



COMMITTEE ON LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

2015 REPORT

Committee on Limited English Proficiency

The Committee on Limited English Proficiency was initially formed in 2008 under the Access goal of the Judicial Branch's Strategic Plan and charged with "eliminating language barriers to facilities, processes and information that are faced by individuals with limited English proficiency." The committee is co-chaired by Judge Maria Araujo Kahn and Alejandra Donath, Program Manager for the Interpreter and Translator Services Unit (ITS), and is comprised of the following members¹:

Troy Brown²
Karen Chorney
Richard Loffredo
Katharine Casaubon (Legal Services advisor)
Melanie Kerr (Support Staff)

In 2015, for the second year in a row, the Connecticut Judicial Branch was ranked second among all states by the National Center for Access to Justice at Cardozo Law School for the services it provides to its limited English proficient stakeholders. This ranking exemplifies the continuing commitment the Judicial Branch has made to ensuring that limited English proficient individuals are able to access its facilities, processes, services and information.

In 2015, ITS received over 41,000 requests to provide in-person oral language assistance in 72 different languages/dialects and over 16,000 requests to provide over-the-phone interpreting services in 48 different languages/dialects. In addition, ITS translated 99 separate Branch forms as well as 84 case specific documents in 2015.

This report serves as an update of the work of the Committee on Limited English Proficiency in 2015.

¹The Committee would like to acknowledge Attorney Susan Garcia Nofi, Executive Director New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Attorney Michelle Fica, Connecticut Legal Services. Their attendance and participation in the Committee meetings has been invaluable.

²Troy Brown, Manager of Administration Services within the Branch's Court Support Services Division, was added as a member in 2015.

Over the past year, the Committee has been working on the following areas in its effort to ensure that limited English proficient individuals can access the justice system in Connecticut:

Continued LEP Training

In 2008, the Branch developed a mandatory LEP training program for all employees that provides information on the federal requirements, explains the role of the interpreter, and details how to obtain language assistance and translation services. This program also offers cultural sensitivity education. Seven sessions were offered in 2015, which were attended by 125 Judicial Branch employees. To date, over 2000 employees have attended this half-day program.

The Branch has also developed an LEP training program for its contractors so that they understand the Branch's obligations to provide meaningful access to persons who are limited English proficient. To date, 166 contractors have attended the program.

Judges and Family Support Magistrates were given LEP training in 2013. Since 2013, LEP training has been incorporated into the new judge orientation program provided to all newly appointed judges. In 2015, two new classes of judges were appointed and received the LEP training. In addition, Justice Robinson and Judge Kahn conducted several training sessions on Implicit Bias, which includes an LEP component, for several Bar Associations in the state.

With the assistance of the Branch's Information Technology Division, the Committee has begun work on transitioning its LEP training to an online format.

Vital Documents

The Judicial Branch has identified its vital documents and has begun the process of translating them into Spanish. In 2015, 99 documents were translated.

The Branch purchased two additional TRADOS licenses in 2015, which has greatly increased its ability to translate documents.

Telephonic Bilingual Services

The Judicial Branch has contracted for telephonic language assistance services, which enable Judicial Branch staff and individuals who are limited English proficient to communicate with the use of a telephone. In 2015, the Judicial Branch switched providers for telephonic bilingual

services. The switch in providers required all Branch offices to be trained on how to access the new providers.³

Telephonic bilingual services are available in more than 150 languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is available in all Judicial Branch facilities and is also available to staff working outside of Branch facilities, via a cell phone, when they need to communicate with limited English proficient individuals. In 2015, it was used 16,602 times in 48 different languages/dialects.

Updating the Judicial Branch's Internet Site

The overwhelming majority of interpreter requests continue to be for the Spanish language (approximately 88%). The next most requested languages are Polish and Portuguese (approximately 3% each). Accordingly, the Judicial Branch continues to translate pages on its website into Spanish, Portuguese and Polish.

The Judicial Branch's Web Board has identified which Frequently Asked Questions pages on the Internet have been the most viewed. ITS has undertaken the process of translating those pages and others into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese.

Revised Judicial Branch LEP Policy and Language Access Plan

The LEP Committee reviewed and revised the Judicial Branch's LEP policy and Language Access Plan. The revised policy and Language Access Plan were translated into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese and posted on the Branch's Internet and Intranet websites.

³The Committee would like to acknowledge the work of Diana Holdridge and Debra Novaco, who replaced all of the Branch's dual-handset phones and provided training on how to access services with the new providers.

Future Plans

The Committee recognizes the continuing need for the Judicial Branch to provide access to its facilities, processes, and information to all limited English proficient individuals. In the coming year, the Committee intends to focus on the following areas:

Vital Documents

The translation of vital documents is an important initiative that is currently underway. In 2013, the Chief Court Administrator sent a letter to the Judicial Branch's Executive Directors on behalf of the Committee requesting them to identify the vital documents utilized by their division for translation. The initial list of identified documents has been translated into Spanish. ITS is currently working on having those documents also translated into Polish and Portuguese.

In the coming year, the Committee will seek to have the Chief Court Administrator send a new letter to the Branch's Executive Directors for any additional vital documents that need to be translated.

Video Remote Interpreting

The video remote interpreting (VRI) pilot program will be relaunched in 2016 at G.A. 5 at Derby. The pilot program was developed to allow a Spanish-language staff interpreter situated in the main office of ITS in Hartford to be present in a courtroom via video technology to provide language assistance services. Derby was identified because ITS is occasionally required to provide language services on days interpreters are not regularly scheduled for that particular location. By using this technology, the time waiting for an interpreter to travel to that location will be greatly reduced. It also reduces the need to hire private providers at higher hourly rates to provide the service. Thus, it is a timelier and cost efficient means of providing interpreter services.

Universal Advisement of Rights

In 2012, a pilot program was developed in which the advisement of rights given by Family Support Magistrates were translated into Spanish and recorded on a DVD. Instead of utilizing an interpreter in court to interpret the Magistrate's advisement of rights, the pre-recorded video is played in open court immediately after the Magistrate gives the advisement. The success of the pilot program led to its statewide implementation in 2014.

A survey will be developed and sent to all the stakeholders involved in the advisement of rights project. The survey will seek to determine the impact of the program and serve as a basis for determining whether or not the program should be extended into other case types.

Training

Training on LEP issues is a continuous effort. The LEP Committee, with the assistance of the Judicial Branch's Information Technology Division, will continue working on transitioning the LEP training to an online format. Moving the training online will enable all Branch employees to go through the training in a short period of time. In addition, it will allow for the development of refresher courses. It is anticipated that the online training will be launched in the first half of 2016.

Outreach

The LEP Committee will create an email account to allow stakeholders to provide suggestions on how the Judicial Branch can better meet the needs of the LEP population. The email account will be added to the Committee's webpage and will be advertised to agencies working with LEP populations.

Translated Orders

The LEP Committee proposes to work with the Branch's Information Technology Division, Court Support Services Division and Court Operations Unit to develop a pilot project to test the feasibility of issuing translated case specific court orders. While currently all standard court orders have been translated into Spanish, the most requested language, and are available on the website as part of the translation of vital documents, this pilot program is designed to electronically generate case specific individualized translated court orders.

"How to Work with Interpreters" Document

While Judicial Branch staff are aware on how to work with an interpreter, ITS also provides interpreters who interact with non-Judicial Branch employees. These individuals may or may not know about the role of an interpreter or their obligation to strictly abide by their code of ethics. The LEP Committee proposes to develop two brochures on how to work with interpreters, one focused on working with interpreters inside the courtroom and one focused on working with interpreters outside the courtroom.

INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR SERVICES
YEARLY STATISTICAL REPORT, 2015

ITS provides in-person language assistance and TBS provides over-the-phone language assistance

LANGUAGE	ITS TOTAL FILES
Afro-Asiatic Languages (Amharic, Hausa, Maay)	15
Akan languages (Twi, Akan)	17
Albanian	234
Arabic, Arabic Moroccan, Arabic Egyptian	342
Baltic languages (Lithuanian)	2
Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian	72
Bulgarian	5
Burmese - Karen	20
Cambodian	59
Cape Verdean/Portuguese Creole	3
Chinese Mandarin/Cantonese	601
Creole English-based (Jamaican, Guyanese)	28
Czech-Slovak	19
French/French Canadian/Haitian Creole	683
Georgian	8
German	6
Greek	41
Hebrew	2
Hungarian	80
Indigenous languages of Central America (K'iche)	5
Indo-Iranian/Indic languages Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Sinhalese, Kannada, Sanskrit, Nepalese, Kurdish, Farsi, Sorani, Tamil, Malayalam, Pashto	364
Italian, Italian Sicilian	39
Japanese	15
Korean	154
Laotian, Mandingo	83
Macedonian	1
Malayo-Polynesian (Tagalog)	4
Niger-Congo languages (Khana, Kirundi, Swahili, Wolof)	24
Polish	1267
Portuguese	1581
Romanian	16
Russian	179
Slovene	2
Spanish	34633
Swedish	4
Thai	36
Tibetan	29
Turkish	51
Ukrainian	178
Vietnamese	190
ITS totals	41092

TBS totals 16605