

Minutes
Committee on Limited English Proficiency
Room 133, 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield
12:30 p.m. October 2, 2019

Members present: Justice Maria Kahn, Atty. Rich Loffredo, Ms. Alejandra Donath, Atty. Brittany Kaplan, Atty. Brandon Pelegano, Atty. Michelle Fica. Atty. Katherine Casaubon for Legal Services.

Member absent: Mr. Troy Brown.

- 1) **Welcome:** Justice Kahn welcomed the members.
- 2) **Approval of Minutes:** The Draft Minutes of the March 21, 2019 meeting were approved.
- 3) **Membership Update:** Justice Kahn noted that two members, Ms. Doreen Del Bianco and Mr. Eduardo Palmieri have retired, and thanked them for their service to the Branch and this Committee. Atty. Brittany Kaplan of External Affairs has replaced Ms. Del Bianco, and the Committee members welcomed her.
- 4) **Subcommittees Update**
 - **VRI:** The Video Remote Interpreting pilot has been halted for the time being, as technical issues remain to be addressed. There was a discussion by the members of other video conferencing technologies currently in use across the Branch, including the Sentence Review Division Docket, hearings such as competency hearings for hospitalized defendants, and certain family support and Appellate Court appearances by incarcerated defendants. Atty. Loffredo noted that the Information Technology Division is working to improve the technology necessary for VRI.
 - **Translations:** Discussion by the members about implementing some recommendations to notify the public of written information available in other languages, including posters. Discussion about creating “pop-ups” on online forms to notify the viewer that the form/brochure they are reading is available in other languages. The Judicial Branch website does have [QuickLinks](#) to translated forms in [Spanish](#), [Polish](#), and [Portuguese](#), and some pages containing [information in Spanish](#), and [Polish](#), and [Portuguese](#), but there is an ongoing need to notice the public of such availability. Additional documents are being scrutinized for translation into other languages. It was also noted that the translation of court orders is a priority.
 - **Training:** All Branch employees, including new hires, are required to take the online LEP training, and there was discussion about creating

a condensed version of the training as a refresher. Justice Kahn presented an LEP training to members of the Bench at a western conference, and she and Ms. Donath are presenting a training on providing LEP services to the public, at the Northeast Regional Conference of State Court Administrators. Additionally, Justice Kahn is writing an article on the history of LEP for the Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society.

- **Web:** The members discussed the Branch's LEP pages and there was general agreement that they are not particularly 'user friendly' or intuitive. Some members have been looking at other states' LEP pages for ideas and inspiration, and will report back to the Committee at the next meeting in 2020.

5) Interpreter/Translator Services Updates: Requesting interpreters online is now live for employees and the feedback has been positive thus far. Atty. Loffredo and Ms. Donath told the members that they have a meeting with Fairfield University officials, who are considering a degree program for interpreting. Justice Kahn suggested there may be a nexus between such a degree program and the Access to Justice Commission's desire to expand free legal clinics that serve ESL people. General discussion about the potential to create internship programs at such clinic, if Fairfield University does move forward with such a degree.

6) Conference for Language Access Coordinators (CLAC) Update: Ms. Donath attended this conference and reported that her peers in other courts report a lot of "pushback" on the use of video remote interpreting from members of the bench and bar. There is a dearth of qualified interpreters across the country, she said, with just 10% of the 1,600 people, who took a national Spanish language interpretation certification test, passing. Only 9% of those who took the certification test in other languages actually passed the rigorous test and process. Ms. Donath also told the members that other states also report difficulty in obtaining interpreter services in indigenous languages, and others say they are using AI and avatars in the interpreting services milieu. Courts are also reporting that their certified interpreters are leaving the courts to take more lucrative jobs in the medical industry, where they also find more job security and opportunities for career advancement. The Committee discussed the difficult and time consuming process of the interpreter certification process, and the significant challenge of retaining those employees who train while on the job, become certified, then leave Branch service to take work with agencies who can pay much higher hourly rates for their services. The members discussed the fact that it takes up to three years for an interpreter to become certified; each person has only three chances to take the national certification test. The Branch's interpreters have a high pass rate and are extremely valuable, but pay rates do not increase with certification, making it more difficult to retain these employees.

- 7) **Other Business:** Justice Kahn and Ms. Donath noted that they will be presenting at the COSCA conference (see item 5).
- 8) **Next Meeting:** Dates for the next meeting will be circulated. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.