

JULY 2018

# LANGUAGE ACCESS METRICS REPORT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA  
LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

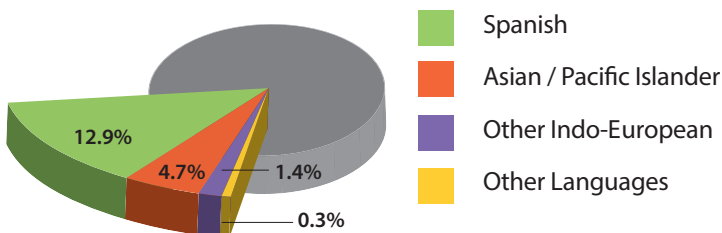
The Language Access Plan (LAP) Implementation Task Force, chaired by California Supreme Court Justice Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, is currently in its fourth year of implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts*. The LAP's 75 recommendations provide guidance and a consistent statewide approach to ensure language access throughout the courts. Since 2015, the task force has made significant progress in its implementation efforts. This report summarizes California language access data showing statewide efforts to make comprehensive language access a reality in the courts.

## Language Access in California

Language access allows limited-English-proficient (LEP) individuals access to a wide range of services. As defined by the U.S. Department of Justice, LEP individuals do not speak English as their primary language and may have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

In California, the most diverse state in the country:

- Over 200 languages are spoken;
- Approximately 44 percent of households speak a language other than English; and
- Nearly 7 million Californians (19 percent) report speaking English "less than very well."

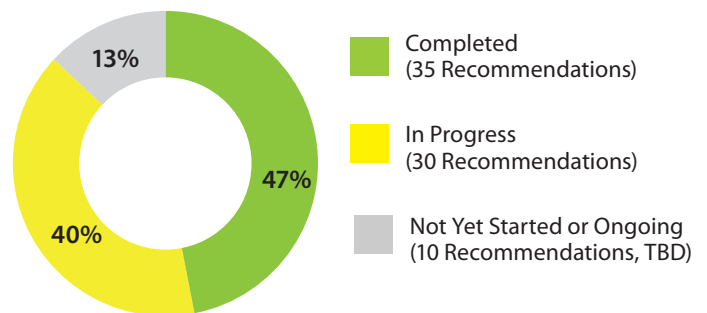


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015)

## Language Access Implementation

The task force produces regular progress reports to show the implementation status of all 75 LAP recommendations: [www.courts.ca.gov/LAP.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/LAP.htm).

### LAP Implementation: 35 of 75 LAP Recommendations Completed to Date



2015			2016	2018
<p><b>January 2015</b> LAP is adopted by the Judicial Council, and Evidence Code section 756 becomes law (clarifying that courts should provide interpreters in civil matters).</p>	<p><b>March 2015</b> LAP Implementation Task Force is formed by Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye.</p>	<p><b>December 2015</b> <i>Language Access Toolkit</i> launches on the California Courts website.</p>	<p><b>January 2016</b> All 58 courts designate a language access representative (now required under rule 2.850).</p>	<p><b>2018</b> Rule 2.851 requires each court to make available a language access services complaint form.  Video Remote Interpreting Pilot Project launches in three courts (Merced, Sacramento, Ventura).  Fiscal Year (FY) 2018–19 budget includes ongoing \$4 million for language access items, including signage.</p>

## Civil Expansion

Effective January 1, 2015, Evidence Code section 756 expanded the case types (see table 1) in which the courts can and should provide interpreters to LEP parties to include civil cases. Section 756 prioritizes case types in the event that a court has insufficient resources to provide interpreters in all civil case types.

**Table 1: Priority Levels of Civil Cases**

Priority 1: Domestic violence, civil harassment where fees are waived (Code Civ. Proc., § 527.6(y)), elder abuse (physical abuse or neglect)
Priority 2: Unlawful detainer
Priority 3: Termination of parental rights
Priority 4: Conservatorship, guardianship
Priority 5: Sole legal or physical custody, visitation
Priority 6: Other elder abuse, other civil harassment
Priority 7: Other family law
Priority 8: Other civil

Over the past three and a half years, the California courts have made significant progress (see table 2) to provide interpreters in civil case types following the priority order dictated by statute.

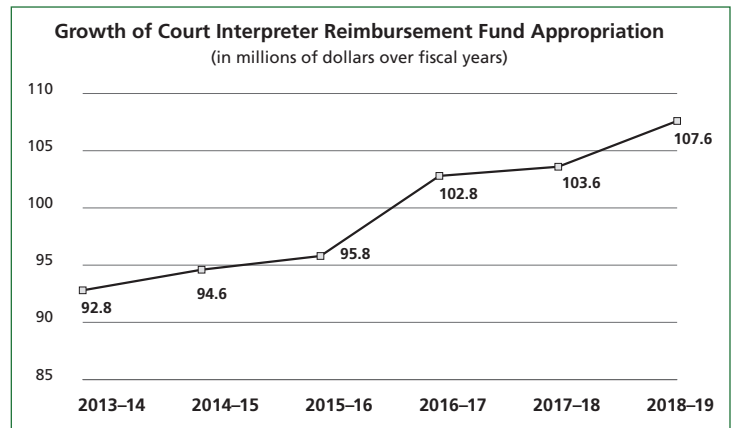
**Table 2: Number of Courts Providing Interpreters in Civil Cases**

Civil Expansion Status	Sept. 2015	Dec. 2016	Dec. 2017
Expansion into all 8 priority levels (Priority Levels 1–8)	9	47	51*
Expansion into 5 or more priority levels (subset of Priorities 1–8)	28	6	6
Expansion into 1 to 4 levels (subset of Priorities 1–8)	9	3	1
No response	12	2	0

\* As of December 2017, 51 of 58 responding courts indicated that they were able to provide interpreters under all eight priorities. The languages provided, and the estimated interpreter coverage for each priority, vary by court. Recent information gathered regarding each court’s estimated coverage will help the Judicial Council with funding and other targeted efforts designed to help all 58 courts reach full expansion.

## Growth of the Court Interpreter Reimbursement Fund

- In 2016, to support court interpreter expenses and expansion efforts, the Governor and the Legislature included an additional ongoing \$7 million for the expansion of interpreters in civil proceedings.
- For FY 2017–18, the total appropriation for the statewide court interpreter reimbursement fund was \$103,632,000.
- A one-time augmentation of \$4 million for the fund is expected for FY 2018–19 to advance the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Language Access.



- Beginning in 2017, the Phoenix Financial System now collects language access data that is not covered under the Court Interpreter Reimbursement Fund (also known as Trial Court Trust Fund 0150037). This data will allow the Judicial Council to track information on noninterpreter costs, including translations, interpreter or language services coordination (including supervision costs), bilingual pay differentials for bilingual staff, multilingual signage, web and communications, training, and technology and equipment.

## Court Interpreter Pool

- Currently, over 1,883 certified and registered court interpreters—by far the largest court interpreter workforce in the nation—are on the Judicial Council’s Master List.
- The Master List ([www.courts.ca.gov/35273.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/35273.htm)) allows courts and members of the public to search for court-certified, registered, and enrolled interpreters who are in good standing with the Judicial Council.
- Interpreters included on the Master List have passed the required exams and officially applied with the Judicial Council. (Application requirements include submitting an application to the Judicial Council, paying an annual fee of \$100, and taking the online “Interpreter Orientation: Working in the California Courts” course.)

- There are currently 1,697 certified court interpreters and 186 registered court interpreters.

**Table 3: Number of Certified Court Interpreters for California's Top 10 Most Frequently Interpreted Spoken Languages (as of June 2018)\***

Language †	2017	2018	+/-
Spanish	1,373	1,367	-6
Vietnamese	53	55	+2
Korean	60	60	0
Mandarin	66	72	+6
Farsi	1	10	+9
Cantonese	29	28	-1
Russian	39	35	-4
Tagalog	4	4	0
Arabic	8	8	0
Punjabi	3	3	0

\* The top 10 spoken languages, ranked in this table, are from the 2015 Language Need and Interpreter Use Study. The Judicial Council will review applicable data sources for development of the 2020 study. The study identifies language need and interpreter use in the California trial courts and is required by the Legislature to be produced every five years under Government Code section 68563.

† There are currently 55 American Sign Language interpreters in California.

- Table 4 shows the number of recent passers of the bilingual interpreting exam to qualify as certified or registered interpreters.

**Table 4: Recent Passers of the Bilingual Interpreting Exams**

Language	2015	2016	2017
Spanish	45	47	56
Vietnamese	3	4	2
Mandarin	2	4	8
Farsi	0	1	9
Cantonese	2	0	1
Russian	2	1	0
Punjabi	1	0	0
Eastern Armenian	1	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>76</b>

## Interpreter Usage

The Judicial Council's Language Access Services (LAS) unit prepares interpreter usage reports for the courts.

Consistent with the direction of the Judicial Council, LAS works directly with the courts to collect interpreter usage data in previously mandated case types, domestic violence case types, and the newly expanded civil case types. The reports are based on data entered in the Court Interpreter Data Collection System or provided by courts from their own internal systems.

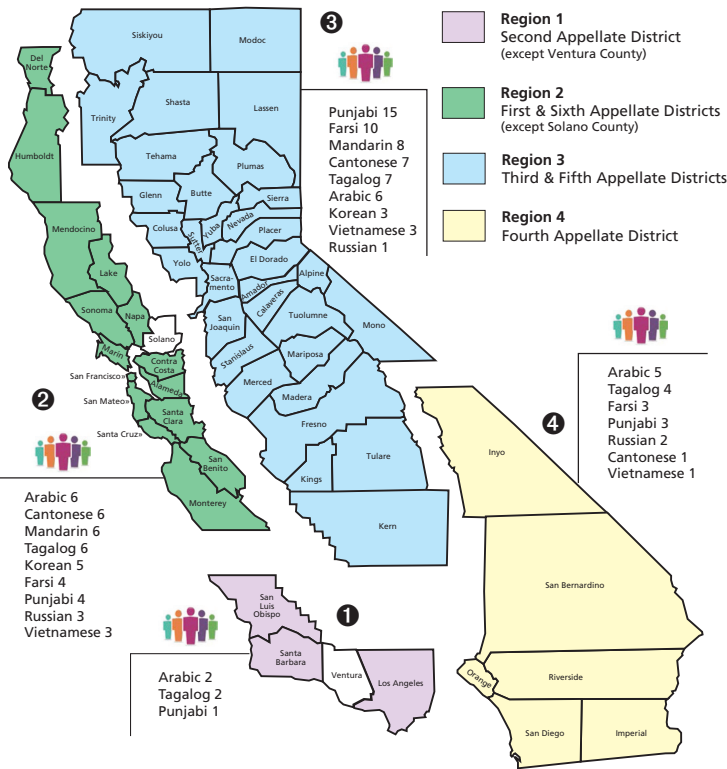
- There were 1,382,062 statewide interpretations in FY 2015–16.\*
- Total interpretations in Spanish were approximately 1.254 million.
- Total other-than-Spanish interpretations were approximately 126,000.
- Some 38.6 percent of the total interpretations took place in Los Angeles County; San Bernardino County had the second most, with 6.8 percent of the total interpretations.
- Although the total number of interpretations decreased statewide, the number of interpretations per filing across all case types actually increased slightly. FY 2014–15 saw 6,832,710 filings with 1,520,878 interpretations, roughly 0.22 interpretations per filing. FY 2015–16 saw 6,209,532 filings with 1,406,784 interpretations for roughly 0.23 interpretations per filing—an increase of just under 2 percent.
- The civil case type saw the largest increase in interpretations per filing, going from 0.06 in FY 2014–15 to 0.10 in FY 2015–16—an increase of roughly 64 percent.

\* The statewide court interpreter usage summary for FY 2016–17 is currently being tabulated. Highlights will be included in the next metrics report.

## Identified Current Interpreter Needs

In March 2018, the Judicial Council LAS conducted a statewide language access survey of the courts to gather information on current language services provided, trends in local court language needs, and any innovative programs, practices, or strategies used to meet local language access needs. The survey identified the top languages for which recruitment of new certified or registered interpreters is needed from the four court interpreter bargaining regions (see figure below). A survey report will be published by September 2018.

Efforts are underway for the Judicial Council to develop a more robust statewide recruitment initiative to increase the pool of qualified interpreters and bilingual staff and to assist near-passers of the bilingual interpreting exam.



Note: The graphic shows the number of courts, by region, that indicated they need more interpreters in the languages shown.

## Web Analytics

Table 5 shows the number of page views to the Court Interpreters Program and Language Access webpages for January 1 to December 31, 2017.

**Table 5: Number of Page Views**

Webpage	2016	2017
Court Interpreters Program	107,146	296,879
Judicial Council Language Access	12,280	18,830
Judicial Council Language Access Toolkit	3,309	3,817

## Resource Links

Judicial Council of California

[www.courts.ca.gov](http://www.courts.ca.gov)

Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts

[www.courts.ca.gov/documents/CLASP\\_report\\_060514.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/CLASP_report_060514.pdf)

Language Access Plan Implementation Task Force

[www.courts.ca.gov/LAP.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/LAP.htm)

Language Access

[www.courts.ca.gov/languageaccess.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/languageaccess.htm)

Language Access Toolkit

[www.courts.ca.gov/lap-toolkit-courts.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/lap-toolkit-courts.htm)

Court Interpreters Program

[www.courts.ca.gov/programs-interpreters.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/programs-interpreters.htm)

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