

54-A DISTRICT COURT

124 W. Michigan Ave., 6th Floor City Hall, Lansing, MI 48933

DISTRICT JUDGES
PATRICK F. CHERRY
FRANK J. DeLUCA
LOUISE ALDERSON
HUGH B. CLARKE, JR.



Court Administrator
ANETHIA BREWER

Magistrate
LAURA A. MILLMORE

Administrative Order No. 2016-1
Rescinds Administrative Order 2013-2

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

In accordance with Supreme Court Administrative Order 2013-8, the court establishes this Language Access Plan (LAP) to provide for the language access needs of court users.

This LAP is the plan for the court to ensure meaningful access to court services for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). A limited English proficient person is a person who does not speak English as his or her primary language, and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English, and by reason of his or her limitations, is not able to understand and meaningfully participate in the court process.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and effective language assistance to LEP persons who come in contact with the court. The court has appointed a language access coordinator to be a contact person for the public, court staff, and the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) concerning this plan and its implementation. The language access coordinator may be contacted through the court administrator's office.

IT IS ORDERED:

Section I. Needs Assessment

A. Census Data

The court will make every effort to provide service to all LEP persons in the court's service area. The following list shows the non-English languages most frequently spoken in the court's physical jurisdiction according to the most recent U.S. Census data.

1. Spanish
2. Vietnamese
3. Arabic

B. Court Experience

Based on court usage, the following list shows other non-English languages spoken in the court and not reflected in the US Census data.

1. Burmese
2. Nepali
3. Swahili
4. Somali

C. Identification of LEP Persons

Court staff use the following methods to identify LEP persons:

1. Courthouse staff are provided with "I Speak" cards
2. In-person and telephone requests from friends or family members
3. Information from law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys and other government agencies.
4. Bi-lingual employees will be utilized when available

Section II. Language Assistance Resources

A. Interpreters Used in the Courtroom

The court will offer assistance to LEP persons in the courtroom by providing foreign language interpreters as required by Michigan Court Rule 1.111.

B. Language Services Outside the Courtroom

The court will take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to services outside the courtroom. This is one of the most challenging situations facing court staff, because in most situations they will encounter LEP persons without an interpreter present. LEP persons may come in contact with court personnel via:

- At the public service counters of the Clerk's Offices when the person is here to check in for court proceedings, make a payment, or with general court inquiries
- At the window of the Probation Department when the person is referred for intake, alcohol assessment, or reporting to their probation officer
- In the judicial offices when a person is here to check in for court proceedings
- Via telephone calls from persons making payments or for general court inquiries

Court staff will consult with the court's language access coordinator to determine what type of language service should be made available, based on the nature and importance of the court service to be provided and resources available. The following language services are available:

- "I Speak" cards at clerks' counters, judicial staff probation department window
- Bi-lingual employee (Spanish)
- Family or friends may handle basic interactions such as making payments
- Language Line, Linguistica or comparable interpreter services via telephone
- In-person interpreters when necessary under the circumstances

C. Service Referrals

The court will make reasonable efforts to ensure that any non-federally funded entity to which the court refers LEP persons for services has provisions for addressing their language access needs. The court will consider alternative referral sources if language access services are not provided by such a non-federally funded entity.

D. Forms & Documents

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) makes selected translated forms available to the courts at <http://courts.michigan.gov/Administration/SCAO/Forms/Pages/default.aspx/>

Competent and reliable information and forms are also available in Spanish at Ayuda Legal de Michigan, <http://michiganlegalhelp.org/es>, which is part of the Michigan Legal Help Program.

When in-person interpreters are hired for court proceedings, they are expected to provide sight interpretation of documents for LEP persons.

E. Other Provisions

In an effort to provide LEP persons language access to court information, the court also provides the following:

While the court encounters a variety of languages, Spanish is by far the most frequently spoken. Training will be provided to handle other languages but the most structured changes (signage, forms or instructions) will be for the Spanish language. The court will continue to work with other courts in the area as well as external stakeholders representing foreign language communities for future opportunities to enhance accessibility.

To further provide meaningful court access to LEP persons, the court has appointed an LAP Committee comprised of administrative, probation, clerks offices and judicial support staff. The mission of the committee is to identify points of contact where language service needs are most common, to prioritize language access needs, and to implement means by which language access will be improved.

Section III. Training

The court is committed to training its judges and court staff, and coordinating with county clerks on providing LEP persons with meaningful access to court services. When the court provides training sessions, it will include a component of addressing LEP policy and procedure and the court's LAP. The court is aware that staff members having contact with the public are more likely to need in-depth training on LEP policy and procedure.

The court will work with SCAO and the Michigan Judicial Institute to ensure that all employees are trained on LEP policy and procedure. Training will be offered to assist judges and staff to: identify and respond to LEP persons, increase awareness of the types of language services available, provide guidance on when and how to access those services, and effectively use language services.

The court will provide judges and court staff the following training regarding language access:

1. **Initial Training:** Upon SCAO's approval of this Language Access Plan, the court will formally review it with judges and all staff at scheduled training sessions. The Language Access Coordinator will be identified, the process for obtaining interpreter services will be covered, and copies of the Language Access Plan and "I Speak" cards will be distributed. Detailed training will be provided to those individuals who regularly encounter LEP persons by virtue of their positions (i.e. counter clerks, judicial staff, probation officers).
2. **Refresher Training:** Follow-up training will be provided any time the Language Access Plan is revised to address changes in providing services.
3. **New Hire Training:** All newly-hired employees will be provided with a copy of the Language Access Plan and the contact information for the Language Access Coordinator. Staff will be trained on the use of I Speak cards, on-site and remote interpreter services and related matters based on the nature of their specific duties.

Section IV. Public Notification and Evaluation of Language Access Plan

A. Language Access Plan Approval and Notification

The court's LAP has been approved by the State Court Administrative Office. The court will post its LAP on its public website or public notification area within the courthouse, and will make copies of the LAP available upon request. The court will also contact the Ingham County Bar Association for inclusion in the association's monthly newsletter.

B. Evaluation and Review of the LAP

At the direction of SCAO, or on its own initiative, the court will assess whether the LAP needs to be updated. The LAP will remain in effect unless modified or updated. Review of the following areas may indicate a need to update the LAP:

- Number of LEP persons requesting court interpreters or language assistance
- Funding provided or available for language services
- Current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided
- Feedback from LEP communities within the City of Lansing and the greater Lansing area
- Court staff (turnover, new hires)
- Feedback from trainings provided by the court or SCAO/MJI
- Viability of identified language services and resources
- Problem areas identified and corrective action strategies adopted
- Updated LEP community data

C. Language Access Coordinator

The language access coordinator for this court ensures this plan is followed, advises the court on potential updates to this plan, and coordinates the language access needs for the court as they arise. The court has identified the name and contact information of the language access coordinator and advised the SCAO.

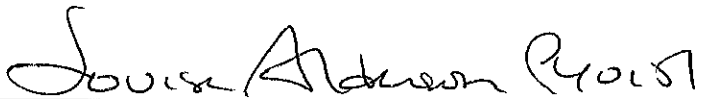
D. Grievance Process

The court is committed to providing LEP persons with meaningful access to court proceedings and services and to addressing grievances regarding access to language services promptly and thoroughly.

Specific issues regarding interpreters or interpreter services should be brought immediately to the attention of the language access coordinator. Specific issues with the court or a particular judge should be brought immediately to the court administrator.

Effective: Upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office

Date: 5/17/16



Louise Alderson, Chief Judge