

Protocol and Action Guide for Serving Limited English Proficient Court Users

Introduction

Whether you are a court employee who is working with the public in jury services, the self-help center or the clerk's office, you have probably encountered members of the public who need help and do not speak English. These encounters can be frustrating and you may be left wondering whether you were able to help at all. In those courts where there are bilingual employees available, you may be able to connect a court user with someone who speaks their language, can answer questions, and can guide them in the right direction. However, even in courts with many bilingual employees, there are times when a bilingual staff member is simply not available, or a person appears who speaks a language that no one on the court staff speaks.

Protocol for Serving Limited English Proficient Court Users

The following protocol provides recommended steps for court employees to follow that will help them meet the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) court users:

- 1. The first step is to use the I-Speak card in order to identify the language of the court user.**

The protocol requires the use of an "I-Speak" card. This resource can be downloaded from the Language Access Toolkit, at the following link: [I-Speak Card](#).

- 2. Once the language has been identified, the next step is to connect the LEP court user with a bilingual court employee who speaks the language required. It is always preferable to call upon bilingual staff members when possible.**
- 3. If no bilingual staff member is available, or no one on the staff speaks the language required, the next step is to connect with Telephonic Interpreter Services (TIS) to conduct the necessary transaction, or guide the court user to an office within the court that can connect with TIS.**

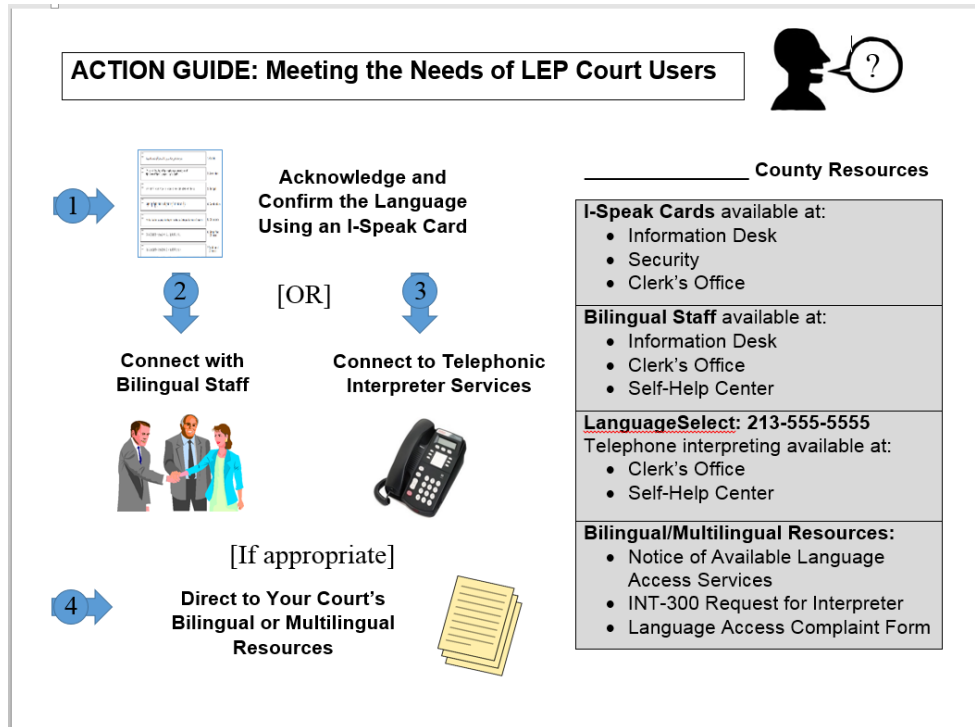
We recommend that courts gain access to TIS, which significantly increases the number of languages that can be served on an "on demand" basis. The Judicial Council has entered into a leveraged procurement agreement (LPA) with a TIS vendor that courts can access through June 2018. More information about the LPA can be found at the following link: [Limited Telephonic Interpreter Services](#).

- 4. Direct to any bilingual or multilingual resources in the court that can assist the court user, including multilingual signage and written information about services available in the court, as appropriate.**

Once communication is established and the court user's needs are made clear, there may be additional bilingual or multilingual resources in the court that can assist the court user, including multilingual signage and written information about services available in the court. To access other resources available to courts to enhance language access services, please see the [Language Access Toolkit](#).

Action Guide for Serving Limited English Proficient Court Users

The Action Guide (attached and shown below) illustrates the steps in the protocol that will help court employees best meet the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) court users. The Action Guide also lists resources that court employees can call upon to work through an encounter with an LEP court user. Courts may customize this content with their county name and specific contact information and additional local resources, as appropriate, in the grey boxes on the right side of the page.



Acknowledge, Connect, Direct (ACD Approach)

- 1** **Acknowledge** and confirm the language that is needed using the I-Speak card or any other written resources the court user has. *(Local courts can use the customizable section of the Action Guide to indicate where employees can find I-Speak cards.)*
- 2** **Connect** the court user with a bilingual employee who can speak to them in their first language. *(Local courts can use the customizable section of the Action Guide to indicate where in the courthouse to find bilingual employees.)*
- 3** **Connect** with Telephonic Interpreter Services to conduct transaction or direct to an office that uses this service. *(Local courts can use the customizable section of the Action Guide to provide the phone number for Telephonic Interpreter Services and/or courthouse locations where these services can be accessed.)*
- 4** **Direct** the court user to your court's existing bilingual or multilingual resources, as appropriate. *(Local courts can use the customizable section of the Action Guide to indicate the written resources, such as signage, multilingual maps and notices that are available in the courthouse.)*