



News Release

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New Jersey Judiciary Adopts Language Access Plan

The New Jersey Supreme Court has directed the adoption of a statewide [Language Access Plan](#) to ensure full access to the courts for participants who have limited English proficiency or who are deaf or hard of hearing. Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, announced today.

“The Language Access Plan consolidates and streamlines all of the policies, programs and services the Judiciary has developed over the years to make sure everyone who comes to court can participate fully in the judicial process, regardless of their hearing ability or English language proficiency,” said Judge Grant.

The dissemination of the Language Access Plan is the culmination of decades of work throughout the Judiciary to identify and address issues confronted by court users with limited English proficiency (LEP) and those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Judiciary’s comprehensive approach to ensuring equal access to LEP court users began with the formation of the New Jersey Supreme Court Task Force on Interpreter and Translation Services in 1982.

In response to task force recommendations, the Judiciary established the Language Services Section within the Administrative Office of the Courts to propose, develop and implement legislation, court rules and administrative policies to address access to the courts by LEP participants. These include a court interpreter credentialing program, a program for translating documents for LEP court users, training for judges and staff, and outreach efforts to make court users aware of the language services available to them.

The New Jersey Judiciary has led the nation in many areas of language services, such as establishing clear credentialing requirements for court interpreters. The Judiciary tests interpreters to ensure they have the professional skills to interpret in court. In court year 2015, interpreting services were provided for 82,927 court events in 83 languages, including American Sign Language.

The New Jersey courts also provide many documents, including brochures and instructions for self-represented litigants in languages other than English, including Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish. Each vicinage employs a number of bilingual staff who have been qualified to provide direct service to court users in Spanish. Since 85 percent of interpreting demand in the Judiciary is for Spanish, the Judiciary website, njcourts.gov, includes Spanish versions of most frequently viewed pages.

Judiciary judges and staff receive training and information on the Judiciary’s services for court users who are LEP and those who are deaf or hard of hearing to help ensure that all court users have equal access to the courts and a meaningful opportunity to understand and participate in court matters that affect their lives, their livelihoods, and their families. Each courthouse has signs and publications to alert court users that these services are available.

“As one of the most diverse states in the nation, New Jersey is rightly a national leader in our efforts to provide language services for court users with limited English proficiency and those who are deaf or hard of hearing,” said Judge Grant. “The Language Access Plan is a wealth of information for anyone who wants to learn more about the history, rationale, implementation or enforcement of our policies and programs in this area.”

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