

El Mirage City Court

Language Access Plan (LAP)

I. Legal Basis and Purpose

This document serves as the plan for the El Mirage 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 El Mirage 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. El Mirage City Court

The El Mirage 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. Farsi
3. Serbian

This information is based on data collected from court.

III. Language Assistance Resources

A. Interpreters Used in the Courtroom

1. Providing Interpreters in the Courtroom

In the El Mirage City Court, Court interpreters will be provided in all courtroom proceedings at no cost to all LEP witnesses, litigants, victims, parents, guardians, and family members of minor witnesses, victims, and/or litigants; 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 El Mirage 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 need for a court interpreter may 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 (probation/parole officers, attorneys, social workers or correctional facilities.) 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 El Mirage City Court will display this sign at the following locations: Main Lobby area.

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.

B. Language Services Outside the Courtroom

The El Mirage 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 officers, cashiers, and records room.

1. ASSISTANCE TO UNDERSTAND COURT PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Services offered by the Court generally to English-Speaking customers pursuant to the Employee Code of Conduct (ACJA §1-303) must also be provided to LEP Litigants in their language.

2. ASSISTANCE TO FILL-OUT COURT FORMS AND PLEADINGS

The El Mirage City Court will assist in the filling-out of court forms for those LEP court customers who are unable to do so either by themselves or with the assistance of another competent adult proficient in English and able to render assistance in a timely manner.

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

- Staff court interpreters or independent interpreter contractors;
- Written information in Spanish on how to access and navigate the court;
- Multilingual signage throughout courthouse locations in the following languages: Spanish
- Courts web page located on the city web site at www.cityofelmirage.org

C. ADDITIONAL WEBSITE/ONLINE ACCESS ASSISTANCE

LEP may also visit the Arizona Supreme Court's Spanish-translated webpage at <http://www.azcourts.gov/elcentrodeautoservicio/FormulariosdeAutoservicio.aspx>.

IV. Court Staff and Volunteer Recruitment

A. Recruitment of Bilingual Staff for Language Access

The El Mirage City Court's bilingual staff is available to serve its LEP constituents. Primary examples include but are not limited to:

- Judicial Assistants on sight as regular full-time and/or part time employees to fulfill interpreter needs as well as regular interpreter contractors of the court.
- Bilingual staff to serve at public counters and or self-help centers; and
- Bilingual staff available on call to assist with contacts from LEP individuals, as needed.

B. Recruitment of Volunteers for Language Access

The court also utilizes contracted interpreters with language access in the following areas:

- At public counters to provide interpretive services between staff and the LEP public

V. Judicial and Staff Training:

The El Mirage 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 attendance in Spanish provided by the court in partnership with local colleges and Institutions to offer these classes on site and free to employees on court time, or through

VI. 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 required complaint form is available online at: <http://www.azcourts.gov/Portals/34/Forms/LanguageAccess/AOCCGNF1F.pdf>

Once completed forward the form to the Language Access Plan coordinator who will respond to all complaints within 30 days of filing.

Please direct complaints to:

El Mirage City Court
Attn: Maria Reyes - Language Plan
Coordinator 14010 N. El Mirage Rd, Ste C
El Mirage, AZ 85335
(623) 815-2186 Voice (623) 815-3466 Fax

NOTE: All information will be maintained/attached to the case as public records.

VII. Public Notification and Evaluation of LAP

A. Public Notification

Copies of El Mirage City Court's LAP will be provided to the public on request.

B. Evaluation of the LAP

The El Mirage 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 biennially.

Every 2 years the court's Director of Court Services 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 court interpreters;
- Assessment of current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided;
- Solicitation and review of feedback from LEP communities within the county;
- 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:

**El Mirage City Court
ATTN: Mark Teran
14010 N. El Mirage Road Ste C
El Mirage, AZ 85335**