

Interview Summary

Name of person interviewed

Itzel Torres Velazquez

Relationship to the case

Witness

Person conducting the interview and preparing written statement

Amanda Batiz, Operations Division Manager, Superior Court

Location of Interview

Millville Municipal Court

Date of Interview

12/15/2022- Thursday

Time of Interview

12:22 P.M. - 1:04 P.M.

Summary:

I have been employed as a Bilingual Clerk 2 with the Millville Municipal Court since March 2022. My supervisor is Kimberly Hamlyn, Certified Municipal Court Administrator. I handle various tasks in my role with the Municipal Court. I complete the court logs for court sessions, schedule and reschedule cases, complete data entry, enter tickets, create and distribute court notices, speak with attorneys and court users on the phone and at the window, and create and distribute court correspondence. As a team, we regularly share, and swap duties as assigned by the Court Administrator and Deputy Court Administrator. We hold court in Millville on Mondays and Wednesdays. Mondays are in-person court days and Wednesdays are entirely virtual. We have a contract with an interpreter, Ms. Linda, who is in court two Mondays per month, usually every other Monday. The schedule is set up for the entire year. We use Language Line for interpreting on Wednesday court days.

When tickets are received in the court, as a clerk, I schedule the matter according to the date listed on the ticket as created by law enforcement. Decisions on requests for postponements are mostly handled by the Court Administrator Kimberly Hamlyn. If there is no one else impacted by a postponement, such as cases involving only a defendant and their attorney, I will reschedule the case and grant the postponement request without consulting with Kimberly. When rescheduling cases either from court or based on a request outside of a court hearing, I reschedule the case to the same type of court day. For example, a request to postpone a Wednesday or virtual case will be rescheduled to a Wednesday or another virtual day. If a request for a postponement or reschedule is made on a case that was scheduled for a Monday, it will be rescheduled to Monday because there was a reason it was scheduled to be in person. If someone requests their case to be moved from virtual day to an in-person day, I will reschedule according to their request without consulting with Kimberly. If someone requests to be rescheduled from an in-person day to a virtual day, I will consult with Kimberly because there was a reason that person was initially scheduled to be in person.

I am not really familiar with the November 2021 order. I do recall that certain cases were scheduled in person at that time and others scheduled virtually when I was initially hired. I am familiar with the October 27, 2022 order. This order requires more cases to be scheduled in person. Cases such as driving without a license, driving on a suspended license or revoked list should be scheduled for in person hearing. Most of the time other cases are scheduled virtually. Often, when cases such as DWI need more time for information, we will schedule those cases on a virtual day, but the final hearing must be in person.

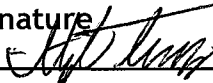
Kimberly sat everyone in the office down and reviewed and explained the October 27, 2022 order to us. Around June or July 2022, we started to schedule in-person cases. At that time, if someone experiences technical difficulty or asks for an in-person hearing, we reschedule the case to an in-person day, Monday. We never changed how we schedule interpreter cases.

Ms. Linda gives us her schedule in advance. Cases requiring the assistance of the interpreter are scheduled on Mondays. If a case is scheduled for a virtual day, a Wednesday, and needs an interpreter, we use Language Line for those cases. If a person calls and says they need an interpreter, we let them know we have an interpreter in court on Mondays and ask if they want to be scheduled then. I usually only talk about the interpreter being in court on Mondays and ask the defendant if Monday is okay. If the person says they want to stay virtual, we will put a note on the file using a sticky note stating, "interpreter needed" so that those in court on Wednesday know that Language Line will need to be used. Usually, we find out that an interpreter is needed because the defendant will call or come to the court and let us know they need an interpreter. I don't move a case to an in-person date without consulting with the defendant. Cases are not scheduled for in person based on their last name (surname). We stick to the date on the ticket when scheduling cases. The only time we create a date is when the ticket does not have a date listed.

I am not aware of any materials or handouts in Spanish for litigants. The notices and website are in English. As a bilingual clerk, I usually help people needing information in Spanish. I'm not aware of Judge Witcher being involved in scheduling of cases or calendars. I only became aware that Judge Witcher was not satisfied with scheduling in November through conversations in the office. Kim spoke to us about the Judge's concern of seeing too many Hispanic people in court on Mondays. We didn't think there was a problem and don't think there is a problem because we know we're not picking people out.

Date: 12/21/2022

Itzel Torres Velazquez
Signature



Date:

Amanda A. Batiz
Signature of Person Conducting the Interview
/S/ Amanda Batiz

Date:

Kelly Johnston
Signature of Management Witness
/S/ Kelly Johnston