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### Language Access Efforts in New Mexico

**New Mexico Judiciary**  
Administrative Office of the Courts

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### NM Ethnic & Linguistic Facts

- ✓ 47% Hispanic or Latino origin,
- ✓ 22 federally recognized tribes,
- ✓ 36% of the population speak a language other than English at home,
- ✓ 10% of population reports speaking English “less than very well,”
- ✓ Among non-English: Spanish, ASL, Navajo, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Arabic.

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### Challenges

- ✓ 19.5% of individuals living below poverty line;
- ✓ Scarcely populated: 17 persons per square mile;
- ✓ Increasing demand for language access services;
- ✓ 60% of prison population of Hispanic or Latino origin;
- ✓ State’s revenue heavily dependent on oil.

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### Legal Basis for Language Access

- ✓ Title II of ADA,
- ✓ Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964,
- ✓ NM Statutes – “Deaf Interpreter Act” and “Court Interpreter Act,”
- ✓ NM Constitution – *Right to an interpreter and LEP individuals can serve as jurors,*
- ✓ NM Supreme Court Rules,
- ✓ “DOJ policy – *Equal access “at all points of contact.”*”

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### Equal Access Needed for Due Process



- ✓ Fifth Amendment – *Right to a fair trial*
- ✓ Sixth Amendment – *Right to confront adverse witnesses*
- ✓ Fourteenth Amendment – *Equal protection of the laws*

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### Language Access “At all points of contact”



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### Access to NM Courts through...

- ✓ Centralized management and funding,
- ✓ Language access planning,
- ✓ Certification and credentialing of court interpreters,
- ✓ Multilingual signage,
- ✓ On-demand remote interpreting services,
- ✓ Translation of documents and forms,
- ✓ Training – *The NM Center for Language Access.*

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### NM Center for Language Access



- ✓ Certificate Programs – court interpreters and bilingual court staff
- ✓ Training and web-portal for judges and staff
- ✓ Language Access Site
- ✓ Annual Report

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### Training Technologies: Interactive Self-Paced Suites

- ✓ Language Access Basic Training
- ✓ Court interpreter Orientation



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### Improving Access to Justice for Native Peoples



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### Court Interpreter Training & Certification Native Languages



***“In the middle of difficulty  
lies opportunity”***



- ✓ Setting priorities and having action plan;
- ✓ Being creative to overcome challenges  
– *collaboration, technology use*;
- ✓ Support from NM Supreme Court;
- ✓ As program grows, “pieces fall into place” and resources are put to use.