



**COMMITTEE ON LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

**2022 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 Justice Maria Araujo Kahn<sup>1</sup> and Alejandra Donath, Program Manager for the Interpreter and Translator Services Unit (ITS), and is comprised of the following members<sup>2</sup>:

Troy Brown  
Brittany Kaplan  
Richard Loffredo  
Brandon Pelegano  
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 finished with the second highest rating 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 2022, ITS covered over 32,000 files that required oral language assistance in 67 different languages/dialects. This includes over 5,000 pre-scheduled events that were covered remotely by either staff and/or contracted interpreters through Microsoft Teams, Cisco technologies and/or telephonically. In addition, over-the-phone interpreting services for over-the-counter language needs were used over 23,000 times in 60 different languages/dialects. ITS translated/revised 230 separate Judicial Branch forms as well as 101 case specific documents in 2022.

This report serves as an update of the work of the Committee on Limited English Proficiency in 2022.

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<sup>1</sup>in March, 2023, Justice Kahn was confirmed by the United States Senate to sit on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Upon confirmation, Justice Kahn resigned as a judge with the Connecticut Judicial Branch. Justice Kahn served as the Committee's co-chair since its creation. She was committed to ensuring that Connecticut's limited English proficient residents were able to access the Judicial Branch's facilities, processes, and services. Her leadership and dedication will serve as an example as the work of the committee continues.

<sup>2</sup>The 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 that 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**

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.

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 2022, thirty-two new judges were appointed and received LEP training.

In 2017, the LEP training moved to an online format. This 75-minute course provides an overview of the Judicial Branch's obligations to provide services to LEP individuals, details 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. Since its online launch, over 3,300 employees have taken the course. 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 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 1,200 individuals have taken the 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. This training is required to be taken by all Judicial Branch employees on a yearly basis. A reminder email will be sent to all Judicial Branch staff on a yearly basis regarding this requirement.

## **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 2022, 230 vital documents were translated into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese.

## **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.

The Committee has begun discussions with the Judicial Branch's Legal Services Unit to add a notice to all Branch forms to indicate that interpreting services are available to all LEP individuals at no cost. In addition to adding such notice to its forms, the Committee is looking into developing posters with similar language to be displayed in the public areas of Judicial Branch facilities.

## **Telephonic Bilingual Services**

The Judicial Branch has contracted with three 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 2022, Telephonic Bilingual Services were used over 23,000 times in 60 different languages/dialects.

## **Translating Pages on the Judicial Branch's Internet Site**

The overwhelming majority of interpreter requests continue to be for the Spanish language (approximately 88%). Historically, the next most requested languages are Portuguese and Polish (approximately 3% each). Accordingly, the Judicial Branch continues to translate pages on its website into Spanish, Portuguese and Polish.

## **Video Remote Interpreting**

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed how much of our court business is 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. The Judicial Branch dramatically increased its usage of Polycom conference phones and virtual platforms such as Cisco technologies; in addition to introducing the use of the Remote Justice platform. Equipment was purchased for the interpreters to allow their participation for all proceedings in which they are required. Utilizing the remote platforms has enabled Interpreter and Translator Services to cover court proceedings and interviews in a more efficient manner.

Recognizing the importance of utilizing remote technologies to provide interpreting services, the Committee has begun working with the Branch's Information Technology Division to develop a program which would allow for simultaneous interpretation.

## **Grievance Procedure**

The Committee has worked to develop a procedure which would allow LEP individuals to file a grievance if they had a complaint about the language services provided by the Branch. The policy and form, once finalized, will be translated and available to LEP individuals who seek to file a complaint.

## **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 and Portuguese.

### **Video Remote Interpreting**

The Committee will continue to work with the Judicial Branch's Information Technology Division to develop a video remote interpreting system that will allow for simultaneous interpretation.

### **Training**

Training on LEP issues is an ongoing priority of the LEP Committee and the Judicial Branch. The Committee will create an online refresher training for judges. The training will provide an overview of the services provided by the Judicial Branch and how those services can be accessed.

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.

### **Language Access Plan**

The LEP Committee will review and update, as necessary, the Judicial Branch's Language Access Plan. Once updated, the revised Language Access Plan will be sent to the Chief Court Administrator for final approval.

### **Notices Regarding Interpreter Services**

The Committee will continue its dialogue with the Legal Services Unit to have a notice placed on all Judicial Branch forms indicating the provision of interpreter services at no cost to the LEP individual. In addition, the Committee will develop notices with similar language to be placed in the public areas of Branch facilities.

**INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR SERVICES  
YEARLY STATISTICAL REPORT, 2022**

ITS provides in-person and remote language assistance for in-court proceedings  
TBS provides over-the-phone language assistance for over-the-counter language needs.

LANGUAGE	ITS	TBS
Afro-Asiatic Languages (Amharic, Maay, Somali, Tigrinya)	10	3
Akan languages (Ashanti, Twi)	18	5
Albanian	133	47
Arabic/Lebanese/Egyptian	223	78
Armenian	1	
Baltic Languages (Latvian)	3	
Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian	7	10
Burmese/Karen	50	17
Cambodian/Khmer	14	6
Chinese Mandarin/Cantonese/Fuzhou	313	124
Creole English-based (Jamaican)	9	
Czech-Slovak	16	1
French/Haitian Creole/French Creole	377	173
Georgian	5	
Greek	28	15
Hebrew	10	
Hmong/Mien	1	1
Hungarian	8	4
Indigenous languages of Central America (K'iche)	35	2
Indigenous languages of South America (Quechua)	4	
Indo-Iranian/Indic languages (Dari, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kurdish, Pothohari, Punjabi, Urdu, Sinhalese, Nepalese, Telugu, Farsi/Persian, Pashto, Tamil)	247	147
Italian	29	10
Japanese	9	7
Korean	33	14
Laotian	21	2
Macedonian	1	
Malayo-Polynesian (Indonesian, Tagalog)	12	
Niger-Congo languages (Lingala, Ewe, Fula, Ga, Ibo, Kinyarwanda, Pidgin, Swahili, Wolof, Yoruba, Mandingo)	54	42
Nilotic Languages (Dinka, Kunama, Nuer)	3	3
Polish	243	134
Portuguese/Cape Verdean	815	813
Romanian	17	12
Russian	91	57
Spanish	29369	21,992
Thai	27	5
Tibetan	8	1
Turkic languages (Turkish)	41	21
Ukrainian	66	8
Vietnamese	65	35
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