

# MONROE COUNTY COURTS

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106 East First Street · Monroe, Michigan 48161-2197

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Hon. Michael W. LaBeau, Chief Judge 38<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court  
Hon. John A. Hohman, Jr., Chief Judge Monroe County Probate Court  
Hon. Jack Vitale, Chief Judge, 1<sup>st</sup> District Court

Administrative Order 2013 - 04J (C38), 2013 - 03J (P58), 2013 - 03J (D01)

## LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

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

This LAP is the plan for the courts 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 courts.

The courts have appointed a language access coordinator 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 through the court administrator's office.

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## **IT IS ORDERED:**

### Section I. Needs Assessment

#### **A. Census Data**

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

- Spanish
- Arabic
- German

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

Monroe County courts staff rely on the LEP persons to request language assistance and by utilizing "I Speak" cards.

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

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

The courts will offer assistance to LEP persons in the courtroom by providing foreign language interpreters as required by Michigan Court Rule 1.111.

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

The courts 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:

- the court counters located at the
  - Monroe County Clerks office
  - Probate Clerks office
  - District Clerks offices
  - District Court Probation office
  - Friend of the Court office
  - Juvenile Section of the Family Division office
  - Family Division reception area
  - All judicial secretaries' windows
- by telephone to Monroe County court offices within the courthouse
- at the Monroe County courthouse Visitors' desk

Court staff will consult with the courts' 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:

- in-person interpreters (via Worldwide Interpreters, Inc. for all languages and a court approved local Monroe County resident for Spanish)
- telephone interpreter services (via *Language Line* for all languages)

### **C. Service Referrals**

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

### **D. Forms & Documents**

The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) makes select translated forms available to the courts at <http://courts.michigan.gov/Administration/SCAO/Forms/Pages/default.aspx>.

An additional translated form is available to court users:

- 1<sup>st</sup> District Court Spanish Plea By Mail form

When in-person interpreters are hired for court proceedings, they are expected to provide sight interpretation of documents for LEP persons utilized in the courtroom.

The Monroe County courthouse relies on individuals to seek language assistance and has “I Speak” cards available at the courthouse visitors’ desk and at all public windows within the courthouse.

### **Section III. Training**

The courts are committed to training its judges and court staff, and coordinating with court clerks on providing LEP persons with meaningful access to court services. When a court does provide training, it will include a component addressing LEP policy and procedure and the courts’ LAP. The courts are aware that staff members having contact with the public are more likely to need in-depth training on LEP policy and procedure.

The courts 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.

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

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

The courts’ have consulted with the Monroe County Intermediate School District Director, the Monroe County Community College Dean of Corporate and Community Services and the Monroe County Library System Director for feedback prior to being approved by the State Court Administrative Office. The courts LAP will be posted on the Monroe County web site, will have its LAP at the visitors’ desk area within the courthouse and will make copies of the LAP available upon request.

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

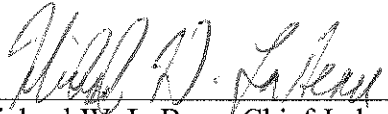
At the direction of SCAO, or on its own initiative, the courts will assess whether the LAP needs updating. The LAP will remain in effect unless modified or updated. Review of the following areas may indicate a need to update the LAP:

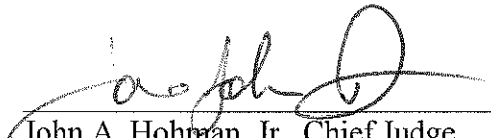
- Number of LEP persons requesting court interpreters or language assistance
- Funding provided or available for languages services
- Current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided
- Feedback from LEP communities within the county
- Court staff (turnover, new hires, etc.)
- Feedback from trainings provided by the court or SCAO/MJI
- Viability of identified language services and resources
- Problem areas and corrective action strategies
- Updated census data

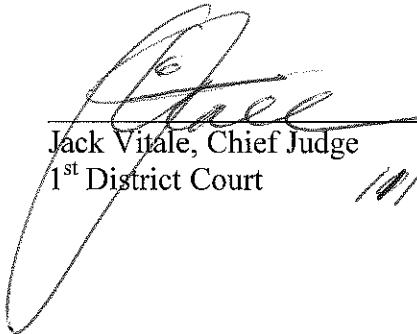
The language access coordinator for the courts ensures this plan is followed, advises the courts on potential updates to this plan, and coordinates the language access needs for the courts as they arise. The courts have identified the name and contact information of the language access coordinator and advised the State Court Administrator Office. The courts will notify the SCAO regional office of any changes to the language access coordinator's contact information, or if a new language access coordinator is named.

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Date: 11/01/13

  
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Michael W. LaBeau, Chief Judge  
38<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court

  
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John A. Hohman, Jr., Chief Judge  
Monroe County Probate Court 11-1-13

  
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Jack Vitale, Chief Judge  
1<sup>st</sup> District Court 10/01/13

SCAO Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Michelle Marcero <michelle\_marcero@monroemi.org>

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## Monroe Language Access Plan - Approved

1 message

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**Region2 Info** <region2-info@courts.mi.gov>

Wed, Nov 13, 2013 at 9:31 AM

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Monroe Language Access Plan - Approved  
C38 2013-04J  
D01 2013-03J  
P58 2013-03J

This is to advise that we have reviewed the above referenced administrative order and find that it conforms to the requirements of MCR 8.112(B). This order is being accepted and filed until advised by your court of any change.

James Hughes  
Region II Administrator  
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