

# 26<sup>th</sup> CIRCUIT COURT

MICHAEL G. MACK  
CHIEF JUDGE

720 W. CHISHOLM STREET, SUITE 1  
ALPENA, MI 49707  
(989) 354-9573



ALPENA COUNTY  
MONTMORENCY COUNTY

Administrative Order 2013-03

## **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 the 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 a language access coordinator to be a contact person for the public, court staff, and SCAO concerning this plan and its implementation. The language access coordinator may be contacted through the court administrator's office.

---

## **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 following list shows the non-English languages most frequently spoken in the court's physical jurisdiction.

1. Spanish
2. Mandarin
3. Polish
4. German
5. Russian

#### **B. Identification of LEP Persons**

Court staff use the following methods to identify LEP persons:

1. "I Speak" cards which will be located at the counter.
2. Reports from attorneys that the individual they represent has a language barrier.

## **Section II. Language Assistance Resources**

### **A. Interpreters Used In the Courtroom**

The court will offer assistance to LEP persons in the courtroom 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, because in most situations they will encounter LEP persons without an interpreter present. LEP persons may come in contact with court personnel via:

- Telephone
- Service Counter
- Case Evaluation
- Juvenile Placement
- Limited English Proficiency Parents
- Written Communication
- Drug Court
- Collections

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 are available:

- "I Speak" Cards
- Telephonic Interpreter Services
- Video Remote Interpreting
- High School Teacher Assistance
- College Professor Assistance

### **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 written materials as provided by the Supreme Court Administrative Office.

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
  - “I Speak” cards to determine language spoken
  - Telephonic Interpreter Services
  - Video Remote Interpreting
  - High School Teacher Assistance
  - College Professor Assistance

### **Section III. Training**

The court is committed to training its judges and court staff, and coordinating with 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 the 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:

- Training staff as to the identity of the Language Access Coordinator.
- Training staff to consult with the Language Access Coordinator to determine what type of language service should be made available.
- Training staff in the use of “I Speak” cards.
- Training staff in the use of telephonic interpreter services.
- Additional training, as necessary, provided by the Language Access Coordinator.

### **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 will make copies of the LAP available upon request.

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

- Alpena Community College
- Alpena High School
- Atlanta High School

**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 languages 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 trainings provided by the court or SCAO/MJI
- Viability of identified language services and resources
- Problem areas and corrective action strategies
- Updated census data

The language access coordinator for this court ensures this plan is followed, advises the court on potential updates to this plan, and coordinates the language access needs for the court as they arise. The court has identified the name and contact information of the language access coordinator and advised the State Court Administrative Office. The court will notify the SCAO regional office of any changes to the language access coordinator's contact information, or if a new language access coordinator is named.

Effective Date: December 11, 2013

Date: 11-18-13

Chief Judge Signature: 