

Minutes

Committee on Limited English Proficiency

Monday, March 25, 2024

2:00 p.m.

Via Microsoft Teams, Livestreaming at

<https://www.youtube.com/@connecticutsupremecourt6639/featured>

Members in Attendance: Hon. José A. Suarez, Co-Chair, Ms. Alejandra Donath, Co-Chair, Mr. Troy Brown, Ms. Daisy Rosado-Hack, Atty. Richard Loffredo, and Atty. Brandon Pelegano. Also in attendance: Atty. Michelle Fica of Connecticut Legal Services. Support staff: Ms. Heather Collins. Absent: Ms. Atty. Brittany Kaplan.

1. Welcome: Judge Suarez called the meeting to order at approximately 2:02 p.m. and welcomed the members.
2. Approval of minutes from the December 7, 2023 meeting: The minutes were approved as drafted.
3. Approve LEP Committee Report: The Committee discussed the Annual Report to the Chief Justice. There was one edit to be made to the membership. Atty. Loffredo said once the Committee approves the Report, it will be forwarded to Chief Court Administrator Judge Elizabeth A. Bozzuto and Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Anna Ficeto for their review and approval. Once it is approved by the OCCA, the [Report will be published on the Committee's website](#). It will also be translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Polish and published in those languages online. The Committee approved the report.
4. Grievance Procedure: There was discussion about the development of a grievance procedure for users of the Branch's spoken interpretation services. While the Branch has not received complaints, the National Center for Access to Justice suggests states adopt a grievance procedure. The process was designed by the Legal Services Unit and after consultation with Human Resources, the procedure is ready to be forwarded to the Office of the Chief Court Administrator for review and implementation. The procedure will be posted online.
5. Notices on forms/signage: An icon used by sister states on forms to indicate that language services are available and at not cost to the user was shared with the Committee. It will be

forwarded to Legal Services for review and if approved, it will be made part of forms as revisions are made.

6. Training: There was discussion about training for Judges and Family Support Magistrates on the requirements under the Branch's Language Access Plan. All Branch staff are trained annually on the requirements and on how to obtain services. Training for Judges is delivered during pre-bench orientation of new Judges and FSM, but Judge Suarez and the Committee agreed that all Judges could benefit from an overview of what and how language services are provided, and proper procedures for ensuring language access. Such an overview would be offered to Judges online, and be 30 minutes or less. The Interpreter and Translator Services Unit will develop the training.
7. VRI and Advisement of Rights update: Atty. Loffredo told the Committee that Video Remote Interpretation has been used in approximately 1,600 court events since June 2023. The services has been rolled out in most courts, including Housing, Criminal, and Family Support Magistrate hearings, but not all JDs use the services. The service is being expanded to Danbury, New Haven, and Bridgeport FSM hearings subsequent to the ironing out of some IT issues. A survey of Judges and Clerks in criminal courts showed that the service received overwhelmingly positive reviews. VRI is not used as much in some larger, high-volume courts where there are staff interpreters available, but the service is proving to be used with growing frequency in courts where there is no staff interpreter. The service provides simultaneous translation, making it extremely efficient for the courts.

The Judicial Branch some years ago rolled out a program where the Advisement of Rights was played by audio in courtrooms in different languages. Technology is changing and becoming more efficient, and last year criminal and housing courts purchased computers for clerks in courtrooms to allow them to more easily play the multi-lingual Advisement of Rights. Family Support Magistrate clerks have requested the same setup and that has been approved by the Office of the Chief Court Administrator and the Executive Director of Superior Court Operations. The Chief Family Support Magistrate is reviewing the advisement, and when it is found to be correct, the clerks will have the same abilities as their counterparts in criminal and housing courts.

8. Next Steps/Next Meeting: The committee agreed on the remaining meeting dates for 2024: June 17, followed by September 16, and December 16th. All meetings will begin at 2 p.m. and will likely be remote.
9. The meeting adjourned at 2:33 pm.