



Judicial Council of California

Advisory Committee on Providing
Access & Fairness

www.courts.ca.gov/accessfairnesscomm.htm
lap@jud.ca.gov

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JCCAccessCoordinator@jud.ca.gov

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROVIDING ACCESS AND FAIRNESS LANGUAGE ACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE

NOTICE AND AGENDA OF OPEN MEETING

Open to the Public (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.75(c)(1) and (e)(1))

THIS MEETING IS BEING CONDUCTED BY ELECTRONIC MEANS

THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED

Date: June 17, 2025
Time: 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Public Log-In: [Click this link to join](#); Passcode: 360901 (Listen only)

Meeting materials will be posted on the advisory body web page on the California Courts website at least three business days before the meeting.

Members of the public seeking to make an audio recording of the meeting must submit a written request at least two business days before the meeting. Requests can be e-mailed to lap@juca.ca.gov.

Agenda items are numbered for identification purposes only and will not necessarily be considered in the indicated order.

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

Call to Order and Roll Call

Approval of Minutes

Approve minutes of March 27, 2025, Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness Language Access Subcommittee meeting.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT (CAL. RULES OF COURT, RULE 10.75(K)(1))

This meeting will be conducted by electronic means with a listen-only conference line available for the public. As such, the public may submit comments for this meeting only in writing. In accordance with California Rules of Court, rule 10.75(k)(1), written comments pertaining to any agenda item of a regularly noticed open meeting can be submitted up to one complete business day before the meeting. For this specific meeting, comments should be e-mailed to lap@jud.ca.gov, attention: Elizabeth Tam-Helmuth. Only written comments received by 12:15 p.m., June 16, 2025, will be provided to advisory body members prior to the start of the meeting.

III. INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS (NO ACTION REQUIRED)

Info 1

Update from Language Access Subcommittee Chair

Presenter: Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Chair; Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Three

Info 2

Update on Development of Training for Court Staff on the Appropriate Use of Machine Translation Tools

The National Center for State Courts, under contract with Language Access Services, will provide an update on development of training for court staff on the appropriate use of machine translation tools.

Presenters: Ms. Jacquie Ring, Language Access Consultant, National Center for State Courts
Ms. Cristina Llop, Language Access Consultant, National Center for State Courts

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn



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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROVIDING ACCESS AND FAIRNESS LANGUAGE ACCESS SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

March 27, 2025

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Chair, Hon. Amy Guerra (ITAC Liaison), Ms. Shirley Luo, Ms. Julie Paik, Ms. Fariba Soroosh, Ms. Katy Van Sant, and Hon. Julie Weng-Gutierrez

Advisory Body Members Absent:

Others Present: Ms. Irene Balajadia, Ms. Angela De Leon, Mr. Douglas Denton, Ms. Tatjana Gruner, Ms. Eunice Lee, Mr. Russell McGregor, Ms. Missy Singh, Ms. Elizabeth Tam-Helmuth, and Ms. Aggie Wong

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m., and staff took roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The Subcommittee reviewed and approved the minutes of the August 22, 2024, meeting.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (ITEMS 1–3)

Info 1: Update from Language Access Subcommittee Chair

Justice Rodriguez shared he met with Language Access Services staff on February 18 to check in on various language access projects. There are several key language access initiatives in the works, including:

1. Language Access Services is partnering with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to offer multiple video remote interpreting (VRI) webinars in April and May 2025, to support courts in their ongoing efforts to leverage technological solutions to help meet their interpretation needs. The trainings include: interactive trainings to help spoken language and American Sign Language interpreters gain confidence using VRI platforms for court interpretation; modules to support judicial officers in effectively preparing for and managing VRI court events; and a success stories webinar highlighting California counties that have successfully used VRI.
2. On May 17, 2024, the Judicial Council approved the launch of the California Court Interpreter Workforce Pilot Program. The pilot program is intended to increase the number of court interpreter employees in the courts by reimbursing participants for their

training costs and examination fees. In return, successful pilot participants agree to work for the courts for at least three years. Cohort 1 launched on January 1, 2025, with 19 courts participating and 126 pilot participants, and the participants have until December 31, 2026, to pass all required exams. For Cohort 2, 16 courts are participating, and participant application opens on March 28, 2025 (participants have until December 31, 2027, to pass all required exams).

3. The NCSC partnered with Language Access Services on a project to conduct national research on the training and portfolio requirements other states recognize to use individuals with ASL generalist credentials to work in the courts and considerations for California.

He also shared that on March 20, Language Access Services and NCSC conducted an educational webinar on Rule 1.300 for courts and court stakeholders. The goal of Rule 1.300 is to connect limited English proficient (LEP) court users with court-ordered programs and services in their primary language.

Lastly, Justice Rodriguez provided an update on staffing, including welcoming Ms. Angela De Leon, new supervising analyst in the Court Interpreters Program. Ms. Charli Depner, Director of the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) is retiring from the Judicial Council.

Info 2: Review Language Access Projects

Senior Analysts Irene Balajadia and Elizabeth Tam-Helmuth reviewed the status of the 2025 language access projects:

1. Language Access Signage and Technology Grants, Fiscal Year 2025-26, Cycle 7

Ms. Balajadia provided an update on the Signage and Grant Program, including the grant overview, goals and categories, funding parameters, application process and timeline for FY 2025-26, Cycle 7 of the grant. The Cycle 7 grants launched and the deadline for courts to apply was February 28. Seventeen courts applied for Cycle 7 grants and staff is in the process of reviewing the draft recommendations and allocations. The draft report will go through the internal approvals, by the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness, Information Technology Advisory Committee, and Technology Committee, before it goes to the council for approval, on July 18, 2025. Awarded courts will have until June 30, 2027, to spend the grant funds and submit invoices and supporting documents.

2. Develop Training for Court Staff on Appropriate Use of Machine Translation Tools

Ms. Tam-Helmuth shared staff from the CFCC and Information Technology (IT) is working with NCSC to develop training webinars and visual handouts for court staff. The training will focus on the California Courts Translator application, which provides real-time voice-to-text (VTT) transcription and translation services to support language access. Staff shared the NCSC conducted a comprehensive landscape review to understand the use of machine translation and voice-to-text applications nationally for language access, as well as the California courts' use of machine translation tools, and specifically the California Translator App. The NCSC gathered

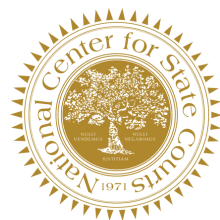
information from the California courts through a survey, focus groups, as well as site visits. The NCSC provided staff with draft curriculum for one of the six modules of the training, including training outlines and scripts. Module 1 will provide an Overview of Language Access and the Role of the CA Translator App. Other modules will cover: VTT app set-up options and best practices; use of the translator app in clerks' offices; use of the translator app in self-help centers; troubleshooting common communication issues; and considerations for LARs, supervisors and managers. The NCSC plans to attend a webinar in June 2025 with JC IT staff and the Translator app VTT courts to answer questions pertaining to the VTT app and to provide information on the training modules and resources.

Update on outreach efforts for multilingual resources on the California Courts Self-Help Guide (2024 language access annual agenda project): Due to some unforeseen delays with required web improvements, Ms. Tam-Helmuth shared the outreach efforts did not take place in December 2024 as planned. However, the improvements and functional enhancements will only benefit court users in accessing these multilingual resources with more ease. Staff provided a walk-through of the online Self-Help Guide and where users can easily access the multilingual resources, through a drop-down menu on the main navigation and by clicking on "See other resources in your language to help you" button to access the language resources pages. The Language Resources page will also have language tiles that court users can easily find by clicking on their language to access the resources. The resources will include information about: filing a case; requesting an interpreter; participating in court via remote hearing; basic information about court processes; and filing a language access or interpreter complaint. Following the subcommittee meeting, staff will conduct e-mail outreach to the courts and court stakeholders regarding the available multilingual resources on the Self-Help Guide.

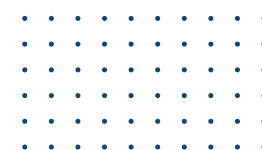
A D J O U R N M E N T

There being no further open meeting business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on X.



National Center for State Courts

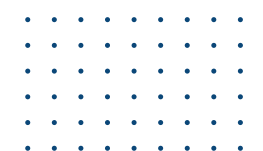


California Courts **Voice-to-Text Translator Application**

PROJECT OVERVIEW

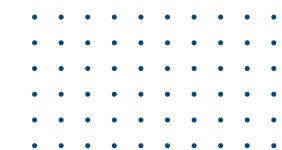
Presentation on the Development of Training
for the CA Courts Translator App

June 2025

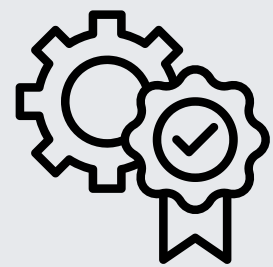


PROJECT OVERVIEW

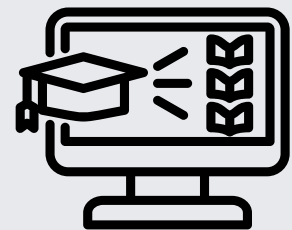
- The Judicial Council of California (JCC) contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to develop training sessions on the appropriate use of machine translation tools for various court audiences.
- NCSC worked closely with the JCC to develop training and guidance on the California Courts Translator App currently being used by several California courts.



PROJECT STEPS



A review of national best practices regarding machine translation and voice-to-text solutions; surveys and focus groups with California courts; and site visits.



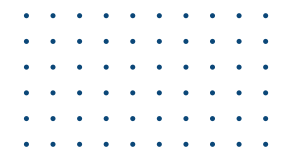
Development of online training modules to support courts in using the California Courts Translator App.



Development of a final project report.

CALIFORNIA COURTS TRANSLATOR APP: *BACKGROUND*

- Launched under the Voice-to-Text Translation Pilot Program (VTT Program), the California Courts Translator App (Translator App) is used as a language access tool for interactions between the public and court staff outside of courtroom proceedings.
- The Translator App was first launched in July 2021 and has been made available to 28 courts throughout the state to use during the pilot phase.
- Currently used at critical points of contact in the court such as clerks' offices, self-help centers, information desks, and jury offices.



CALIFORNIA COURTS TRANSLATOR APP: *BACKGROUND (CONT.)*

- Over 130 languages and dialects
- Google Neural Machine Translation (GNMT, “Google Translate”) for all languages except Spanish
- Google Automated Machine Learning (AutoML) for Spanish
 - User-defined
 - More advanced model



ROLE OF THE CALIFORNIA COURTS TRANSLATOR APP

- The CA Courts Translator may be used for the limited purpose of conversing with a court employee to access court services and is not recommended for complex legal interactions.
 - Use when no other language access tool is reasonably available.
 - Use for short, non-complex interactions.

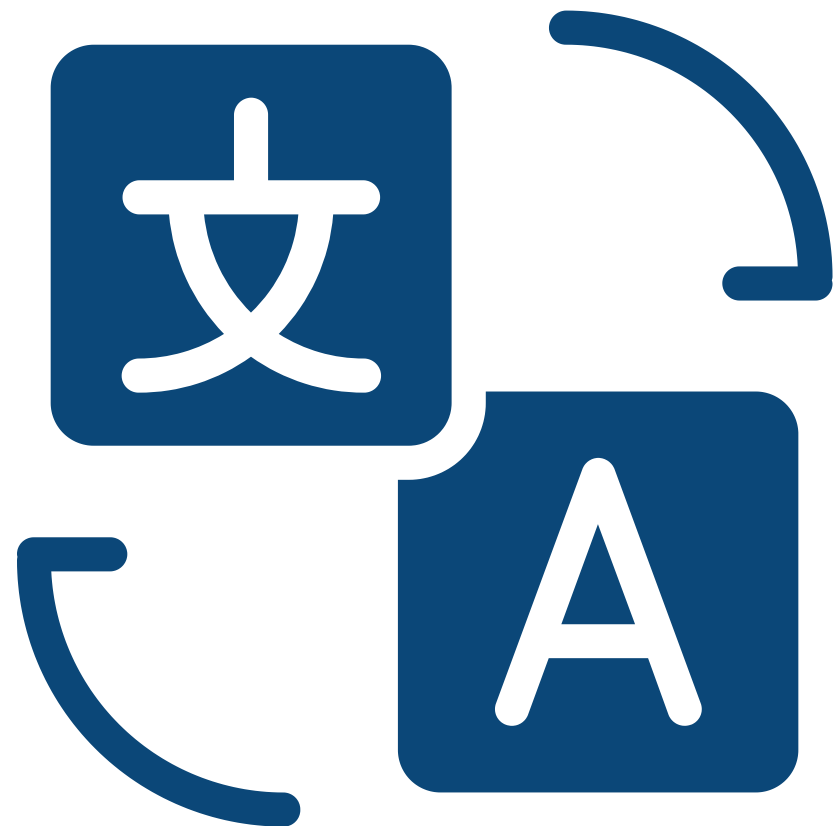
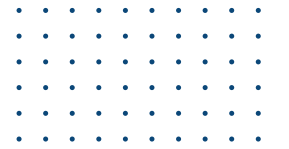


CALIFORNIA COURTS TRANSLATOR APP: *BACKGROUND (CONT.)*



- The Judicial Council's VTT Project Team has prepared video demos and resources to help courts use the Translator App.
- Resources are reviewed in regular meetings with the pilot courts and are provided in a SharePoint site that all participating courts and other designated staff can access.
- All Translator App communications in Spanish are reviewed by a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to assist with improving the Translator App.

LANDSCAPE REVIEW: *FINDINGS*

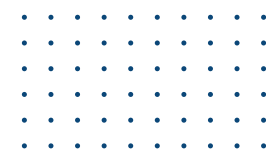


- While courts nationally are interested in translation and voice-to-text tools for language access, adoption rates remain low.
- National guidance on the use of such tools is still limited. Previously issued federal guidance cautions about the reliance solely on machine translation and instructs government agencies to have humans review and verify translations.
- Other industries use some technological solutions for language access. Guidance typically recommends the use of machine translation with human or professional review or for on-demand, emergency solutions while human interpreters are located, but with caution.

CALIFORNIA COURTS SURVEY

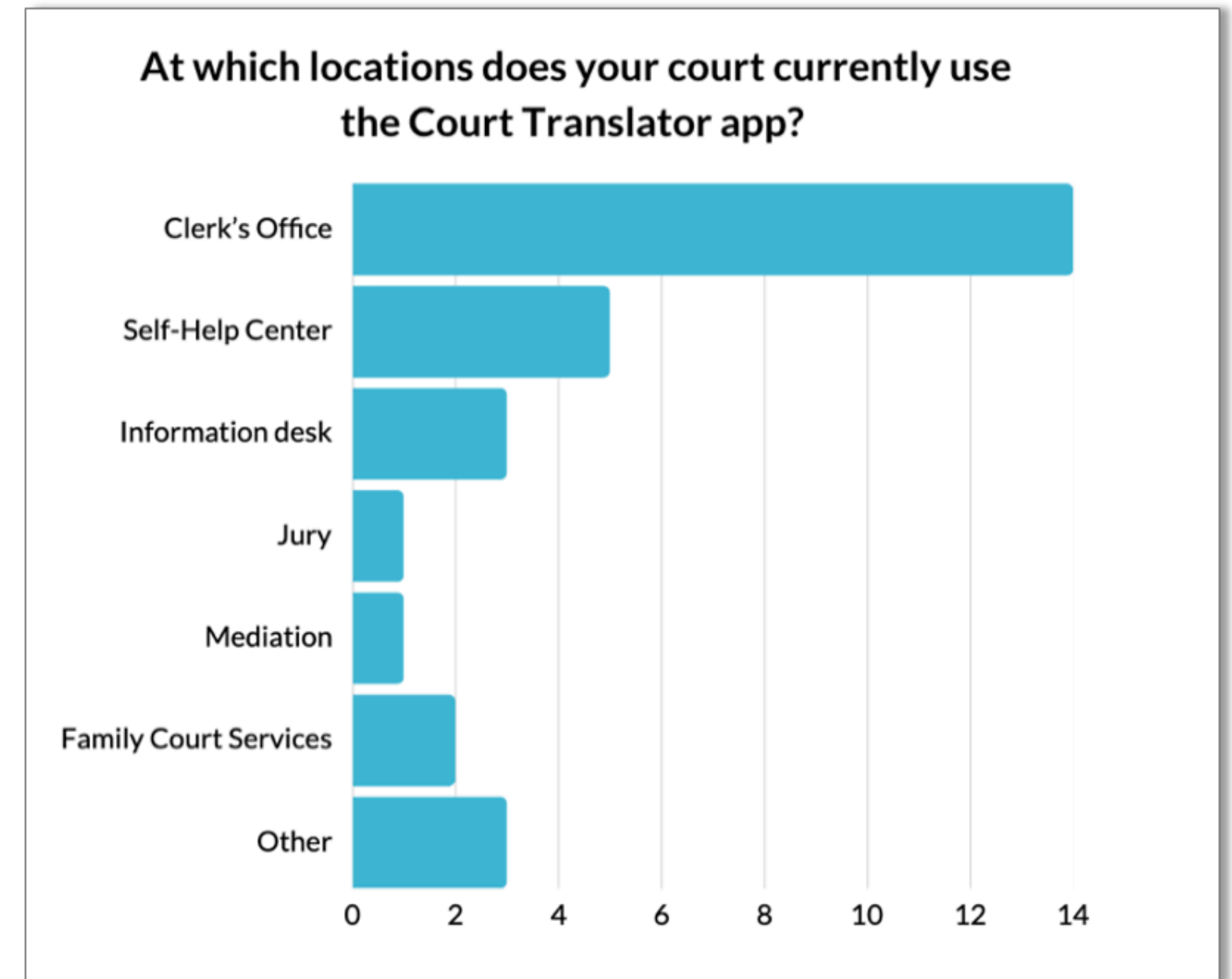
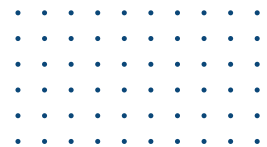


- An online survey was provided to the 28 California courts participating in the VTT pilot project.
- There were 15 respondents to the survey from a total of 11 courts.
- Respondents included: IT directors and staff, managers and supervisors, court executive officers, and clerks.



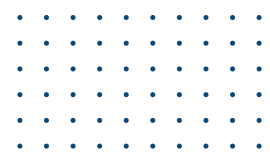
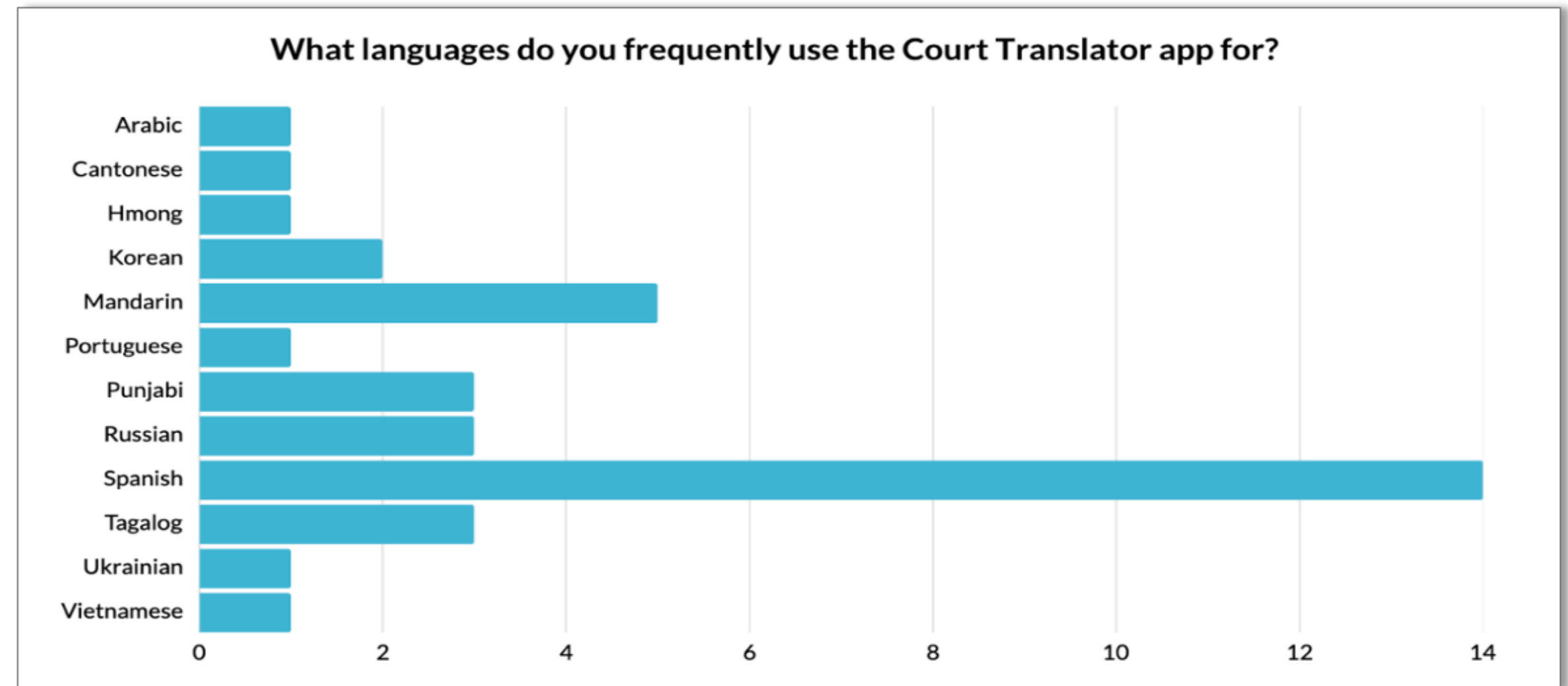
CALIFORNIA COURTS SURVEY: *FINDINGS*

- Surveyed courts use the Translator App in a range of locations.
- Almost all reported using the Translator App in clerks' offices; five respondents noted using it in self-help centers, and three indicated it is used at information desks.



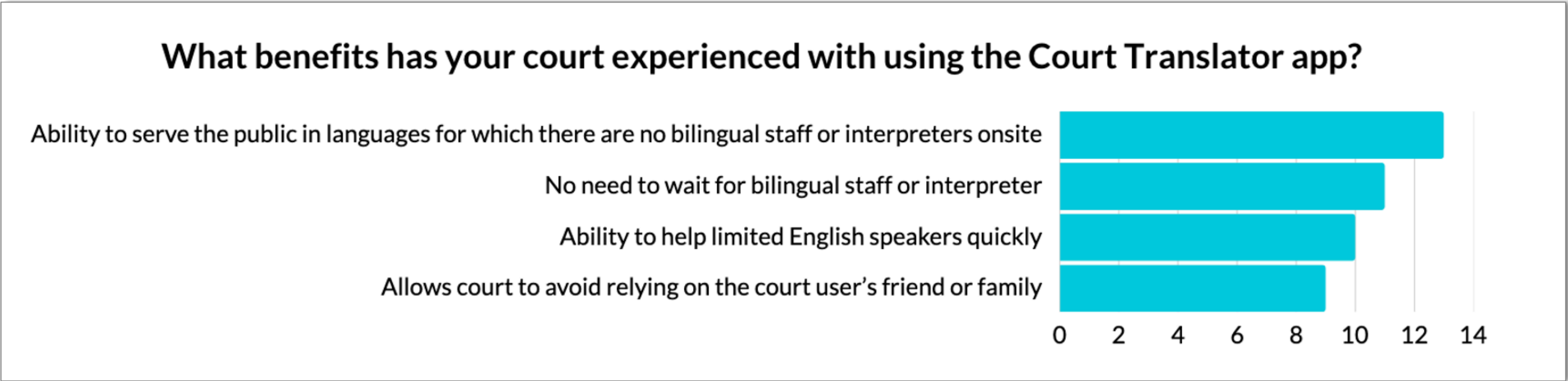
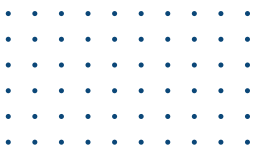
CALIFORNIA COURTS SURVEY: *FINDINGS (CONT.)*

- Surveyed courts use the Translator App for various languages, with Spanish as the language most used.



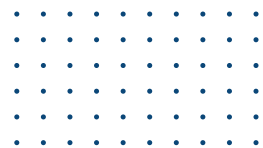
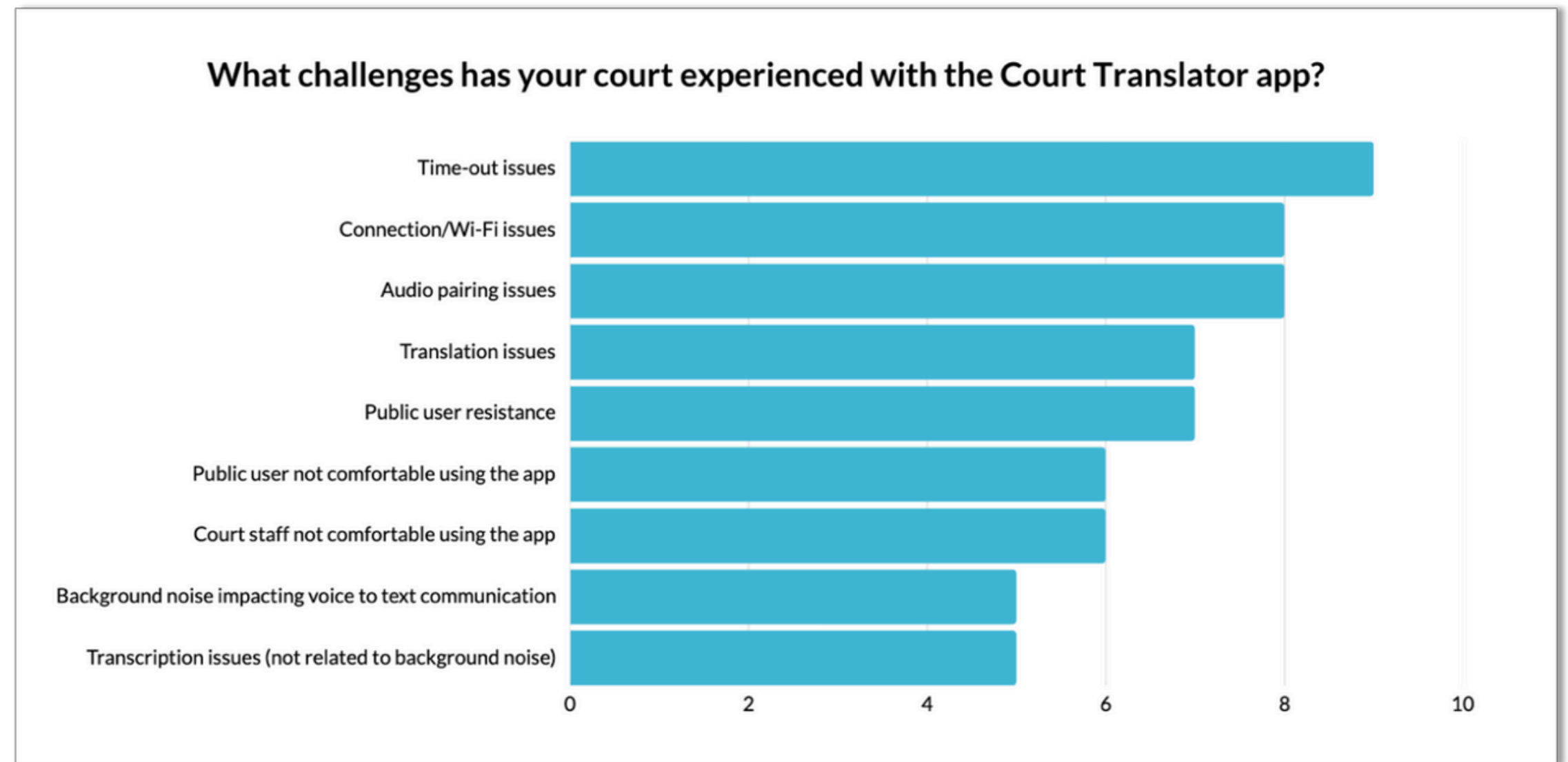
CALIFORNIA COURTS SURVEY: *FINDINGS (CONT.)*

Benefits of the App:



CALIFORNIA COURTS SURVEY: *FINDINGS (CONT.)*

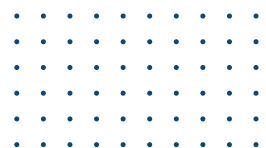
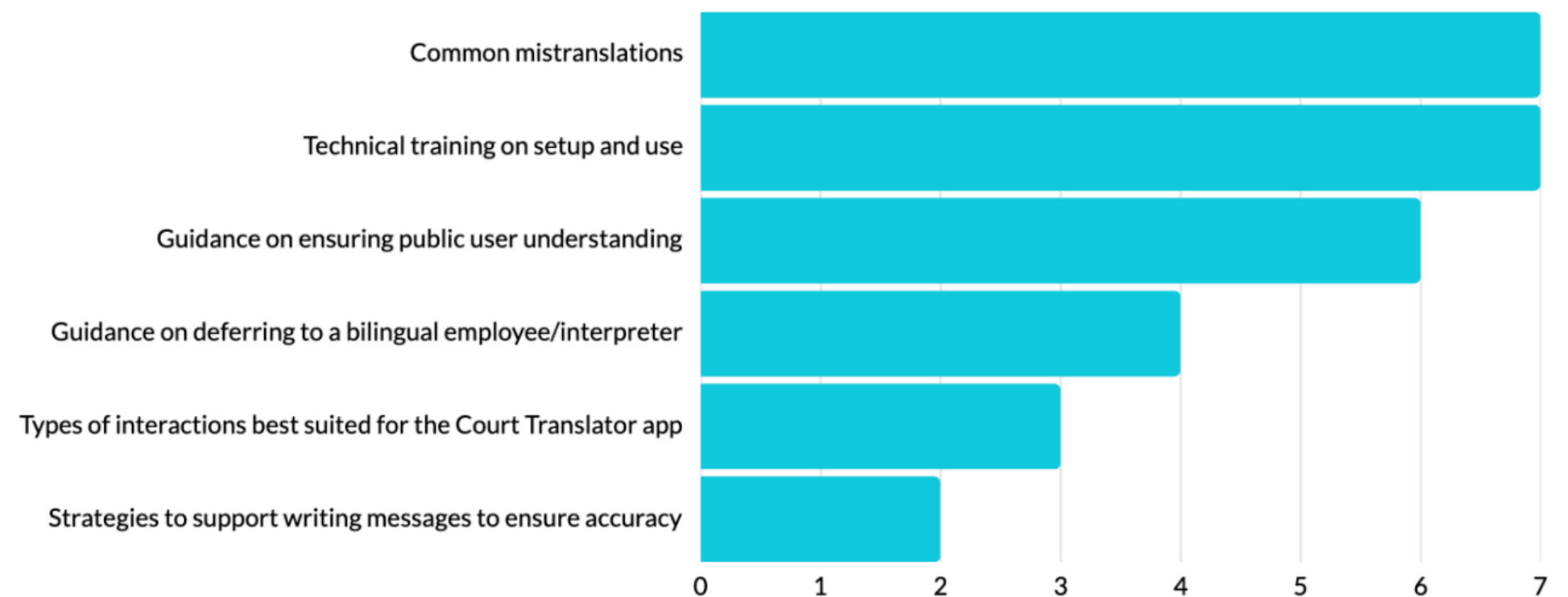
Challenges of the App:



CALIFORNIA COURTS SURVEY: *FINDINGS (CONT.)*

Training Interests:

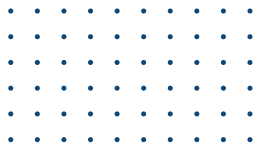
What types of additional training would be helpful for your court to understand how to best use the Court Translator app?



FOCUS GROUPS AND SITE VISITS



- Focus groups were conducted with five courts using the Translator App:
 - Merced Superior Court
 - San Luis Obispo Superior Court
 - Riverside Superior Court
 - Santa Barbara Superior Court
 - Santa Clara Superior Court
- Site visits were conducted with San Mateo Superior Court (Northern Branch), Sutter Superior Court, and Yolo Superior Court.



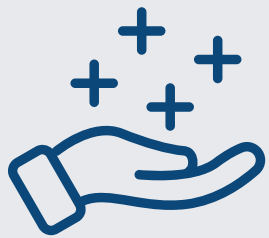
FOCUS GROUPS AND SITE VISITS: *FINDINGS*



Courts agreed that the Translator App works well for short, non-complex interactions



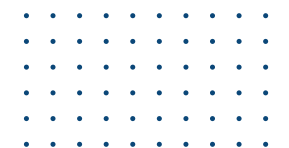
Participants agreed the Translator App should not be used in complex interactions or where a public user is looking for more complicated information.



All participants mentioned the benefit of being able to help the public in real time when no bilingual staff are available.

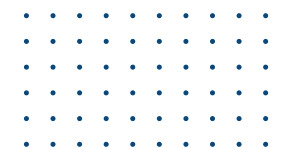
FOCUS GROUPS AND SITE VISITS: FINDINGS (CONT.)

- Focus group participants noted some **challenges** with the Translator App, including:
 - Pairing issues between devices and application timing out
 - Awkward set-up options
 - Public user resistance and/or confusion with using the Translator App



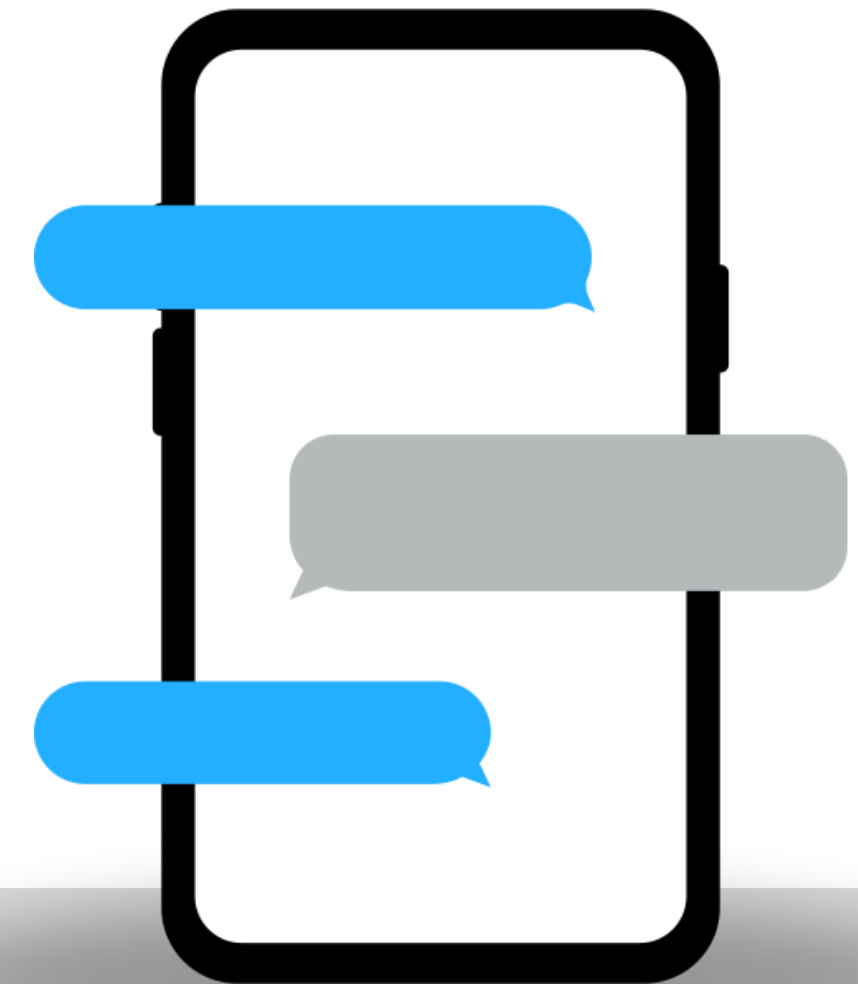
FOCUS GROUPS AND SITE VISITS: FINDINGS (CONT.)

- Focus group participants noted **training and resources** that would be helpful:
 - Guidance on when and why to use the Translator App
 - Examples of translation issues and how to avoid these
 - Pre-recorded instructional videos
 - Multilingual flyers (or other visual information) to explain the Translator App to the public

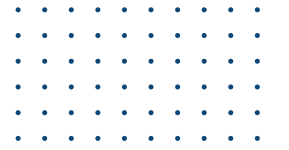


ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

- The Translator App has some **limitations** with:
 - Longer messages
 - Supporting communication with legal terminology
 - Communication with more than one issue or person involved
 - Messages with a lot of back-and-forth exchanges
 - Transcription of messages originating from the public



TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS



- Based on the research conducted, NCSC recommended the development of training modules and resources covering:
 - Setting up the Translator App for optimal use (for the public and for staff)
 - When and why to use the Translator App
 - Understanding the Translator App's limitations
 - Understanding how to best formulate messages to minimize transcription and translation errors
 - Troubleshooting common issues



Module 1

Overview of Language Access
and the Role of the Translator
App

Module 2

Translator App Set-Up Options
and Best Practices

Module 3

Use of the Translator App in
Clerks' Offices

Module 4

Use of the Translator App in
Self-Help Centers

Module 5

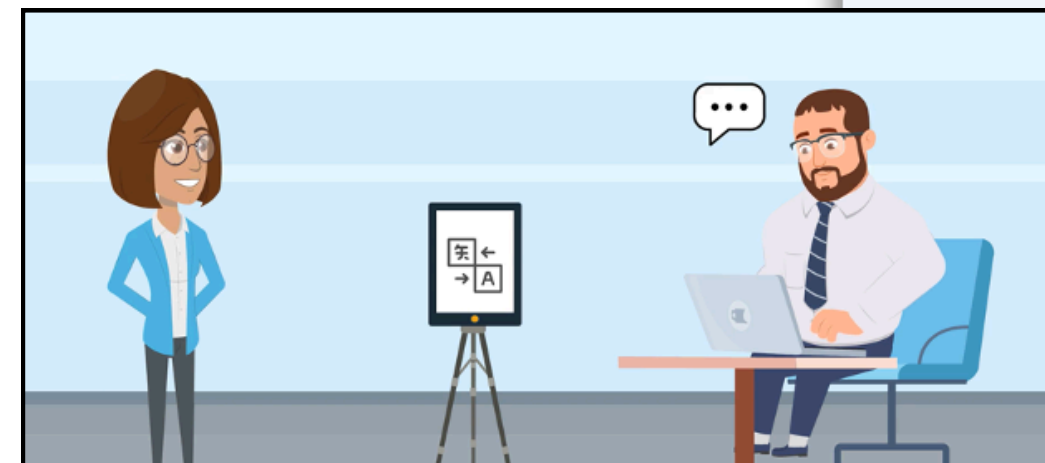
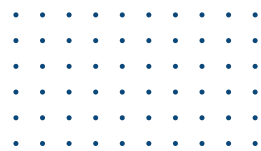
Troubleshooting Common
Communication Issues

Module 6

Considerations for LARs,
Supervisors, and Managers

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

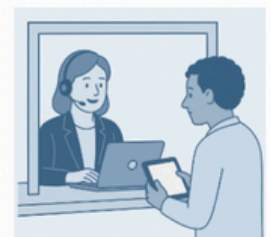
- A short explainer video for the public to assist with using the CA Courts Translator App in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Punjabi, and Cantonese.
- A tip sheet for machine translation and voice-to-text tools



Tips for Machine Translation and Voice-to-Text Tools



Machine Translation (MT) and Voice-to-Text (VTT) tools are becoming more common in everyday interactions. Courts may deploy these tools, and members of the public may bring their own apps or devices to help them communicate.



This guide offers general tips for using MT and VTT tools with individuals who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), regardless of the platform or device. These tips are designed to help ensure meaningful communication in court settings.

Warning: MT and VTT tools can help with quick, simple communication but are not a substitute for trained interpreters or bilingual staff during complex or high-stakes interactions.

MT and VTT Tools

Communications (E.g., "I can help you process your ticket payment." "Here's a form." "Fill out these forms, make two copies, and return here to file them.") that are complete and grammatically correct that primarily depend on court staff providing simple, non-complex information, with minimal need for the public user to tell their story (such as canned responses) or repeatable phrases (e.g., "I am a bilingual staff person is located or interpretation services are being arranged")

own bank of vetted phrases (canned responses) for common court interactions.

Other Language Access Options

When is legally significant or complex.

- There's extensive back-and-forth communication or a great deal of legal terms.
- The LEP individual is emotional or visibly distressed.
- MT results are unclear, or the public user looks confused.

Don't rely on MT or VTT tools when precision and understanding are critical.



QUESTIONS?