

Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma

Language Access Plan



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County of Sonoma

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Updated 07/01/2021

The Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma provides language access service to LEP court users consistent with the Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts (California Language Access Plan or LAP). This Limited English Proficient (LEP) Plan addresses language access services and policies that affect court users and language access producers at our Court.

1. Identification of LEP Persons

According to the United States Census Bureau, Detailed Household Language by Household Limited English Speaking Status (2019) ¹. A majority of the Limited English-speaking households in Sonoma County were in homes where Spanish was the primary language spoken. Other limited English-speaking families in which a primary language was specified were Chinese (Including Mandarin, Cantonese), Other Asian and Pacific Island languages, Vietnamese, and Other Indo-European languages.

In the period from 01/01/2018 – 12/31/2020, the Sonoma County Superior Court reported 39,585 interpretation services rendered.

- a. Spanish 38,681 or 98%
- b. Loa 108 or less than 1%
- c. Vietnamese 74 or less than 1%
- d. Russian 73 or less than 1%
- e. Fijian/ Fijian Hindustani 64 or less than 1%

While we furnished 217 interpretations in American Sign Language, these requests fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

2. Service Providers

Interpreters: The Court strives to provide complimentary interpreters to all LEP court users for all court hearings and trials and court-ordered/court-operated events. Interpreters are provided at no cost for all criminal, traffic, and juvenile law cases. While we continue efforts toward providing interpreters in all civil matters, we may limit interpreter provision as described below.

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<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Sonoma%20County%20languages%20&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B16002&hidePreview=false>

Priorities established in Evidence Code § 756, as follows:

- Priority 1: Domestic violence, civil harassment cases where there is no fee to file, elder abuse cases where there is physical abuse or neglect
- Priority 2: Unlawful detainers (evictions)
- Priority 3: Termination of parental rights
- Priority 4: Guardianship and conservatorship
- Priority 5: Cases where one person is asking for sole custody or visitation
- Priority 6: Other civil harassment and elder abuse cases
- Priority 7: Other family law cases
- Priority 8: Other civil cases

Also, the Court provides complimentary interpreters to all LEP persons for the following Court events or programs:

- Family Court Services Mediation or Child Custody Recommending Counseling
- Mandatory settlement conferences in all civil and family law cases
- Court Investigations and Court Order Evaluations

Bilingual Staff: The Court has bilingual staff to help LEP users in their language in person, or By telephone through the use of multilingual employee listing. Spanish is the only language currently spoken by the Court's staff other than English, but the Court continues to seek opportunities to expand these languages.

When bilingual staff is not available, qualified interpreters are provided either in person or remotely at the various contact points with the Court (such as court entrances, clerk's offices, self-help centers, etc.). The Court uses Language Line Services for telephonic interpretation to communicate between staff and the LEP persons.

- **Translated Written Information:** The Court provides multilingual information in the following ways:
 - By providing links to the California Court's Online Self-Help Center (English) and the Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (Spanish).
- By using resources and instructional materials that have been translated by other courts and made available at <https://www.courts.ca.gov/partners/equalaccess.htm>
- Educational and informational handouts and brochures are available in Spanish at the Court's family law facilitator's offices.

3. Notification of Language Access Services

Notice of Language Access Services

The Court notifies court users of available language access services and how to access them

in the following ways:

Multilingual notice posted at the courthouse entrance, clerk's office, jury room, self-help center/family law facilitator's office, and courtrooms.

Public access to the Language Access Office, located at the HOJ in Room 110 J

Court's website at <http://sonoma.courts.ca.gov/info/interpreter> with links to Do I need an Interpreter brochure, flyers, and infographics in English | Farsi (فارسی) | Korean (한국어) | Russian (русский) | Simplified Chinese (简体中文) | Spanish (Español) | Tagalog | Traditional Chinese (繁體中文) | Vietnamese (Tiếng Việt)

Court's website at <http://sonoma.courts.ca.gov/info/interpreter> with links to Public Service Announcements about the availability of interpreters in audio

Availability of Interpreters in Court - How to Request an Interpreter

- **Scenario 1 - Going to Small Claims Court**

English Transcript With Translations

Available in eight languages as audio:

Cantonese (广东话) | Farsi (한국어) | Korean (한국어) | Mandarin (普通话) | Russian (русский) | Spanish (Español) | Tagalog | Vietnamese (Tiếng Việt)

- **Scenario 2 - Traffic Citation**

English Transcript With Translations

Available in eight languages as audio:

Cantonese (广东话) | Farsi (한국어) | Korean (한국어) | Mandarin (普通话) | Russian (русский) | Spanish (Español) | Tagalog | Vietnamese (Tiếng Việt)

Display and availability of I-Speak Cards or I-Speak poster at all points of contact with the Court.

4. Education of Court Staff and Judicial Officers

As recommended in the California LAP, the Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma provides education for court staff and judicial officers on

- (1) language access laws, policies, and procedures at the state and local level,
- (2) working with language access service providers,
- (3) working with LEP court users,
- (4) tools and technologies for providing language access, and
- (5) cultural competence

In addition to the availability of training, all court staff have access to tools for serving LEP court users, such as the Language Access Toolkit, I-Speak cards, multilingual employee email, Language Line Services, and LEP.gov

5. Monitoring and Updating Local Language Access Services Policies

The Court regularly monitors its language access services, policies and procedures, and all items included in this LEP Plan to assess whether any changes are needed. Also, the Court performs an annual evaluation of its policies and updates this document as appropriate. Updates to the webpage are similarly performed yearly or more often if necessary to provide current, up-to-date information to all court users.

The Court has developed a language access complaint form and process, available at <http://sonoma.courts.ca.gov/info/interpreter> or by contacting the Language Access Office at the location specified below to address the failure to provide language access services. Issues with the Court's provision of services, including interpreter services, qualified multilingual assistance at all points of contact with the Court, and translations of local court forms or other materials, may also be addressed.

The Court handles all complaints regarding the local provision or failure to provide language access services. All complaints are also reported to the Judicial Council to assist in the ongoing monitoring of the overall implementation and success of the California Language Access Plan, consistent with Recommendation No. 63 of the California LAP

6. Language Access Representatives

Any concerns and requests for information regarding this LEP Plan, its content, implementation, or the language access services provided by the Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma should be directed to:


<p>Arlene D. Junior Court Executive Officer Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma 600 Administration Way Sonoma, CA 95403 (707) 521 6742 Email: CEO@sonomacourt.org</p>	<p>Kwesi Williams Director, Family Law & Probate Superior Court of California, County of Sonoma 600 Administration Way Sonoma, CA 95403 707-521-6742 Email: Kwilliams@sonomacourt.org</p>
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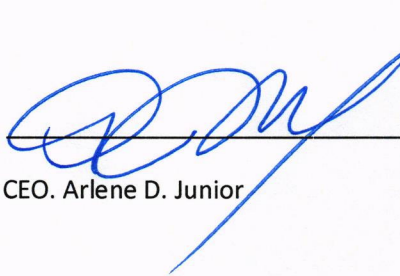
7. Plan Approval

- a. This Language Access Plan was revised on 07/01/2021.
- b. The Language Access Plan is approved by:

Presiding Judge: Hon. Brad DeMeo

Court Executive Officer: Arlene D. Junior


 _____ 7/15/2021
 Hon. Brad DeMeo Date


 _____ 7/15/2021
 CEO. Arlene D. Junior Date