

**Minutes of the
Committee on Limited English Proficiency
9:30 a.m.
Wednesday, December 8, 2021
Via Microsoft Teams and Livestreamed on YouTube**

Members in Attendance: Hon. Maria A. Kahn, Co-Chair, Ms. Alejandra Donath, Co-Chair, Mr. Troy Brown, Atty. Brittany Kaplan, Atty. Viviana Livesay, Atty. Richard Loffredo, and Atty. Brandon Pelegano. Also present, Atty. Michele Fica, CT Legal Services. Support staff: Ms. Heather Collins.

- I. **Welcome:** Justice Kahn called the meeting to order at approximately 9:32 a.m. and noted that it was being livestreamed on YouTube for the public.
- II. **Approval of minutes from the May 2021 meeting:** The Draft minutes were posted online and circulated to the members prior to the meeting. Atty. Pelegano made the motion to approve the minutes as written, it was seconded by Atty. Kaplan, and the motion to accept was passed 8-0.
- III. **LEP training updated:** The Committee, at its May 2021 meeting, discussed training/re-training/updating training for all Judicial Branch staff. Ms. Donath and Atty. Loffredo created an updated version of the mandatory LEP training that has been completed by all staff, and sent it for suggestions, comments, and edits to the members. The current mandatory training is two hours in length; all new hires must complete it within a month of hire, while it has previously been completed by existing staff. The refresher course is shorter, about 30 minutes, and like the existing training, will be completed online by all staff. The goal is to give employees a refresher on what services are available to serve limited English proficient members of the public who need to access Judicial Branch services, processes, and programs. In addition to providing in-person translation, the Branch has a telephonic translation service that can provide interpretation in over 100 languages. The refresher course will help staff become familiar with/refresh their familiarity with ordering those services, among other things. The members reviewed the draft training and will forward any final comments to Ms. Donath and Atty. Loffredo for incorporation. Once the finalized version is ready, Ms. Donath and Atty. Loffredo will work with the Superior Court Operations' Employee Education Unit to create it in an easy-to-use online format, and then sent back to the Committee for review. After that, the training will be forwarded by the co-chairs to Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III with the recommendation that it be made mandatory for staff, and if approved, a timeline developed for delivery and completion.

There was robust discussion by the members on how often to recommend that the training be completed by staff. The Justice Index, as compiled by the National Center for Access to Justice, recommends training every three years. There was general agreement that every staff member should complete the course every 1 or 2 years, with supervisor discretion to require refreshers more often for staff who have daily, direct contact with the public, especially in areas with higher volumes of LEP communities. There was also discussion of how regularly to offer the training to judges (in addition to the mandatory sessions held previously and training for new judges); all of which will be explored further.

- IV. Website updated:** The Branch’s LEP website, jud.ct.gov/LEP/, was updated earlier this year to be more user-friendly and intuitive. Justice Kahn and Atty. Loffredo thanked Atty. Livesay for her dedication to ushering the updates through the internal process. In addition to the new site, which is also available [in Spanish](#), and [in Portuguese](#), and [in Polish](#), the page invites the public to contact the Interpreter Services Unit with questions at an email address, LEP@jud.ct.gov. Ms. Donath, who is Program Manager of the ITS, said that the email address is being utilized by people who need assistance in accessing services.
- V. Forms:** The Legal Services Unit has been working on revising forms into languages other than English and on noticing the public, on forms, that language assistance is available at no cost. Atty. Livesay led the development of two distinct boxes: One, at the top of the form, would say “*This form is available in other languages,*” which would be a cue not only to the public but to staff. The other is a boxed footer at the bottom of forms which visually cues people that free interpretation services are available and directing people to the jud.ct.gov/LEP page for assistance. The footer includes flags representing countries where the most requested language interpretations (Mexico, Brazil, Poland, Portugal etc.) are made by court users, along with a “speaking” symbol. The Committee was extremely supportive of the visual cues, which the members said would help not only the public but staff who need to secure language services for LEP individuals. Atty. Fica suggested that the Branch consider adding the flags/speaking footer to Judicial Notices, which are sent to parties telling them of upcoming events and other case activity. Atty. Loffredo said he would investigate that request and report back on whether that would be feasible.
- VI. Interpreter Card:** At the last meeting, the Committee approved the language of a draft of an LEP Information Card. The card has been distributed to public librarians, as well as Call Center staff, Law Librarians, Court Service Center and Public Information Desk staff. According to Justice Kahn, the draft card was very well-received. The two-sided

card talks about what the role of court interpreters; how to request one; and basic FAQs. It has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Polish and distributed.

- VII. Grievance procedures:** The Committee took notice of the Justice Index’s recommendation that the Branch have a formal grievance procedure for members of the public regarding how language services are provided. Atty. Livesay told the members that her unit is conducting an inquiry into how other states are doing this and will report back to the Committee at a later date.
- VIII. Other Business:** Atty. Fica works with low-income consumers of legal services and noted that the Branch has not only expanded but embraced its use of remote proceedings for civil cases. There was discussion among the members of requesting that the Judicial Branch’s “Connecticut Guide to Remote Hearings For Attorneys and Self-Represented Parties” and “[Quick Reference Guide for Remote Court Proceedings](#)” be translated and posted online. Atty Loffredo will follow up with Court Operations on this suggestion.
- IX. Next Meeting:** The group will re-adourn in early 2022, likely in February, at which time a draft Annual Report will be discussed and circulated.
- X. Adjourn:** Justice Kahn thanked everyone for their dedication to ensuring people with limited English proficiency have equal access to Connecticut’s court system, and wished everyone a healthy and Happy New Year. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:50 a.m.