

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy for the Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Tennessee

Purpose

The Circuit Court Clerk's Office of Jefferson County, Tennessee, is committed to providing equal access to its services, programs, and activities for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 42. This policy outlines the procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can meaningfully participate in court-related services, including court filings, record access, jury coordination, and other clerical functions.

Policy Statement

The Circuit Court Clerk's Office will take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to all services and programs provided by this office. This includes providing language assistance services, such as interpretation and translation, at no cost to the LEP individual, to facilitate effective communication and participation in court processes.

Procedures

1. Identification of LEP Needs

- The Circuit Court Clerk's Office will assess the language needs of individuals accessing services through self-identification, observation, or community demographic data provided by the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).
- Staff will use "I Speak" cards or similar tools to identify the preferred language of LEP individuals.

2. Language Assistance Services

- **Oral Interpretation:** Qualified interpreters will be provided for LEP individuals during interactions with the Clerk's Office, including counter services, court hearings, and other proceedings, as authorized by Supreme Court Rule 42. Interpreters may be provided in-person, via telephone, or through remote video services coordinated with the AOC.
- **Written Translation:** Vital documents, such as court forms, notices, and instructions, will be translated into languages commonly spoken in [County Name], as determined by community needs and AOC guidance.
- The Clerk's Office will prioritize languages identified in the AOC's Language Access Plan or local demographic data.

3. Staff Training

- All staff will receive training on Title VI requirements, LEP policies, and procedures for accessing language assistance services. Training will be conducted annually or as needed, in coordination with the AOC.
 - Staff will be trained to recognize LEP needs and to utilize available interpretation and translation resources effectively.
- 4. Outreach and Notification**
- The Clerk's Office will post notices in commonly spoken languages informing LEP individuals of their right to free language assistance services. These notices will be displayed in public areas and on the office's website.
 - Community outreach will be conducted to inform LEP populations about available services, in collaboration with local organizations and the AOC.
- 5. Complaint Process**
- LEP individuals who believe they have been denied meaningful access to services may file a complaint with the Circuit Court Clerk's Office or the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts. Complaint forms and procedures are available at the Clerk's Office and online at www.tncourts.gov.
 - Complaints will be handled promptly and in accordance with Title VI regulations.

Coordinator and Contact Information

The Title VI/LEP Coordinator for the Jefferson County Circuit Court Clerk's Office is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and coordinating language assistance services. For assistance or to file a complaint, contact:

Jefferson County Circuit Court Clerk's Office
765 Justice Center Drive, Suite 2, Dandridge, TN 37725
865-397-2786
kpoe@jeffersoncountyttn.gov

Monitoring and Updates

The Circuit Court Clerk's Office will periodically review and update this LEP policy to reflect changes in community demographics, federal or state regulations, or AOC guidance. Feedback from LEP individuals and community stakeholders will be considered to improve language access services.

This policy reaffirms our commitment to ensuring equitable access to justice for all individuals, regardless of language proficiency.