



**SEVENTH JUDICIAL
DISTRICT**

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

&

**AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES ACT PLAN**

**SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN
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SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

I. DEFINITIONS

Definition of “Seventh Judicial District” and “the Courts”:

“Seventh Judicial District” and “the Courts,” as used throughout this plan, means all the District and Magistrate courts in New Mexico's Seventh Judicial District, namely: Catron County District Court, Catron County Magistrate Court, Socorro County District Court, Socorro County Magistrate Court, Sierra County District Court, Sierra County Magistrate Court, Torrance County District Court and Torrance County Magistrate Court.

For a list of language access planning team members from these courts, *see Attachment A*.

II. LEGAL BASIS AND PURPOSE

This document serves as the plan for the Seventh Judicial District to provide to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) services that are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166. Language access services are further provided for in the New Mexico Constitution and in State Statute (*see* Section IV A).

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and reasonable language assistance to LEP persons who come into contact with the Seventh Judicial District.

III. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Statewide by Language

The State of New Mexico provides court services to a wide range of people, including those who speak limited or no English and those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

According to the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the most frequently encountered languages in New Mexico's courts are:

- 1) Spanish
- 2) American Sign Language (ASL)
- 3) Navajo, Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic

In Fiscal Year 2022, interpretation was provided in New Mexico's courts in a total of 58 different languages.

B. Seventh Judicial District by Language

Demographic Data by County:

The Seventh Judicial District will make every effort to provide services to all LEP persons. For purposes of anticipating need, the following data shows the spoken (ie., not signed) languages other than English that are most frequently used in the Courts' geographic area.

1) Modern Language Association Data:

The following data comes from the Modern Language Association (MLA). The MLA data indicates the percentage of county residents above the age of five who speak the language at home; it does not indicate proficiency or lack of proficiency in English.

The top five spoken languages other than English in each county are as follows:

Catron County

- 1) Spanish 13.34%
- 2) "Other specified North American Indian languages" 1.17%
- 3) Navajo 1.09%
- 4) German 0.59%

Sierra County

- 1) Spanish 15.64%
- 2) Navajo 0.51%
- 3) French 0.46%
- 4) German 0.17%
- 5) "Other specified North American Indian languages" 0.13%

Socorro County

- 1) Spanish 31.31%
- 2) Navajo 6.66%
- 3) Chinese 1.40%
- 4) "Other specified North American Indian languages" 0.81%
- 5) German 0.34%

Torrance County

- 1) Spanish 24.77%

- 2) Navajo 0.48%
- 3) Hebrew 0.31%
- 4) German 0.21%
- 5) Greek 0.21%

2) Migration Policy Institute Data:

The following data comes from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI). The MPI data indicates the percentage of county residents above the age of five who are classified as Limited English Proficient. MPI only lists a language if it is spoken by 5% or more of a county's total population or by 500 or more persons within a county, and if those speakers are also Limited English Proficient.

MPI lists the following LEP data for the Seventh Judicial District:

- Catron County: No data (ie., fewer than 500 or 5% LEP persons).
- Sierra County: No data (ie., fewer than 500 or 5% LEP persons).
- Socorro County: 1,400 (8.6%) Spanish-speaking LEP persons; 700 (4.2%) Navajo-speaking LEP persons.
- Torrance County: 1,100 (7.3%) Spanish-speaking LEP persons.

The Seventh Judicial District Language Access Planning team is responsible for updating demographic data as it becomes available.

Courthouse Users:

The Seventh Judicial District will also assess its language needs on an ongoing basis based on what it identifies about courthouse users. This is achieved through two methods:

- 1) Tracking the use of interpreters in the courtroom.
- 2) Tracking encounters between staff and LEP persons in out-of-courtroom settings.

1) Courtroom interpreter use:

The Courts track courtroom interpreter usage using the Odyssey case management system. The LAP team is responsible for updating interpreter data in this LAP at its annual meetings.

For interpreter use in the Seventh Judicial District during the most recent calendar year (2022), *see Attachment B*. Prior year data is also included in *Attachment B*, for comparison purposes.

2) Out-of-courtroom tracking:

The Courts track out-of-courtroom encounters with LEP individuals at the clerks' windows and on the telephone, using a form provided by AOC. The Language Access Specialist or the Court Manager at each courthouse is responsible for ensuring this data is tracked on an ongoing basis and the LAP team is responsible for ensuring the data is updated in this plan at its annual meeting. Out-of-courtroom statistics for the most recent calendar year (2022) are set out in *Attachment C*. Statistics from prior years are also included in *Attachment C*, for comparison purposes.

IV. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES INSIDE THE

COURTROOM

A. Provision of Interpreters in the Courtroom

The provision of spoken-language and signed-language interpreters in court proceedings is based in New Mexico state statute and the Constitution. The Constitution references language access in multiple sections, including Article II, Section 14 and Article VII, Section 3. In the Seventh Judicial District, interpreters will be provided, consistent with the Court Interpreter Standards of Practice and Payment Policies, at no cost to court customers, witnesses, jurors and other parties who need such assistance under the following circumstances:

- For a deaf or hard-of-hearing litigant, juror, observer (when an observer has submitted a request to the court prior to the proceeding), or witness in any type of court proceeding. Title II of the ADA requires local and state courts to provide qualified signed language interpreters or other accommodation to ensure effective communication with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.
- For a non-English speaking person who is a principal party in interest or a witness in a criminal case.
- For a non-English speaking person who is a principal party in interest or a witness in a domestic violence case, domestic relations case, and/or Children's Court case, including court-ordered domestic relations mediation.
- For a non-English speaking person who is a principal party in interest in a civil case or that party's witness.
- For victims who are active case participants, i.e., testifying as a witness or when making a statement at sentencing.
- For any non-English speaking juror. A certified court interpreter shall be provided to petit and grand jurors, including jury orientation, voir dire, deliberations, and all portions of the trial.

It is the responsibility of the private attorney, Public Defender or District Attorney to provide qualified interpretation and translation services for pre-trial witness interviews, transcriptions and translations and for attorney/client communications during proceedings.

The AOC has issued Guidelines for audio recorded, video recorded or written materials in languages other than English pursuant to Rule 1-103(E)(8) NMRA. These Guidelines address circumstances in which interpreters may and may not be used to perform sight translation in the courtroom. For the AOC Memorandum dated July 22, 2016, *see*: <https://languageaccess.nmcourts.gov/rules-guidelines-memos-1>.

B. Determining the Need for an Interpreter in the Courtroom

The Seventh Judicial District determines whether an LEP court customer needs an interpreter for a court hearing in the following ways:

The need for a court interpreter may be identified prior to a court proceeding by the LEP person or on the LEP person's behalf by: the clerk's office; or by outside justice partners such as police officers, probation/parole officers, attorneys, social workers, advocates or correctional facilities.

The Courts have access to a multilingual interpreter needed check sheet/rights advisory for pro se

clients, created by AOC. The sheet informs clients in 11 languages that they are entitled to an interpreter free of charge, and asks them to check the box by the language they need.

The Magistrate Courts coordinate with law enforcement partners and detention centers to help ensure early identification of interpreter needs.

Within the Courts' Odyssey case management system, when an interpreter is requested by the attorney or pro se litigant, Court staff has the ability to modify the party information to indicate that an interpreter is needed. Once this information is entered, when a Notice of Hearing is generated an "I" will appear next to the hearing event signifying an interpreter is needed. This flagging system ensures that once the need for an interpreter has been identified, court staff will be alerted for every hearing. The flag will also transfer when cases are transferred from Magistrate to District Court.

The need for an interpreter may also be made known in the courtroom at the time of the proceeding. The Seventh Judicial District displays signs in English, Spanish, Navajo and Vietnamese that state: "You have the right to an interpreter at no cost to you. If you cannot speak or understand English, or if you need an American sign language interpreter, please contact the clerk for assistance." The Seventh Judicial District displays these signs at the following locations: clerks' windows, outside courtrooms, and near building entrances. The Court Manager of each courthouse is responsible for ensuring signs are posted.

Also, the judge may determine that it is appropriate to provide an interpreter for a court matter.

In a case where the court is mandated to provide an interpreter, but one is not available at the time of the proceeding even after the court has made all reasonable efforts to locate one, the case will be postponed and continued on a date when an interpreter can be provided.

C. Remote Interpreting

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, AOC Language Access Services prioritized remote interpreting over in-person interpreting for all proceedings with the exception of jury trials. Details to assist courts with telephone and video interpreting are posted at: <https://languageaccess.nmcourts.gov/rules-guidelines-memos-1>.

D. Court Interpreter Qualifications and Availability

The Seventh Judicial District schedules interpreters for courtroom hearings in compliance with Supreme Court rules and AOC policies.

Interpreters for all New Mexico state courts are scheduled using a centralized interpreter scheduling management system managed by AOC. Court staff enter requests for interpreters in all languages into the scheduling system. Requests are screened by an AOC coordinator, who broadcasts the interpreter assignments to interpreters located as close to the court as possible. Once the assignment has been filled, courts receive email notification of the interpreter assigned.

V. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM

The Seventh Judicial District is also responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to services outside the courtroom. Language services outside the courtroom include routing, communications and interactions between court staff and LEP individuals as they request information, file documents, schedule appointments, and so on. In the Seventh Judicial District, LEP individuals may come into contact with court personnel via the phone or the clerk's window.

When court personnel in the Seventh Judicial District come into contact with LEP individuals, they use “I Speak” cards; the Certified Languages International (CLI) phone service; or a Language Access Specialist (LAS).

Language Access Specialists are bilingual employees of the court who have successfully completed justice system language access training through the New Mexico Center for Language Access. They are a category of employee specifically created by the NM Judiciary to ensure the delivery of meaningful language access services in out-of-courtroom settings (e.g., at the clerk's window). As of the latest revision of this plan, the Seventh Judicial District employed the following Spanish-speaking LASs:

- Rachel Gonzales, Judicial Specialist Supervisor, Socorro County District Court
- Mary Mora, Judicial Specialist Supervisor, Sierra County District Court
- Guadalupe Marin, Judicial Specialist 2, Sierra County District Court

The LAP team discusses Seventh Judicial District LAS needs and potential trainees at each annual meeting. As of the latest revision of this plan, the Torrance County District Court, Socorro County Magistrate Court, Sierra County Magistrate Court and the Torrance County Magistrate Court each had one potential candidate for the program.

To facilitate communication between LEP individuals and court staff, the Seventh Judicial District uses the following resources to the degree that resources are available:

- Language Access Specialists, as detailed in this section.
- Multilingual signage, as detailed in Section IV C.
- “I Speak” cards in over 60 languages, to identify the individual’s primary language.
- Telephonic interpreting services, which are available to provide assistance at the clerk’s window. The telephonic interpreting services are provided in over 175 languages, through Certified Languages International (CLI).
- In the District courts, a public phone line which provides the following services:
 - a) An option to press for Spanish, which will transfer to either an LAS or a Spanish voicemail.
 - b) An after-hours Spanish voicemail.
 - c) A Spanish jury message which is updated as frequently as needed.
- The Socorro and Sierra County Magistrate Courts have Spanish phone messages. The remaining Magistrate Courts will implement Spanish phone messages by June 30, 2023.
- The AOC Memorandum, “Providing Interpreters for Court-Ordered Programs, Services or Events,” explains when the obligation to provide language access for programs, services or events falls on the court and when it falls on outside agencies. *See:* <https://languageaccess.nmcourts.gov/rules-guidelines-memos-1>.

VI. TRANSLATED RESOURCES (WRITTEN AND AUDIOVISUAL)

The Courts understand the importance of having forms and documents professionally translated so that LEP individuals have greater access to needed information and services. Translation requests should be submitted to the AOC's vendor via an online portal. For further details, *see* "New Translation Portal Instructions" at <https://languageaccess.nmcourts.gov/rules-guidelines-memos-1>.

Currently, the following translated resources are available statewide:

- Supreme Court forms in bilingual format, available at <https://languageaccess.nmcourts.gov>:
 - *Spanish*: Domestic Violence, Domestic Relations, Interpreter request, Adult Guardianship
 - *Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic*: Landlord Tenant
- The website of the NM Judiciary at <https://nmcourts.gov>, including the Seventh Judicial District Court page, has been professionally translated into Spanish. The Court's webmaster is responsible for notifying the AOC Language Access Planning Consultant whenever updates are made in English so that AOC can make the corresponding updates on the Spanish mirror page.
- Resources posted on the AOC Language Access Services website at: <https://languageaccess.nmcourts.gov>. To help users who are LEP, blind/low-vision; low literacy/computer literacy or deaf/hard-of-hearing to navigate the site, an avatar is included. This virtual assistant speaks English, Spanish and Navajo and can respond to either written or verbal commands.
- Informational videos for Self-Represented Litigants in ASL, Spanish and Navajo (with closed captioning) are posted throughout the Language Access Services website.
- Guardian and Conservator orientation program videos in Spanish are posted at: <https://adultguardianship.nmcourts.gov/videos-informativos-de-entrenamiento>
- A District Court Self Help Guide (Spanish and Navajo) is available on the Language Access Services website.
- Magistrate court personal data intake form in bilingual English/Spanish format.
- Eight Spanish pamphlets for Self-Represented Litigants, explaining civil procedures and terminology in the magistrate courts, provided by AOC.
- As the only state in the United States that seats LEP jurors, the New Mexico AOC provides the following materials (available at <https://jury.nmcourts.gov>):
- ✓ Spanish: juror questionnaire, qualification form, handbook, FAQs, creed, tips for after jury service, medical excuse form, orientation video open-captioned in Spanish.
- ✓ Navajo: juror questionnaire and qualification form.

In addition, the following translated resources are available for LEP court users in the Seventh Judicial District:

- Seventh Judicial District Self Help Guide (English/Spanish), available at: <https://seventhdistrictcourt.nmcourts.gov/autoayuda>.
- Request for interpreter form in English and Spanish, as detailed in Section IV C.
- Juror acceptance letter in Spanish.
- Juror call-in cards in Spanish.
- Juror summons in Spanish.
- Juror completion letter in Spanish.
- Courtroom information sheet in Spanish.
- Domestic Violence case history entry card in Spanish.

- Bilingual (English/Spanish) handouts from community partners.

VII. LANGUAGE ACCESS STAFFING

The Seventh Judicial District is an equal opportunity employer and recruits and hires/contracts with bilingual staff/contractors to serve its LEP constituents. Primary examples include:

- Court interpreters who serve the Courts on an on-call basis, coordinated and funded by AOC.
- Language Access Specialists, as detailed in Section V. The District Courts pay a \$1 per hour increase to LASs and are committed to paying for the LAS training program if necessary. In the Magistrate Courts, the increase and training fees are paid by AOC.
- Other bilingual staff who are on call to assist with out-of-courtroom contacts from LEP individuals as needed. The Courts actively recruit bilingual employees and encourage all bilingual employees who provide language access services to become LAS-certified.

VIII. JUDICIAL AND STAFF TRAINING

The New Mexico State Courts and the Seventh Judicial District are committed to providing language access training opportunities for all judicial officers and staff members. Training and learning opportunities currently offered by the New Mexico Supreme Court and the Seventh Judicial District will be expanded or continued as needed. These opportunities include:

- Mandatory language access training for all new and continuing employees, using a language access training DVD developed by the New Mexico Judiciary and made available to all courts in October 2011. The DVD includes information on the legal basis for language access and goes into detail on procedures for providing services. A policy directive mandating the training was issued by the Supreme Court in the form of an Order in April 2011. A subsequent policy directive was issued by AOC in October 2011 in the form of a Language Access Training Policy. AOC distributed an accompanying training acknowledgment form to be signed by each employee and added to their personnel file after training was completed.
- Instruction for all employees on the Courts' LAP policies and procedures, as described in this plan.
- Scholarships and wage incentives (as available) to encourage the enrollment of current bilingual employees in the Language Access Specialist certificate program offered through the New Mexico Center for Language Access.
- An annual Language Access Specialist symposium, the benefits of which include a full year's worth of Continuing Education Units, as well as LAS webinars throughout the year.
- Conferences, judicial conclaves, webinars, etc. that include sessions dedicated to language access topics, organized by AOC Language Access Services and its partner, the NM Center for Language Access.
- The AOC and national colleagues have developed the Language Access Basic Training (LABT), an interactive training program available online at: <https://nmcenterforlanguageaccess.org/cms/en/courts-agencies/about-language-access-basic-training>. The training is geared toward all judicial employees, and also contains more intense modules of practice and skills assessment for bilingual employees. Training topics include Legal Basis; Ethics; Roles of Court Staff and Cultural Competency.

Trainings for employees in the Seventh Judicial District will be held as needed, and the Court Manager of each courthouse is responsible for implementing trainings. New employees receive language access

orientation, administered by the AOC Human Resources Division, shortly after assuming their responsibilities.

Language Access Specialist, conference, judicial conclave, webinar, etc. training opportunities are advertised to the judiciary by AOC.

IX. FUNDING AND PROCUREMENT ISSUES

The New Mexico Supreme Court and Administrative Office of the Courts commit significant resources to the following language access efforts to benefit all state courts on a regular basis: signage; assistive listening/interpreting equipment; certified interpreter services for court proceedings for spoken and signed languages; training and certification of interpreters and Language Access Specialists; 24/7 telephonic interpreting available in 175 languages for out-of-courtroom communication with LEP individuals; and the development of related training materials for court personnel and language access service providers. The NM Judiciary will continue to support the Seventh Judicial District's language access efforts through these services and will work to identify new funding opportunities to support language access efforts across the judiciary and specific to the needs of the Seventh Judicial District, as identified through current or future language access planning efforts.

X. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN AND SERVICES

The Seventh Judicial District understands the importance of communicating to the LEP and deaf/hard-of-hearing public that its courthouses are accessible. As detailed throughout this plan, the Courts communicate accessibility by means of signage; "I Speak" cards; telephone services; DVDs; online materials, and written materials. In addition, the Courts undertake the outreach measures detailed below.

The Courts benefited from a statewide Public Service Announcement highlighting the accessibility of New Mexico's courts which AOC distributed to radio stations across the state in English, Spanish, Navajo and Vietnamese.

Upon signature of each annual revision of this plan, the CEO of District Court sends an email to local Criminal Justice Coordinating Council members, enclosing the LAP. The email is intended to advise the LEP and deaf/hard-of-hearing community that the Court is accessible and to familiarize them with the specific provisions of the Court's LAP.

For distribution of this plan to the public and court employees, *see* ADA Plan, Section IX.

XI. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Seventh Judicial District has a complaint procedure for persons who feel their rights to language access have been violated. Should any individual wish to make a complaint, the attached complaint procedure and form will be provided to them by the LAP Coordinator. The procedure and form are available in English and Spanish and can be translated into additional languages as needed (*see Attachment D*).

XII. APPROVAL AND EVALUATION OF LAP

A. LAP Approval

The Seventh Judicial District LAP is subject to approval by the Chief Judge and Court Executive Officer. Any revisions to the plan will be submitted to the above individuals for approval, and then forwarded to the AOC.

B. LAP Evaluation

The Seventh Judicial District will routinely assess whether changes to the LAP are needed. The plan may be changed or updated at any time but reviewed no less frequently than once a year.

Annually, the Courts' language access planning team will review the effectiveness of the Courts' LAP and update it as necessary. The evaluation will include identification of any problem areas and development of corrective action strategies. Elements of the evaluation will include:

- Number of LEP persons requiring court interpreters and out-of-courtroom language assistance.
- Assessment of current language needs to determine if additional services or materials should be provided.
- Assessment of whether language access procedures are operating smoothly.
- Assessment of whether court staff adequately understand LEP policies and procedures and how to carry them out.
- Identifying gaps in LAS coverage and suitable candidates to undergo LAS training.
- Review of any feedback from court employee training sessions.
- Ensuring that all tasks summarized in this plan have been completed by their target date.
- Ensuring that all time-sensitive references; rules or policies that are subject to change; and individuals mentioned in this plan, are up-to-date.

C. Seventh Judicial District LAP Coordinator:

Jason Jones, Court Executive Officer
Seventh Judicial District Court
200 Church Street, Socorro, New Mexico 87801
socdjej@nmcourts.gov
575-835-0050

D. AOC LAP Coordinator:

Bernice Ramos, Senior Statewide Program Manager, Language Access Services
New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts
110 Calle de Alegra, Las Cruces NM 88001
aocbar@nmcourts.gov
(505) 231-1681

E. LAP Effective date:

See: LAP & ADA Plan signature page

**SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
ADA PLAN
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I. LEGAL BASIS AND PURPOSE

The New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts is committed to ensuring equal access to and full participation in court programs, court services, and court activities for qualified individuals with disabilities, including attorneys, litigants, defendants, probationers, witnesses, victims, potential jurors, and public observers of court proceedings.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was enacted to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. Under Title II of the ADA, no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of programs, services, or activities of a public entity. This prohibition applies to the New Mexico state courts as providers of public programs, services, and activities. Pursuant to the ADA, people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to access, use, and fully participate in court programs, services, and activities and not be discriminated against because of their disability.

A person is considered disabled for purposes of the ADA if he or she has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. "Major life activities" include, but are not limited to: reading, communicating, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, standing, walking, breathing, and the operation of a major bodily function.

The ADA also protects people who have a record of such an impairment or who are regarded as having such an impairment, if being perceived as having a disability results in discrimination.

It is important to remember that not all disabilities are obvious. "Invisible disabilities," such as psychological or cognitive conditions, can substantially limit a person's ability to engage in major life activities.

Any individual with an interest in participating in or attending any proceeding before any court may make a request for an accommodation. This includes jurors, parties, attorneys, witnesses, and spectators.

Whenever reasonable, New Mexico Court policies, practices, or procedures must be modified to make court programs, court services, and court activities readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. This includes removing architectural barriers by altering existing facilities where feasible or relocating services to an ADA-accessible site.

The ADA also includes removing communication barriers by providing auxiliary aids and services that would allow a person with a disability to effectively represent a client, be a party in a lawsuit, testify as a witness, serve on a jury, observe a hearing or trial, or otherwise participate in all programs, services and activities. In providing reasonable accommodations, the New Mexico Courts give ADA Title II primary consideration to the accommodations requested by the person with a disability when reasonable and practicable. To ensure ADA effective communications with people who are deaf or hard of hearing, the New Mexico Courts provide sign language and oral interpreters, TTYs, or other appropriate auxiliary aids and services free of charge. The New Mexico Courts may also provide information in Braille and Large Print for people with visual disabilities as a reasonable accommodation request.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publish the latest Disability and Health Data System (DHDS) on their website at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/dhds/data-guide/status-and-types.html#status>.

DHDS is an online source of state level data on adults with disabilities. In the state of New Mexico 460,355 adults have a disability. This is equal to 28% or roughly 1 in 4 adults.

According to DHDS, in New Mexico the percentages of disabled individuals 18 years or older were reported in 2020 as follows:

- Cognitive Disability 13.4%
- Mobility Disability 12.2%
- Independent Living Disability 8.8%
- Hearing Disability 6.9%
- Vision Disability 4.7%
- Self-Care Disability 4.5%

Definitions:

- Cognitive: serious difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Hearing: serious difficulty hearing or deafness.
- Mobility: serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
- Vision: serious difficulty seeing or blindness.
- Self-care: difficulty dressing or bathing.
- Independent living: difficulty doing errands alone.

III. ADA COORDINATOR DUTIES

A. Duties of the AOC Office of the Statewide ADA Title II Coordinator

The Office of the Statewide ADA Coordinator within the Administrative Office of the Courts provides resources, guidance and training to all judiciary employees. It also oversees the enforcement of the Act in each district and their programs and activities.

Among the duties of the statewide ADA Coordinator are to:

- Plan and coordinate compliance efforts.
- Develop and distribute notice about ADA Title II compliance.
- Respond to general inquiries from the public.
- Coordinate requests for auxiliary aids and services and reasonable modifications of policies, practices and procedures.
- Train staff, boards and commissions on ADA requirements.
- Interact and consult with staff, boards and commissions on the ADA.
- Develop a grievance procedure.

- Investigate complaints.
- Conduct a self-evaluation.
- Develop a transition plan.
- Ensure districts are complying with all ADA Title II mandates.

Statewide ADA Coordinator:

Peggy Cadwell

ADA@nmcourts.gov

(505) 414-5313

B. Duties of the Local ADA Coordinator

Among the duties of the local ADA Coordinator are to:

- Handle all ADA Title II requests from the public. Receive requests for accommodations, communicate with the person making the request to clarify the nature of the accommodation needed, and facilitate implementation. Engage in the Interactive Process as needed and follow up on effectiveness of the accommodations. Collaborate with court staff and judicial officers to participate in the interactive process and assist with facilitating reasonable accommodations.
- Provide information about and arrange for the use of appropriate auxiliary aids and devices.
- Ensure ADA-related signage and other information is in place and accurate.
- Suggest or assist in making modifications to court operations and practices to ensure that court programs and services are fully accessible.
- Investigate grievance complaints.
- Ensure the District is complying with all ADA Title II mandates.
- Conduct investigations of all complaints.
- Cooperate with the Statewide ADA office by providing all requested information during an investigation.
- Maintain contact with staff and judges to ensure that services provided are effective.
- Conduct and participate in all activities related to the self-evaluation process and provide the results to the office of the Statewide ADA Coordinator.
- Maintain a record of all accommodations granted and denials.
- Maintain a record of grievances filed and results.

Court personnel who become aware of a need for an accommodation may consult with the ADA Coordinator for their district for assistance. In turn, the local ADA Coordinator may request additional assistance from the Statewide ADA Title II Coordinator.

Seventh Judicial District ADA Coordinator:

Rachel Gonzales

socdr1g@nmcourts.gov

(575) 835-0050

Should Rachel Gonzales be unavailable, employees and the public may contact Jason Jones, Court

Executive Officer, at socdjej@nmcourts.gov or (505) 835-0050.

IV. PROVISION OF ASL INTERPRETERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

The provision of spoken language and signed language interpreters, and other communication access accommodations, in court proceedings is based in New Mexico State Statute and the Constitution. The Constitution references language access in multiple sections, including Article II, Section 14 and Article VII, Section 3.

Title II of the ADA requires courts to provide qualified sign language interpreters or other accommodations to ensure effective communication with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Interpreters will be provided at no cost to deaf or hard-of-hearing litigants, witnesses, jurors and observers (when an observer has submitted a request to the court prior to the proceeding) in any type of proceeding in the New Mexico courts.

V. ASL RESOURCES FOR JURORS

The New Mexico AOC provides an open-captioned orientation video for Deaf and hard-of-hearing jurors:

https://jury.nmcourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2020/12/JuryOrientation_capt_eng.webm

VI. OUT-OF-COURTROOM CONTACTS

The Seventh Judicial District and Magistrate Courts report that the majority of out-of-courtroom contacts occur with court staff at the clerk's window. Contacts with security personnel are infrequent, as Socorro County District Court is the only court in the district with a bailiff (who is a court employee). Accommodations requested have primarily been for ASL, cognitive disabilities, and a juror with mobility concerns. The ADA Coordinator will keep track of accommodation requests, along with documenting any denials and the reason for the denial.

AOC will mail service animal signage to the Court, to be displayed in every courthouse in the district.

The LAP/ADA planning team will collaborate with the Statewide ADA Coordinator to create a handout for staff and the court bailiff containing basic information about accommodating requests, regulations around service animals, and ADA Coordinator contact details.

VII. LIVE CHAT DEVICES

In an effort to lead the way in augmenting accessibility for Deaf and hard-of-hearing court users, AOC has begun piloting the use of live chat UbiDuo devices. This technology enables live chat to take place between the court customer and staff, with each party typing into their respective station. Walk-in Deaf and hard of hearing court users who have not submitted advance notice of interpreter need can now converse immediately at the counter, eliminating the need to pass paper notes back and forth or to wait for an interpreter. Live chat devices have also been helpful in the provision of services to individuals

with speech difficulties.

The Court will provide the following link to staff for training in how to use the devices:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2ceYxbGvAQ>

As of the latest revision of this plan, the Seventh Judicial District did not yet have UbiDuo devices in any of its courthouses. The Office of the Statewide ADA Coordinator supplies these devices to the courts as funding permits.

VIII. JUDICIAL AND STAFF TRAINING

The Statewide ADA Office offers regular training in partnership with the Southwest ADA Center and other disability organizations. The Statewide Coordinator notifies all judiciary employees of upcoming trainings via email. Webinars are offered to all judiciary employees free of charge and are recorded and available on the Language Access YouTube channel at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAyCQWhtNiJFAGPrXnB-wQQ>

The Statewide ADA Coordinator's Office will be creating a basic ADA training video for new employees in Fiscal Year 2023 which will be distributed to all judicial districts. Additional training assistance is available to the Seventh Judicial District on request by contacting the Office of the Statewide ADA Coordinator.

IX. PUBLIC NOTICE

All public entities must provide information to the public, program participants, program beneficiaries, applicants and employees about the ADA and how it applies to the public entity.

A new Americans with Disabilities Act page was created and added to the New Mexico Courts website in October 2021. The page includes the Notice of Rights (in English, Spanish and ASL); the Request for Accommodations, Grievance Procedure and Complaint forms (in English and Spanish), and contact information for the Statewide ADA Coordinator.

<https://www.nmcourts.gov/americans-with-disabilities-ada>.

<https://www.nmcourts.gov/estadounidenses-con-discapacidades>.

The Court will create and publish an ADA email address, ADA.7thdistrict@nmcourts.gov, in order to keep track of any incoming email requests from the public.

A hard copy of the Seventh Judicial District LAP/ADA Plan (in English and Spanish) shall be kept at the public counter of the District courthouse and in the lobby of the Magistrate courthouses. Copies of the plan will be provided to the public on request, in English, Spanish or alternative formats. In addition, the Seventh Judicial District posts the plan at

<https://seventhdistrictcourt.nmcourts.gov/language-access-plan> and AOC posts the plan at

<https://languageaccess.nmcourts.gov/language-access-plans>.

X. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The statewide Grievance Procedure is attached to this plan and also posted on the ADA website in

English and Spanish at: <https://www.nmcourts.gov/americans-with-disabilities-ada/forms>.

XI. APPROVAL AND EVALUATION OF ADA PLAN

A. ADA Plan Approval

The Seventh Judicial District ADA plan is subject to approval by the Chief Judge and Court Executive Officer. Any future revisions to the plan will be submitted to the Chief Judge and Court Executive Officer for approval, and then forwarded to the AOC.

B. Annual Evaluation

Annually, or more frequently if needed, the Court will review the effectiveness of its ADA plan and update it as necessary.

C. Seventh Judicial District ADA Coordinator

Rachel Gonzales
Seventh Judicial District Court
socdrlg@nmcourts.gov
(575) 835-0050

D. Statewide ADA Coordinator

Peggy Cadwell
New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts
111 Lomas Ave NW Suite 300, Albuquerque NM 87102
ADA@nmcourts.gov
(505) 414-5313

E. ADA Plan Effective date:

See: LAP & ADA Plan signature page

**LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN
& ADA PLAN SIGNATURE PAGE**

A. Effective Date:

LAP original effective date: July 3, 2012

ADA plan original effective date: February 24, 2023

Latest revision of LAP and ADA plan: February 24, 2023

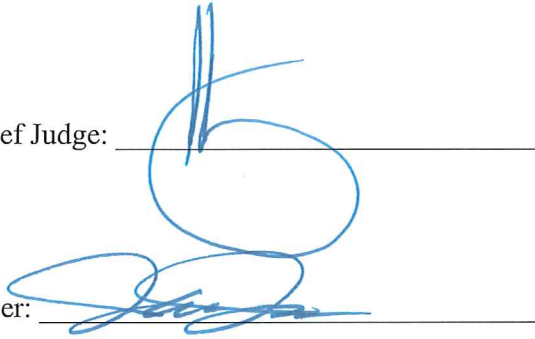
B. Approved By:

Hon. Mercedes Murphy, District Court Chief Judge: _____

Date: 2/14/23

Jason Jones, District Court Executive Officer: _____

Date: 2/14/2023



ATTACHMENTS

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN:

- A) Members of the Seventh Judicial District LAP/ADA Planning Team**
- B) Interpreter Statistics**
- C) Out-of-Courtroom Encounters Data**
- D) Language Access Complaint Procedure and Form**

ADA PLAN:

- 1) Notice of Rights**
- 2) Request for Accommodations**
- 3) Grievance Procedure**
- 4) Complaint Form**

**Seventh Judicial District LAP
Revised 2023
Attachment A**

Seventh Judicial District Language Access Planning Team

Jason Jones, District Court Executive Officer (**LAP Coordinator**)

Rachel Gonzales, Court Manager 2, Language Access Specialist & **ADA Coordinator**, Socorro & Catron County District Court

Stephanie Vega, Administrative Assistant, Socorro & Catron County District Court

Susan Rossignol, Court Manager 2, Torrance County District Court

Mary Mora, Court Manager 2, Sierra County District Court

Melinda Martinez, Court Manager 1, Catron County Magistrate Court

Diona Lucero, Court Manager 2, Sierra County Magistrate Court

Maggie Gibson, Court Manager 2, Torrance County Magistrate Court

Amanda Lujan, Court Manager, Socorro County Magistrate Court

**Seventh Judicial District LAP
Revised 2023
Attachment B**

Courtroom Interpreter Data

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2022
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	5
Socorro County District	Spanish	32
	Navajo	17
Torrance County District	Spanish	43
	Vietnamese	1
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	12
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	90
	Navajo	14
	American Sign Language	5
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	24
	Hindi	1
Totals	Spanish	206
	Navajo	31
	American Sign Language	5
	Vietnamese	1
	Hindi	1
		244 total assignments in all languages across all courthouses

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2020
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	4
Socorro County District	Spanish	42
	Navajo	22
Torrance County District	No data available	No data available
Catron County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Sierra County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available

Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	14
	Chinese Mandarin	3
Totals	Spanish	60
	Navajo	22
	Chinese Mandarin	3
		85 total interpreter assignments in all languages across 4 of 8 courthouses

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2018
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	5
	American Sign Language	3
Socorro County District	Spanish	23
	Navajo	23
	American Sign Language	10
Torrance County District	Spanish	16
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	30
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	9
Totals	Spanish	83
	Navajo	23
	American Sign Language	13
		119 total interpreter assignments in all languages across 7 of 8 courthouses

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2017
Catron County District	N/A	0

Sierra County District	Spanish	8
	American Sign Language	5
Socorro County District	Spanish	23
	Navajo	21
	American Sign Language	4
Torrance County District	Spanish	47
	Japanese	1
Catron County Magistrate	Spanish	1
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	22
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	43
	Navajo	18
	American Sign Language	4
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	15
	Punjabi	2
Totals	Spanish	159
	Navajo	39
	American Sign Language	13
	Punjabi	2
	Japanese	1
		214 total interpreter assignments in all languages across all 8 courthouses

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 2016 to Dec 2016
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	12
	American Sign Language	2
Socorro County District	Spanish	35
	Navajo	3
Torrance County District	Spanish	21
	American Sign Language	1

	Japanese	1
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	46
	Navajo	2
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	39
Total for all courthouses combined	Spanish	153
	Navajo	5
	American Sign Language	3
	Japanese	1
		162 total interpreter assignments in all languages across 7 of 8 courthouses

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 2015 to Dec 2015
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	11
	American Sign Language	1
Socorro County District	Spanish	21
	Navajo	1
Torrance County District	Spanish	16
	American Sign Language	1
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	10
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	52
	Navajo	9
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	32
	Polish	1
	American Sign Language	1
Total for all courthouses	Spanish	142

combined	Navajo	10
	American Sign Language	3
	Polish	1
	156 total interpreter assignments in all languages across all 8 courthouses	

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 2014 to Dec 2014
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	1
Socorro County District	Spanish	6
	Navajo	2
Torrance County District	Spanish	5
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	12
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	15
	American Sign Language	1
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	30
	Russian	3
	Pulaar	1
Total for all courthouses combined	Spanish	69
	Navajo	2
	American Sign Language	1
	Russian	3
	Pulaar	1
		76 total interpreter assignments in all languages across all 8 courthouses

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 2013 to Dec 2013
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	3
Socorro County District	Spanish	2
	Navajo	3
Torrance County District	Spanish	6
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	8
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	20
	Navajo	2
	American Sign Language	1
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	50
Total for all courthouses combined	Spanish	89
	Navajo	5
	American Sign Language	1
		95 total interpreter assignments in all languages across all 8 courthouses

Over a one-year period from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Jan 2012 to Dec 2012
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	15
Socorro County District	Spanish	12
	Navajo	1
Torrance County District	Spanish	5
Catron County Magistrate	Spanish	2
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	14
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	19
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	30

Total for all courthouses combined	Spanish	97
	Navajo	1
		98 total interpreter assignments in all languages across all 8 courthouses

Over a one-year period from September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2011, the courtroom interpreter assignments in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of interpreter assignment	Number of assignments Sep 2010 to Sep 2011
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	8
Socorro County District	Spanish	11
	Navajo	5
Torrance County District	Spanish	6
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	15
	Chinese	1
	American Sign Language	1
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	20
	Navajo	5
Total for all courthouses combined	Spanish	60
	Navajo	10
	Chinese	1
	American Sign Language	1
		72 total interpreter assignments in all languages across all 6 courthouses

**Seventh Judicial District LAP
Revised 2023
Attachment C**

Out-of-Courtroom Interpreter Data

Over a period from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2022
Catron County District	No data available	No data available
Sierra County District	Spanish	129
Socorro County District	Spanish	66
Torrance County District	No data available	No data available
Catron County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Sierra County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Torrance County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Total	Spanish	195

Over a period from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2020
Catron County District	No data available	No data available
Sierra County District	Spanish	55
Socorro County District	Spanish	53
Torrance County District	No data available	No data available
Catron County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Sierra County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	2
Total	Spanish	110

Over a period from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2018
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	19
Socorro County District	Spanish	76
Torrance County District	Spanish	8
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	300
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	46
Total	Spanish	449

Over a period from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2017
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	21
Socorro County District	Spanish	50
Torrance County District	Spanish	7
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	5
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	147
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	35
Total	Spanish	265

Over a period from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1, 2016 – Dec 31, 2016
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	Spanish	28
Socorro County District	Spanish	95
Torrance County District	Spanish	6
Catron County Magistrate	No data available	No data available

Sierra County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	53
Total	Spanish	182

Over a period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1, 2015 – Dec 31, 2015
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	No data available	No data available
Socorro County District	Spanish	107
Torrance County District	No data available	No data available
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	9
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Torrance County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Total	Spanish	116

Over a period from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1, 2014 – Dec 31, 2014
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	N/A	0
Socorro County District	Spanish	104
Torrance County District	N/A	0
Catron County Magistrate	N/A	0
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	8
Socorro County Magistrate	No data available	No data available
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	38
Total	Spanish	150

Over a period from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013, the out-of-courtroom encounters in the Seventh Judicial District were as follows:

Courthouse	Language of out-of-courtroom encounter	Number of encounters Jan 1, 2013 – Dec 31, 2013
Catron County District	N/A	0
Sierra County District	No data available	No data available
Socorro County District	Spanish	June – Dec: 23 (Jan – May data unavailable)
Torrance County District	Spanish	6
Catron County Magistrate	Spanish	5
Sierra County Magistrate	Spanish	23
Socorro County Magistrate	Spanish	160
Torrance County Magistrate	Spanish	129
	Somali	1
	Hindi	1
Total	Spanish	346
	Somali	1
	Hindi	1
		348 total out-of-courtroom encounters in all languages across 7 of 8 courthouses

Seventh Judicial District Court Language Access Complaint Procedure

Should a court client/customer feel that his/her rights to meaningful language access have not been met by the Court, the following procedure may be followed to register a complaint:

1. The person with the complaint (the complainant) should contact the Seventh Judicial District Language Access Plan (LAP) Coordinator to report the complaint by completing and submitting the attached Complaint Form, or by telephone.

Contact information: Jason Jones, Court CEO, Seventh Judicial District Court, 200 Church Street, Socorro NM 87801; socdjej@nmcourts.gov; (575) 835-0050 x20.

2. If the complainant does not believe that his/her concerns have been adequately addressed or resolved with the Seventh Judicial District LAP Coordinator, the complainant should contact the NM Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Senior Statewide Program Manager, Language Access Services.

Contact information: Bernice Ramos, Senior Statewide Program Manager, Language Access Services, New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts, 110 Calle de Alegra, Las Cruces NM 88001; aocbar@nmcourts.gov; (505) 231-1681.

3. The complainant may also, at any time in this process, contact the United States Department of Justice.

Contact information: Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20530; (202) 514-4609 or (202) 514-0716 (TTY).

Seventh Judicial District Court Language Access Complaint Procedure

Seventh Judicial District Court Language Access Complaint Form

The following information is necessary to assist us in processing your complaint. Should you require assistance in completing this form, please contact us at: Seventh Judicial District Court, 200 Church Street, Socorro, New Mexico 87801, (575) 835-0050, socdjej@nmcourts.gov

Please complete and return this form to:
Jason Jones, Language Access Plan Coordinator
Seventh Judicial District Court
200 Church Street, Socorro, New Mexico 87801
socdjej@nmcourts.gov
Phone: (575) 835-0050 x20
Fax: (575) 838-5217

1. Name of person filing complaint (the complainant):
2. Complainant's Address:
3. Complainant's Contact Information: Home Phone: Work Phone: Mobile Phone: E-mail:
4. If you are filing on behalf of another person, please include your name, address, phone number, and relation to the complainant: Name: Address: Phone: E-mail: Relationship to Complainant:

Seventh Judicial District Court Language Access Complaint Procedure

5. Please describe, in your own words, in what way you believe that your rights to language access were not met and whom you believe was responsible. Please use the back of this form or additional pages as needed:

6. Please indicate the date/s when the above occurred:

7. Please sign below:

Signature_____

Date Signed_____

Return this form to:

Jason Jones, Language Access Plan Coordinator
Seventh Judicial District Court
200 Church Street, Socorro, New Mexico 87801

socdjej@nmcourts.gov

Phone: (575) 835-0050 x20

Fax: (575) 838-5217

Americans with Disabilities Act Notice of Rights

The New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts is committed to ensuring equal access to and full participation in court programs, court services, and court activities for qualified individuals with disabilities, including attorneys, litigants, defendants, probationers, witnesses, victims, potential jurors, and public observers of court proceedings.

What is the American with Disabilities Act?

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was enacted to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. Under Title II of the ADA, no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of programs, services, or activities of a public entity. This prohibition applies to the New Mexico state courts as providers of public programs, services, and activities. Pursuant to the ADA, people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to access, use, and fully participate in court programs, services, and activities and not be discriminated against because of their disability.

Who is considered a person with a disability under the ADA?

According to the ADA, a person with a disability has a physical, mental, or communication disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as:

caring for oneself,

performing manual tasks,

walking,

seeing,

hearing,

speaking,

breathing,

learning,

and working.

An ADA-disability may also restrict the person's way of doing things and/or where and for how long the person can do a certain activity or function.

If I have a disability, what do the courts have to do to help me access the courts?

Whenever reasonable, New Mexico Court policies, practices, or procedures must be modified to make court programs, court services, and court activities readily accessible to and useable by people with disabilities. This includes removing architectural barriers by altering existing facilities where feasible or relocating services to an ADA-accessible site.

The ADA also includes removing communication barriers by providing auxiliary aids and services that would allow a person with a disability to effectively represent a client, be a party in a lawsuit, testify as a witness, serve on a jury, observe a hearing or trial, or otherwise participate in all programs, services and activities. In providing reasonable accommodations, the New Mexico Courts give ADA Title II primary consideration to the accommodations requested by the person with a disability when reasonable and practicable. To ensure ADA effective communications with people who are deaf or hard of hearing, the New Mexico Courts provide sign language and oral interpreters, TTYs, or other appropriate auxiliary aids and services free of charge. The New Mexico Courts may also provide information in Braille and Large Print for people with visual disabilities as a reasonable accommodation request.

How do I request an accommodation?

ADA accommodation requests should be submitted to the local Chief Executive Officer, ADA Coordinator for the District or their designees as soon as possible.

Reasonable notice must be given for the New Mexico Courts to consider an accommodation request without causing undue disruption to court proceedings. If the request concerns a particular court proceeding, the request should be made as soon as possible, preferably as soon as the person needing accommodation receives notice of the proceeding to allow consideration of the request and to arrange for a potential reasonable accommodation.

How do decisions about accommodations get made?

Once the request for accommodation has been received, the district's Chief Executive Officer, the District's ADA Coordinator or their designees will review the request and engage in an interactive process with the requestor to evaluate and provide a reasonable accommodation. The Statewide ADA Coordinator will be available for consultation as requested.

Every effort shall be made to meet the specific needs of the individual, and Primary Consideration will be given to the aid or service requested. However, if that aid or service results in an undue burden for the court or fundamental alteration of the court proceeding, program, service, or activity, the New Mexico Courts may suggest an equally effective accommodation. In providing reasonable accommodations, New Mexico Courts are not required by the ADA to make modifications that would fundamentally alter the affected service or program or cause undue financial or administrative burden.

The Chief Executive Officer, ADA Coordinator for the district or their designees, will notify the requestor whether the request has been approved or denied. If the request has been approved, the accommodation will be provided at no charge to the requestor. If the party requesting accommodation disagrees with the decision, a grievance may be filed.

ADA ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM

The _____ Court is committed to its policy of providing equal access to the Court consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), as amended, and all other applicable state and federal laws. If you have a disability that may restrict your ability to meaningfully participate in Court proceedings, programs, activities, or services, we will provide you with reasonable and appropriate accommodations at no cost to you. If you need assistance with or an accommodation for completing this form because of disability or limited English proficiency, please contact us at: _____

Please provide us with the following information:

Today’s date: _____

Your First Name: _____

Your Middle Initial: _____

Your Last Name: _____

Your Home Address: _____

City, State and Zip Code: _____

Your Phone Number: _____ Home ____ Cell Phone _____

Your Email Address: _____

Your Court Case Number: _____

ADA ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM

Date and Time: _____

What specific accommodation are you requesting?

Please provide any additional information that might be useful in the ADA Coordinator's review of your accommodation request:

ADA Grievance Procedure

The ADA grievance procedure may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in court proceedings, the provision of services, or programs and activities of the New Mexico Courts. To file a grievance, complete the Grievance Form below. Alternative means of filing a grievance will be made available upon request for an ADA accommodation or an accommodation for limited English proficiency pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The grievance should be submitted by the requestor and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but not later than thirty (30) calendar days after the alleged discrimination occurred to:

Peggy Cadwell
Statewide ADA Title II Coordinator
New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts
ADA@nmcourts.gov
(505) 414-5313

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after the receipt of the grievance, the Statewide ADA Coordinator will meet with the requestor to discuss the alleged discrimination and possible resolution.

Within thirty (30) calendar days after this meeting, the Statewide ADA Coordinator will respond in writing and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the requester, such as large print, Braille, audio or accessible video tape. The response will explain the position of the New Mexico Courts and offer options for substantive resolution of the grievance.

In the event the grievance cannot be resolved by the Statewide ADA Coordinator, further appeal may be made to the Administrative Director of the Courts. The requestor shall submit their appeal to the Administrative Director of the Courts within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving the written decision by the Statewide ADA Coordinator.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the Administrative Director of the Courts will review the alleged discrimination as well as the proposed resolution and within thirty (30) calendar days, provide the requestor with a written decision. All grievances received by the Statewide ADA Coordinator and the corresponding responses to the grievances shall be maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts for a minimum period of three years.

Applicable federal statutes and regulations: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination by federally funded organizations on the basis of disability in the delivery of services and employment practices (29 U.S.C. § 794) and 28 C.F.R. Part 42, Subpart G; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the delivery of services and employment practices (42 U.S.C. § 12132) and 28 C.F.R. Part 35

Americans with Disabilities Act Complaint Form

For Staff Completion Only

Date Received: ____/____/____

Received by: _____

Date of Resolution: _____

Please complete all boxes and sections on the information form. Print or type all entries.

PERSON MAKING THE COMPLAINT:

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

M.I: _____

Address: _____

Your Home/Cell phone: (____) ____-_____

Your Work number: (____) ____-_____

Email Address:

What is the best way to contact you? Home Phone Cell Phone Work
Mail Email Other: _____

What is the best time to contact you? _____

Check: Yes ____ No____: I require an accommodation for filing and resolving my complaint. Please contact me at the phone numbers and email addresses I listed to make accommodation arrangements.

DETAILS OF COMPLAINT

Date of Incident: ____/____/____

Court

Location _____

Identify the person and/or division in the Court

Please describe the concern in your own words. Use the back of the form if additional space is needed. Attach any letters or other documentation that detail the issues. Please be as specific as possible, including all names and dates.

DESIRED RESOLUTION

In your opinion, what action should be taken by the Court to resolve this matter?

HOW YOUR COMPLAINT IS HANDLED

The vision of the New Mexico Courts is to be an efficient and fair forum built on a foundation of integrity and administered by a team committed to efficient, timely, and innovative services. To this end, any complaint received by the Court will be processed in a timely manner. Complaints are processed in the order that they are received or by degree of severity. Each complaint is reviewed and investigated by a supervisor or designee. The outcome of the investigation or resolution will be disclosed to the person making the complaint.

FOR STAFF COMPLETION ONLY:

Investigation Date: ____/____/____

Resolution Date: ____/____/____

Complainant contacted and informed of resolution Yes/ No

Date Contacted: _____

Reason complainant not contacted:
