

STATE OF MICHIGAN



ISABELLA COUNTY TRIAL COURT

300 North Main Street  
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858  
Tel. (989) 772-0911 Fax (989) 772-7337

HON. PAUL H. CHAMBERLAIN  
CHIEF JUDGE

LANCE S. DEXTER  
COURT ADMINISTRATOR

HON. WILLIAM T. ERVIN  
TRIAL JUDGE

HON. MARK H. DUTHIE  
TRIAL JUDGE

Isabella County Trial Court  
Local Administrative Order 2013- 02

**LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN**

In accordance with Supreme Court Administrative Order 2013-8, the Isabella County Trial Court establishes this Language Access Plan (LAP) to provide for the language access needs of Court users.

This LAP is the plan for the Court to ensure meaningful access to Court services for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). A limited English proficient person is a person who does not speak English as his or her primary language, and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English, and by reason of his or her limitations, is not able to understand and meaningfully participate in the Court process.

The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and effective language assistance to LEP persons who come in contact with the Court.

The Court has appointed a language access coordinator, Lance S. Dexter, Court Administrator, to be a contact person for the public, Court staff, and SCAO concerning this plan and its implementation. The Language Access Coordinator may be contacted at 989-772-0911 x213 or by cellular phone 989-621-0090.

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IT IS ORDERED:

**Section I. Needs Assessment**

**A. Census Data**

The Court will make every effort to provide service to all LEP persons in the Court's service area. The following list shows the non-English languages most frequently spoken in the Court's physical jurisdiction.

1. Spanish
2. Chinese
3. Russian
4. Japanese
5. Mon-Khmer, Cambodian LEP

#### **B. Identification of LEP Persons**

Court staff use the following methods to identify LEP persons:

- a. "I speak" cards at the Business Office counter
- b. In-person and telephone requests from friends/family members of LEP persons seeking assistance for upcoming Court matters

### **Section II. Language Assistance Resources**

#### **A. Interpreters Used in the Courtroom**

The Court will offer assistance to LEP persons in the Courtroom, and for magistrate and referee hearings, by providing foreign language interpreters as required by Michigan Court Rule 1.111.

#### **B. Language Services Outside the Courtroom**

The Court will take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to services outside the Courtroom. This is one of the most challenging situations facing Court staff, because in most situations they will encounter LEP persons without an interpreter present. LEP persons may come in contact with Court personnel via:

- i. All Trial Court employees located at 300 N. Main Street, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

Court staff will consult with the Court's Language Access Coordinator to determine what type of language service should be made available, based on the nature and importance of the Court service to be provided and resources available. The following language services are available:

- ii. Language assistance signs posted at public entrance, directing LEP's to the Business office
- iii. In-person interpreters

### **C. Service Referrals**

The Court will make reasonable efforts to ensure that a non-federally funded entity to which the Court refers LEP persons for services has provisions for addressing their needs. The Court will consider viable alternatives if language access is not provided by such a non-federally funded entity.

1.

### **D. Forms and Documents**

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) makes select translated forms available to the Courts at their website:

<http://Courts.michigan.gov/Administration/SCAO/Forms/Pages/default.aspx>

- i. Additional translated forms available to Court users include Rights of Arraignment in Spanish.

When in-person interpreters are hired for Court proceedings, they are expected to provide on-site interpretation of documents for LEP persons.

- ii. Courthouse translation for LEP
  - i. The Isabella County Trial Court has no frequently encountered languages. "I Speak" cards are available.
  - ii. When persons present themselves needing assistance with forms, Court staff will first check the SCAO website to determine if the form is printed in the requested language, and print it for the consumer.
  - iii. Use of a remote interpretation will be used at the Business Office counters when needed.

### **Section III. Training**

The Court is committed to training its Judges and Court staff, on providing LEP persons meaning access to Court services. When the Court provides training sessions, it will include a component addressing LEP policies and procedures and the Court's Language Access Plan. The Court is aware that staff members having contact with the public are more likely to need in-depth training on LEP policy and procedure.

The Court will work with SCAO and MJI to ensure that all employees are trained on LEP policy and procedure. Training will be offered to assist Judges and staff to identify and respond to LEP persons, increase awareness of the types of language services available, guide when and how to

access those services, and effectively use language services.

The Court provides to judges and Court staff the following training regarding language access:

- A. How to use "I Speak" cards and where to display them
- B. How to access the Court's Administrative Order for Language Access
- C. Identification of the Language Access Coordinator and instruction about arranging appropriate language services through each Language Access Coordinator.

#### **Section IV. Public Notification and Evaluation of Language Access Plan**

##### **A. Language Access Plan Approval and Notification**

The Court's LAP has been approved by the State Court Administrative Office. The Court will post its LAP on its public website and public notification area within the Courthouse, and will make copies of the LAP available upon request. This LAP will be reviewed by the local Councils of Government which consists of State, County, City, and Township members including police, fire, transportation, hospital personnel.<sup>2</sup>

##### **B. Evaluation and Review of the LAP**

At the direction of SCAO, or on its own initiative, the Court will assess whether the LAP needs updating. The LAP will remain in effect unless modified or updated. Review of the following areas may indicate a need to update the LAP:

- A. Number of LEP persons requesting Court interpreters or language assistance
- B. Funding provided or available for language services
- C. Current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided
- D. Feedback from LEP communities within the County
- E. Court staff (turnover, new hires, etc.)
- F. Feedback from training provided by the Court or SCAO/MJI
- G. Viability of identified language services and resources
- H. Problem areas and corrective action strategies

I. Updated census data

Every request/instance of language assistance will be transmitted to the Language Access Coordinator by Court staff. The Coordinator will compile the data on an annual basis for budget purposes and review the bullet list above for feedback from the community, in order to address any need to modify the LAP.

The Language Access Coordinator ensures this plan is followed, advises the Courts on potential updates to this plan, and addresses the language access needs for the Court as they arise. The Isabella County Trial Court has identified Lance S. Dexter, Court Administrator, 989-772-0911 x213 or cellular phone 989-621-0090 as Language Access Coordinator. The Court will notify the SCAO Region III Office of any changes to the Language Access Coordinator's contact information, or if new language access coordinators are named.

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(SCAO APPROVED)

12-9-13  
Date

  
Paul H. Chamberlain, Chief Judge