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What's New at the California Courts' Online Self-Help Center and Equal Access

March 2015

Instead of our regular newsletter updating you on the [California Online Self-Help Center](#) and [Equal Access](#) site, we want to take this opportunity to give you information about the tremendous step taken by the judicial branch, on January 22, 2015, in ensuring access to the courts for all Californians:

Adoption by the Judicial Council of the [Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts!](#)

(click for the [Executive Summary](#) to get a condensed version where you can see all 75 recommendations).

As part of the Plan's adoption, the Judicial Council also approved the formation of an Implementation Task Force (Recommendation 60), to be chaired by Justice Cuéllar of the California Supreme Court, and a Translation Committee (Recommendation 36).

The Translation Committee is charged with developing a translation policy for Judicial Council translations, and will also be establishing protocols for prioritization of translations, identification of language needs for translation of documents, etc. Among the Plan's recommendations are several that will address providing tools for courts to provide better language access. Many of these tools will hopefully be of great benefit to all of you, as self-help and legal services providers. So stay tuned to Plan implementation both at the state level and especially at the local level in your courts.

[California Courts' YouTube Channel](#) for judicial branch videos, self-help videos & more.

[Email your questions](#) to the Equal Access community.

- If you have particular concerns around documents and information you believe should be prioritized for translation, please let us know. The Equal Access listserv can be an effective mechanism for communicating needs at the local level to the Translation Committee and Implementation Task Force.

We urge you to read the Plan or the Executive Summary to understand what the California Language Access Plan may mean for you and for your LEP customers. Among the 75 recommendations, there are a number of them that may be of special interest to you (although all 75 may directly or indirectly affect all of you). Below is their number and short descriptive title (unless indicated otherwise, the Recommendations listed are slated to commence in Phase 1 of implementation, beginning immediately):

- Rec. 4: Mechanisms for LEP court users to self-identify.
- Rec. 5: Information for court users about availability of language access services
- Rec. 8: Expansion of court interpreters to all civil proceedings
- Rec. 9: Provisional qualification requirements for non-credentialed interpreters.
- Rec. 10: Provision of qualified interpreters in all court-ordered/court-operated proceedings.
- Rec. 11: Consideration of language accessibility of service providers in making court orders (Phase 2).
- Rec. 18: Creation of multilingual standardized videos.
- Rec. 22: Avoiding conflicts of interest when appointing a noncertified, nonregistered interpreter.
- Rec. 23: Minors will not be appointed to interpret.
- Rec. 24: Avoid appointment of bilingual court staff, absent exigent circumstances, to interpret in courtroom proceedings. (Phase 2)
- Rec. 25: Designation of a language access office or representative in each court/county.
- Rec. 27: Provision of language access tools to court personnel. (Phase 2)
- Rec. 31: Pilot for remote assistance at counters and in self-help centers. (Phase 2)
- Rec. 32: Pilot for remote assistance for workshops. (Phase 2)
- Rec. 34: Use of bilingual volunteers
- Rec. 51: Language access resources on intranet.
- Rec. 36: Establishment of Translation Committee

- Rec. 37: Statewide multilingual samples and templates, adaptable for local use, to be provided by Judicial Council, in collaboration with courts.
- Rec. 38: Posting of translations on Judicial Council website and notice to courts of availability.
- Rec. 47: Language proficiency standards for bilingual staff.
- Rec. 48: Standards and online training for bilingual staff (Recruitment addressed in Rec. 28).
- Rec. 50: Judicial branch training regarding Language Access Plan.
- Rec. 53: Partnerships to disseminate information.
- Rec. 54: Multilingual audio or video recordings to inform public.
- Recs. 62-65: Complaint form and mechanisms re. language access services.
- Rec 66: Statewide repository of language access resources.

With regard to the Equal Access site, we are continuing our efforts to revamp the [Instructional Materials](#) section of Equal Access, and are particularly looking at any instructions or materials you may have in other languages so that we can begin building our library of multi-lingual materials. If you have any you think may be of help to other self-help or legal services providers throughout the state, even if they need some adaption for local needs, please forward along.

As always, if you have feedback you have not yet shared with us, please do so. **Finally, if there are any materials you would like assistance in developing or translating, or if you want to find out what other courts have done and cannot find the information on these sites, please feel free to contact bonnie.hough@jud.ca.gov.**