



## **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan 2025**

The Superior Court of California, County of Ventura provides language access services to LEP court users in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and consistent with the Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts (California Language Access Plan or LAP). This Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan addresses language access services and policies that affect LEP court users and language access procedures at our court. The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and reasonable language assistance to LEP persons who come in contact with the Superior Court of Ventura County.

### **I. Needs assessment**

#### **1. Statewide**

The top 5 non-English languages spoken in this county, in descending order of frequency, are:

1. Spanish
2. Mandarin
3. Portuguese
4. Punjabi
5. Arabic

This information is based on data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Judicial Council of California, Court Interpreter's Data Collection System (CIDCS), and data collected from the Ventura Superior Court's internal interpreter database.

#### **2. Superior Court of Ventura County**

The Superior Court of Ventura will make every effort to provide services to all LEP persons. However, the following list shows the foreign languages that are most frequently used in this Court's geographic area:

1. Spanish
2. Mixteco bajo\*
3. Mandarin
4. Arabic
5. Farsi

\* Indigenous language from Mexico that does not have a written form. Mixteco interpreters are fluent in Spanish, but not necessarily in English.

### **II. Language Access Resources**

**1. Court Interpreters:** Providing spoken-language interpreters in court proceedings are based in whole or in part in statutory and case law. In the Superior Court of Ventura County, interpreters will be provided at no cost to our court customers who need such assistance in the following circumstances:

1. For litigants and witnesses in criminal hearings;
2. For litigants and witnesses in juvenile justice hearings;



3. For litigants and witnesses involving domestic violence and elder abuse, juvenile dependency, family law and child support cases, to the extent that funding is provided; and
4. For litigants who need assistance when using family court services, to the extent that funding is provided.

In 2015, the state expanded no cost interpreter services, subject to availability, to all case types, including probate, mental health, limited and unlimited civil proceedings. Ventura Superior Court is committed to providing language access to all case types. However, interpreters for all civil case types other than those listed above will be subject to resource availability.

Where demand for interpreter services exceeds availability on a given day, the Court follows the priorities established in Evidence Code § 756, as follows:

- Priority 1: Domestic violence, civil harassment cases where there is no fee to file, elder abuse cases where there is physical abuse or neglect
- Priority 2: Unlawful detainers (evictions)
- Priority 3: Termination of parental rights
- Priority 4: Guardianship and conservatorship
- Priority 5: Cases where one person is asking for sole custody or visitation
- Priority 6: Other civil harassment and elder abuse cases
- Priority 7: Other family law cases
- Priority 8: Other civil cases

In addition, the court strives to offer language services to all LEP persons for the following court services, events or programs:

- Family Court Services Mediation or Child Custody Recommending Counseling
- Small Claims Mediation
- Mandatory Settlement Conferences in all case types
- Court Investigator Office interviews

Many people who need an interpreter will not request one because they do not realize that interpreters are available or because they do not recognize the level of English proficiency or communication skills needed to understand the court proceeding. The court does not have funding to provide interpreters for non-mandated proceedings. However, the court can provide some assistance within existing funding restrictions and will endeavor to do so for non-mandated proceedings.

In a case where the court is mandated to provide an interpreter, but one is not available at the time of the proceeding, even after the court has made all reasonable efforts to locate one, as previously outlined in this plan, the case will be postponed and continued to a date when an interpreter can be provided. When an interpreter is unavailable for a case in which the court is not mandated to provide one, the court takes the following action: The



party is provided a list of interpreters in the particular language, the Internet link to the Judicial Council Master list of interpreters or s/he is asked to contact the Interpreters Office for assistance.

### **1.1. Court Interpreter Qualifications**

The Superior Court of Ventura County hires interpreters for courtroom hearings in compliance with the rules and policies set forth by Government Code section 68561 and California Rules of Court, rule 2.893. The Judicial Council maintains a statewide roster of certified and registered interpreters who may work in the courts. This roster is available to court staff and the public on the Internet at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/courtinterpreters/master.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/courtinterpreters/master.htm).

When an interpreter coordinator has made a "due diligence" effort to find a certified or registered court interpreter and none is available, the interpreter coordinator then seeks a noncertified, nonregistered court interpreter, in accordance with the governing local labor agreement and applicable regulations.

**2. Bilingual Staff:** The court has bilingual staff to help LEP users in their language in person or by telephone.

When bilingual staff are not available, qualified interpreters are provided either in person or remotely at the various points of contact with the court (such as clerk's offices, self-help centers, etc.). Staff court interpreters are preferred, whenever available, for in-person or remote interpretation. If not available, the court uses the United Language Group to provide telephonic interpretation to assist in communication between staff and LEP persons.

**3. Translated Written Information and Media:** The California courts understand the importance of translating forms and documents so that LEP individuals have greater access to the courts' services. The Superior Court of Ventura County currently uses Judicial Council forms and instructional materials translated into commonly used languages.

- These translated forms are available at the court's Web site for internal use and are available to the public at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/languages](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/languages) as well as at the court's Self-Help Centers;
- The court also has access to instructional materials that have been translated by other courts at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/trans.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/trans.htm).
- The court has translated the following documents into other languages
  - Brochures in a variety of proceedings are available in Spanish in our Self-Help Centers; Instructions for completing fee waivers in Spanish;
  - Instructions for expunging a misdemeanor record in Spanish;
  - Instructions for responding to an unlawful detainer case in Spanish;

### **4. Notification of Language Access Services**

The court notifies court users of available language access services and how to access them in the following ways:

- Interpreter information and instructions on how to request an interpreter on display and listed on various court notices.
- Multilingual notices posted at the clerk's office, and other relevant points of contact.



- Display and availability of language identification, or “I-Speak” Cards at various point of contact with the court

### **III. Court Staff Recruitment**

#### **1. Recruitment of Bilingual Staff for Language Access**

The Superior Court of Ventura County is an equal opportunity employer and recruits and hires bilingual staff to serve its LEP constituents. Primary examples include but are not limited to: Court interpreters to serve as permanent employees of the court; and Bilingual staff to serve at public counters including the self-help centers.

#### **2. Judicial and Staff Training**

The Superior Court of Ventura County is committed to providing LEP training opportunities for all judicial officers and staff members. As recommended in the California LAP, the Superior Court of California, County of Ventura provides education for court staff and judicial officers on: (1) language access laws, policies and procedures at the state and local level, (2) working with language access service providers, (3) working with LEP Court users, (4) tools and technologies for providing language access, and (5) cultural competence.

Training resources and materials are provided as follows:

- Orientation bench guides and education for all new judicial officers.
- All court staff have access on the Court’s internal intranet site to tools for serving LEP court users, such as the Language Access Toolkit, I-Speak cards, and United Language Group
- Continued training for the purpose of keeping judicial officers and court staff educated regarding new developments associated with the Language Access Plan.

### **IV. Monitoring and updating Local Language Access Service Policies**

The Ventura Superior Court regularly monitors its language access services, policies and procedures, and all items included in this LEP plan to assess whether any changes are needed. In addition, the court performs an annual evaluation of its policies and updates this document as appropriate.

### **V. Language Access Office**

Any concerns and requests for information regarding this LEP Plan, its content, implementation, or the language access services provided by the Superior Court of California, County of Ventura should be directed to: Manager of Court Interpreter Services (Language Access Representative).

All complaints regarding the local provision, or failure to provide, language access services are handled by the court. All complaints are also reported to the Judicial Council to assist in the ongoing monitoring of the overall implementation and success of the California Language Access Plan, consistent with Recommendation No. 63 of the California LAP.



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