

Language Access in Court-Ordered Services Information for Courts and Judicial Officers



Every day in the California Courts, litigants are ordered to participate in a variety of rehabilitative services, such as counseling, Batterer Intervention Programs, parenting skills classes and substance abuse treatment. When a litigant with limited English proficiency is unable to participate in these services because of a language barrier, there are a variety of possible consequences, including probation violations, contempt of court and loss of custody and access to children.

Effective September 1, 2019, the Judicial Council has developed new guidance and resources for courts to enhance language access to these important programs and services, which include a rule of court, rule 1.300, and three new optional forms.

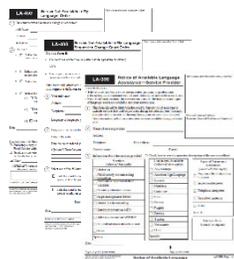
New [California Rules of Court, rule 1.300](#), is based on:

- Recommendations 10, 11, 30 and 33 contained in the Judicial Branch's [Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts](#), which set forth best practices for ensuring that limited English proficient (LEP) court users have equal access to programs and services ordered by the court.
- The appellate court's holding in *In re J.P.* (2017) (14 Cal. App. 5th 616), finding that it was an abuse of discretion on the part of the juvenile court to order a limited English proficient litigant to participate in substance abuse treatment, when no language services were available to enable his participation.

And provides the following guidance to courts:

- (1) As soon as feasible, courts must adopt procedures to enable LEP court litigants to access services provided directly by the court to the same extent as litigants who are English proficient.
- (2) To the extent feasible, a court should avoid ordering an LEP litigant to a private program that is not language accessible.
- (3) Courts should seek out opportunities to partner with other courts and with community service providers in the use of technology to expand access to bilingual staff members and interpreters among courts.
- (4) Courts are encouraged to keep a list of language-accessible services available in their geographic region and to provide this information on a neutral and non-endorsing basis to bench officers and litigants, as appropriate.

And the following optional forms:



- Form [LA-350 Notice of Available Language Assistance—Service Provider](#)
- Form [LA-400 Service Not Available in My Language: Request to Change Court Order](#)
- Form [LA-450 Service Not Available in My Language: Order](#)

Looking for More Information and Resources?

Contact:

LAP@jud.ca.gov

Judicial Council Language Access Webpage:

<https://www.courts.ca.gov/languageaccess.htm>

Language Access Toolkit:

<https://www.courts.ca.gov/lap-toolkit-courts.htm>

Directory of Language Access Representatives:

<https://jm.courts.ca.gov/programs/lap/documents/LAP-LAR-Directory.pdf>