

Language Access Policy

Purpose:

This section outlines the procedures and guidelines for ensuring that language barriers do not impede a defendant's access to justice in County Criminal Court #11. The policy is designed to provide effective communication and understanding for all defendants, regardless of their proficiency in English.

Scope:

This policy applies to all defendants who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency (LEP) and require language interpretation services in County Criminal Court #11.

Policy Statement:

Language will not be a barrier to accessing the court. County Criminal Court #11 is committed to ensuring that all defendants, regardless of their language proficiency, have full access to court proceedings. The court utilizes the Office of Court Administration for Spanish-speaking defendants and contracts with Visual Language for defendants who speak uncommon languages, including sign language. If Visual Language cannot provide the necessary interpreter, the court will seek services from Access Language or other qualified providers.

Procedures:**1. Spanish-Speaking Defendants:**

The court will use the services provided by the Office of Court Administration to ensure that Spanish-speaking defendants have access to interpretation services throughout their court proceedings.

2. Defendants with Uncommon Languages or Sign Language Needs:

The court contracts with Visual Language to provide interpretation services for defendants who speak uncommon languages or require sign language interpretation.

Visual Language is the primary provider for these services, ensuring that all defendants can fully participate in their court proceedings.

3. Alternative Language Providers:

In the event that Visual Language is unable to provide the required interpreter for a specific language, the court will use Access Language or other qualified providers to meet the defendant's needs.

The court will ensure that the chosen provider is capable of delivering accurate and reliable interpretation services, maintaining the integrity of the court process.

4. Procedure for Requesting an Interpreter:

Defendants or their attorneys must notify the court of the need for an interpreter as early as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the appropriate services.

The Court Coordinator will coordinate with the necessary language service providers to ensure that an interpreter is available for all scheduled court appearances.

5. Quality Assurance:

The court will monitor the performance of language service providers to ensure that they meet the required standards of accuracy and professionalism.

Feedback from defendants, attorneys, and court staff will be used to assess the effectiveness of the language services provided and make improvements as necessary.

Responsibility:

The Court Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the provision of language services and ensuring that all defendants with LEP are provided with the necessary interpretation services.

The judge is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring that all defendants have equal access to the court, regardless of language barriers.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in language service providers, court procedures, or legal requirements.