

**SURPRISE CITY COURT
16081 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, Arizona 85374**

**Language Access Plan (LAP)
Revised August 2015**

I. Legal Basis and Purpose

This document serves as the plan for the Surprise City Court to provide to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) services that are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.; 45 C.F.R. § 80.1 et seq.; and 28 C.F.R. § 42.101–42.112). 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 Surprise City Court.

This language access plan (LAP) was developed to ensure meaningful access to court services for persons with limited English proficiency. Although court interpreters are provided for persons with a hearing loss, access services for them are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act rather than Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and therefore will not be addressed in this plan.

II. Needs Assessment

A. Statewide

The State of Arizona provides court services to a wide range of people, including those who speak limited or no English. From a statewide perspective, the following languages were listed with the greatest number of speakers who spoke English less than “Very Well” in Arizona (according to the American Community Survey estimate report from the U.S. Census Bureau dated April 2012):

1. Spanish
2. Navajo
3. Chinese
4. Vietnamese

B. Surprise City Court

The Surprise City Court is responsible to provide services identified in this plan 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. Albanian
3. Arabic

4. Romanian

This information is based on data collected from:

1. Surprise City Court bilingual staff,
2. United States Census Bureau, April 2012 American Community Survey
3. CourTools Measure 1 – Access and Fairness 2014 Surprise Municipal Court Cumulative Statistical Analysis report,
4. Internal statistics, and
5. Data collected from interpreter service invoices.

III. Language Assistance Resources

A. Interpreters Used in the Courtroom

1. Providing Interpreters in the Courtroom

In the Surprise City Court, court interpreters will be provided in all courtroom proceedings at no cost to all LEP court customers including witnesses, victims and parents, guardians, and family members of minors as well as any other person whose presence or participation is necessary or appropriate as determined by the judicial officer.

It is the responsibility of the private attorney, Public Defender or County Attorney to provide qualified interpretation and translation services for witness interviews, pre-trial transcriptions and translations and attorney/client communications during out of court proceedings.

2. Determining the Need for an Interpreter in the Courtroom

The Surprise City Court may determine whether a court customer has limited English proficiency. Identification of language needs at the earliest point of contact is highly recommended. The citing officer may indicate interpreter and language needs on the face of an Arizona Traffic Ticket and Complaint (ATTC), or electronic-citation (e-Citation). Interpreter information then transfers to the automated case management system via electronic or manual data processing.

The need for a court interpreter may also be identified prior to a court proceeding by the LEP person or on the LEP person's behalf by counter staff, self-help center staff, family court services, or outside justice partners such as attorneys, victim advocates, or counseling service providers. Courts should have a documented process to identify LEP needs for parties with notation in the physical or electronic case file.

Signage throughout the court building indicating interpreter services are available may also help to identify LEP individuals. The Surprise City Court will display this sign at the following

locations: courthouse entry point at security station, lobby information desk, and front counter windows.

The need for an interpreter also may be made known in the courtroom at the time of the proceeding. 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 on a date when an interpreter can be provided.

3. AOC Interpretation Resources

Court Interpreter Registry and Listserv

The AOC maintains a statewide roster of individuals who indicate they have interpreting experience and have expressed interest in working in the courts. The court using interpreting services will determine the competence of the persons listed. This roster is available to court staff on the Internet at <http://www.interpreters.courts.az.gov>.

Additionally, AOC created a statewide listserv to allow courts to communicate via email on court interpreter-related matters. The listserv is an excellent resource to locate referrals for specific language needs. Access codes and instructions to join the listserv, may be obtained from the AOC language access contact person.

Video Remote Interpreting

The AOC has installed video conferencing equipment at the State Courts building that will allow courts with compatible technology to remotely conference an interpreter from the Phoenix metro area or from another court jurisdiction into their court to improve resource allocation and reduce time and costs associated with interpreter travel. Contact the AOC LAP contact for more information on VRI connectivity and checklist for court proceedings most appropriate for video.

B. Language Services Outside the Courtroom

The Surprise City Court is also responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to all court services and programs outside the courtroom. Court services and programs include, but are not limited to, self-help centers, clerk offices, intake offices, cashiers, and records room.

The court also is responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to all court-ordered services and programs. Court-ordered services and programs include, but is not limited to, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, treatment or educational programs provided by a court employee or a private vendor under contract with the

court. Contracts with vendors that provide direct services to court users must include the requirement that the vendor provide language services, including interpreters, for all LEP individuals.

The court uses the following resources to facilitate communication with LEP individuals and court staff or providers of court-ordered services:

- The Surprise City Court has bilingual employees who speak Spanish. When LEP customers seek our assistance outside the courtroom, we first try to meet their needs by using the language skills of our employees;
- The Surprise City Court has developed an internal list of bilingual employees who may provide assistance to LEP customers when necessary and when no staff person is immediately available to provide that assistance in person;
- For face-to-face encounters, as well as telephone conversations, the Surprise City Court uses the *Language Line* when on-site interpreters are not available;
- When court staff does not know what language a customer is speaking, they use “*I Speak*” cards, to identify the individual’s primary language;
- Independent interpreter contractors;
- Staff who have some knowledge of another language but need help with court terminology may consult the following glossary sources:
 - a. Spanish/English glossary on the AOC self-help Web site, http://ajinweb/ctserv/smu/CMU_CourtInterpreter.htm
 - b. Spanish Language Style Guide and Glossaries for U.S. Government Web Sites, <http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/multilingual/spanish-guide/index.shtml>

To provide linguistically accessible services for LEP individuals, the Surprise City Court provides the following:

- Bilingual staff provide Spanish interpretation at the front counter, on the telephones, and inside the courtrooms;
- The Surprise City Court utilizes interpreter services from *Language Line* when on-site interpreters are not available;
- “*I Speak*” cards are utilized to identify the individual’s primary language;
- Website link from Surprise City Court’s website to the Supreme Court’s Spanish translated webpage for court forms and instructions and other language access related resources such as the court’s LAP and complaint form should be made available online. Supreme Court page: <http://www.azcourts.gov/elcentrodeautoservicio>

C. COURT APPOINTED OR SUPERVISED PERSONNEL

The Surprise City Court also shall ensure that court appointed or supervised personnel, including

but not limited to, child advocates, guardians' ad litem, court psychologists and doctors provide language services, including interpreters as part of their service delivery system to LEP individuals.

D. Translated Forms and Documents

The Arizona courts understand the importance of translating forms and documents so that LEP individuals have greater access to the courts' services. The Surprise City Court currently uses forms and instructional materials translated into Spanish.

- The court has translated various documents into Spanish:
 - Motions;
 - Order and Notice of Hearing Date;
 - Petition for Order of Protection;
 - Petition for Injunction Prohibiting Harassment;
 - Petition for Workplace Harassment;
 - Plaintiff and Defendant Guide Sheet for Protective Orders;
 - Records Request.

These documents will be located at the front counter, the courtrooms, and online at www.surpriseaz.gov/court

E. WEBSITE/ONLINE ACCESS

A copy of the Surprise City Court LAP is available online at www.surpriseaz.gov/court . If the court operates an Internet website, it should ensure the website is accessible to LEP persons and will include, at a minimum:

- A notice about the availability of language services written in Spanish and posted on the home page.
- A hyperlink to Arizona Supreme Court's Spanish-translated webpage at <http://www.azcourts.gov/elcentrodeautoservicio>

Interpreters at court hearings are expected to provide sight translations of court documents and correspondence associated with the case.

IV. Court Staff Recruitment

A. Recruitment of Bilingual Staff for Language Access

The Surprise City Court is an equal opportunity employer and recruits and hires bilingual staff to serve its LEP constituents. Primary examples include but are not limited to:

- Bilingual staff to serve at front counters, courtrooms, telephones, and or self-help centers;
- Bilingual staff available on call to assist with contacts from LEP individuals, as needed.

V. Judicial and Staff Training

The Surprise City Court is committed to providing language access training opportunities for all judicial officers and staff members. Training and learning opportunities currently offered will be expanded or continued as needed. Those opportunities include:

- Interpreter coordinator training;
- Diversity Training;
- Cultural competency training;
- LAP training;
- Staff advanced training provided by University of Arizona and the National Center for Interpretation, Court Interpreter Training Institute;
- New Employee Orientation training; and,
- Judicial officer orientation on the use of court interpreters and language competency.
- AOC's Language Access in the Courtroom Training DVD
- AOC'S Language Access online training videos

VI. Public Outreach and Education

To communicate with the court's LEP constituents on various legal issues of importance to the community and to make them aware of services available to all language speakers, the Surprise City Court provides community outreach and education and seeks input from its LEP constituency to further improve services. Outreach and education efforts include:

- Conducting a survey – National Center for State Courts, CourTools Access and Fairness Survey, also available in Spanish.

The court will solicit input from the LEP community and its representatives through the CourTools survey and will seek to inform community service organizations on how LEP individuals can access court services.

VII. Formal Complaint Process

If an LEP court customer believes meaningful access to the courts was not provided to them, they may choose to file a complaint with the trial court's Language Access Plan Coordinator.

The Court will develop a complaint process that includes at a minimum, the following information:

- Indicate the Court will respond to any complaint within 30 days and the records will be

maintained as public records.

- Indicate how to file a complaint and to whom the complaint should be directed.
- The Court must attach the complaint form (English/Spanish) to the LAP.
- Ensure that translated versions of the complaint form are available in multiple locations, including, but not limited to:
 - Forms posted on the court's website and,
 - Hard copy forms available at the front counter.

VIII. Public Notification and Evaluation of LAP

A. LAP Approval and Notification

The Surprise City Court's LAP is approved by the presiding judge and court administrator. Upon approval, please forward a copy to the AOC Court Services Division. Any revisions to the plan will be submitted to the presiding judge and court administrator for approval, and then forwarded to the AOC. Copies of Surprise City Court's LAP will be provided to the public on request and will also be posted online at www.surpriseaz.gov/court.

B. Evaluation of the LAP

The Surprise City Court will routinely assess whether changes to the LAP are needed. The plan may be changed or updated at any time but reviewed not less frequently than once a year.

Every year the court's management team will review the effectiveness of the court's LAP and update it as necessary. The evaluation will include identification of any problem areas and development of corrective action strategies. From time to time, the court may consider using a survey sampling of data collection for a limited time period which involves assessing language access requests to assist in the evaluation of the LAP.

Elements of the evaluation will include:

- Number of LEP persons requesting Spanish language assistance;
- Assessment of current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided;
- Assessment of whether court staff adequately understand LEP policies and procedures and how to carry them out;
- Review of feedback from court employee training sessions; and,
- Customer satisfaction feedback as indicated on the Access and Fairness Survey, if administered by the court during this time period.
- Review any language access complaints received during this time period.

C. Trial Court Language Access Plan Coordinator:

Linda Rodriguez, Court Administrator
Surprise City Court
16081 N. Civic Center Plaza
Surprise, AZ 85374
(623) 222-4820
lrodrig3@courts.az.gov

D. AOC Language Access Contact:

Amy Wood
Court Services Division
Administrative Office of the Courts
1501 W. Washington Street, Suite 410
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 452-3337
awood@courts.az.gov

E. LAP Effective date: August 11, 2015

F. Approved by:

Presiding Judge: Louis Frank Dominguez Date: 8-11-15

Court Administrator: Linda Rodriguez Date: 8-11-15

Surprise City Court, 16081 N. Civic Center Plaza, Surprise, AZ 85374

(Court Name)

Language Access to Court Services Complaint Form

The court may be required to provide interpreters at no cost for court users, including litigants, victims, and witnesses who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. If you believe you have not been provided effective language assistance for any court or probation proceeding or other service provided by the court, please complete this form and return it to: Surprise City Court, 16081 N. Civic Center Plaza, Surprise, AZ 85374

(Address of Court)

*The submission of a complaint will NOT affect the outcome of any court matter.
The court will address your concerns within a reasonable time not exceeding 30 days after submission of this form.*

THIS FORM IS AVAILABLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES UPON REQUEST.

PLEASE COMPLETE:

Today's Date: _____

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ / ____ / _____

Home Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____

Mobile Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

Primary Language: _____

Date of Incident: _____

What problem did you have with language assistance?

- The court did not provide an interpreter
- The interpreter did not interpret correctly or did not speak my language
- Other- please describe:

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d states that "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

FORMULARIO DE QUEJA
Servicios de Traducción e Interpretación

Para garantizar la participación en las diligencias y los servicios judiciales, se le proveerá un intérprete sin costo alguno a las personas tales como litigantes, víctimas, ofendidos y testigos que no hablen el inglés como idioma principal o a aquellos que no sepan escribir, leer, entender o hablar el inglés. Si Ud. cree que no le han facilitado servicios de interpretación en el tribunal, o para gozar de los servicios de régimen a prueba, por favor, llene este formulario y envíelo a: Surprise City Court, 16081 N. Civic Center Plaza Surprise, AZ 85374

*Ninguna causa pendiente se verá afectada por haber sometido una queja.
Este tribunal tratará de abordar su queja en un plazo de 30 días después de haberla sometido.*

PUEDE OBTENER ESTE FORMULARIO EN OTROS IDIOMAS SI LO SOLICITA

LLENE LOS ESPACIOS EN BLANCO:

Fecha: _____

Nombre: _____

Apellido(s): _____

Dirección: _____

Ciudad/Estado/C.P.: _____ / _____ / _____

Teléfono: (_____) _____ - _____

Celular: (_____) _____ - _____

Correo electrónico: _____

Idioma principal: _____

¿En qué fecha sucedió el incidente? _____

Explique cuál fue el problema:

- El tribunal no me proporcionó un intérprete
- El intérprete no interpretó de manera adecuada o no hablaba mi idioma.
- Otro motivo; anote los detalles:

