



COMMITTEE ON LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

2016 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 Brown
Karen Chorney
Richard Loffredo
Eduardo Palmieri
Katharine Casaubon (Legal Services advisor)
Melanie Kerr (Support Staff)

The trying economic realities of 2016 forced the Judicial Branch to make very difficult decisions. Even with these difficulties, however, the Branch's commitment to ensuring that limited English proficient individuals are able to access its facilities, processes, services and information remained a priority.

In 2016, ITS received over 43,000 requests to provide in-person oral language assistance in 72 different languages/dialects and over 15,000 requests to provide over-the-phone interpreting services in 49 different languages/dialects. In addition, ITS translated 50 separate Branch forms as well as 110 case specific documents in 2016. See Attachment A.

This report serves as an update of the work of the Committee on Limited English Proficiency in 2016.

¹The Committee would like to acknowledge Attorney Susan Garcia Nofi, former 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.

On-Going Initiatives

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. Five sessions were offered in 2016, which were attended by 98 Judicial Branch employees. To date, over 2000 employees have attended this half-day program. With the assistance of the Branch's Information Technology Division, the Committee has begun the process of transitioning this LEP training to an online format, which is expected to launch in 2017.

The Branch also offers a civil rights training program to its contractors. Within this program is a component on LEP so that contracted providers understand the Branch's obligations, as well as their own obligations, to provide meaningful access to persons who are limited English proficient. Three sessions were offered in 2016, with 72 contracted providers attending.

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 2016, Judge Kahn provided follow-up training to the judges at their fall divisional meetings. The follow-up training covered current trends related to LEP issues, the process of assigning interpreters, how best to maximize resources, and upcoming initiatives.

Vital Documents

The Judicial Branch has identified its vital documents and continues the process of translating them into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese. In 2016, 160 documents were translated.

The Committee would like to recognize the work of Millie Rutkiewicz, Lead Court Interpreter, who oversaw translations for the Judicial Branch for the past six years. Millie retired from the Judicial Branch in December, 2016. It is through Millie's dedication and leadership that the Judicial Branch has been able to translate so many of its 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 through the use of a telephone.

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 2016, it was used 15,859 times in 49 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. The Interpreter and Translator Services Unit has undertaken the process of translating those pages and others into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese.

Video Remote Interpreting

The growth in demand for interpreting services, the continuing need to find adequate candidates, hiring limitations due to budgetary issues, and the shortage of certified and qualified interpreters make it necessary for the Branch to look for additional ways to ensure the provision of meaningful access to justice for LEP individuals.

A pilot program was launched in 2016 which allows for video remote interpreting between offices. Currently, when interviews with an individual who is limited English proficient are scheduled and an in-person interpreter is unavailable, offices utilize the Branch's telephonic bilingual services. In the pilot, the Judicial Branch is exploring the use of video remote interpreting by its staff certified interpreters for these types of interviews.

The New Britain Judicial District was selected as the pilot location. Since October 2016, interviews between Judicial Branch staff and limited English proficient individuals within the juvenile probation office, adult probation office and family relations office have occurred utilizing video remote interpreting technology. If feasible, this technology can be utilized in other locations and settings to promote efficient and timely provision of interpreter services.

“Guidelines for Working with Court Interpreters”

The Committee created a new form, entitled “Guidelines for Working with Court Interpreters”, JD-ES-327. The form provides recommendations to maximize the effectiveness of communications utilizing a court interpreter. These guidelines were developed to educate non-Judicial Branch staff and professionals utilizing court interpreters.

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. The Interpreter and Translator Services Unit 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.

In the coming year, the Committee will work with the External Affairs Division to notify/inform stakeholders of the availability of additional translated vital documents.

Video Remote Interpreting

The LEP Committee will review feedback regarding the video remote interpreting pilot program launched in the New Britain courthouse to facilitate interviews with LEP clients in the bail, probation and family services offices. Depending on the results of the feedback, the Committee will seek to expand the program to additional courthouses.

The Committee will also continue to work with the Branch’s Information Technology Division and Judge Support Services Unit to develop a video remote interpreting pilot in the New Britain courthouse for in-court proceedings. This will 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. By using this technology, the time waiting for an interpreter to travel to that location will be greatly reduced. It also allows ITS to maximize the services of its highly trained and skilled staff interpreters, rather than relying on less experienced outside vendors. 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 has been developed and will be 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 launch an online training program for all Judicial Branch employees. The training will be mandatory for all Judicial Branch employees and will be required to be completed within six months of the launch date.

The LEP Committee will also begin developing an online training module for the Judicial Branch's contracted providers. This training will be mandatory for all contracted providers that provide direct services to the Judicial Branch's stakeholders.

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.

Additionally, the Committee will reengage the Judicial Branch's LEP stakeholders to determine if there are any additional improvements that can be made.

Revise Language Access Plan

The Committee will review and revise the Judicial Branch's Language Access Plan.

Telephonic Bilingual Services Refresher Training

The Judicial Branch has been piloting a third telephonic bilingual service. In 2017, this third provider will be rolled out statewide. As part of the rollout, Interpreter and Translator Services will provide a refresher training on how to utilize telephonic services to every office.

Review Website

The LEP Committee will review its Committee webpage, as well as the "Limited English Proficiency (LEP)" webpage, on the Judicial Branch's website to see if any improvements can be made to make it more user-friendly.

Attachment A

**INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR SERVICES
YEARLY STATISTICAL REPORT, 2016**

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

LANGUAGE	ITS TOTAL FILES	TBS TOTAL CALLS
Afro-Asiatic Languages (Amharic, Somali, Tigrinya)	26	7
Akan languages (Twi,Akan)	6	1
Albanian	237	22
Arabic, Arabic Moroccan	420	55
Baltic languages (Lithuanian)	6	6
Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian	37	2
Bulgarian	1	1
Burmese - Karen	31	3
Cambodian - Khmer	34	3
Cape Verdean	2	0
Chinese Mandarin/Cantonese	786	89
Creole English-based (Jamaican, Krio)	30	89
Czech-Slovak	15	2
French/French Canadian/Haitian Creole	626	26
Georgian	6	0
German	2	1
Greek	26	2
Hebrew	4	0
Hmong	2	0
Hungarian	19	1
Indigenous languages of Central America (K'iche)	5	0
Indo-Iranian/Indic languages Azerbaijani, Bangladesh, Bengali,Gujarati,Hindi,Punjabi,Urdu,Sinhalese,Nepalese,Kurdish,Farsi, Malayalam,Pashto, Telugu	296	63
Italian	57	7
Japanese	4	0
Korean	136	14
Laotian, Mandingo	46	4
Macedonian	8	3
Malayo-Polynesian (Tagalog, Indonesian, Malay)	27	2
Niger-Congo languages (Kirundi,Kinyarwanda,Swahili,Wolof)	40	25
Polish	661	105
Portuguese	1105	266
Romanian	15	1
Russian	187	52
Spanish	37846	14912
Swedish	1	0
Thai	32	1
Tibetan	34	2
Turkish	62	4
Ukrainian	153	53
Vietnamese	200	35
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