text. Period. Third, getting through court reporting school is hard and often the wrong type of students – who aren't prepared for the academic rigor or the time commitment – so there is a high drop-out rate.

### **Court reporting schools experience a high dropout rate. Why?**

A lot of students in court reporting school drop out early on. Why? Because they start school without understanding what it takes to succeed. You need A's to pass in court reporting school, not B's or C's. But we've got you covered! We'll give you a taste of court

reporting (it's free!) so you can see if you like it. That's the purpose of the A-to-Z Program. Bottom line, you can become a court reporter if you're willing to work – and the payoff is huge: lifetime job security, a well-paid job in a white collar profession, and no student debt!

### **What's the skill set I need?**

Got good language skills? Check. Got good keyboard skills, like typing, texting? Check. Are you willing to put in the work and dedicate yourself to learning? You know, all the usual virtues that make somebody successful in school.

Here's the good news: If you check off all the right boxes, you're somebody we want, because you *are* most likely to succeed! That's the promise of Project Steno: We'll help you make the right career choice, we'll help you find the right school — and we'll help pay the bills with ongoing tuition assistance.

### **How do I get started?**

Enroll in an A to Z Program. That's it! (see below)

### **What is an A-to-Z Program?**

A-to-Z programs exist in many locations across the United States to allow prospective court reporting students to try out court reporting over a six- to eight-week period without making a financial or life commitment. Students are provided with the use of a stenographic machine and taught rudimentary court reporting (machine shorthand). The entire goal is to see whether students have a proclivity and an interest in court reporting BEFORE they make the full commitment to court reporting school.

### **Do I need a steno machine to participate in the A-to-Z Program?**

Yes, but in most cases, the volunteers running the A-to-Z Program will coordinate for students to get their hands on a steno machine to borrow during the six to eight weeks of the program.

### **How is A-to-Z associated with Project Steno?**

Completion of an A-to-Z Program is one of the requirements for students to be eligible for tuition assistance through Project Steno. But there is no formal connection between A-to-Z and Project Steno.

### **How much does a court reporting education cost?**

A student who completes court reporting school in two to three years, which is about the time frame for successful students, the cost is generally in the \$25,000 to \$30,000 range OVERALL. However, a major component of Project Steno is to reduce that cost through tuition assistance.

## **How long does it take to complete court reporting school?**

Court reporting is different in that students work toward speed and accuracy thresholds for capturing and converting speech to text rather than merely earning a certain amount of credits for completing courses. For some students, completing school can as little as two years. For others it's three or four years. For some it takes longer than that. There are no guarantees, which is why participation in an A-to-Z Program to test students' proclivity and interest for court reporting before enrolling in school is such a great idea.

## **What is the purpose of Project Steno?**

Quite simply, the concept is to ensure that more qualified students enroll in court reporting school so that more court reporters complete school and enter the workforce. Project Steno aims to reduce the cost of court reporting education for qualified students. It will provide guidance and mentoring to students to help them get through school. And it will only work with schools that have a track record of success.

## **How is Project Steno funded?**

Project Steno relies exclusively on contributions from the court reporting community for its operations. Most of the contributions arrive from court reporting firms who not only have a passion for their profession, but have a strong business interest in seeing more court reporters emerge from school?

## **Are there good jobs available when students get out of school?**

It is virtually guaranteed that a student who emerges from court reporting school will have a great job waiting for him or her. The compensation is good. The long-term career-path provides multiple options. And because there is a need for court reporters in all corners of the country – and even abroad – it is a job that can almost literally take you anywhere.

## Basics

- [Court Reporting Careers](#)
- [Court Reporting Profiles](#)
- [Getting Started](#)

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