

LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date/Time: Friday, February 9th, 2024; 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. (ET)

Meeting Location: 201 N Illinois St. Indianapolis, Indiana 46204; South tower: Fuse West

1. Welcome

The meeting commenced with a warm welcome to all attendees.

2. Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved without amendments.

3. Old Business

Language Access Plans (LAP)

- There were no new updates on the Language Access Plans, though we have received an additional five submissions from counties. Not all counties have submitted their plans yet, and we will continue to work towards increasing submissions.
- The county's new submission deadline is being finalized with the Chief Justice.
- Proposals to improve LAP submissions include:
 - Offering grants as an incentive for counties to submit their LAPs.
 - Providing access to the Language Line as an incentive for plan submissions.
 - Sending individual notices via email and phone to each county.
 - Conducting outreach through judges in neighboring counties who are on this committee.
 - Organizing educational sessions.
 - Utilizing the Wednesday Newsletter for further outreach.
- Regarding funding:
 - A request will be made to the Chief Justice for more funding and additional staff for the Language Access program.
 - Our target goal is to achieve a 60% increase in LAP submissions overall.

Advisement of Rights

- The National Center for State Courts will prepare a proposal with a quote to be sent to Manpreet. Demos are expected to be available in early spring.

Interpreter Complaint Form

- The next step is to make the Interpreter Complaint Form accessible on the website for county use, addressing issues of accessibility before it can be posted on the website.

Interpreter Rule Change

- We reviewed the changes since the last meeting, including the addition of a court interpreter definition.
 - Concerns were discussed with Justin Forkner and Judge Silma.
 - Discussions included judicial discretion and potential abuse of discretion.
 - We addressed jury-related concerns, noting that the term "must" applies specifically to jury contexts.
 - Competency levels and language assessments for examinations were reviewed.
 - We remain mindful of interpreter breaks.
 - The deadline for submission is February 9 to meet with CJ this month.
 - For interpreters in Civil Proceedings, a suggestion was made to remove and add references to IC 34-45-1-3 and 4, and applicable federal law.

Language Access Program Update

- None of the candidates passed the court interpreter certification exams. However, 28 individuals are registered to take the written exam on February 12.

Members' County/Organization Update

- No updates were provided from members regarding their counties or organizations.

4. New Business

Language Line

- There is currently no policy or procedure defining the intended use of the Language Line services.
 - Counties have been overusing the Language Line resources. Initially, \$25,000 was allocated, but costs have increased each quarter and year. This amount was set as a limit by Justice Shepard, who also noted that the service was intended as a last resort, as the interpreters provided are not court-certified.
 - A proposal for county allocation will be discussed to address this issue.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

2024 NEXT MEETING DATES:

Q2: MAY 10TH, Q3: AUGUST 16TH, & Q4: DECEMBER 6TH

LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date/Time: Friday, May 10th, 2024; 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. (ET)

Meeting Location: 201 N Illinois St. Indianapolis, Indiana 46204; North tower: 16th Floor

1. Welcome

The meeting began with a welcome to all participants.

2. Old Business

Language Access Plans

- To date, 30% of the counties have submitted their Language Access Plans (LAPs). Our goal is to achieve 50% submission by the end of the year 2025.
- Members will reach out to the counties that have not yet submitted their plans to offer support and address any questions to help meet this goal.

Advisement of Rights

- Michael Moore has completed drafting the dialogues for the advisement videos in a one-way conversation format. Manpreet is collaborating with the Criminal and Juvenile Bench Book Committees to ensure that the dialogues cover all necessary legal points and to obtain their approval before moving forward with production. Once the dialogues are approved and finalized, they will be submitted to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for a proposal and quote for translation into the target languages and video production.
- The advisements will be in the top three to five languages based on case data: ASL, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Burmese, Punjabi, and Mandarin.
- We need to explore funding sources to cover the costs of the advisements.
- The proposal for Justices to introduce the advisements was not approved. Instead, Manpreet will request that the Bench Book Committee chair or a member of the committee handle the introductory segment of the videos.
- NCSC will produce an animated video.
- The committee will continue discussing determining the most suitable platform for hosting these videos.

Interpreter Complaint Form

- The committee discussed the interpreter complaint form and how it would be used. Manpreet explained the complaint process and noted that she is working with OCEO to post the form on the website.

Interpreter Rule Change

- The committee considered whether there is a sufficient pool of interpreters and if judges and courts can comply with the proposed rule changes. Manpreet shared feedback from the district meetings regarding different district's judges thoughts about the rule change.
- There was also discussion on how to educate judges who may not see the need for court-certified interpreters.
 - Laura mentioned she and Manpreet have held training events with poor attendance. Manpreet has also presented at many conferences hosted by the Court.
 - The committee brainstormed solutions such as collaborating with judges to boost attendance, involving individuals who have experienced lack of language access in court, and having committee members assist in outreach efforts.
 - The chair emphasized the need to ensure adequate resources (funding to pay for interpreters and interpreters) are in place before making the rule mandatory to ensure compliance by local courts.
- Kaur has a meeting scheduled with the Chief Justice on May 14, where she will provide feedback, propose district coordinators, and request an increase in grant funding. Last year, there were over \$2 million in interpreter grant fund requests, but only \$500,000 was provided from the current budget.

Language Access Program Update

- Manpreet plans to request administrative assistance to manage the increasing demands of the Language Access program.
- Manpreet reported on the pass and fail rates of recent court interpreter certification examinations. The committee expressed concerns about the high failure rates and discussed alternative pathways to passing the exam, including:
 - Implementing a tiered system similar to other states.
 - Creating alternative licenses, akin to measures taken in response to lawyer shortages.
 - Recruiting interpreters from colleges, universities, communities, churches, and coalitions, with committee members volunteering to help spread the word.
 - Magistrate Douglass, Laura Thomas, and Maria Wildridge volunteered to lead efforts to reach out to various communities.

Members' County/Organization Update

- Due to time constraints, there was no opportunity to provide updates from members regarding their counties or organizations.

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

2024 NEXT MEETING DATES:
Q3: AUGUST 9TH, & Q4: DECEMBER 6TH