



**NCRA ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT
FY 2016 and FY 2017**

**National Court Reporters Association
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NCRA Annual School Report

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NCRA promotes excellence among those who capture and convert the spoken word to text and is committed to supporting every member in achieving the highest level of professional expertise.

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NCRA Annual School Report

Overview

This year's Annual Report is compiled from data submitted by 31 of the 32 court reporting programs, down from 42 in 2015. As of January 2018, there are only 27 NCRA-approved court reporting programs who are accepting new students. Total school enrollment dropped from 3,083 in 2015 to 1,800 in 2017, and the number of new students enrolling compared to two years ago has dropped by almost 50%. As expected, as the number of schools decline, so do the number of graduates, from 263 two years ago to just 168 in 2017. The 2013-2014 Industry Outlook report commissioned by NCRA predicted a demand for an additional 5,500 court reporters by 2018. This demand will not be met as more schools close. Court reporting firms are facing a shortage of court reporters and captioners and cite that they are being forced to turn down work as a result. This critical decline in the number of court reporting programs, students, and graduates has reinforced the fact that recruitment and retention efforts must be among NCRA's top priorities for 2018 and beyond.

One of the major challenges in recruitment has been the limited success in promoting the benefits of careers in court reporting and captioning. In order to elevate visibility for the profession, NCRA began the crTakeNote campaign in 2014. It reached almost 28 million impressions but did not result in a high number of qualified leads or student enrollments in court reporting programs. The marketing strategy was reevaluated and in 2016 NCRA launched DiscoverSteno, a multi-pronged approach to educate the public, recruit students, and begin a campaign to leverage members, court reporting firms, and state associations to create a country-wide network of recruiters.

The new DiscoverSteno website is a work in progress and has gone through several iterations. Its primary function is to introduce prospective students to the profession and give them the opportunity to connect with court reporting programs. On the site, visitors can take an Inventory Interest Survey which identifies the characteristics consistent with successful court reporters. These surveys generate qualified leads which are sent to NCRA-approved schools. Visitors to the site can also watch a video to get a firsthand look at the venues where court reporters and captioners work.

Finally, the most exciting initiative of DiscoverSteno is the NCRA A to Z program. The NCRA A to Z Intro to Machine Shorthand program is a free six-week program that teaches the basics of steno writing and provides participants with the opportunity to discover whether a career in court reporting or captioning is the right choice for them. This is a grassroots program that relies on volunteers and offers participants the choice of taking the program in person or on-line. Through the power of social media, paper flyers, word of mouth, and the dedication of hundreds of volunteers, the NCRA A to Z program is working hard to promote the profession.

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The second, equally important aspect of NCRA's education mission is to boost student retention in schools. To that end, NCRA is working to provide students with the resources and support they need to stay in school. Existing programs, such as the Virtual Mentor Program, have been bolstered, while new resources, such as the online student newsletter and the new Student Resources page on the website, have been added. In January 2017 the Virtual Mentor Program was overhauled. A Virtual Mentor Program handbook was written to give guidance and structure to both mentors and mentees and the sign-up process was updated to ensure better matches are being made. There are currently 160 mentors on the books with over 250 students matched since 2016.

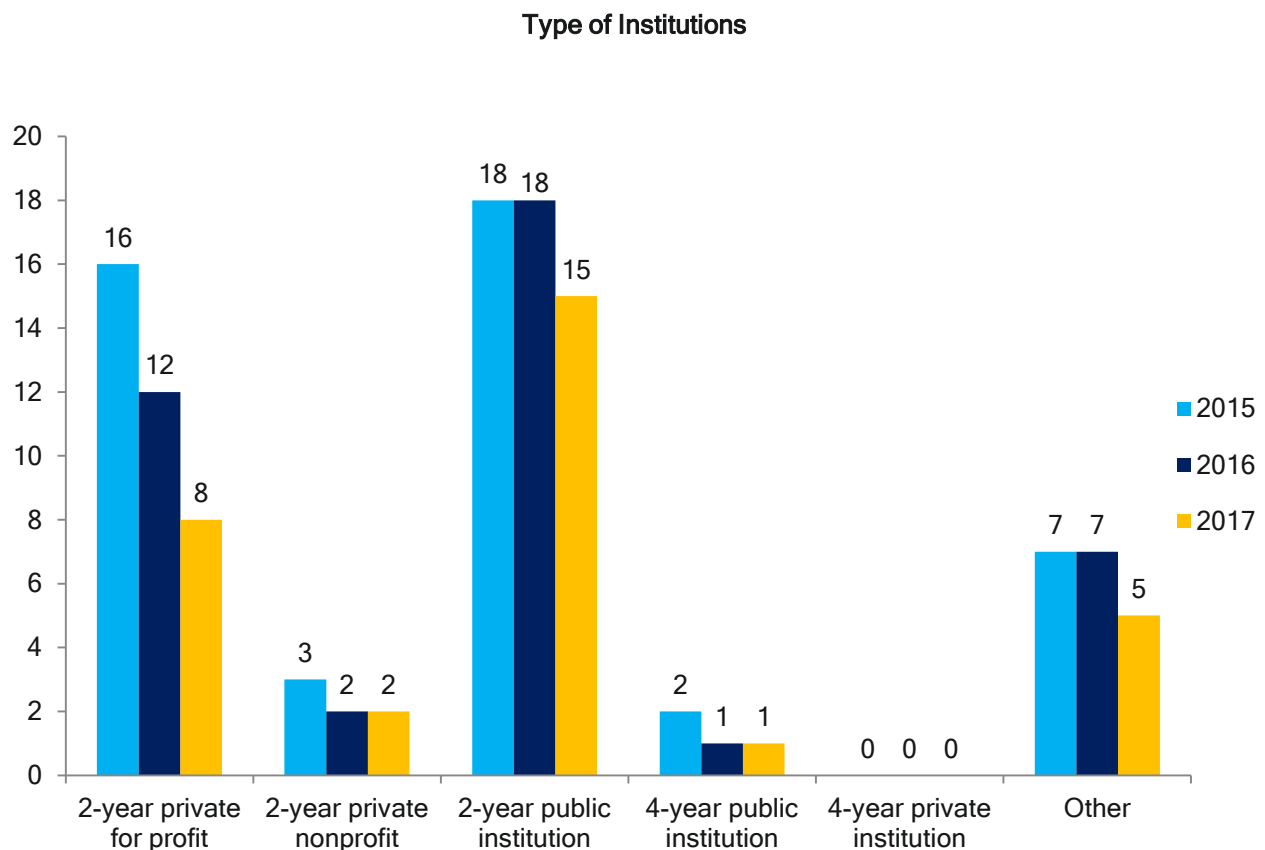
One of the most wide-reaching tools that NCRA has developed for students is the online student newsletter, *Up-to-Speed*, which launched in January 2017. This bi-monthly publication reaches over 10,000 members, nonmembers, teachers, administrators, high school counselors, and prospective students, thus serving as a recruitment tool as well. The newsletter highlights the achievements of outstanding students and offers tips on study skills, test-taking, mentorship, attending convention, and more. Teachers, court reporters, and even fellow students contribute to this community of support. Another place for students to go for information is the new Student Resources page on the NCRA website. Here students can find issues of the student newsletter, information on scholarships and grants, and be directed to DiscoverSteno.

The statistics in this report illustrate that the profession is suffering from a lack of public awareness. Schools are closing, citing not just high attrition and low enrollment, but lack of interest and budget cuts as well. Overcoming these challenges will require a concerted effort on the part of not just NCRA, but schools and state and local leadership as well. This report is intended to provide the information and background needed to assist in those efforts.

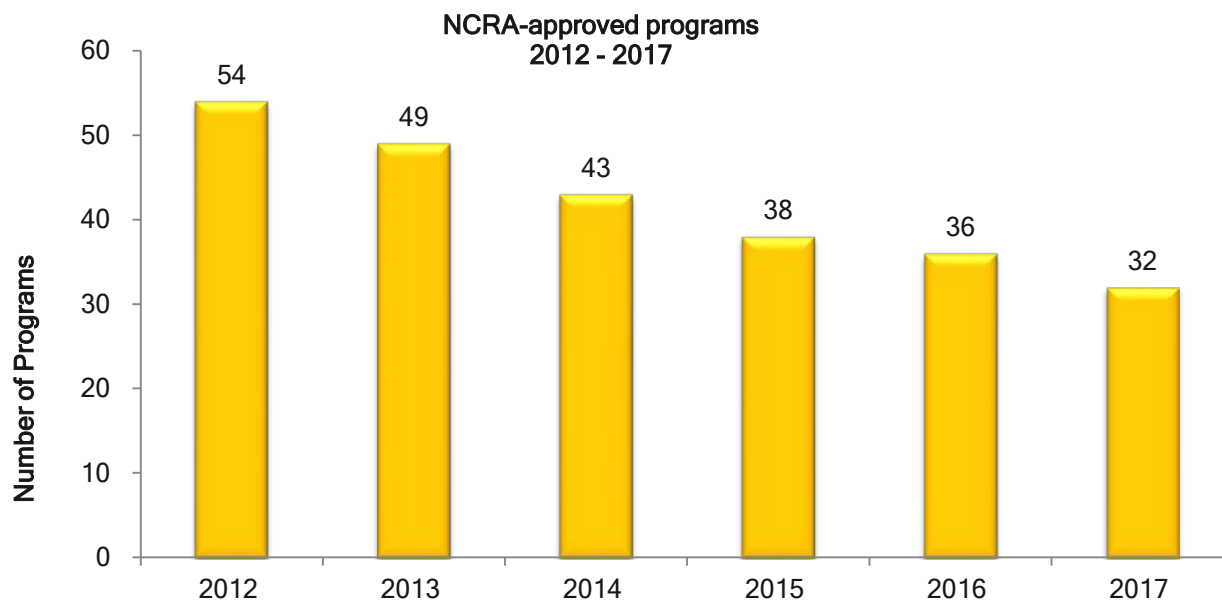
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Institutions

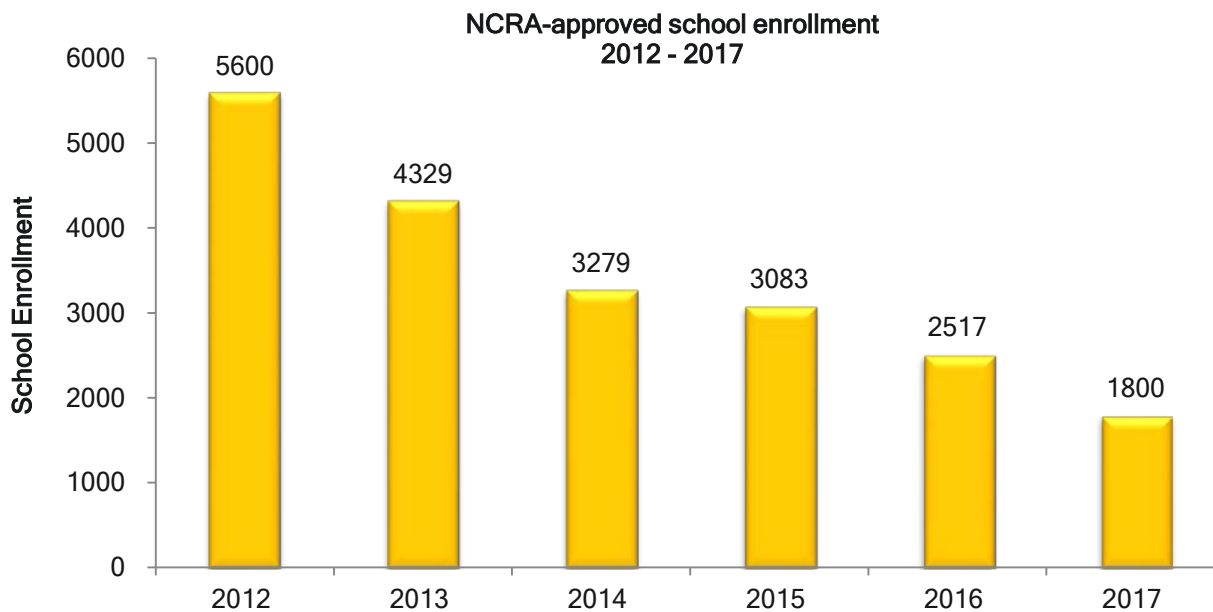
Over the last four years, we have seen a decline in court reporting programs. During the last six years, approximately 20 or more schools have been removed from the approved or participating category. The elimination of the participating category in January 2018 saw six schools drop their affiliation with NCRA. With the closure of traditional court reporting programs, we are seeing an increase of new types of programs surfacing to fill the gap. NCRA's Council on Approved Student Education (CASE) has started discussions on how to incorporate and support these start-up programs. A review of the General Requirements and Minimum Standards (GRMS) will be the focus in 2018 to explore if there is a way to include them in the eligibility requirements.



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The data below illustrates the critically low number of enrollees in NCRA-approved court reporting programs. Over the past two years, there has been a 58% drop in enrollment.

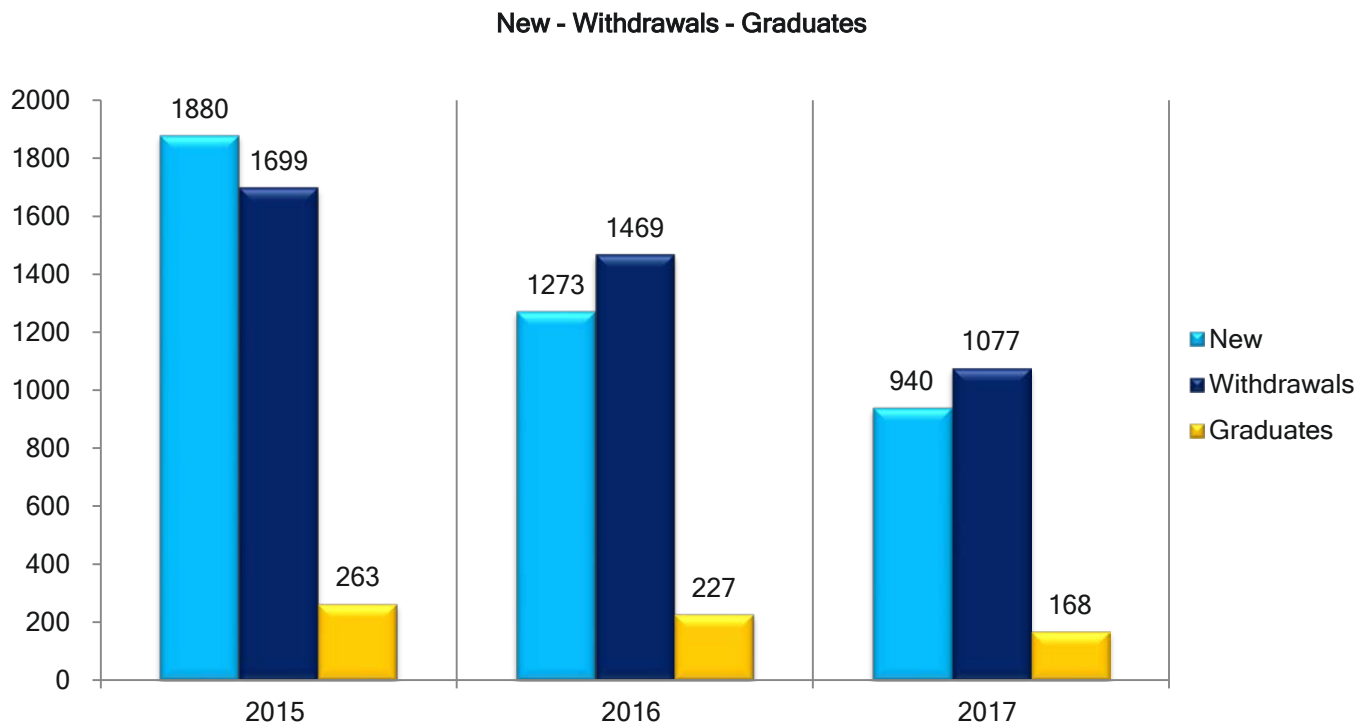


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Annual enrollment summary

Annual enrollment figures are calculated based on the annual report from November 1 of the previous year to October 31 of the current year. Programs list how many students enrolled, withdrew, and graduated during that 12-month period. Graduation rates are difficult to calculate unless compared with a cohort. Below is a graduation worksheet that was created to beta test collecting data by cohorts (similar to the Department of Education).

The data below shows a steady decline of students being recruited and graduating from a court reporting program, but the numbers remain high for those students who withdraw. NCRA may explore researching why students are withdrawing at such a high rate. The NCRA A to Z Program initiative will be evaluated during 2018 to measure its impact on enrollment and retention.




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Graduation rate

NCRA has struggled for many years to determine the true graduation rate for NCRA-approved and participating programs. Last year, with the help of a few court reporting administrators and an outside consultant, NCRA produced an instrument somewhat similar to that used by the Department of Education to collect graduation rate data for schools.

The graduation worksheet was optional this year, but 22 programs returned the form. The data collected was used to determine the graduation rate for the class of 2015.

Graduation rates per school ranged as high as 100% and as low as 1.6%. The average for the 22 programs was 14.4%. This percentage is extremely low and does not produce enough graduates to fill the market need.

		Graduation Rate Report Completers within normal time to 200% Full-Year Cohort (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013)	
Cohort Year	<u>2013</u>		
	# of Men		31
	# of Women		641
	<u>2013</u> Court Reporting Enrollment		673
Transfers-out: Students who did not complete the program and transferred out to another school or to another program in the school:			112
Transfer-in: Students who transfer into the school from another school or another program during the cohort year and completed 50-75 percent			37
COMPLETERS			
A.	<u>Completers within the normal time frame</u> Completers/Graduates of court reporting or realtime program within the normal time frame:		42
B.	<u>Completers within 100 percent to 150 percent of normal time frame</u> Completers/Graduates of court reporting or realtime program within the 100 percent to 150 percent of the normal time frame:		42
C.	<u>Completers within 150 percent to 200 percent of normal time frame</u> Completers/Graduates of court reporting or realtime program within the 150 percent to 200 percent of the normal time frame:		2
EXCLUSIONS			
B.	Exclusions: Students who died or became permanently disabled; students who left school to serve in the armed forces (or have been called up to active duty); students who left school to serve with a foreign aid service of the Federal Government; students who left school to serve on an official church mission; and/or students who completed in greater than 150 percent of program but did not graduate		2
GRADUATION RATE FOR COHORT 2015			14.4%

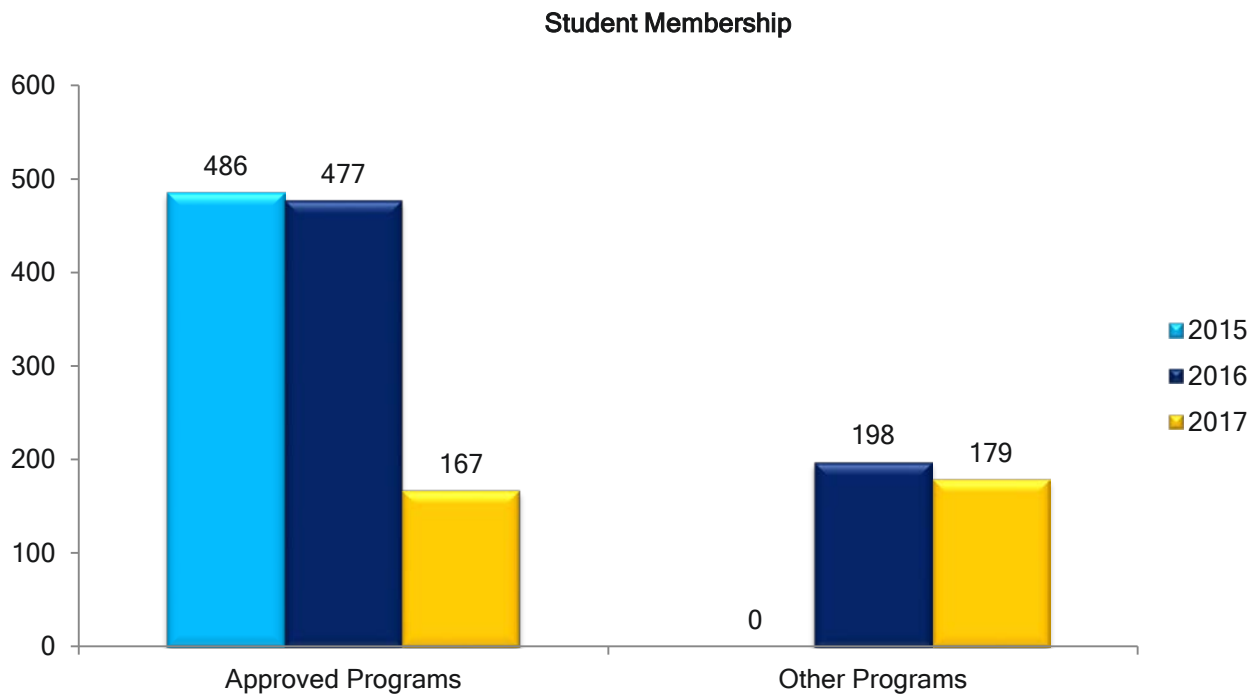
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Student membership

Student membership and engagement have been areas where NCRA has added additional resources. However, as the decline in schools continues to spiral so do the student member numbers. The huge decline during 2017 is due to school closings and the elimination of the participating school category.

New initiatives have seen success. In January 2017 an online student newsletter, *Up-To-Speed*, was launched. Today it is distributed to over 10,000 constituents with a 22% open rate. The NCRA Virtual Mentor Program has over 160 mentors and over 250 students who have been matched. A newly created Mentor/Mentee Handbook, an overhaul of the website, and updated sign-up procedures further strengthened the program. Marketing and Outreach conducted a student membership drive to all court reporting programs. Program directors were offered a free NCRA membership if 10 or more students signed up.

Student membership allows students to remain current in the latest topics and trends in the industry and provides them with a networking avenue post-graduation. We continue to encourage student engagement even as enrollment and membership decline.

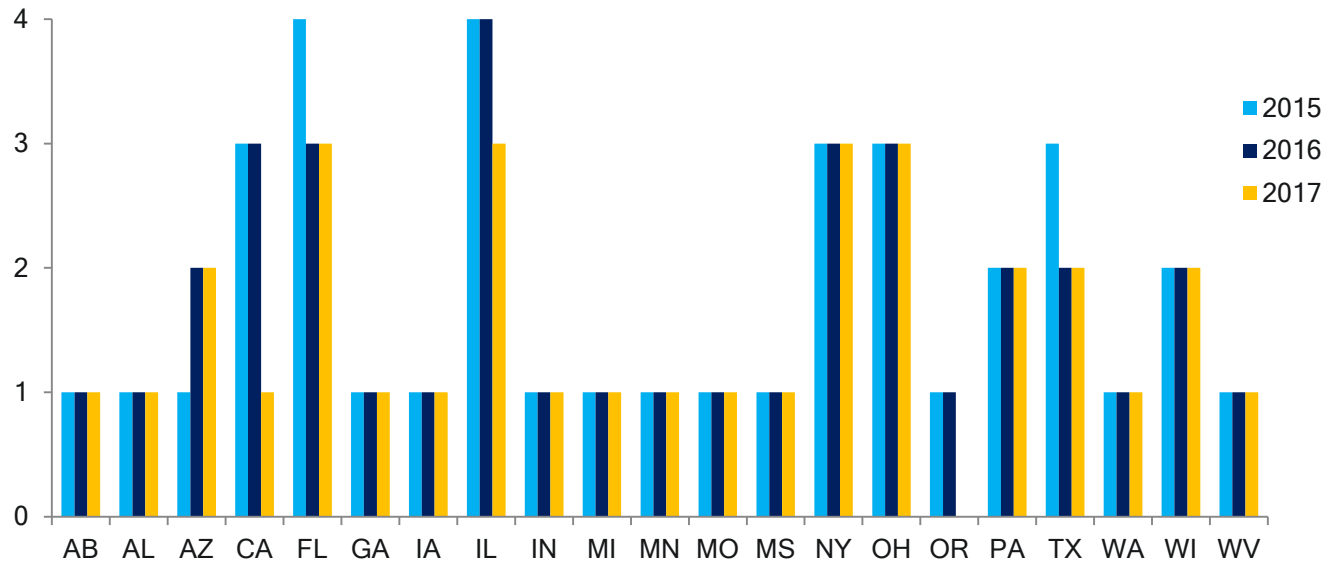


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Program locations

The 32 NCRA-approved programs are from the following states. The regions with the highest concentration of court reporting program closures continue to be in the Midwest and the East.

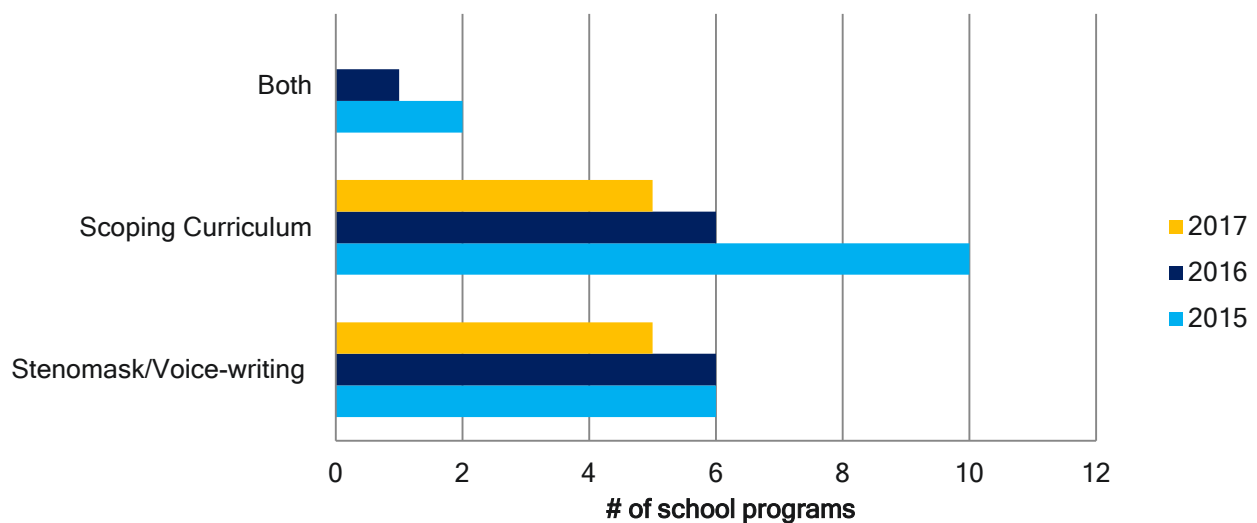
Approved Programs by State



Other programs

NCRA does not review or approve voice-writing or scoping programs, but some NCRA-approved programs offer those voice-writing and scoping.

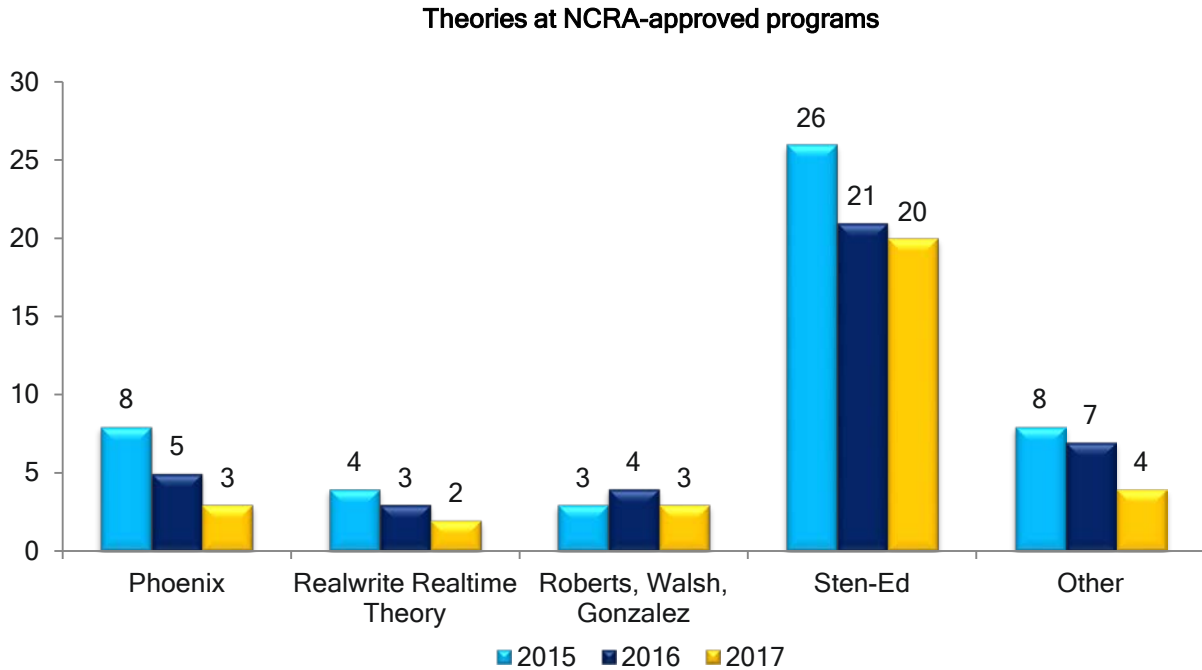
Voice and scoping curriculum



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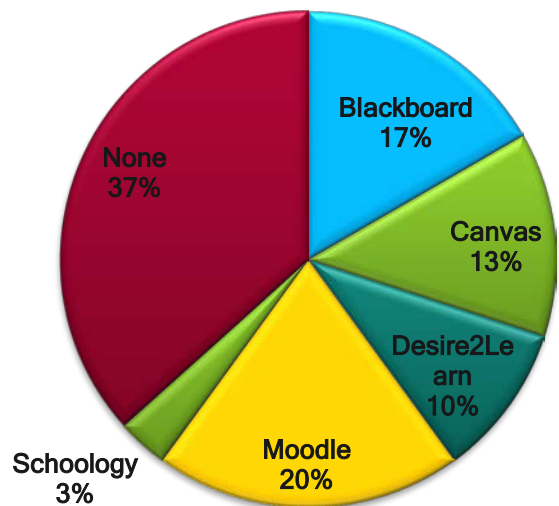
Types of theory

Over time, NCRA’s role regarding steno theories has shifted from one of a regulator to that of a clearinghouse. The chart below shows the shift over time from Phoenix and Roberts, Walsh, and Gonzalez to Sten-Ed and other customized theories.



Learning management systems (LMS)

Learning management systems have become an integral part of online learning. Of the 32 NCRA-approved programs, 22 are using some type of LMS.

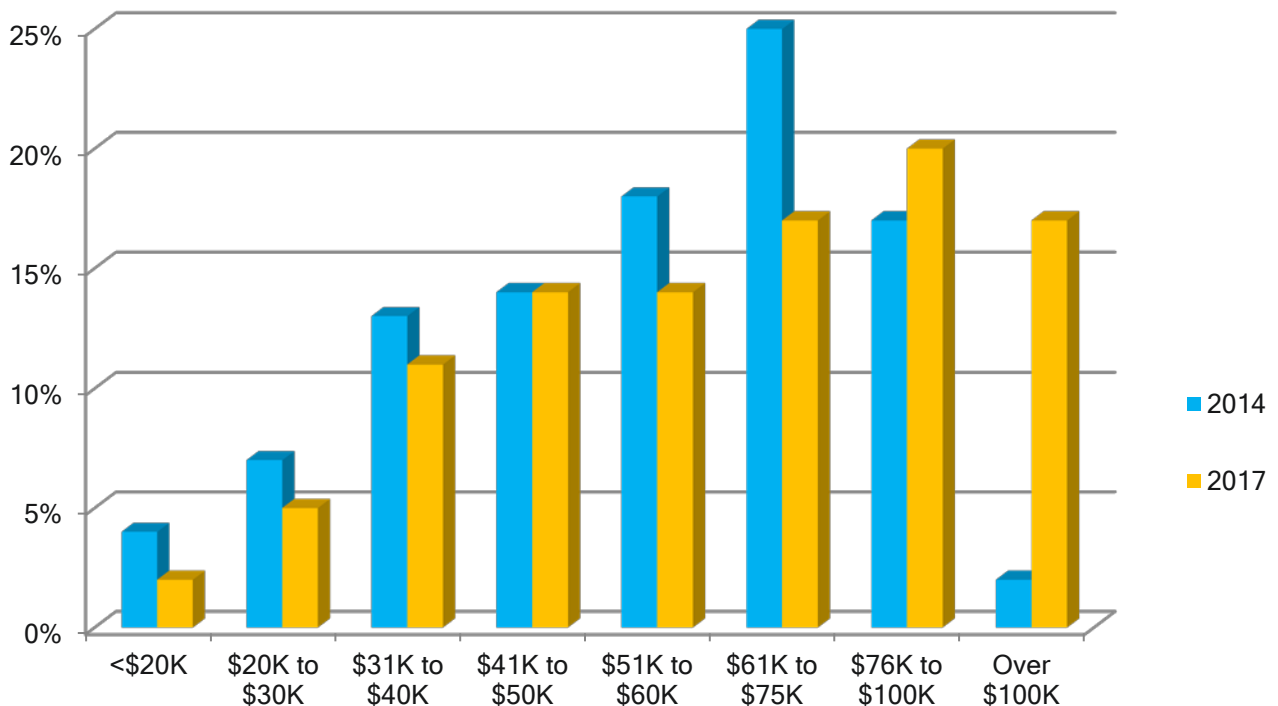


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Salary statistics

The chart below reflects the breakdown of membership salaries. Over the last three years, the increase in members earning over \$100K has compounded due to the expanding markets of realtime and captioning.

Salary Range	2014	2017
<\$20K	4%	2%
\$20K to \$30K	7%	5%
\$31K to \$40K	13%	11%
\$41K to \$50K	14%	14%
\$51K to \$60K	18%	14%
\$61K to \$75K	25%	17%
\$76K to \$100K	17%	20%
Over \$100K	2%	17%



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NCRA A to Z Program

In February 2017, during Court Reporting and Captioning Week, NCRA launched the DiscoverSteno (DS) web site. The DS site offers visitors an opportunity to explore, consider, and learn more about a career in court reporting and captioning. One component of the site is the Interest Inventory Survey (IIS). The IIS was designed to identify traits (i.e. skills, abilities, and values) that seasoned court reporters consider essential for a successful career in court reporting and captioning. Participants are encouraged to take the survey and receive their competency results.

Core Competencies	Descriptors
Commitment to work	Self-motivated, dedicated, diligent, and disciplined. Able to bounce back from bad days. Works independently. Proud of self and work. True to the record by taking pride in work. Takes ownership. Prepared for the challenges of the profession.
Language skills	Loves the English language. Large vocabulary. Good communication skills. Able to seek clarification for new terminology. Has the speed to keep up with fast talkers. Good proofreading and editing skills.
Continual learner	Desires to learn new things. Life-long learner. Intellectually curious. Well versed and read. Asks questions. Learns from mistakes. Appreciates a variety of assignments.
Endurance	Able to put in long hours of practice to improve skill level. Has developed manual dexterity from playing an instrument or video games. True interest in learning the skill.
Perfectionist	Perfectionist to the point of being compulsive. Constantly strives for excellence. Always looking for ways to improve by setting higher and higher standards for self. Very competitive to be the fastest and most accurate.
Focus	Ability to multi-task. Stays on task and handles distractions. Has a don't-give-up attitude. Goal oriented and a leader. Likes being in control of the situation and works well under pressure. Able to manage stress and stressful situations.
Work ethic	Reliable, dependable, and mature. Gets it done.
Attention to detail	Pays strict attention to the details.
Ability to balance work, family & play	Able to handle irregular work schedules. Balances family obligations and conflicts. Manages personal stress. Resilient. Recovers quickly to maintain self and work. Takes time for self and recharge.
Self-motivated	Independent and disciplined. Self-starter. Perseveres and stays focused on the end game. High desire to succeed. Always improving.

Targeted marketing efforts to increase traffic to the IIS site yielded leads that have been sent to NCRA-approved and participating court reporting programs.

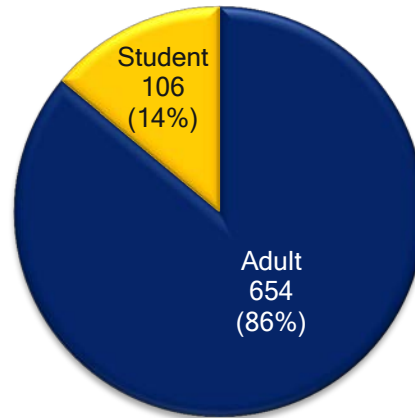
The site also hosts the NCRA A to Z Intro to Machine Shorthand program. This free six-week course offers the perfect opportunity for potential participants to learn the alphabet in steno, write on a real machine, and decide if pursuing an education in court reporting or captioning is the right choice. It has already reached over 400 participants in over 45 states. In the past 12 months, both programs have done considerably well. The next step is to launch an online NCRA A to Z program during the first quarter of 2018.

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NCRA A to Z Program statistics

Interest Inventory Survey (IIS)

The IIS consists of two surveys: one for students (25 and younger) and one for adults (26 and over). Between the two surveys, 760 leads have been sent to NCRA-approved and participating programs.



Participant statistics

Since the start of NCRA A to Z, approximately 71 programs have been completed around the country in 28 states. Of the 406 participants assigned to a program leader, 274 have started and/or completed the program. NCRA is currently surveying the participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the impact on enrollment at court reporting programs.

Programs scheduled:	71
Participants signed up:	617
-Assigned a leader	406
-Unassigned	211
Program leaders signed up:	268
-Assigned participants	96
-Unassigned	140
-Removed from list	32

Machine donations

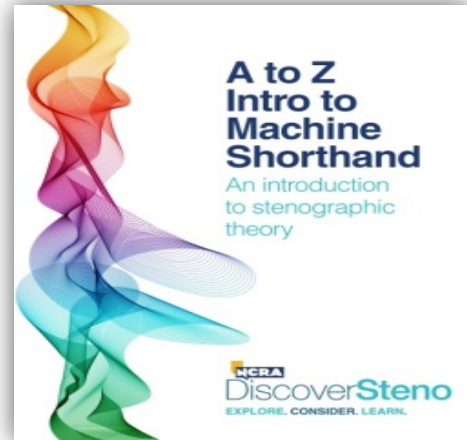
NCRA also created a donor machine program. Members gladly donate their used steno machines, chargers, AC adapters, paper trays, ribbons, tripods, and cases to their state associations. Currently, NCRA has a list of 57 machines available.

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Marketing ideas

At the start of the program, NCRA created marketing materials to attract students to the NCRA A to Z program. These materials were shared with program leaders to inform the public and recruit participants. A few of the marketing materials shared and programs conducted were as follows:

- NCRA A to Z Intro to Machine Shorthand Handbook
- NCRA A to Z flyer
- NCRA A to Z PowerPoint template
- Teach an A to Z Program [website](#)
- Presentations at state association meetings
- NCRA listservs
- Program leader webinar
- DiscoverSteno interest webinar
- Articles in the [JCR](#) and [JCR Weekly](#)
- NCRA A to Z Program Completion Certificate



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Moving Forward

As the profession faces the multiple challenges of declining enrollment and rising attrition, NCRA is committed to boosting student enrollment and fostering student success. Looking ahead to 2018, the Education Department will focus its efforts on the following:

- Continuing to improve DiscoverSteno by creating a dynamic marketing strategy to update the website, bringing in new users, and providing key resources for recruitment
- Finding new ways to use the DiscoverSteno Interest Inventory Survey (IIS) as a tool to recruit high school students and other prospects to NCRA A to Z and court reporting programs
- Following up with court reporting programs on the quality of DiscoverSteno IIS leads, enrollment of NCRA A to Z participants, and assessment of the overall program
- Sending surveys to NCRA A to Z program participants to assess the value of the program
- Broadening the NCRA A to Z program by launching the online module in spring 2018
- Expanding the network of NCRA-approved court reporting programs by implementing a second eligibility tier option
- Establishing and cultivating relationships with non-NCRA associated court reporting programs
- Providing more comprehensive information about court reporting programs on the NCRA website to allow students to compare programs
- Introducing stenography at the high school level by starting an NCRA A to Z program or a stenography club at the high school level
- Enhancing the Virtual Mentor Program by encouraging all students to have a mentor (partnering with schools, working with the New Professionals Committee, starting a student-to-student mentor program)
- Continuing to bring new and relevant content to the student newsletter, encouraging more students to contribute, share their ideas, and get involved