



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
Court Language Access Services

DATE: March 26, 2015

RE: Update: 2014 Language Access Plan

Having a document such as a Language Access Plan (LAP) offers invaluable opportunities for improvement of court procedures, information sharing, communication and public relations. When the community believes that the court is dedicated to providing fair services to all, the mutual goodwill serves to benefit not only the court, but also those who access it and needs its professional services. In 2012 the OJD began a self-evaluation of how well the court defines tasks, sets priorities, assigns responsibility, and allocates the resources necessary to come into or maintain compliance with language access best practices.

A key mechanism in identifying and removing linguistic barriers is based upon the impressions of limited English proficient (LEP) court users and communities. In 2014 the OJD received National Center for State Courts' technical assistance and funding from the State Justice Institute to develop and conduct two assessment tools to measure LEP communities' experiences and satisfaction with OJD's language access services. The resulting report provided a detailed snapshot of issues experienced by speakers of thirty-two different languages. These results are being analyzed and incorporated into a revised LAP that outlines how the court defines tasks, sets priorities, assigns responsibility, and allocates the resources necessary to come into or maintain compliance with language access requirements. The OJD LAP is meant to be action oriented and provide a standardization of flexible service plans for statewide trial courts to serve LEP and self-represented litigants. It includes replicable standards, policies, and protocols for language access in the courts. Under the direction of the Chief Justice and State Court Administrator, the OJD's LAP will include activities and assigned responsibilities to mitigate concerns and ensure improvement may be undertaken on a regular basis. If you are interested in providing written feedback to the OJD Language Access Plan, please contact Kelly Mills, Court Language Access Services Program Manager at 503-986-7004, kelly.mills@ojd.state.or.us.

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