

Committee on Limited English Proficiency
February 26, 2014
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
225 Spring Street, Wethersfield
Conference Room 206

Members Present: The Hon. Maria A. Kahn, Co-Chair, Ms. Alejandra Donath, Co-Chair, Ms. Karen Chorney, Atty. Richard Loffredo.

Others present: Legal Services Advisors Atty. Nancy Porter and Atty. Katherine Casaubon; Ms. Heather Collins, Court Operations, filling in as support for staff person Ms. Melanie Kerr.

- I. **Welcome of members** by the co-chairs: Judge Kahn and Atty. Porter introduced the Committee's new legal advisor, Attorney Katherine Casaubon from the Legal Services Unit. Atty. Casaubon recently joined Legal Services following a clerkship at the Supreme Court. She will be replacing Atty. Porter on the Committee. The Committee thanked Atty. Porter for her service to the LEP effort.
- II. **Approval of October 16, 2013 Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were unanimously approved.
- III. **Report to the Chief Justice:** Atty. Loffredo drafted the Committee's annual report, and the members reviewed it. There were two minor changes to some of the language. The members discussed the content of the report, which in part speaks to expanding the number of documents translated, and interpreter and translator services. The Committee agreed that the report is substantively complete and will be reviewed by the Executive Director of Court Operations, Atty. Joseph D. D'Alesio, prior to its submission to Chief Justice Rogers.
- IV. **Access to Justice Recommendations: Judge Kahn,** who also co-chairs the Judicial Branch Access to Justice Commission (ATJC), told the Committee that the ATJC's 2012 Annual Report to the Chief Justice contained a handful of recommendations specific to those with limited English proficiency. The majority, if not all, of those recommendations, have been completed or are in some phase of implementation, or are ongoing, she said. Judge Kahn asked the members to review those recommendations, which can be found in the Commission's report, at http://jud.ct.gov/Committees/access/ATJ_AnnualReport.pdf , and make comments about the recommendations' relevance and/or state of completion. **Ms. Chorney** will create a chart of the members' responses, which will then be shared by Judge Kahn with the ATJ Commission.

- V. **Outreach to Colleges and Universities: Co-Chair Donath** presented a document, prepared by Ms. Jill Hoskins of the Interpreter and Translator Services Unit, of all of the higher education opportunities available in Connecticut, with forty institutions assessed, from Albertus Magnus to Yale. There was discussion among the group about the opportunities to work with the state's community colleges and other state schools to design a career track that would help students take advantage of interpreter and translator service careers in the Branch. **Ms. Donath and Atty. Loffredo** want to meet with Branch administrators to discuss possible next steps, such as meeting with state colleges and exploring the possibility of establishing internships and/or mentoring possibilities that would foster interest in a career with the Judicial Branch. They will report back at the next meeting.
- VI. **Staff Opportunities for Conversational Spanish Classes: Ms. Chorney** talked with officials from Manchester Community College, which develops in-service training. Cost is an issue. CSSD has begun holding "brown-bag lunches" that discuss cultural competency issues, and the Committee wondered if that program could somehow be adopted but with a focus on conversational Spanish. The more Branch staff who speak some Spanish, the better the Branch's services to the public will be. There was also discussion about developing an online training, through the Learning Management System, that would allow interested staff to take a module or series of modules in conversational Spanish. There were questions about costs and staff time; it was discussed that perhaps modules could be rolled out on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, but the Committee needs to ask administrators if such a program would be cost prohibitive, before proceeding.
- VII. **Other Project Updates: Atty. Loffredo reported on:**
- **Vital Documents:** Work continues on identifying vital documents and translating them into Spanish and other languages, such as Bail Commissioner letters, victim services information, etc.
 - **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):** A remote interpreting project begins the first week of March, with Ms. Donath in her office in Hartford, and with the court in Derby. Derby does not have the services of a full-time interpreter from Tuesday through Friday each week. This program will allow Ms. Donath to provide interpreter services via a video conferencing set-up. It also allows her to interpret in private conversations between a party and their attorney; they would use headphones to hear her interpretation so that others' cannot hear it. The system works over a private, secure channel with firewall protection. If the pilot is successful, it will gradually be expanded throughout the state. VRI, if successful, will help address the critical need for interpreters by creating staffing efficiencies, eliminating unnecessary travel, and saving money.
 - **Universal Advisement of Rights:** The Spanish version of an individual's Advisement of Rights in court proceedings has been recorded and is now playing in Family Support Magistrate Courts in Hartford and New Haven. The recording allows Judges to start their calendar calls on time, rather than having to wait 'their turn' for a Spanish interpreter to say those rights aloud in

courtrooms prior to proceedings beginning. Due to the success in Hartford and New Haven, the program will be rolled out statewide.

- VIII. **New Business:** **Ms. Chorney** advised that since cutting the number of LEP Proficiency classes from two to one each month, class sizes have doubled but the workload has been cut in half, an efficiency that saves money and staff on-site and travel time. **Judge Kahn** said that she has spoken with the deputy director in charge of Small Claims/Motor Vehicle Magistrates, who are private attorneys who hear those case types at a nominal cost to the Branch. A new class of SC/MVMs is beginning, and Ms. Donath said she will reach out to the deputy director to make her aware of available LEP training.
- IX. **Next Steps:** The members will review the ATJ report and report back at the next meeting, which will be on Thursday, April 24th at 9 a.m. at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield. An agenda will be posted on the [Committee's website](#).