

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 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 court.

The court has 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 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.

1. Spanish or Spanish Creole
2. German
3. Polish
4. French or French Creole

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. Other Indic Languages (Punjabi)
2. Persian (Farsi)
3. Romanian
4. Chinese Dialects

C. Identification of LEP Persons

Court staff use the following methods to identify LEP persons:

1. "I Speak" cards available in all court offices at public counters.
2. In-person and telephone requests from friends/family or attorneys for LEP persons.

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. LEP persons may come in contact with court personnel via:

- Court Security Screening
- Court Administrative Offices
- Court Record and Payment Offices
- Friend of Court
- County Clerk
- Probation Offices

Court staff will consult with the court's language access coordinator where appropriate 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:

- Staff accessed routinely by the public will have "I Speak" cards to identify the language needed.
- LEP individuals seeking routine court services at public service counters frequently bring family or friends to translate.
- Telephone interpreter services are available in court offices for more involved situations.
- Where the contact with an identified LEP person can be scheduled, every attempt will be made to arrange an in-person interpreter.

C. Service Referrals

The court 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 court will consider viable alternatives if language access is not provided by such a non-federally funded entity.

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:
 - CC291 Advice of Rights (Spanish).

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

2. Courthouse translation services for LEP:
 - a. The St. Clair County Courts have no frequently encountered languages. "I Speak" cards are available. Requests for language assistance outside courtrooms or scheduled events are rare.
 - b. When LEP persons need assistance with forms, court staff will use the SCAO website. If forms are not available in a required language, telephonic interpretation services or in-person interpreters will be arranged as appropriate for the court services involved.

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 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 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 court provides judges and court staff and offers to county clerks the following training regarding language access:

- How to use "I Speak" cards and where to display them.
- How to access the court's language access plan.
- Identification of the language access coordinator for each court and instruction about arranging appropriate language services through each court administrator.

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 and public notification area within the courthouse and will make copies of the LAP available upon request via the Court Administration Offices.

The court consulted with the following members of the community in creating its LAP:

- St. Clair County Bar Association.
- Operation Transformation- Local entity that coordinates community services provided by the faith community.
- Port Huron Hospital.

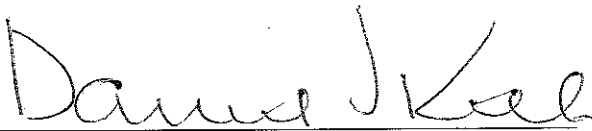
B. Evaluation and Review of the LAP

At the direction of SCAO, or on its own initiative, the court will assess whether the LAP needs updating. The LAP will remain in effect unless modified or updated.

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 State Court Administrative Office. The court 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: _____

Date: 12/5/13



Chief Judge