

State of New York
Unified Court System



Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge

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April 11, 2017

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to advise you that the New York State Unified Court System recently released a strategic plan that aims to enhance access to justice for litigants and other persons with limited English proficiency, or those who are deaf or hard of hearing. See *Ensuring Language Access: A Strategic Plan for the New York State Courts*:
<http://www.nycourts.gov/publications/language-access-report2017.pdf>

The Plan sets forth a variety of concrete steps that the court system will take to ensure language access, in the following categories:

- Improving the Recruitment, Assessment and Training of Court Interpreters
- Strengthening the Management of the Language Access Program
- Moving Beyond the Courtroom
- Ensuring Language Access for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community
- Training Judges, Court Staff, and the Bar to Work Effectively with Court Interpreters and the Limited English Proficiency Community
- Promoting Quality in the Language Access Program
- Working with the Community to Enhance Language Access
- Expanding Language Access through Improved Signage, Translation, and Online Information
- Partnering with the Town and Village Courts to Ensure Language Access in these courts

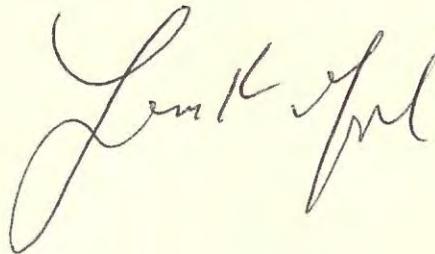
We hope that you will read our new plan, and provide feedback and suggestions as we move forward in strengthening this critical program.

In addition, there are three specific areas in which you can help ensure language access:

- **Notify the court of the need for an interpreter as early as possible.** A litigant or his/her attorney may notify the part clerk, court officer or chief clerk's office of the need for an interpreter, and the specific language or dialect being requested. Advance notice of the need for language services will help to prevent delays.
- **Alert the judge or court clerk if there are problems, concerns or delays related to court interpreting.** You can also contact the Office of Language Access at 646-386-5670 or via email: courtinterpreter@nycourts.gov
- **Help us reach the communities that need language services.** Outreach to the community is critical to ensure that LEP court users are aware of the right to a free interpreter and to assist in recruiting interpreters. We invite your assistance in this outreach. Application materials and details about how to become a court interpreter can be found online at: www.nycourts.gov/courtinterpreter or by contacting the Office of Language Access.

We value your input and welcome your suggestions as we continue to collaborate in an effort to improve this important program. Thank you for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lenka J. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "L".