

# **Resource: Language Access Planning and Technical Assistance Tool for Courts (DOJ 2014)**

This language access planning and technical assistance tool for courts was created by the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section (DOJ), to assist courts and court systems as they develop comprehensive language access programs. This tool was developed in response to requests for technical assistance from courts and others involved in planning and implementing measures to improve language assistance services in courts for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals.

The tool is intended to facilitate planning to supplement and support the growing body of technical assistance and other resources developed by the American Bar Association, the National Center for State Courts, and other national, state, and local entities. Based on the Department of Justice Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs ([Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs \(May 2011\)](#)), available [here](#), this tool is tailored for use in courts. Just as with other planning tools, the focus is on identifying suggested areas of assessment and planning for courts. In each area, considerations are provided to identify challenges and highlight opportunities for improvement. Some courts will find that they have addressed certain areas and issues in this tool but that other areas may need greater priority and attention. In addition, the Department hopes this tool will help courts identify which actions can be taken right away, which need focused attention and resources, and which require more long term planning and implementation to accomplish.

Completing this tool neither establishes nor guarantees a court's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or other civil rights requirements. The legal requirements for courts that receive federal financial assistance from DOJ have been explained in prior guidance documents, [Resources for State Courts](#), available [here](#).

Use of the tool is of course voluntary; courts are not required to use the suggested considerations in this tool or submit their responses to DOJ. The tool is divided into sections that suggest general areas for assessment and planning. Following each section are suggested planning steps. Because of vast nationwide differences in court structures and administrative and financial authorities and responsibilities, some considerations may not be applicable to every court. Courts are encouraged to modify this tool to the particular needs and features of their court and court system.

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- U.S. Department of Justice

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