

Thirty-Fifth Judicial Circuit Of Michigan



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35th CIRCUIT COURT, LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2013 –
66th DISTRICT COURT, LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2013 –
SHIAWASSEE CO PROBATE COURT, LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2013-

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

In accordance with Supreme Court Administrative Order 2013-8, the court establishes this Language Access Plan (LAP) to provide for the language access needs of court users.

This LAP is the plan for the court to ensure meaningful access to court services for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). A limited English proficient person is a person who does not speak English as his or her primary language, and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English, and by reason of his or her limitations is not able to understand and meaningfully participate in the court process.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and effective language assistance to LEP persons who come in contact with the court.

The court has appointed the court administrator as the language access coordinator to be the contact person for the public, court staff, and SCAO concerning this plan and its implementation.

IT IS ORDERED:

Section I Needs Assessment

A. Census Data

The court will make every effort to provide service to all LEP persons in the court's service area. The most frequent non-English language spoken in the court's physical jurisdiction is:

Spanish
Arabic

B. Court Experience

Based on court usage, the following list shows other non-English languages spoken in the court and not reflected in the US Census data.

French
Tagalog

There are no other identified, non-English languages.

C. Identification of LEP Persons

Court staff use the following methods to identify LEP persons

- "I Speak" cards at clerks' counters
- In-person requests or requests from friends/family of LEP persons seeking assistance for court matters

Section II Language Assistance Resources

A. Interpreters Used In the Courtroom

The court will offer assistance to LEP persons in the courtroom, and for magistrate and referee hearings, by providing foreign language interpreters as required by Michigan Court Rule 1.111.

B. Language Services Outside the Courtroom

The court will take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to services outside the courtroom. This is one of the most challenging situations facing court staff since in most situations they will encounter LEP persons without an interpreter present. LEP persons may come in contact with court personnel via:

Security screening stations at courthouse entrances
Circuit, Family, Probate, District Court Clerks' offices – in person and by phone
District Court Probation – intake, PSI's, report days, drug-alcohol screens, drug-alcohol referrals, community service referrals
Juvenile Court Probation – risk assessments, pre-trials, inquiries, intake, consent calendar meetings, report days, violations, truancy meetings, in-home visits.

Friend of the Court – intake, orientations, custody-parenting time interviews, support enforcement conferences, mediation, counter and phone inquiries
PPO Office – assistance with PPO filings both in person and by phone
Caseflow Manager’s Office – assistance both in person and by phone

Court staff will consult with the court’s language access coordinator to determine what type of language service should be made available based on the nature and importance of the court service to be provided and resources available. The following language services will be available:

“I Speak” Cards at clerks’ counter
Telephonic interpreter services
In person Spanish speaking staff (Family and Probate)

C. Service Referrals

The court will make reasonable efforts to ensure that a non-federally funded entity to which the court refers LEP persons for services has provisions for addressing their needs. The court will consider viable alternatives if language access is not provided by such a non-federally funded entity.

D. Forms & Documents

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) makes select translated forms available to the courts at <http://courts.michigan.gov/Administration/SCAO/Forms/Pages/default.aspx>.

1) Additional translated forms available to court users include:

- Rights of Arraignment – District Court – Spanish.

When in-person interpreters are hired for court proceedings, they are expected to provide sight interpretation of documents for LEP persons.

2) Courthouse translation for LEP

- Requests for language assistance are rare in Shiawassee County courts. “I Speak” cards are available.
- When persons present themselves needing assistance with forms, court staff will first check the SCAO website to determine if the form is available in the requested language, and if so will print and provide it.
- If forms are not available in the needed language, the court will offer assistance through Language Line for immediate translation. Telephone lines will be offered for this purpose.

Section III Training

The court is committed to training its judges and court staff, and coordinating with the county clerks on providing LEP persons with meaningful access to court services. When the court provides training sessions, it will include a component addressing LEP policy and procedure and the court's LAP. The court is aware that staff members having contact with the public are more likely to need in-depth training on LEP policy and procedure.

The court will work with SCAO and MJI to ensure that all employees are trained on LEP policy and procedure. Training will be offered to assist judges and staff to: identify and respond to LEP persons, increase awareness of types of language services available, guide when and how to access those services, and effectively use language services.

The court provides to judges and court staff and offers to county clerks the following training regarding language access:

- How to use "I Speak" cars and where to display them
- How to access the court's Administrative Order for Language Access
- Identification of the language access coordinator for each court and instruction about arranging appropriate language services through each court administrator

Section IV. Public Notification and Evaluation of Language Access Plan

A. Language Access Plan Approval and Notification

The court's LAP has been approved by the State court Administrative Office. The court will post its LAP on its public website and public notification area within the courthouse, and will make copies of the LAP available upon request.

The court consulted with the following members of the community in creating its LAP:

- There is no identified LEP community in Shiawassee County

B. Evaluation and Review of the LAP

At the direction of SCAO, or on its own initiative, the court will assess whether the LAP needs updating. The LAP will remain in effect unless modified or updated. Review of the following areas may indicate a need to update the LAP:

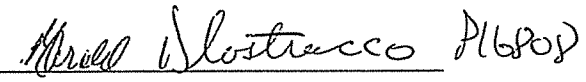
- Number of LEP persons requesting court interpreters or language assistance
- Funding provided or available for language services

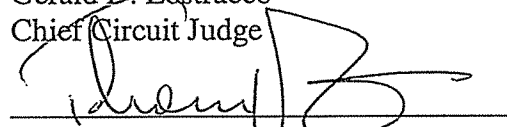
- Current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided
- Feedback from LEP communities within the county
- Court staff (turnover, new hires, etc.)
- Feedback from training provided by the court or SCAO/MJI
- Viability of identified language services and resources
- Problem areas and corrective action strategies
- Updated census data

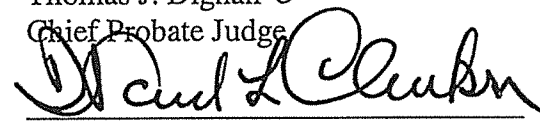
Every request/instance of language assistance will be transmitted to the language access coordinator by court staff. The coordinator will compile the data on an annual basis for budget purposes and review the bullet list above in order to address any need to modify the LAO.

The language access coordinators ensure this plan is followed, advise the courts on potential updates to this plan, and address the language access needs for the court as they arise. The court has identified the name and contact information of one language access coordinator for each court and advised the State Court Administrator. The court will notify the SCAO regional office of any changes to the language access coordinators' contact information, or if new language access coordinators are named.

Effective Date: _____
 (SCAO Approved)

Dated: 12/5/2013 
 Gerald D. Lostracco
 Chief Circuit Judge

Dated: 12-5-13 
 Thomas J. Dignan
 Chief Probate Judge

Dated: 12.5.13 
 Ward L. Clarkson
 Chief District Judge