



COMMITTEE ON LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

2025 REPORT

Committee on Limited English Proficiency

The Committee on Limited English Proficiency was formed in 2008 under the Access goal of the Judicial Branch's Strategic Plan and charged with "eliminating language barriers to facilities, processes and information that are faced by individuals with limited English proficiency." The committee is co-chaired by Appellate Court Judge Jose Suarez and Alejandra Donath, Program Manager for the Interpreter and Translator Services Unit (ITS), and is comprised of the following members¹:

Troy Brown
Brittany Kaplan
Richard Loffredo
Brandon Pelegano
Daisy Rosado-Hack
Viviana Livesay (Legal Services advisor)
Heather Collins (Support Staff)

The Judicial Branch is committed to ensuring that limited English proficient (LEP) individuals are able to access its facilities, processes, and services. This commitment is evidenced as the Branch continues to rank second among all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, in providing language access in its courts, according to an assessment conducted by the National Center for Access to Justice (NCAJ) at Fordham Law School.

In 2025, ITS covered over 51,000 files that required oral language assistance in 88 different languages/dialects. This includes over 11,000 events that were covered remotely by either staff and/or contracted interpreters through video remote interpreting equipment, Microsoft Teams and/or telephonically. In addition, over-the-phone interpreting services for over-the-counter language needs were used over 38,000 times in 63 different languages/dialects. ITS translated/revised 157 separate Judicial Branch forms as well as 185 case specific documents in 2025.

This report serves as an update of the work of the Committee on Limited English Proficiency in 2025.

¹The Committee would like to acknowledge Attorney Michelle Fica from Connecticut Legal Services. Her attendance and participation in the Committee meetings has been invaluable.

I. On-Going Initiatives

In its effort to ensure LEP individuals can access the Judicial Branch's facilities, processes, and information, the Committee has been working over the past year on the following areas:

Continued LEP Training

Judicial Branch Staff

In 2009, the Judicial Branch developed a mandatory LEP training program for all of its employees that provided information on the federal requirements for the provision of services to LEP individuals, explained the role of the interpreter, and detailed how to obtain language assistance and translation services. This program also offered cultural sensitivity education. Over 2,300 employees attended this half-day program.

In 2017, the LEP training moved to an online format. This 75-minute course provided an overview of the Judicial Branch's obligations to provide services to LEP individuals, detailed the role of an interpreter, the differences between an interpreter and a translator, and how Judicial Branch employees can obtain language assistance services 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. In 2020, this training was revised and re-recorded to reflect updated information. All new Judicial Branch employees are required to complete this course. In 2025, 402 new employees took this course.

In 2022, the LEP Committee launched a refresher training for Judicial Branch employees. The refresher training focuses on the interpretation and translation services provided by the Branch and how Branch staff can access those services. In 2025, over 3,600 Judicial Branch staff completed the LEP refresher training course. This training is required to be taken by all Judicial Branch employees on a yearly basis.

Judicial Officers

Judges and family support magistrates were given LEP training in 2013. Additional LEP training was provided to judges in 2016. Since 2013, LEP training has been incorporated into the new judge and family support magistrate orientation program provided to all newly appointed judges and family support magistrates. In 2025, twelve new judges and two new family support magistrates were appointed and received LEP training.

In 2025, a refresher LEP training was created for judges and family support magistrates. This course provides an overview on why interpreter services are required and how those services can be accessed. All judges and family support magistrates were required to take the course.

Judicial Branch Contractors

In 2018, the LEP Committee developed an online training for those entities that contract with the Judicial Branch and provide services to LEP individuals. The training covers the federal requirements regarding the provision of services to LEP individuals, the entity's responsibilities to LEP individuals under the terms of their contract with the Judicial Branch, how an entity can meet its responsibilities, the difference between interpretation and translation, and tips on how to work with interpreters. Since its online launch, over 2,800 individuals have taken the course.

Vital Documents

The ongoing identification and translation of vital documents has remained a priority of the LEP Committee and the Judicial Branch. In 2013 and again in 2017, the Chief Court Administrator requested that the Judicial Branch's Executive Directors identify the vital documents utilized by their Divisions. Interpreter and Translator Services continues the process of translating these documents into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese. In 2024, based on the increased demand for language assistance services for Chinese-Mandarin, vital documents began to be translated into Chinese-Mandarin as well. In 2025, 157 vital documents were translated.

Forms

All forms that have been translated into other languages now have an indicator to alert staff and members of the public that the form is available in other languages.

In addition, all forms will now include a footer that includes the following language in English, Spanish, and Portuguese: *Free language services available*. All new forms will include this footer, and the footer will be added to all existing forms as they are updated.

Flag Posters

The public areas of Judicial Branch facilities display a poster that contains flags that individuals can point at to identify the language they speak. In 2025, these posters were updated to display the flags of the countries where LEP individuals come from. These posters were delivered to all Judicial Branch facilities and contracted providers.

Telephonic Bilingual Services

The Judicial Branch has contracted with two vendors for telephonic language assistance services, enabling Judicial Branch staff and individuals who are limited English proficient to bridge the language gap by communicating through the use of a telephonic interpreting service.

Telephonic Bilingual Services are available in more than 150 languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are available in all Judicial Branch facilities and are also available to staff working outside of Judicial Branch facilities, via a cell phone, when needed to communicate with LEP individuals. In 2025, Telephonic Bilingual Services were used over 38,000 times in 63 different languages/dialects.

Historically, the Branch has provided these services through contracts with the state of Connecticut's Department of Administrative Services. For the first time, the Branch has put out a bid directly for these services. It is expected that this change will enhance the services provided to the Branch's LEP stakeholders.

Video Remote Interpreting

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed how much of our court business was conducted. Before the pandemic, the overwhelming majority of court cases and interviews were conducted in-person. As a result of the pandemic, it became necessary to shift proceedings to remote platforms. This shift allowed the Judicial Branch to experiment with utilizing video remote interpreting (VRI) technology. The excellent work of the Judicial Branch's Information Technology Division created a system that allowed for simultaneous interpreting utilizing VRI equipment. Allowing for simultaneous interpreting has significantly shortened the length of time a case with a remote interpreter takes. The system also allows for an attorney to have a private conversation in the courtroom with an individual who is limited English proficient.

By introducing VRI, the Judicial Branch can continue assigning certified and highly qualified staff interpreters to cover on-the-record proceedings. The VRI program allows interpreters to be located throughout the state and, through video technology, to be accessed from distant locations to provide language services. In addition, one interpreter could remotely cover several proceedings at a variety of locations in a short period of time, rather than requiring interpreters to drive some distances to these locations.

The VRI system was launched in June 2023 in arraignment courtrooms. Arraignment courtrooms were selected first because they are generally brief, non-complex hearings. At least one arraignment courtroom in each Judicial District was set up for VRI by the end of 2023.

Upon conclusion of the statewide rollout in arraignment courtrooms, a survey was distributed to Branch stakeholders (judges, attorneys, clerks) regarding the use of the VRI system. The results

of the survey were overwhelmingly positive. Accordingly, the decision was made to roll the system out to the juvenile courts.

Based on the success of the arraignment and juvenile courts, the decision was made to roll out the VRI system in all remaining case types heard in the Superior Court: Housing, Family Support Magistrate, Civil, and Family.

Currently, the VRI system can be used for all case types in any courtroom that is video-conferencing equipped. There are 52 VRI-specific carts deployed statewide, and another 72 video-conferencing carts capable of using the VRI system.

Since its launch in 2023, over 10,000 events have gone forward using the VRI system.

Revised Language Access Plan

The LEP Committee reviewed and revised the Judicial Branch's Language Access Plan. The revised Language Access Plan, which was approved by the Chief Court Administrator, has been translated into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese and posted on the Branch's Internet and Intranet websites.

II. Future Plans

The LEP Committee recognizes the continuing need for the Judicial Branch to provide access to its facilities, processes, and information to all limited English proficient individuals. In the coming year, the Committee intends to focus on the following areas:

Vital Documents

The translation of vital documents is an important initiative that has been underway since 2013. The Interpreter and Translator Services Unit will continue to translate vital documents into Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, and Chinese-Mandarin.

Video Remote Interpreting

The Committee will continue to work with the Judicial Branch's Interpreter and Translator Services Unit and Information Technology Division to enhance the Branch's VRI program.

Training

Training on LEP issues is an ongoing priority of the LEP Committee and the Judicial Branch. The Committee will review and update the online training provided to newly hired Branch employees and the yearly refresher training provided to all Branch employees.

The Committee will also begin work on developing an online tutorial for external stakeholders on the services that the Judicial Branch provides to LEP individuals and how those services can be accessed.

Telephonic Bilingual Services

Upon the award of the telephonic bilingual services contract, new training materials will be created. Once the materials are created, Interpreter and Translator Services' staff will go to all Judicial Branch offices to provide training on how to access the services.

"I Speak" Booklets

Similar to the "flag" posters that were updated and distributed in 2025, the Committee will work on updating and distributing new "I Speak" booklets to Judicial Branch facilities and contracted

providers. These booklets will allow for LEP individuals to easily identify the languages they speak.

Judicial Branch Website

Pursuant to rules adopted by the Department of Justice under the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding the improvement of website and mobile applications for people with disabilities, the Judicial Branch is working towards compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1. The Interpreter and Translator Services Unit will ensure all translations contained on the Branch's website are in compliance with the standards.