



# JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

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## LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

### MINUTES OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING

April 24, 2018

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Judicial Council's Sacramento Office

2860 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 400

Sacramento, California 95833

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**Advisory Body  
Members Present:**

Hon. Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, Chair, Hon. Manuel Covarrubias, Vice-Chair, Ms. Naomi Adelson, Ms. Angie Birchfield, Hon. Terence L. Bruiniers, Hon. Jonathan Conklin, Ms. Ana Maria Garcia, Hon. Dennis Hayashi, Ms. Janet Hudec, Ms. Joann Lee, Ms. Ivette Peña, Hon. Rosendo Peña, Mr. Michael M. Roddy, Hon. Victor Rodriguez, Mr. José Varela and Mr. David Yamasaki

**Advisory Body  
Members Not  
Present:**

Hon. Steve Austin, Mr. Kevin Baker, Ms. Tracy Clark, Hon. Michelle Williams Court, Hon. Janet Gaard, Ms. Susan Marie Gonzalez, Hon. Jonathan Renner, Ms. Jeanine Tucker, Dr. Guadalupe Valdés, and Hon. Brian Walsh, and Hon. Laurie Zelon

**Others Present:**

Ms. Jaya Badiga, Ms. Irene Balajadia, Mr. Alf Brandt, Ms. Karen Camper, Mr. Matthew Clark, Ms. Lisa Crownover, Ms. Paola De la Cruz, Mr. Douglas Denton, Ms. Tayryn Edwards, Ms. Diana Glick, Mr. Stephen Goldberg, Mr. Willie Guerrero, Mr. Kevin Hefner, Mr. James Kim, Mr. Rob Klotz, Ms. Olivia Lawrence, Ms. Cristina Llop, Ms. Rebecca Montgomery, Ms. Kim Pederson, Ms. Anne Marx, Ms. Cynthia Miranda, Ms. Jenny Phu, Ms. Lorena Pike, Mr. Michael Planet, Ms. Jacquie Ring, Deputy Stephen Roberts, Hon. Jaime Román, Ms. Linda Romero-Soles, Ms. Ofelia Sandoval, Ms. Laura Speed, Ms. Elizabeth Tam-Helmuth, Ms. Amanda Toste, Ms. Laila Waheed, and Ms. Sonia Sierra Wolf.

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#### I. OPEN MEETING (CAL. RULES OF COURTS, RULE 10.75 (C)(1))

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##### **Welcome and Introduction**

The Chair, Supreme Court Justice Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, welcomed everyone to the fourth community outreach meeting of the Language Access Plan (LAP) Implementation Task Force (ITF). He shared that the Task Force has been working closely with the California courts and its many stakeholders to help implement the LAP's recommendations and to ensure fair and equal access to the courts for all court users, regardless of what language they may speak. He reported that the Task Force is in its fourth and final year of implementation, has come a long way and made significant progress. As of March 2018, in just three years, 35 of the 75 LAP recommendations have been completed. The Task Force has made great strides in the areas of civil expansion, funding, education, data collection, and technology. The plan is that Language Access will continue as a program for the Judicial Council, and that the remaining LAP recommendations will be assigned to Judicial Council staff and/or other advisory committees.

Justice Cuéllar also reported that Judge Covarrubias would be leading a small working group of Task Force members to focus and organize the remaining recommendations and to work with Judicial Council staff to potentially transfer the work to a new advisory body (TBD).

He reported that this year's outreach meeting was being held in Sacramento County for many reasons: the Task Force's ongoing collaboration and partnership with members of the Legislature; as well as the efforts to use technology in the Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Pilot Project at the Sacramento Superior Court (and two other courts in the state – Merced and Ventura Superior Courts).

Vice-Chair Hon. Manuel Covarrubias noted that community outreach meetings are a great opportunity for continued learning, to review language access progress made, and to identify challenges that exist. He stated that similar to the Joint Working Group that developed the LAP, the Task Force has been a highly collaborative effort and the community outreach meetings provide an opportunity to gather input, refine strategies, and remedy any language access problems or issues that courts or court users may be experiencing. Judge Covarrubias noted that the panelists for the meeting included judicial officers and Court Executive Officers, court staff, court interpreters, Judicial Council staff, legal services providers, community services, and non-profit organizations. He also stated that in addition to the three panels today, there would be time reserved for public comment.

Judge Covarrubias noted the three panels for the meeting today would cover important language access topics, including: 1) Language Access Expansion: Update on Statewide Progress, to be moderated by Judicial Council staff, Douglas Denton; 2) Community Needs, Public Outreach and Recruitment Strategies, to be moderated by Joann Lee; and 3) VRI Pilot Project and Other Technological Solutions and Accessible Courthouses, to be moderated by Justice Terence Bruiniers.

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**SESSION ONE – LANGUAGE ACCESS EXPANSION: UPDATE ON STATEWIDE PROGRESS**

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**Moderator: Mr. Douglas Denton**

**Participants: Ms. Karen Camper, Ms. Ivette Peña and Ms. Linda Romero-Soles**

Mr. Douglas Denton (Supervising Analyst, Judicial Council) provided an overview on expansion of language services, noting that interpreters are now provided in civil and probate matters and that the provision of interpreters is no longer the responsibility of court users, but is a function of the court. He noted a number of initiatives that have been completed, including the expansion of the Language Access Toolkit and the report on wayfinding and signage strategies in the California courts. He mentioned the VRI Pilot Project is underway (the pilot has since concluded as of July 31, 2018). Mr. Denton also noted that the Task Force worked with the Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee to develop proposed legislation to make clear that courts should – subject to available resources – provide court interpreters in small claims actions. If approved by the Legislature and Governor, these proposed amendments would take effect in January 2019 and education on the amendments may be needed.

Mr. Denton shared the Task Force developed a model complaint form and process so limited English proficient (LEP) court users can register a complaint regarding the court's language access services. Also, the Court Interpreters Advisory Panel is currently developing a court interpreter credential review process that is available for public comment, until June 8, 2018. Mr. Denton provided an update on funding request for 2019, through the Budget Change Proposal process, noting that the next request will likely include funding to assist courts with the purchase of VRI equipment, pending the outcome of the VRI Pilot Project.

Ms. Ivette Peña (Chief Deputy, Legal Services/Court Counsel, Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles; and Task Force Member) noted that the expansion of language services in Los Angeles County Superior Court started with a complaint from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) with regard to a court user not being provided with a Korean interpreter in a non-evidentiary hearing. Los Angeles Court has since reached an agreement with the DOJ. She stated that the Los Angeles Court has 370 employee interpreters and 220 contract interpreters. The interpreters are overwhelmingly in Spanish, but there are also 75 interpreters in languages other-than-Spanish, covering 20 different languages. She also stated that there are 39 courthouses (soon to be 41) in Los Angeles County.

Ms. Peña noted that there remains a need for legislative advocacy because current funding only covers interpreters in court proceedings but does not cover interpreter services outside of the courtroom nor the cost of court interpreter supervisors. She stated that the Los Angeles Court has progressed a lot in its provision of language services, and noted the importance of making forms, websites, signage, etc. understandable and accessible in English. In addition to benefiting all court users, plain language "translation" is also a critical first step before moving to translation efforts.

She highlighted the use of Gina, the online traffic avatar that speaks six languages and helps court users address their traffic tickets. Gina has been very successful for the court and is being replicated by other courts in the state. Ms. Peña also noted the importance of tracking and monitoring metrics. By tracking data, the court has been able to better address the actual need for language services throughout its points of contact with the public. For example, data collected on the need for, and use of, multi-lingual telephonic interpretation services at clerk counters, revealed there is a much larger Mandarin-speaking court population than court-interpreter use alone indicated, and therefore, the court had unknowingly been underserving Mandarin-speaking court users. In order to meet the needs of different individuals interacting with the range of court services, the Los Angeles Court is also looking at how they recruit bilingual individuals.

When asked about the complaint process in Los Angeles, Ms. Peña noted that the court has a basic complaint form on its court website and make it available at all court locations, which is available in the county's top five languages. The form has not resulted in a lot of complaints – noting that the court has received only a handful of written complaints per year. Ms. Peña did

note that complaints can be in different languages and the cost of translation does have to be accounted for.

Ms. Karen Camper (Court Executive Officer, Calaveras County Superior Court) provided an overview of Calaveras County. The county has a population of approximately 45,000 people, 88% of which are Caucasian and 10% of which are Hispanic. Ms. Camper noted that historically the court has had 20-25 interpreter days per year and that all but 2 to 3 requests have been for Spanish. In 2017, the court saw a jump in usage to 43 interpreter requests. These were also mostly for Spanish with a few for Hmong, Mien, and Khmer. For the court to secure interpreters in languages other than Spanish, it can take several hours to a week. The court relies on interpreters driving from Sacramento, Merced, and Fresno Counties. They are generally able to fulfill interpreter requests, although sometimes they get a release from another county and then the interpreter is recalled due to the current cross-assignment process for court interpreters. Ms. Camper noted that the court has never had to reschedule a case due to a failure to provide an interpreter. Lastly, Ms. Camper noted the county is closest to neighboring Amador County, a county that struggles with securing interpreters. Interpreters will often charge mileage and rates that are higher than the state per diem rates. They also often require travel time be paid and charge a full-day rate for a 15-minute hearing.

Ms. Linda Romero-Soles (Court Executive Officer, Merced County Superior Court) provided an overview of Merced County. The county's demographics include 58% of the population that is Hispanic and 11% of the population that is Asian/Pacific Islander. Ms. Romero-Soles stated that the top five languages for which interpreters are needed are Spanish, Hmong, Punjabi, Portuguese, and Lao. The court has five full-time Spanish interpreters and one Hmong staff interpreter. Ms. Romero-Soles noted that 80% of the need for interpreters is for traffic matters. She also stated that the court has a total of five facilities. Merced Court is one of the three pilot courts in the VRI Pilot Project, at their Los Banos Courthouse. All jurors currently come into Merced. To assist with the provision of interpreters, Ms. Romero-Soles stated that the court has to rely on other counties, including Fresno, Stanislaus, and Madera Counties. She also spoke about the county's use of VRI, noting that the VRI system had been used 70 times already and has been a valuable resource for the court and staff interpreters.

During discussion, Ms. Peña noted that Los Angeles Court has expanded its provision of court interpreters to unlimited civil matters and has also created a portal for requesting an interpreter. One of the challenges faced by the Los Angeles Court is that it has not yet confirmed the language required for a party's waiver of the court-provided interpreter in order to respect that party's preference for their own (certified or registered) interpreter. She also noted that the number of interpreters makes providing for interpreters in all civil matters difficult. Civil cases can require that interpreters be on one given case for an entire day, a week, several weeks and it can really impact the courts. Also, Ms. Peña noted that the interpreter request/scheduling portal has been helpful in the smaller case types and that once the court has a new case management system, the court will be able to manage the workforce more effectively and collect data.

Ms. Camper noted that Calaveras Court would like to implement VRI technology, which would help the court to schedule its interpreters more efficiently. At Merced Court, Ms. Romero-Soles

stated that the challenges the court faces have to do with interpreter availability and funding. The court currently has to pay the federal rate and travel time to interpreters.

Ms. Peña stated that it is essential for the judicial branch to see language access as a fundamental access issue and that if a court user cannot understand the proceedings, the court is not providing access. Ms. Camper again mentioned the importance of technology and the use of VRI and reiterated that the technology would be a real solution for her court.

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**SESSION TWO – COMMUNITY NEEDS, PUBLIC OUTREACH, AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES**

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**Moderator: Ms. Joann Lee**

**Participants: Ms. Jaya Badiga, Mr. Stephen Goldberg, and Mr. Kevin Hefner**

Ms. Joann Lee (Special Counsel, Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Community Outreach Unit, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles; and Task Force Member) provided an overview of the panel speakers and opened up the conversation by asking Mr. Kevin Hefner about the California Legislature’s support for language access in the California judicial branch.

Mr. Kevin Hefner (Senior Legislative Aide, Assemblymember David Chiu’s Office) noted that Assemblymember, David Chiu has worked to previously secure funding for language access. He noted the importance of being proactive and involving immigrant communities from the district’s constituency to understand how to best work with these individuals to meet their needs. He stated that different approaches may be needed to make sure that everyone has access to the judicial system, and that efforts must be proactive.

Mr. Hefner further stated that his congressional district represents the Eastern part of San Francisco, which includes Chinatown and the Mission. Approximately 12.5% of the community is underrepresented (hard to count) and, therefore, it is essential to rely on input from individuals in the district to help shape policy. He explained that some communities don’t have the resources required to go online, and it is important to work with community organizations to provide adequate communication to constituents about language access services. With regard to any existing concerns, Mr. Hefner noted that the next Census process will emphasize applications online and the number of enumerators going door to door to communities will be significantly reduced. This will lead to continued undercounting of populations without, or distrusting of, online access and may limit the resources afforded to them.

Mr. Stephen Goldberg (Regional Counsel, Legal Services of Northern California) explained that the Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC) is a federally funded nonprofit legal aid organization that serves a number of Northern California counties. Core programs include providing legal assistance for housing, healthcare, and civil rights issues. LSNC serves low-income persons as well as seniors, who are served without income limitations. Mr. Goldberg shared a handout that indicates Spanish is the largest non-English language group served by LSNC, followed by various Asian languages. Mr. Goldberg noted that the numbers understate the number of LEP persons that LSNC assists because, while at intake an individual may self-

identify as an English speaker, however, it later becomes clear that there is a need for an interpreter. With regard to the changes in LEP populations served, Mr. Goldberg stated that there has not really been growth, but rather, there are trends over the years, including an initial increase in Russian speakers that later decreased. Also, there is an increase in Asian language groups needing services. Mr. Goldberg stated that sometimes a particular language group will find LSNC and then that language group will grow in terms of services requested and provided. As a result of changes in immigration trends, LSNC works to increase outreach efforts to those populations. With regard to using data to assist with identifying language needs, the LSNC uses LEP.gov and the Census data.

Mr. Goldberg shared that overall language access expansion efforts have been positive. Issues that had been experienced in the past have mostly been resolved now. Mr. Goldberg did note that there still can be some issues with obtaining interpreters in languages other than Spanish. He noted that several courts in the Northern California counties now have signage.

Ms. Jaya Badiga (Managing Attorney, WEAVE Inc.) provided an overview of WEAVE Inc., a non-profit agency working to end domestic and sexual violence. WEAVE provides legal services in the greater Sacramento area. Ms. Badiga stated that WEAVE's LEP population is primarily Spanish-speaking. She further relayed that some of the needs faced by WEAVE clients are so critical and urgent that the availability of an interpreter could be a life or death situation for a client. She noted the important distinction between being bilingual and being an interpreter, stating that bilingual individuals do not generally know or understand how to explain legal concepts. She also warned against relying on self-reporting of language needs as it leads to an underestimation of the difficulty of understanding legal proceedings in English and it can be very costly to clients. Ms. Badiga also pointed out that at times clients may experience a lack of comfort with an interpreter, which could be cultural. These challenges sometimes make it harder for WEAVE providers to delve deeper into some of the particular struggles faced by their clients. Overall, she noted that the court has been excellent in ramping up access to Spanish interpreters. However, she added, there are still challenging in securing certified Punjabi interpreters. Lastly, Ms. Badiga stated that the more barriers the clients face, the more critical the services are.

Ms. Naomi Adelson of the Task Force asked the panel how they work with indigenous languages and languages of lesser diffusion. Ms. Badiga, in her response, noted the importance of not just looking at data regarding a "preferred language," but also looking at the language an individual speaks at home. Ms. Badiga added that providers have to consider both language and communication. Sometimes the language needs are so rare, you have to "make do." In terms of assisting the community with accessing services, Ms. Badiga stated that in Sacramento, the organization helps clients fill out forms to request an interpreter and provides advice to clients about language services accordingly.

Ms. Joann Lee from Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) stated that they have self-help centers in the courts and they attend various meetings to raise issues with judges, if needed. LAFLA also participates in language service meetings twice a year. Ms. Lee stated that having

the court Language Access Representatives (LARs) has been helpful. The LARs will work with LAFLA to resolve complaints informally.

Mr. Hefner noted that Assemblymember Chiu's office relies heavily on hearing from communities in order to make changes. Ms. Badiga noted that quarterly or more often, the organization communicates with the court about issues.

Ms. Anne Marx from the Judicial Council Court Interpreters Program highlighted an ongoing need for partnerships with local community groups, stating that partnerships take time and, often, courts and organizations are understaffed. Ms. Marx noted the importance of ongoing efforts to develop internship programs and other initiatives that can support courts in entering into partnerships.

When asked about bilingual staffing and recruitment, Mr. Goldberg shared LSNC uses bilingual staff when they can. They require bilingual staff to pass a test and LSNC actively looks for bilingual individuals when recruiting staff. Mr. Goldberg added that LSNC uses in-person language assistance when they can, and will use telephonic language services, if needed. LSNC never uses minors to interpret and will only use family members if it is an emergency. Mr. Goldberg also stated that LSNC translates materials into Spanish based on the needs of the community. Translations are completed using staff (especially for written correspondence). If there is no staff, a translation agency is used. LSNC does not use Google Translate or other machine translation.

Ms. Badiga explained that WEAVE has gotten federal and state grants that have allowed them to hire bilingual attorneys and staff to better serve LEP clients. Bilingual staff are offered a pay differential, but retention is a challenge they face.

Ms. Rebecca Montgomery, the LAR from Solano County Superior Court, talked about the court's outreach efforts, including an initiative to visit schools and provide information about a career in interpreting. She provided the example of working with University of California, Davis, where the presentation focused on the profession of court interpreting, what the career entails, and what it takes to become a certified court interpreter in California.

Mr. Goldberg explained that LSNC outreach efforts have included participation at public fairs and identifying organizations in the community to make connections. LSNC also conducts one-day naturalization fairs and works with other organizations to organize them. LSNC is constantly looking for other organizations to reach out to and work together to better reach LEP and other vulnerable clients.

WEAVE offers legal workshops at other organizations where there is a high need for services. Examples include partnering with other domestic violence agencies that specialize in services for ethnic communities. Ms. Badiga noted the importance of cultural competence and sensitivity.

With regard to state assembly work, Mr. Hefner described Assemblymember Chiu's office's efforts in conducting 15 outreach meetings within the Asian Pacific Islander community in San Francisco to gather information. The Assemblymember Chiu and his staff are now bringing that information back to Sacramento.

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**SESSION THREE – VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING PILOT PROJECT AND OTHER TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS**

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**Moderators: Hon. Terence Bruiniers**

**Participants: Hon. Jaime Román, Deputy Stephen Roberts, Ms. Kim Pedersen, Ms. Ofelia Sandoval, and Mr. Mike Planet**

Hon. Terence Bruiniers (Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Five; and Chair of the Task Force's Technological Solutions Subcommittee) opened the third and last session by introducing the panel members and then providing a brief presentation of slides illustrating visuals of the six-month VRI Pilot Project. Justice Bruiniers' presentation included a review of the VRI vendors participating in the pilot: Paras & Associates and the Connected Justice Consortium. The presentation also noted the independent evaluation process being conducted by the San Diego State University Research Foundation. Justice Bruiniers discussed the training component of the VRI pilot courts (Merced, Sacramento and Ventura Superior Court), including the use of mock trials to help train participants on the equipment and refine processes. He explained the pilot is testing the effective communication and the technical performance of the VRI equipment.

Hon. Jaime Román (Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento) stated that the VRI Pilot in his court has included arraignments and settlements. He stated that the court may have up to 80 cases in the morning and with VRI, the court is able to provide immediate communication which helps ease everyone. In using VRI, Judge Román noted the importance of pacing, making sure not to go too fast or too slow as the speaker. He noted that the younger attorneys seem to be more willing to use VRI; however, the older attorneys are drawn to VRI and are also willing to work with VRI. Judge Román noted that VRI can assist with ensuring due process, providing timely access to services, and serving litigants. As he described, the mistakes made so far with the VRI pilot have been because of user error, but they have been readily and easily addressed.

Ms. Kim Pedersen from Sacramento Superior Court added that sometimes the interpreter virtually stays with the litigant after the court proceeding, by moving from a screen in the courtroom to another area in the court on a different screen. This is so that the interpreter can assist with facilitating LEP litigant surveys regarding the use of VRI. So far, all of the LEP court users have given the technology a five-star rating and have been satisfied with the services.

Deputy Stephen Roberts (Bailiff, Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento) stated that his primary role in the courtroom is to ensure security and adherence to protocol. The addition



of VRI is one more step that adds to his normal duties. As part of the VRI Pilot at Sacramento Court, Deputy Roberts is responsible for rolling in the equipment into the courtroom and turning everything on. He reports that the process, thus far, has been seamless. He also confirmed that everyone seems to be receptive to VRI and that the defendants usually understand right away that someone who speaks their language will be available. While there have been some technical challenges during the pilot, his overall assessment is that everything has gone smoothly.

Ms. Kim Pedersen (Language Access Representative, Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento) noted that Sacramento Court has been able to use VRI for private attorney-client communications. The court created a cheat sheet to make sure that the attorneys and judges know that they need to mute their microphones if they do not want to be heard using VRI.

Task Force member Jose Varela asked Ms. Pedersen how the lead interpreter for the pilot had been chosen. Ms. Pedersen explained that a total of 23 interpreters of the 26 Spanish interpreters on staff were trained so that they could be used on rotation. The court also offered additional training to any interpreters that needed it. The goal of the court was to use all available interpreters in the VRI Pilot.

Ms. Naomi Adelson asked about the use of VRI in trials, and Justice Bruiniers stated that it is still the intention of the pilot to use VRI for short, non- or limited-evidentiary procedures, in appropriate settings, and that it is not the intention to use VRI for trials.

Ms. Ofelia Sandoval (Certified Court Interpreter, Superior Court of California, County of Merced) spoke about her experience as a Spanish interpreter participating in the VRI Pilot. She stated that she had completed about four weeks of the pilot and have mostly interpreted in the consecutive mode of interpretation. She switches out with another downtown Merced interpreter every two weeks. Ms. Sandoval noted that she had conducted a simultaneous interpretation for traffic cases and the experience required her to manipulate the technology because the same speaker system was shared. She reported finding that process to be very distracting. Ms. Sandoval noted that VRI seemed fine for brief, non-complex matters using the consecutive mode.

In discussing the systems being used for the VRI Pilot, Justice Bruiniers stated that Connected Justice has a more sophisticated integration, but it can be more difficult to integrate with courts.

Mr. Mike Planet (Court Executive Officer, Superior Court of California, County of Ventura) stated that Ventura County Superior Court is currently working with Paras & Associates and currently doing training with Connected Justice. Mr. Planet confirmed that the VRI Pilot seems to be going well. One of the courtrooms has an attorney/client conference room, so they are able to use that room as a separate set-up. In comparing the previously conducted VRI Pilot for American Sign Language (ASL) and this pilot for spoken language, Mr. Planet stated that both pilots require close communication with Information Technology (IT) staff. To be successful with VRI, Mr. Planet emphasized the need to work closely in partnership with IT. He also noted that the main difference for the spoken language pilot is working with two audio feeds and also,

trying to serve a larger volume of users. The process can slow down proceedings if you are using the consecutive mode of interpretation. Mr. Planet also noted that the current technology provides the ability to pan the whole courtroom.

In looking at VRI and its possible use for smaller courts, Justice Bruiniers noted the importance of looking at what can be cost effective for a smaller county and reported that there will be more exploration of how to share resources across counties.

Mr. Planet reiterated what other panelists mentioned, that all courts have challenges serving LEP court users in more exotic languages and VRI can assist with providing interpreters in these languages, regardless of court size. The challenge is ensuring that there is a backbone/infrastructure to provide services.

Ms. Janet Hudec of the Task Force brought up that courts should also look at the use of VRI outside court proceedings (such as for probation interviews, classes, etc.). While this is not part of this particular pilot project, it may be good to look at other technological solutions for non-courtroom uses where certified interpreters are not required. Mr. Planet noted that looking to use VRI outside of court may be of interest to Ventura Court if cost-sharing is in place, but the first priority would be covering the courts now.

Ms. Pedersen explained that, at Sacramento Court, the interpreter is required to follow the court user to the fines and fees room and the court is now monitoring the use of VRI for that service, too. The current process entails having the same interpreter that was assisting in the courtroom log off the monitor in the courtroom and then log onto the monitor in the fines room to assist the LEP court user in that interaction. So far, providing VRI in this way has resulted in satisfaction by the court user for this service.

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#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Public comment included a video message from Ms. Amber Hodson of Deaf Hope. The message indicated that communication efforts for the deaf community would be better in video format with ASL signing. The comment noted that the notice for the Community Outreach meeting should be provided in video format with ASL.

Ms. Lorena Pike, the Language Access Representative from Santa Barbara Superior Court, shared her court is a mid-size court currently covering interpreters for all civil cases, as well as all probate, guardianship, and family law cases. She noted that court users speak a number of different Mixteco languages. To encourage more interpreters, Ms. Pike has been going to career fairs at junior high schools, high schools, and the local university. Ms. Pike uses these opportunities to talk to linguistic department students about a career in court interpreting. She also started a workshop, "Intro to Court Interpreting," that she gives for free so that local individuals learn about the interpreting profession. Ms. Pike is also in discussion with colleges in Santa Barbara to train interpreters, given that there are no other programs in the Central Coast.

In fact, Santa Barbara City College is in the process of approving a program and Ms. Pike will be a faculty member teaching a certificate program (translation and interpretation).

Ms. Pike also explained that there are interpreter retention issues because state courts do not pay the federal rate. She suggested that having the Judicial Council raise the guidelines for payment would offer more incentive to the interpreters. Additionally, Ms. Pike noted that Punjabi and Tagalog interpreters are very difficult to get because there are few certified interpreters in these languages. Ms. Pike also noted that the court has difficulty reaching out to speakers of indigenous languages.

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#### **A D J O U R N M E N T**

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Justice Cuéllar thanked everyone for participating in today's meeting.

Justice Cuéllar thanked all of the speakers and all who attended in person or listened in by telephone or via the live broadcast on the California Courts website. He also thanked the Judicial Council staff and the National Center for State Courts for helping the Task Force present the meeting. The audio for the meeting will be posted to the Task Force web page as soon as it is available.

Justice Cuéllar reflected on the Task Force's accomplishments. He reported being heartened by the great progress that the California courts and stakeholders have made since 2015 in implementing the Language Access Plan and making language access a reality in the courts. He reviewed the following, as the significant projects for the Task Force in its final year:

- VRI Pilot Project and other technologies to assist LEP court users;
- Funding requests, including making sure there are enough funds for full civil expansion;
- Data collection and monitoring; and
- Transitioning the remaining work of the Task Force after it sunsets so Language Access remains a vital program for the judicial branch.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on October 17, 2018.