

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch
Public Service and Trust Strategic Plan

Committee on Limited English Proficiency

November 15, 2011
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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

AGENDA and MINUTES - REVISED

Attendees: Hon. Maria Kahn (co-chair), Toni Smith-Rosario (co-chair), Faith P. Arkin (co-chair), Virginia Apple, Troy Brown, Karen Chorney, Alejandra Donath, Karen Franchi, Scott Hartley, Cynthia Hernandez, Daniel Horwitch, James Maher, Shirley Turnbull, Deborah Tvaronaitis, Susan Nofi-Bendici (guest)

Absent: Diane Hatfield, Lorin Himmelstein, Michaelangelo Palmieri, Rhonda Stearley-Hebert

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting commenced at 2:05 p.m. with Faith Arkin welcoming the committee members in attendance.

II. Approval of June 9, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the June 9, 2011 LEP Committee meeting were approved unanimously.

III. Advisement of Rights - Pilot

The plan to pilot a model Advisement of Rights for use by Family Support Magistrates was approved by the Office of the Chief Court Administrator in the summer of 2011. The project envisions a video portrayal of a certified Judicial Branch interpreter providing the model Advisement of Rights in Spanish that was read to the court by the Family Support Magistrate in English for Support Enforcement matters. The model Advisement of Rights that was previously prepared by Chief Family Support Magistrate Sosnoff Baird and Family Support Magistrate Hutchinson was translated into Spanish. Following the completion of the translated Advisements, it was learned that the model Advisements required revision because of a U.S. Supreme Court case. Magistrate Sosnoff Baird identified several court locations where all types of Family Support cases were heard in a single court session so that both the English and Spanish versions of the model would not have to be modified for a particular court session. The revisions were identified and Judicial Branch interpreters are working on them now.

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The committee identified the following as needing additional focus:

1. establishing the logistics of implementing a model advisement (facility, equipment, staff)
2. identifying LEP populations and needs by geographic location so that the efficacy of the pilot may be assessed accurately
3. determining if the pilot should utilize an all-encompassing model (for all types of Support Enforcement cases) or a menu of discrete sections based on specific Support Enforcement sessions.

Faith Arkin offered to separate the model advisement into topic areas and to explore utilizing a video with “chapters”. The committee determined that a universal introduction for use in every Support Enforcement session would be appropriate.

Deborah Tvaronaitis will provide a chart depicting court locations and the types of motions heard on each of the dockets.

Scott Hartley suggested one of the Hartford courts as a pilot location based on existing equipment, types of dockets, etc. He suggested researching other locations for similar technical capabilities.

IV. Video Interpreting

Scott Hartley presented information obtained from HB and Cisco regarding “Skype” type of electronic communications. He indicated that grant funding may be pursued for the purchase of 12 video monitors in interpreter offices around the state. These would be operated by certified interpreters who would be assigned cases similar to those who travel throughout the state. Jim Maher indicated that research is necessary to identify the dockets with greatest need and establish technical specifications. In addition to Jim’s comments, the committee members identified the following issues:

1. Does the system allow for multiple channel communications? Headphones with multiple channels are necessary to allow for separate communications with defendants, counsel, and the courtroom at large.
2. Can ITD provide the bandwidth required for this additional demand?

V. Break

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

Previous discussions in accordance with the agenda expended the bulk of time allocated for this topic. Faith asked that committee members review the recommendations for the next meeting.

VII. Report: Foreign Language Instruction Workgroup

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The workgroup did not formally meet prior to the LEP Committee meeting. A menu of options was started as a baseline and distributed to the group participants for review. The workgroup will be convened in the near future.

VIII. Administrative Issues

Faith asked if the role of the ongoing committee should remain as a working group or change to be more like an advisory panel and asked that committee members consider both and be ready to discuss this at the next meeting.

Miscellaneous:

- Judge Kahn reported that she sent the LEP press release to the Portuguese Bar Association which was forwarded to all 55 members.
- Faith requested that committee members review the quick links on the Judicial Branch Intranet and Internet websites.
- Alejandra Donath reported that she attended the New England Consortium of State Court Administrators and was able to meet with interpreter and translation services counterparts from VT and MA. She discovered that CT is the only state in New England that is providing in-house translation services and certification exams.
- Troy Brown reported that the LEP website is being added as a link to CSSD's Cultural Competency website.
- In response to a question about the LEP training being provided as a web-based tutorial, several committee members expressed concern over the possibility of losing significant learning achieved through the interactive process. Further, Troy Brown noted that in materials required from CSSD vendors regarding language assistance measures, the information is very different from those who attended this training versus those who did not.

IX. Next Steps

The committee will reconvene early in 2012.