

CHATINO LANGUAGES IN SONOMA COUNTY

TO BETTER SERVE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE SPEAKERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

This informational resource was created to assist with our goal of ensuring meaningful participation in the judicial process for individuals who speak an indigenous language and have Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

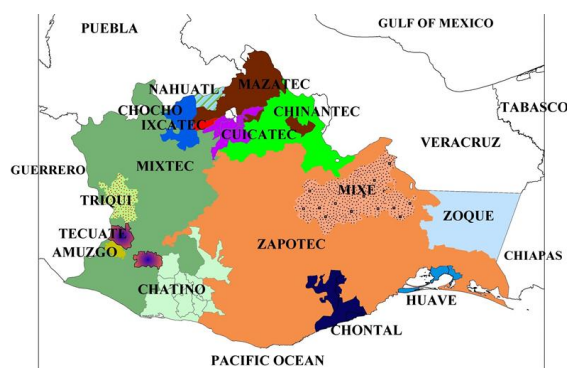
CHATINO LANGUAGE OVERVIEW

Chatino is a group of indigenous Mesoamerican languages which are natively spoken by approximately 45,000 people whose communities are located in the southern portion of the Mexican state of Oaxaca. The Mexican Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI) recognizes 6 variants of Chatino which have limited mutual intelligibility. The two most commonly requested in Sonoma County are Chatino Zenzontepec (Alto) and Chatino Nopala (Bajo).

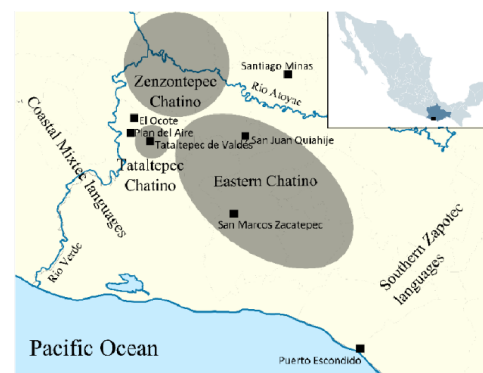
From 2023 to July 2024 the Sonoma County Superior Court has provided approximately 53 Chatino Zenzontepec and approximately 23 Chatino Nopala interpretations to court users. Due to the limited number of speakers in California, our court is fortunate to work with two Chatino Zenzontepec interpreters and one Chatino Nopala interpreter.

Tips for Identifying which Chatino Variant is Needed

If you are not sure which Chatino language a court user speaks ask them what town they are from. The INALI has a resource which lists which Chatino variants are spoken in each town. If their English or Spanish is severely limited, have them point on a map which town they are from. Keep in mind that a Chatino speaker may not be aware of what we call their language. Rather, they may be more familiar with the terms “Alto” (High) or “Bajo” (Low).



Indigenous Languages of Oaxaca, Mexico. Our court has also provided interpreters in Amuzgo, Mixteco, Nahuatl, Triqui, and Zapotec.



Approximate Location and subgrouping of Chatino Languages

**Sonoma County Superior Court
Interpreter & Reporters Unit**

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