



STATE OF MICHIGAN

59TH DISTRICT COURT

3161 WILSON S.W.
GRANDVILLE, MI 49418
PHONE (616) 538-9660
Fax (616) 538-5144

Peter P. Versluis
District Judge

Julie C. Fend
Court Administrator

John R. Jackson
Attorney – Magistrate

Administrative Order 2013 – 04

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 (369)
2. Vietnamese (68)
3. Italian (34)

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. Polish

C. Identification of LEP Persons

Court staff use the following methods to identify LEP persons:

1. Available “I Speak” cards at all clerk’s counters.
2. In-person bilingual family members/associates of LEP persons assist in identifying language for upcoming legal involvement.
3. Telephone requests from family/friends of LEP person for language assistance involving future court matters.

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. 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 personnel via:

- District Court clerk’s counter/window.
- Security screening prior to courtroom entrance.
- Prosecutor’s Office inside the District Court: Pre-Trial conferences.
- District Court Probation: intake, report days with probationer/Probation Officer, alcohol assessment interviews, PSI interviews, substance-abuse screening/testing, community service/work crew referrals, treatment referrals.

Court staff will consult with the court’s 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:

- “I Speak” cards at clerk’s counter
- In-person interpreters: Spanish, Vietnamese, Polish
- El Centro Translations (Hispanic Center of West Michigan): Spanish, Vietnamese
- Eduardo Romero: Spanish
- Donna Bos: Spanish
- Liaison Linguistics: Spanish, Vietnamese, Italian
- Wordbridge, Anne Pham: Vietnamese
- Language Line Services use in a separate conference room with security.
- District Court issued cellular phone for use to interpret over phone with Language Line Services.

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:

- District Court Probation Department forms: ADE Incorporated SALCE (Substance Abuse/Life Circumstance Evaluation) Survey DSM-5, ADE Incorporated NEEDS Survey DSM-5, Alcoholics Anonymous documentation form, monthly report form, basic instruction sheet, and an anger education pamphlet.

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

- Requests for language assistance involving documents is infrequent. “I Speak” cards are available at each clerk’s counter.
- If individuals present themselves needing translation with court documents, court staff will review the SCAO website to establish whether or not the document has been previously translated in the requested language, and if so, provide a copy to the individual.

- If specific forms are not available on the SCAO website, court staff will utilize the Language Line for assistance to the LEP individual.
- In-person interpretation if reasonably accessible within the court location.

E. Other Provisions

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

- If needed, Spanish and Vietnamese translators are available for telephone translation at the District Court clerk's counter 24 hours a day through El Centro Translations of the Hispanic Center of West Michigan or Wordbridge.

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

- All staff will have a copy and adhere to the Local Administrative Order of the Language Access Plan for LEP individuals.
- All staff will understand where "I Speak" cards are located and how to utilize them.
- Staff will have the ability to identify and utilize the language access coordinator for the court.
- Each staff member will have instruction, knowledge, and be made aware of the requirements for providing meaningful access to the District Court's services for LEP individuals.

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 or public notification area within the courthouse and will make copies of the LAP available upon request.

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

- Translator and community member Eduardo Romero - Spanish
- El Centro Translations (Hispanic Center), Alejandra Villa and Daisy Madrigal - Spanish
- Wordbridge, President Anne Pham – Vietnamese
- City of Grandville Title VI Plan
- Kent County Human Resources Department
- Kent County 17th Circuit Court Administrator

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. 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 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: _____

Chief Judge Signature: _____