

Court Reporter Rate Guide 2026

Real pricing data — per-page rates, appearance fees, and hidden costs across all 50 states

- ✓ Federal and private per-page transcript rates
- ✓ Rates by metro area and service level
- ✓ Hidden fees to watch for (expedited, realtime, copies, exhibits)
- ✓ How to negotiate better rates with agencies and freelancers

How Court Reporter Billing Works

Court reporter billing is multi-layered. Unlike a flat hourly rate, invoices typically combine an appearance fee, per-page transcript charges, and various add-ons. Understanding the structure is the first step to controlling costs.

Billing Structure Overview

| Component | Description | Typical Cost |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Appearance fee (per diem) | Charged for showing up — half-day or full-day | \$100–\$500 |
| Per-page transcript fee | The core charge, billed on the final certified transcript | \$3.00–\$7.50/page |
| Copy charges | Additional parties requesting copies | \$0.75–\$1.45/page |
| Add-ons | Expedited delivery, realtime feed, rough drafts, exhibits | Varies widely |

Quick Budget Reference

Short deposition (1–2 hours, ~75 pages): \$300–\$700

Half-day deposition (3–4 hours, ~150 pages): \$500–\$1,200

Full-day deposition (5–7 hours, ~300 pages): \$900–\$2,500

Full video deposition with transcript, sync, and room: \$1,000–\$3,000+

Federal Court Transcript Rate Caps — Your Benchmark

The Judicial Conference of the United States (JCUS) sets maximum per-page rates for federal proceedings. These serve as the national pricing benchmark.

Delivery Speed Rates (Per Page)

| Speed | Original | First Copy | Additional Copies |
|--------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| 30-Day (Ordinary) | \$4.40 | \$1.10 | \$0.75 |
| 14-Day | \$5.10 | \$1.10 | \$0.75 |
| 7-Day (Expedited) | \$5.85 | \$1.10 | \$0.75 |
| 3-Day | \$6.55 | \$1.30 | \$0.90 |
| Next-Day (Daily) | \$7.30 | \$1.45 | \$1.10 |
| 2-Hour (Hourly/Same-Day) | \$8.70 | \$1.45 | \$1.10 |

Realtime Feed Rates (Per Page)

| Number of Feeds | Cost per Page |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 feed | \$3.70 |
| 2–4 feeds | \$2.55 |
| 5+ feeds | \$1.80 |

Source: JCUS rate schedule, effective October 1, 2024.

Key Rule of Thumb: Expedited delivery adds 50–100% over ordinary rates. Only expedite when you genuinely need it — this is the single biggest cost lever attorneys control.

Private/Freelance Rate Ranges

Per-Page Rates by Service Level

| Service Type | Per-Page Rate |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Standard transcript (10–14 day) | \$4.50–\$6.25 |
| Expedited (3–7 day) | \$5.85–\$7.50 |
| Daily/overnight | \$7.30–\$8.50 |
| Same-day / 2-hour | \$8.70–\$10.00+ |
| Rough draft | \$1.75–\$3.50 |
| Realtime feed | \$3.00–\$3.70/page |
| CART | \$50–\$75/hour |

Appearance Fees

| Duration | Typical Fee |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Half-day (up to 4 hours) | \$100–\$400 |
| Full-day (up to 8 hours) | \$200–\$700 |
| Hourly | \$75–\$300/hour |

Rates by State & Metro Area

| State / Metro | Per-Page Range | Appearance Fees | Key Notes |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| New York (NYC) | \$6.50–\$7.50 | \$250–\$400 | Highest rates in the country |
| Washington, DC | \$6.00–\$7.50 | Up to \$350 | Premium government/regulatory market |
| California (LA/SF) | \$5.50–\$7.00 | \$150–\$350 | Severe shortage; 458 reporters short |
| Chicago / Illinois | \$4.40–\$5.85 | \$110–\$220 | Federal rates; private higher |
| Southern Florida (Miami) | \$4.84–\$8.03 | \$65–\$100/hr | Above JCUS baseline |
| Texas (Houston, Dallas) | \$4.00–\$6.00 | \$65–\$150 | Moderate market |
| New Jersey / Delaware | \$4.75–\$6.25 | Moderate | Mid-Atlantic standard |
| Midwest / Rural | \$3.00–\$5.00 | \$75–\$125 | Lowest cost markets |

\$ NYC vs. NJ Savings Tip

Booking in northern NJ instead of Manhattan can save 20–30%

\$ Industry Salary Benchmark

National median \$67,310/yr (\$32.36/hr). Top freelancers with realtime in major markets earn \$150,000–\$300,000+

Hidden Fees & Add-Ons

Always get an itemized quote. Budget 20–30% above the base transcript cost for add-ons.

| Add-On | Typical Cost | Notes |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Appearance fee | Included in session | Standard — no deposition without it |
| Transcript copies | \$0.75–\$1.45/page | Each party beyond original requests |
| Rough draft | \$1.75–\$3.50/page | Quick turnaround, not for trial |
| Realtime feed | \$3.00–\$3.70/page | Live connection to attorneys during deposition |
| Expedited delivery | \$5.85–\$10.00/page | 50–100% premium over ordinary rates |
| Weekend/after-hours | +50% surcharge | Charges apply from Friday noon to Monday 9am |
| Exhibit handling | \$25–\$100 | Physical exhibits, scanning, cataloging |
| Video-transcript sync | \$150–\$300 | Timestamp sync with video footage |
| Expert/medical surcharge | +\$1.50–\$2.00/page | Complex, technical, or medical testimony |
| Cancellation fee | \$200–\$400 flat | Same-day cancellation; double on holidays |
| Travel/mileage | \$0.50–\$2.00/mile | Outside reporter's service area |
| Conference room | \$50–\$150/hour | Rental of dedicated deposition suite |
| Interpreter | \$100–\$300/hour | Spanish, Mandarin, or other language services |
| E-transcript | Included | Searchable PDF; typically no add-on |
| Word index | \$50–\$150 | Alphabetical index of testimony by topic |

Pro Tip: Request an itemized quote that breaks out appearance fee, per-page rate, delivery speed, copy charges, and all anticipated add-ons.

How to Negotiate Better Rates

1. Compare agency vs freelance. Agencies mark up 20–40% but offer consistency and liability.
2. Choose standard delivery. 14-day turnaround is 15–20% cheaper than expedited.
3. Share transcripts. Negotiate copy rates upfront — per-party copies add up fast.
4. Bundle services. Agencies offering transcription + court reporting often discount 10–15%.
5. Negotiate volume. For 5+ depositions per case, ask about per-session volume pricing.
6. Consider remote. Remote depositions eliminate travel, lodging, and per-diem charges.
7. Skip rough draft. Rough drafts cost \$1.75–\$3.50/page but are rarely used.
8. Get three quotes. Pricing varies 30–50% within the same city.
9. Negotiate copy rates. First copy \$1.10, additional copies \$0.75 — lock this in upfront.
10. Avoid last-minute cancellations. Penalties are steep (\$200–\$400); reschedule if possible.

Budget Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate total court reporter costs. Print and fill in for each case.

| Line Item | Estimated Cost | Actual Cost |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Appearance fee | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Transcript original (per-page) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Transcript copies (per-page) | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Realtime feed | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Rough draft | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Expedited delivery | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Video recording | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Video-transcript sync | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Exhibit handling | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Conference room | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Travel/mileage | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| Other add-ons | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| 20% contingency buffer | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |
| TOTAL ESTIMATED | \$ _____ | \$ _____ |

Pro Tip: Complete this worksheet before requesting quotes. Knowing your full scope helps you get accurate all-in pricing and avoid surprise charges.

Want a quick sanity check on your numbers?

Email this worksheet to contact@stenoscout.com or browse verified reporters at stenoscout.com

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