

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Public Service and Trust Strategic Plan

Committee on Limited English Proficiency

June 9, 2011
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

225 Spring Street
Wethersfield, CT
2nd Floor, Conference Room 204

AGENDA and MINUTES

Attendees: Hon. Maria A. Kahn, Faith Arkin, Toni Smith-Rosario, Virginia Apple, Alejandra Donath, Daniel Horwitch, James Maher, Rhonda Stearley-Hebert

Absent: Karen Franchi, Rena Goldwasser, Scott Hartley, Diane Hatfield, Cynthia Hernandez, Michaelangelo Palmieri, Shirley Turnbull, Deborah Tvaronaitis

Guests: Troy Brown, Lorin Himmelstein, Julia Sedyk, Susan Nofi-Bendici

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting attendees introduced themselves and Faith Arkin welcomed the committee members and guests.

II. Approval of March 17, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of March 17, 2011 were unanimously approved.

**III. LEP Committee recommendations - Phase Three Implementation Report of the Strategic Plan
(continued review from March meeting)**

The Committee continued its review of the recommendations included in the Phase III Implementation Report (dated September 2010). The recommendations were individually discussed and the resulting action steps will be documented and distributed to the committee members.

IV. Advisement of Rights

A work group comprised of Faith Arkin, Alejandra Donath, Diane Hatfield, Dan Horwitch and Deborah Tvaronaitis met to discuss the Advisement of Rights as it is administered throughout the state. Alejandra Donath had collected data from the Interpreters which was reviewed for patterns or trends but did not reveal significant conclusions.

A short survey was submitted by Hon. Barbara Quinn to the National Center for State Courts' (NCSC) listserve to determine how other states are handling this issue. The NCSC will return the results of the survey to the Judicial Branch after the June 13, 2011 response deadline. Follow up telephone calls will be made to address responses that the work group would like to explore further.

The work group will view the video narrated by Hon. Antonio C. Robaina to become familiar with the length and breadth of the advisement of rights in Spanish.

Faith reported that the Family Support Magistrates may be willing to consider piloting a standardized advisement of rights format in one or two locations around the state.

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Public Service and Trust Strategic Plan

V. Break

VI. Video Interpreting

At the request of Executive Director Joseph D. D'Alesio, the committee discussed the possibility of video interpreting. Described as a "Skype" type of electronic procedure, an interpreter would be able to provide interpreting services from a computer located virtually anywhere. Cameras in the courtroom could allow the interpreter to view the environment and speakers. Video interpreting could also be used to provide services to those individuals in lockup. The benefits cited include reduced travel time and expenses.

The committee determined that it would benefit from further review of the concept by a work group comprised of representatives from the Interpreter and Translator Services, Administration, Legal Services, and the Information Technology Division. The committee would like to know the context in which video interpreting would be feasible and efficient, while meeting legal parameters. In addition, the work group was asked to recommend the types of cases that could utilize this technology and the framework in which they would be handled.

VII. Translation Services On-Line

The committee looked at three websites that offer online translation services: Google's Translate, Yahoo's Babelfish, and SDL's FreeTranslation. The members noted that Translate.com offers audible translations while Babelfish.com offers website translations.

Virginia Apple, who previously researched electronic translation services for the Judicial Branch Web Board, noted that the accuracy rate for these types of sites in general is no higher than 60%. The Web Board concluded that the sites may be helpful for simple and short interactions but that the translation of legal or technical information consistently returned a product that did not make any sense. Virginia agreed to share the research she previously conducted with the committee.

The LEP committee determined that the risk of disseminating inaccurate information posed too great a potential liability even for items such as driving directions. Further, the committee did not want the Judicial Branch perceived as using these services to meet a federal mandate. Finally, the committee recommended that the LEP training program be amended to acknowledge the existence of the websites and to caution users that the services are legally insufficient and inaccurate but in certain very limited instances may be helpful.

VIII. Administrative Issues

The chairpersons raised the issue of the future of the LEP Committee with respect to its purpose, its activities and its membership. Judge Kahn noted that other committees that have accomplished their goals have been terminated and some evolved into advisory committees. Judge Kahn requested that Faith Arkin speak with Judge Quinn and Judge Carroll to determine their expectations of the committee given its remaining recommendations and accomplishments to date.

VIII. Next Steps

The LEP Committee will reconvene toward the latter part of the summer.