

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Public Service and Trust Strategic Plan

Committee on Limited English Proficiency

January 19, 2012
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

4th Floor Conference Room
90 Washington Street, Hartford, CT

AGENDA/MINUTES

Approved March 30, 2012

Attendees: Hon. Maria A. Kahn (Co-Chair), Toni Smith-Rosario (Co-Chair), Faith P. Arkin (Co-Chair, Virginia Apple, Troy Brown, Alejandra Donath, Scott Hartley, Diane Hatfield, Cynthia Hernandez, Lorin Himmelstein, Daniel Horwitch, Jim Maher, Michaelangelo Palmieri, Deborah Tvaronaitis, Karen Chorney (Staff), Susan Nofi-Bendici (Guest)

Absent: Karen Franchi, Rhonda Stearley-Hebert, Shirley Turnbull

I. Welcome and Introductions

Faith P. Arkin opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees.

II. Approval of November 15, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The revised minutes of the LEP Committee meeting held on November 15, 2011 were unanimously approved.

III. Advisement of Rights – Pilot Project

Faith notified the committee members that the Advisement of Rights project had made significant progress since the last committee meeting, specifically:

- The Spanish translation of the model rights was completed
- Topic headers were generated and inserted into the document for “chaptering”
- All of the Family Support Magistrates agreed to participate, as did Family Support Referee Hutchinson
- Deborah Tvaronaitis and Karen Chorney created a chart of Family Support sessions by type to assist in the determination of pilot areas

Scott Hartley noted that there is video equipment in New Haven but not in one particular courtroom. The committee discussed the possibility of recording the advisement of rights as a video but only using the audio portion until video equipment can be made available.

The committee members discussed the various logistics as they relate to implementation and established a workgroup to research equipment, sound testing, procedures, etc. Volunteers for the workgroup include Toni Smith-Rosario, Cynthia Hernandez, Alejandra Donath, Scott Hartley, Deborah Tvaronaitis, Ginny Apple, and Karen Chorney. Karen volunteered to chair the workgroup.

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Public Service and Trust Strategic Plan

IV. Video Interpreting Status Report

Scott Hartley reported that he is still working with the Information Technology Division and has scaled back the scope of the project. The current proposal is to operate from one central ITS office in Hartford with the ability to provide interpretation services to courtrooms in Putnam, Enfield, Rockville GA and Derby. The Interpretation and Translation Services Unit noted that the mode of interpretation is consecutive and they are exploring whether simultaneous interpretation would be possible at all 4 locations. Ballpark figures for equipment were discussed as well as the need for an 8-channel digital audio mixer in each of the four courtrooms. The benefits/savings that would result from this initiative include, but are not limited to, less travel for staff interpreters resulting in better use of their time and a reduced need for contracted interpreter services.

V. Foreign Language Instruction Workgroup Status Report

Toni Smith-Rosario, Karen Chorney, Virginia Apple, and Alejandra Donath worked on the information and materials developed in the Language Instruction workgroup.

Ginny circulated a partial mock up of a poster intended to be displayed in public areas with photographs and topic statements in Spanish, Portuguese, and Polish. The poster is meant to expedite communication with members of the public who are new to the courthouse and should be an adjunct to existing building directories. Due to size considerations, it is limited to 20 topic areas. The committee members supported further development of the poster and suggested consultation with Nancy Kierstead for input on the most common inquiries.

Alejandra presented information from other states: Indiana courts work with Indiana University to offer Spanish courses to staff and the state of Alaska offers a training program to bilingual staff that allows them to assist clients up to the point where an interpreter is necessary.

Karen circulated materials from various websites offering free resources: vocabulary lists in multiple languages, make-it-yourself flash cards, audio tutorials that clarify pronunciation, and instructional games to assist with practice and retention.

The workgroup also discussed the concept of “learning lunches” utilizing mentor/facilitators and suggested topics as another source of language instruction.

The workgroup hopes to present a list of language instruction options to the LEP committee members at its next meeting.

VI. Break

VII. ABA Standards for Language Access in Courts

Faith noted that both the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators unanimously passed a resolution supporting the adoption of the ABA Standards for Language Access in Courts. The document’s Table of Contents were

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Public Service and Trust Strategic Plan

distributed to the LEP Committee members who were made aware that the ABA Standards identify a continuum of services. Faith noted that a small workgroup (consisting of Jim Maher, Alejandra Donath, Scott Hartley, Dan Horwitch and Faith Arkin) met to discuss the standards and determined that the Branch had already implemented many of the standards but that there were some that were problematic, and there were some standards that the Branch had not yet been addressed. The full document will be distributed to all committee members by email for further discussion at the next LEP committee meeting.

VI. LEP Committee Recommendations - Phase Four Implementation Report of the Strategic Plan (October 2011)

The committee members began discussion of the remaining LEP recommendations listed on pages 25-26 of the Phase Four Implementation of the Strategic Plan.

- *Continue scheduling LEP training programs so that all Branch employees are able to attend. As part of this initiative, the curriculum of the LEP training program is continually refined. Additionally, LEP training to Branch vendors who provide contracted services will continue during the next year to ensure compliance with federal regulations.*

Karen reported that approximately 1300 of the 3900 Judicial Branch staff have been trained to date and that approximately 100 contracted OVS and CSSD service providers have been trained as well.

Troy Brown offered 5 people from his area that are ready and willing to assist with LEP training. Adding additional trainers will be pursued so that all employees can be trained “sooner than later”.

- *Continue working closely with the External Affairs Division in expanding outreach efforts to the LEP population through community organizations and media organizations that have targeted non-English speaking audiences.*

The committee members established that this work is now an ongoing project within the Division of External Affairs, and, therefore, should be removed from the LEP Committee’s implementation list. The LEP Committee will request that the list of agencies developed be updated as necessary.

- *Continue efforts to solicit Branch employees and members of the bench who have bilingual or multilingual abilities to participate in the Branch’s outreach initiatives, including the [Speakers Bureau](#). Outreach to employees who participated in the Latino Community Fellows Program offered through St. Joseph’s College will be explored.*

The committee members established that this is now being implemented by the Division of External Affairs and that it should be removed from the LEP Committee’s implementation list.

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Public Service and Trust Strategic Plan

Two suggestions were made involving “greeters” in the courts: that volunteers/interns placed through External Affairs who are bilingual be utilized as greeters and that the Superior Court Operations “greeter” program utilize bilingual employees.

- *Continue examination of whether various case management systems could be modified to identify cases/matters that require interpreter/translation services. This examination will include exploring whether a code could be developed that will appear on the printed docket to provide the on-site interpreter with caseload information to enhance the provision of interpreting services.*

The committee discussed both “old” and “new” case management systems and determined that, at this time, it would be helpful for cases requiring an interpreter to be “flagged”, however, that notation in the case management system cannot replace, or be used in lieu of, an official interpreter services request (JD-CL-93).

The remaining recommendations were tabled until the next committee meeting due to time constraints.

VII. Next Steps

The next LEP Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled on Thursday, March 8 at 2:00 p.m. at a location to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.