

STATE OF MICHIGAN 6th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT/ OAKLAND COUNTY PROBATE COURT	LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN	ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER CIRCUIT 2013-04J PROBATE 2013-04J
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LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

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

This LAP is the plan for the Courts 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 the plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and effective language assistance to LEP persons who come in contact with the Courts.

The Courts have appointed a language access coordinator to be a contact person for the public, court staff, and 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 Courts will make every effort to provide service to all LEP persons in their service area. The following list shows the non-English languages most frequently spoken in the Courts’ physical jurisdiction.

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|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Spanish | 5. Russian | 9. Hmong |
| 2. Arabic | 6. Vietnamese | 10. Tagalog |
| 3. Chinese | 7. Korean | 11. Polish |
| 4. Japanese | 8. Chaldean | 12. Albanian |

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. N/A

C. Identification of LEP Persons

Court staff use the following methods to identify LEP persons and their subject language:

1. Use of bi-lingual employees;
2. Communicating with friends or family members accompanying the LEP person for the sole purpose of identifying the subject language;
3. Use of "I Speak" cards;
4. Use of telephonic language services; and
5. Use of SCAO form MC 81, Request for Foreign Language Interpreter.

Section II. Language Assistance Resources

A. Interpreters Used In the Courtroom

The Courts 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 Courts 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 and other county personnel via:

- Passing through security at the public entrances;
- Probate service counter;
- Obtaining information at the Clerk's Office and Case Management Office;
- Working with the Friend of the Court – this includes home visits made by FOC staff, telephone calls, in person appearances at the front counter, payment window, and for purposes of meeting individually with FOC staff who handle accounting, medical, enforcement and general support issues;
- Working with the Personal Protection Order clerks;
- Interacting with Juvenile Intake and Youth Assistance;
- Communicating with chambers; and
- The Jury Office.

Court staff will consult with the courts' 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:

- The Courts will continue to maintain a list of professional court interpreters that is shared with internal and external stakeholders pending the appointment of the Foreign Language Board of Review and its action on standards for certification and qualification;
- Staff at all public access points will be trained on the use of “I Speak” cards and have them available for use;
- Bi-lingual staff will be made available to assist LEP persons for general informational issues;
- Telephonic language services will be used for general matters and to ensure access when professional interpreters are not reasonably available and bi-lingual staff are either unavailable or unable to provide the necessary level of language access;

C. Service Referrals

The Courts will make reasonable efforts to ensure that a non-federally funded entity to which the court refers LEP persons for services has provisions for addressing their needs. The Courts will consider viable alternatives if language access is not provided by such a non-federally funded entity. This includes representatives like court appointed attorneys, Guardians ad Litem, Legal Guardians ad Litem, CASA workers, supervised parenting time providers, et cetera.

D. Forms & Documents

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

- 1) Additional translated forms available to court users include:
 - The Friend of the Court handbook has been translated into Spanish.

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

- 2) Courthouse translation for LEP
 - Reference is made to foreign translations of SCAO approved forms at <http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Forms/Pages/Foreign-Translations.aspx>
 - FOC handbook;
 - Investigating multi-language signage in County facilities and web page tools;
 - Telephonic language lines

E. Other Provisions

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

- No other provisions have yet been made.

Section III. Training

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

The Courts will work with SCAO and MJI 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, guide when and how to access those services, and effectively use language services.

The Courts provide to judges and court staff and offer to county clerks the following training regarding language access.

- General orientation regarding the language access plan and responsibilities under it;
- Specific training on the use of "I Speak" cards;
- Specific training, as needed, on the use of telephonic language lines;
- Specific training on the use of and working with foreign language interpreters;

Section IV. Public Notification and Evaluation of Language Access Plan

A. Language Access Plan Approval and Notification

The Courts' LAP has been approved by the State Court Administrative Office. The Courts will post the LAP on its public website and public notification area within the courthouse and will make copies of the LAP available upon request.

The Courts intend to consult with the following members of the community in the implementation of their LAP:

- Michigan Translators and Interpreters Network;
- Family Law Assistance Project;
- Oakland Schools;
- CASA;
- El Centro;
- Arab American and Chaldean Council;
- Oakland County Bar Association;
- Adams-Pratt Law Library

- Bromberg and Associates
- Inter-Lingua

B. Evaluation and Review of the LAP

At the direction of SCAO, or on their own initiative, the Courts will assess whether the LAP needs updating. 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 languages services
- Current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided
- Feedback from LEP communities within the county
- Court staff (turnover, new hires, etc.)
- Feedback from trainings provided by the court or SCAO/MJI
- Viability of identified language services and resources
- Problem areas and corrective action strategies
- Updated census data

The language access coordinator for the Courts ensures this plan is followed, advises the Courts on potential updates to this plan, and coordinates the language access needs for the Courts as they arise. The Courts have identified the name and contact information of the language access coordinator and advised the State Court Administrative Office. The Courts will notify the SCAO regional office of any changes to the language access coordinator's contact information or if a new language access coordinator is named.

Effective Date: December 10, 2013



Nanci J. Grant
Chief Circuit Judge



Linda S. Hallmark
Chief Probate Judge

Date: 12-10-13

Date: 12-10-13