



# Department of Justice

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## **FOLLOWING JUSTICE DEPARTMENT'S REVIEW, HAWAII STATE COURT COMMITTS TO EQUAL ACCESS FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS**

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department announced today that it has closed its review of the Hawaii Judiciary’s Language Access Program following the department’s successful provision of technical assistance to the Hawaii Judiciary. The department’s Federal Coordination and Compliance Section (FCS) of the Civil Rights Division began its work following the receipt of complaints raising concerns about the court system’s provision of language services to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals in state court proceedings and court operations in alleged violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI requires recipients of federal financial assistance, such as courts, to provide competent language services free of charge to LEP individuals in court proceedings and operations. Nearly 13 percent of Hawaii’s population is LEP.

The department and the Hawaii Judiciary have worked cooperatively to effectuate a number of improvements to language services. The judiciary’s accomplishments include:

- Issuing a clear policy stating that all LEP individuals would be provided competent court interpretation free of charge in court proceedings, and that language services would also be provided for other court operations.
- Implementing an awareness campaign to increase the public’s knowledge on how to access the court’s language services, including the creation of multilingual outreach materials in hard copy and on the web. It also enhanced its website to make it easier to find information about its language assistance services, and created 14 language-specific webpages that contain all of the language-specific translations in one location.
- Beginning to create a language assistance complaint system.
- Revising its court interpreter assignment system, training interpreters and providing mandatory training for judicial staff on the interpreter assignment process.
- Implementing oversight measures to ensure that the language access program complies with Title VI.

“I commend the Hawaii Judiciary for its proactive efforts to provide all communities with equal access to justice regardless of the language they speak,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Vanita Gupta of the Civil Rights Division. “The results we are seeing in Hawaii are a testament to what collaboration and cooperation can achieve. Hawaii knows its work is not done, and we welcome the opportunity to continue to provide assistance whenever needed.”

The department has worked with courts across the country to improve the provision of language services to LEP individuals. <http://www.lep.gov/resources/resources.html#SC>. It also released “Language Access Planning and Technical Assistance Tool for Courts” last year which provides court systems with a series of questions to consider as they develop and implement plans to provide language assistance.

Please click [here](#) for further information about FCS. For additional LEP-related resources, please go to the [Federal Interagency LEP website](#).

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