ACCESS TO JUSTICE
Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts

LANGUAGE SERVICES IN THE MARYLAND COURTS

FISCAL YEAR 2025

mdcourts.gov/accesstojustice

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LANGUAGE ACCESS PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

In fiscal year 2025, the Maryland Judiciary reaffirmed its commitment to access to justice by strengthening and expanding its language access services so that limited English proficient and deaf and hard-of-hearing court users could fully participate in legal proceedings. This focus on language accessibility continues to be a cornerstone of the Judiciary's mission to provide fair, effective, and efficient justice for all.

Throughout the year, the Judiciary advanced ongoing projects while laying the groundwork for new initiatives that will further improve access in the years ahead. Technology-based solutions continued to play an important role, helping courts serve language-diverse communities more efficiently and effectively. At the same time, new initiatives were introduced to enhance interpretation and translation resources and strengthen the bilingual staff program.

By building on past successes and investing in future improvements, the Judiciary continues to ensure that all Marylanders, regardless of language or national origin, can navigate the Maryland court system with fairness, dignity, and full access to justice.

THE COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM

Since its establishment in 1996, the Maryland Judiciary's Court Interpreter Program has steadily expanded and evolved into one of the most exemplary court interpreter programs in the nation. Today, the program provides certified and qualified foreign language and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for in-person and remote interpretation for court proceedings and numerous court-related events. In addition, it coordinates and responds to requests for accommodations for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing by securing American Sign Language interpreters (ASL), Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI), Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) services, and other resources as needed.

STAFF INTERPRETERS

Staff interpreters play a vital role in the Judiciary's delivery of language access services. Maryland Judiciary staff interpreters are seasoned professionals who provide high-quality interpretation across a wide range of proceedings: from complex, high-stakes trials to day-to-day assistance at court counters. Their presence ensures consistent, reliable language access where it is most needed. At present, all staff interpreters are certified in Spanish, reflecting the high demand for Spanish language services throughout the state.

TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Clerk's offices play a critical role as the first point of contact for many court users. To ensure meaningful access, staff in clerk's offices, as well as commissioners, court help centers, and other court personnel, have access to Language Line accounts that provide on-demand telephonic interpretation. This service allows individuals to communicate their needs in their own language, whether in person at the counter or over the phone. While telephonic interpretation is not typically used for courtroom proceedings, it is an indispensable tool at the public points of service in the Maryland courts.

VIDEO INTERPRETATION SERVICES IN COURTROOMS

The Court Interpreter Program continues to promote video remote interpreting (VRI), with a particular focus on ensuring interpreters can be connected quickly and effectively to Maryland courtrooms when the rest of the participants are onsite (hybrid VRI). This includes supporting courts in facilitating remote interpretation for critical proceedings such as bail reviews, where timely access to language services is essential. Whether a hearing is conducted fully remote or in a hybrid format, the program ensures that both spoken language and ASL interpreters can seamlessly join and provide interpretation, making remote access a reliable and efficient option for the courts.

ON-DEMAND REMOTE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE SERVICES

Just as Language Line provides on-demand telephonic interpretation for spoken languages, the Judiciary offers a comparable service for the deaf community. All courts and court-based services, including clerk's counters, commissioner stations, and court help centers, have access to accounts and software that enable on-demand video remote interpreting in ASL. This service ensures that deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals can immediately communicate their needs through videoconferencing whenever they appear at a public point of service.

QUALIFIED BILINGUAL STAFF

The Maryland Judiciary recognizes the value of its diverse workforce, which includes staff members from many cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To build on this strength, the Judiciary launched the Bilingual Staff Program in fiscal year 2023. This initiative formalizes the role of public-facing employees who are fluent in Spanish, enabling them to directly assist court users in their own language. By leveraging staff's multilingual skills, the program enhances customer service, reduces barriers for limited English proficient individuals, and helps to ensure equal access to justice.

TRANSLATED COURT FORMS

Court Interpreter Program staff oversee a statewide service for needed written translations, which include rendering court forms into Chinese, French, Korean, Russian, and Spanish in an interlineated format. As new forms are developed or

existing ones are revised, the program manages the translation of those documents to ensure consistency and accuracy. While these translated forms are available on the Judiciary website to assist court users in understanding the content, all court forms must still be completed in English. The translated versions are provided for informational purposes only. Translated court forms can be accessed in court forms on the Judiciary website.

LANGUAGE PORTALS

The Judiciary is committed to ensuring that limited English proficient (LEP) users can access critical online information in their own language. To that end, the Judiciary maintains welcome pages in Chinese, French, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. These pages provide step-by-step instructions on navigating the Judiciary's website, along with links to relevant forms and resources on how to work with court interpreters. In addition, the Judiciary website features a Google Translate tab, allowing users to view website content in all languages supported by Google Translate. Together, these resources help reduce language barriers and make the Judiciary's web content more accessible to all.

COURT HELP VIDEOS

Access to Justice maintains a wide range of court help videos on legal topics designed to help the public navigate the courts. Several of these videos explain how to request an interpreter in spoken and ASL languages and how to work effectively with them in the courtroom. Access to Justice continues to expand this library by adding new videos, and transcripts are provided in English and Spanish.

MONTHLY Q&A SESSIONS FOR REGISTRY INTERPRETERS

Since December 2021, the Court Interpreter Program has been hosting monthly informational sessions for registry interpreters. These Q&A meetings have become a highly popular forum, giving interpreters the opportunity to raise questions and seek clarification about program operations and policies. Beyond their popularity, the sessions play an instrumental role in maintaining open and ongoing channels of communication with the interpreter community, strengthening collaboration and trust.

AYUDA LANGUAGE BANK

In fiscal year 2025, Access to Justice continued its successful partnership with Ayuda, a nonprofit legal organization, by renewing the grant that supports interpreter and translation services for civil legal aid providers across Maryland. Through this ongoing collaboration, Ayuda ensures that civil legal aid organizations can communicate effectively with clients who have limited English proficiency, expanding access to justice for vulnerable communities.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Access to Justice Court Interpreter Program regularly engages in activities to promote awareness of the Judiciary's language access services among stakeholders and communities that may not otherwise know these services are available.

This work continued in fiscal year 2025 with a series of new training and outreach initiatives. In January 2025, Court Interpreter Program staff, Ksenia Boitsova and Xiomara Iglesias, presented a Judicial College Professional Development webinar on *How to Assist Limited English Proficient Customers.*

In February 2025, program staff, together with an ASL consultant, delivered a Judicial College webinar on *How to Assist Hard of Hearing Customers.* As a Certified Deaf Interpreter, our ASL consultant enriched the session with practical insights and best practices for court staff when working with members of the Deaf community.

Most recently, at the MSBA Annual Summit in June 2025, Access to Justice staff members Ksenia Boitsova and Xiomara Iglesias joined the chair of the Court Access Committee, Hon. Michael Siri, to present a session titled *How to Work Effectively with Court Interpreters* in Ocean City.

In addition, on August 14, 2025, Ksenia Boitsova participated in Maryland Legal Aid's *Language Access 101* training. She presented on the language access tools available within the Judiciary for free legal aid attorneys and provided guidance on how to appropriately address and resolve interpreter errors.

RECENT INITIATIVES

The Maryland Judiciary has undertaken several initiatives during fiscal year 2025 to enhance its ability to respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of persons with limited English proficiency.

QUALIFIED BILINGUAL STAFF

The Qualified Bilingual Staff Program allows courts to test and certify employees fluent in Spanish as qualified bilingual staff. Candidates must pass a proficiency test to demonstrate they can communicate effectively with the public. Those who qualify receive a salary stipend, wear a badge identifying their status, and are recognized for serving court users directly in Spanish without the need for an interpreter. This program plays an important role in eliminating communication barriers and promoting access to justice. After a successful pilot, the program has continued to grow and was expanded to several additional jurisdictions in fiscal year 2025.

Circuit Courts

- Four (4) new Qualified Bilingual employees in Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties.
- Sixteen (16) total Qualified Bilingual employees now serving across several circuit courts.

The District Court

- Four (4) new Qualified Bilingual employees in Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County.
- Nine (9) total Qualified Bilingual employees now serving across the District Courts.

These accomplishments demonstrate a steady growth of the Qualified Bilingual Staff Program, which is now being rolled out to all jurisdictions across the state.

COURT HELP VIDEOS

The Judiciary is excited to offer a new series of on-demand video trainings for judges and magistrates as part of their professional development. Access to Justice staff, drawing on their deep expertise in courtroom interpretation and their experience in developing educational content, created the scripts for these videos to ensure they are both practical and accessible.

Available on the Judiciary's Intranet, *Tips on How to Work with Court Interpreters* is a five-part series covering key topics: preparing for an interpreted proceeding, conducting an interpreted proceeding, working with team interpreters, using video

remote interpreters, and understanding relay interpretation. Each video is designed to be brief so that judges and magistrates can view them conveniently.

By engaging with these resources, judges gain effective tools to manage interpreters in the courtroom. When judges apply best practices, such as being mindful of pacing, allowing interpreters sufficient time, and using proper techniques for team or remote interpreting, it reduces errors and delays. This, in turn, ensures that limited English proficient participants can participate meaningfully. Although the videos are directed to judges, they indirectly strengthen access to justice for all court users who rely on interpreters.

FIGURE 1. VIDEOS FOR JUDGES ON "TIPS ON HOW TO WORK WITH COURT INTERPRETERS"

COURT STAFF TRAININGS

In fiscal year 2025, the Court Interpreter Program introduced biweekly, drop-in training sessions for court staff who receive interpreter requests and schedule interpreters. These ongoing sessions provide staff with the opportunity to ask questions about best practices for assigning spoken language and ASL interpreters, as well as about the use of language access tools, policies, and procedures. The Court Interpreter Program will continue offering these trainings to ensure that court staff in all jurisdictions have the support and resources they need to serve the public effectively.

COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM

REGISTRY

In fiscal year 2025, the Court Interpreter Program continued to provide the Judiciary and Marylanders with a broad range of language access tools, including highly qualified interpreters for court proceedings and court-related services. To support this mission, the program not only recruited and tested new interpreters but also expanded professional development opportunities by offering webinars and workshops designed to strengthen interpreter skills and ensure consistent, high-quality court interpretation services across the courts.

The Maryland Court Interpreter Program maintains a Registry of certified and qualified interpreters who are authorized to serve in the Maryland courts. In fiscal year 2025, the Registry included 470 interpreters representing 78 languages. New interpreters are added on a continual basis, while others are removed when they do not meet program requirements. To remain on the Registry, interpreters must fulfill ongoing testing and continuing education obligations, participate in program activities, and sign an acknowledgment agreeing to comply with program policies and the Canons of the Maryland Code of Conduct for Court Interpreters. These requirements are designed to ensure the continued quality and integrity of interpretation services across the Maryland courts.

WORKSHOP & EXAMINATIONS

In fiscal year 2025, the Court Interpreter Program continued its efforts to recruit, test, and train new interpreters to be placed on the Registry. Prospective interpreters were offered opportunities to participate in preparatory programs and take tests, and those working in languages with available certification exams were able to sit for court interpreter certification exam.

The following recruitment and training activities are generally offered twice each year to maintain a steady pipeline of certified and qualified interpreters:

Introductory Webinar
Court Interpreter Written Exam
Language Proficiency Interviews
Orientation Webinar
Mandatory Training on ZOOM and ScheduleInterpreter Platform
Oral Examination Preparation Workshop
Certification Examinations

In fiscal year 2025, 234 candidates were offered an opportunity to qualify for the program. Forty-four (44) of those candidates fulfilled the testing and training requirements and were added to the Court Interpreter Registry in the following

languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Farsi, Tigrigna, Bulgarian, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, French, Haitian Creole, Dari, Pashto, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Registry interpreters are required to complete 16 hours of continuing education every two years. To support compliance, program staff monitor each interpreter's progress and send reminders well in advance of reporting deadlines. In fiscal year 2025, the Judiciary continued to offer workshops and webinars at no cost to Registry interpreters, providing accessible opportunities to earn the required credits. These trainings are designed to strengthen professional skills while ensuring compliance with continuing education standards. Table 1 summarizes the courses offered during the year and the number of participants in each program.

TABLE 1. INTERPRETER CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES - FY25

CLASS NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Court Interpreter Ethics	46
Resilience Interpreting	63
Court Interpreter Ethics Advanced	40
Building a Note-Taking System from Ground Up	28
Note-Taking for Veteran Interpreters	29
Witness Management	85
Consecutive Interpreting	81
Deliberate Practice in Simultaneous Interpreting	95
Deliberate Practice in Note-Taking	68
A Legal Encounter from A to Z	79
Team Interpreting in Court	61
Masters of Family Law Interpretation	59
Clear Speech: English Pronunciation Strategies	48
Vocabulary Building – Traffic Accidents	63
Ethics in Action: Real World Challenges	55
AI & You: A Hands-On Webinar for Court Interpreters	48
Vocabulary Building - Firearms	43
Upgrade Your Sight Translation	36
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	**1,045**

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Court Interpreter Program offers certification exams twice a year in 15 languages. The exam tests the interpreter's skills in sight translation, consecutive interpretation, and simultaneous interpretation. Passing this challenging exam is a true testament to an interpreter's superb interpretation skills.

In fiscal year 2025, the Court Interpreter Program conducted 75 certification exams. Seven (7) interpreters passed the certification exams and became certified in Spanish, Korean, and Russian.

The Maryland Judiciary maintains a public listing of Maryland court certified and qualified interpreters who have given permission for their name, e-mail address, and phone numbers to be released to users of interpretation services outside of the Maryland Judiciary.

The Court Interpreter Program actively recruits interpreter candidates in all languages and grants reciprocity to out-of-state certified interpreters for onsite and video-remote proceedings on a case-by-case basis.

Individuals interested in information on how to become listed on the Maryland Judiciary Court Interpreter Registry can visit the website at:

https://www.courts.state.md.us/interpreter

RELEASE LIST

Individuals looking for an interpreter for a private assignment outside of the Maryland Judiciary can check the Judiciary Interpreter Public Listing to see if there are interpreters listed under the requested language. The Administrative Office of the Courts is not responsible for any interaction between the interpreter and outside agencies or companies.

PROGRAM USE

CIRCUIT COURTS USAGE

Between fiscal years 2024 and 2025, the overall number of interpreter assignments in the circuit courts increased slightly from 10,113 to 10,469. Several jurisdictions saw notable growth, including the Circuit Court for Montgomery County (9%), the Circuit Court for Howard County (32%), and the Circuit Court for St. Mary's (45%). Smaller counties such as Dorchester, Somerset, and Calvert also showed clear increases in usage.

In contrast, the number of interpreter requests for the Circuit Court for Prince George's County declined by 11%, and the Circuit Court for Baltimore City declined by 6%. Overall, the distribution of interpreter requests shifted slightly in fiscal year

2025, with smaller jurisdictions seeing an increase in interpreter requests, while two of the largest counties saw reduced numbers of interpreter requests.

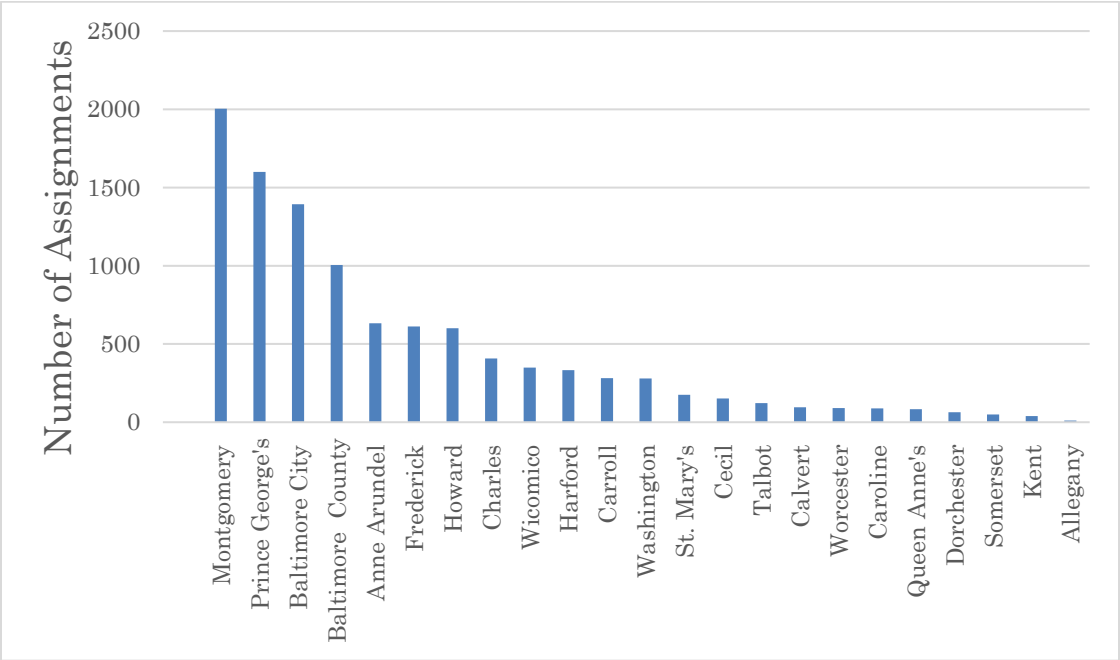

FIGURE 2. CIRCUIT COURTS - INTERPRETER ASSIGNMENTS BY JURISDICTION - FY25

As in previous years, the most requested languages in fiscal year 2025 were Spanish, ASL, Amharic, Arabic, French, and Mandarin. Spanish and ASL remain dominant, though both saw slight declines by 3.5% and 3.2%, respectively.

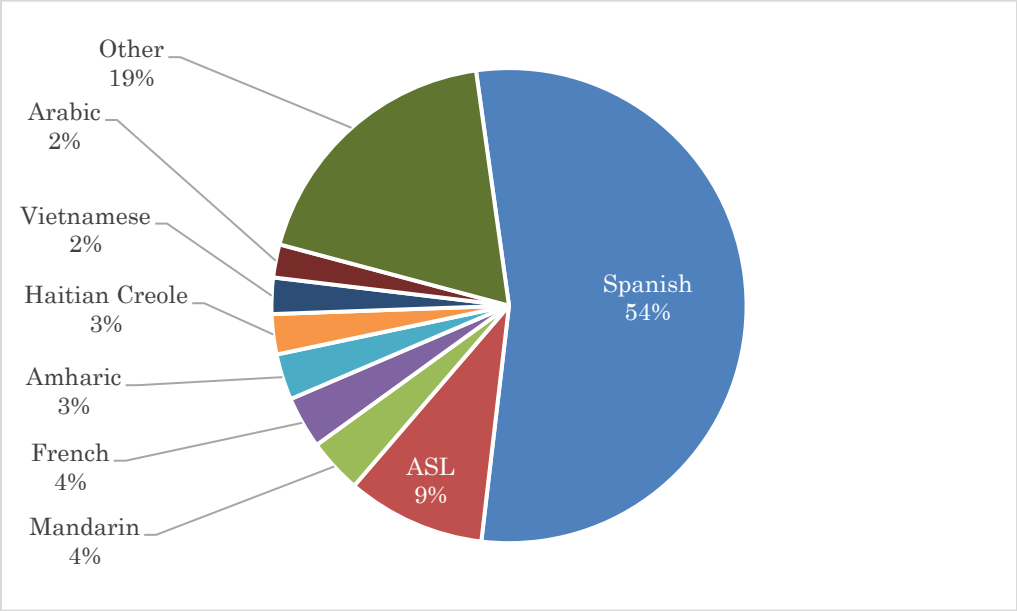

FIGURE 3. CIRCUIT COURTS - ASSIGNMENTS BY LANGUAGE - FY25

In fiscal year 2025, interpreters were requested in six new languages not previously requested in the circuit courts: Kinyarwanda, Kurdish, Taishanese, Oromic, Malayalam, and Ukrainian. While the numbers are small, their presence signals the expansion of linguistic diversity among court users.

In short, most of the growth came from court-ordered or court-referred services, while jury assignments declined. The bulk of interpreter activity continues to be in courtrooms.

TABLE 2. COURT INTERPRETER EVENT TYPES - CIRCUIT COURTS - FY25

EVENT TYPE	EVENTS	PERCENT
Court-Referred Service	440	4%
Courtroom Proceeding	9,568	92%
Juror	460	4%
Other	1	0%
Total	**10,469**	**100%**

Rule 1-333 requires courts to appoint certified interpreters, when possible, to provide the highest quality service to courts and those with limited English. For some languages, where no certification examination is administered, the courts will rely on qualified interpreters. Judiciary policy permits courts to assign qualified interpreters and non-registry interpreters when no certified or qualified Registry interpreters are available.

Court interpreters are provided in a full range of circuit court case types. As mentioned earlier, in fiscal year 2025, requests for interpreters rose slightly. The biggest growth came in family and criminal cases, while juvenile and non-family civil cases saw modest declines compared to fiscal year 2024.

TABLE 3. COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM CASE TYPE - CIRCUIT COURTS - FY25

CASE TYPE	ASSIGNMENTS	PERCENT
Civil - Family	6,087	58%
Civil - Non-Family	514	5%
Criminal	2,258	22%
Juvenile	805	8%
Traffic	3	0%
Unassigned	803	7%
Total	**10,469**	**100%**

District Court Usage

In fiscal year 2025, interpreter requests in the District Court increased by 6% compared to the previous year. While overall requests rose, the trends varied by county. The largest increases occurred in Baltimore City (37%), Montgomery County (19%), and Carroll County (66%). At the same time, interpreter requests declined notably in Prince George's County (27%) and Baltimore County (12%).

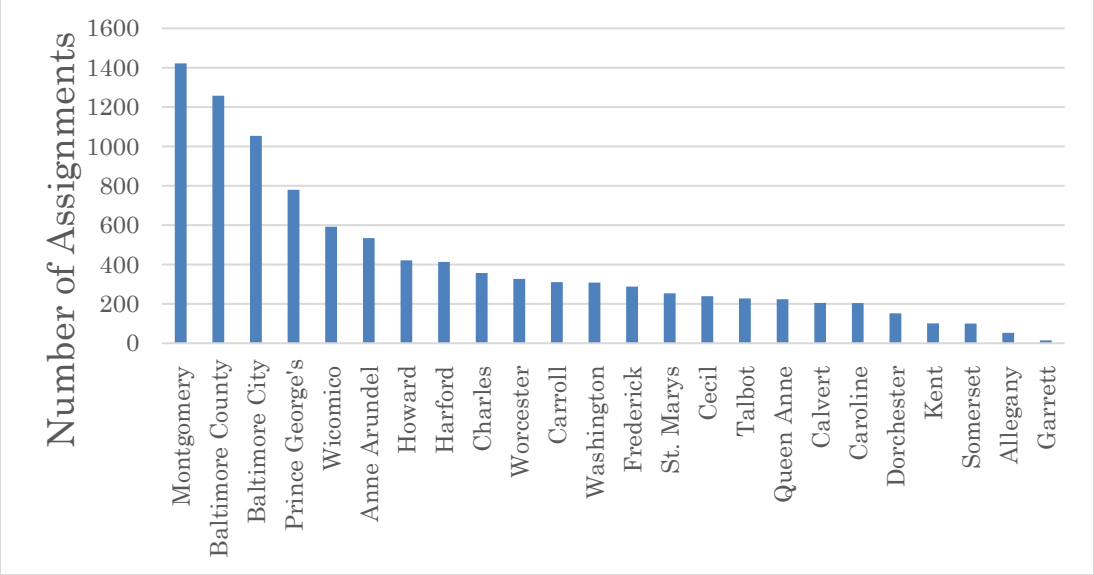

Figure 4. District Court - Interpreter Assignments by Jurisdiction - FY25

As in circuit courts, the demand for in-person interpreters is highest for Spanish, which represents 51% of all assignments in District Court locations.

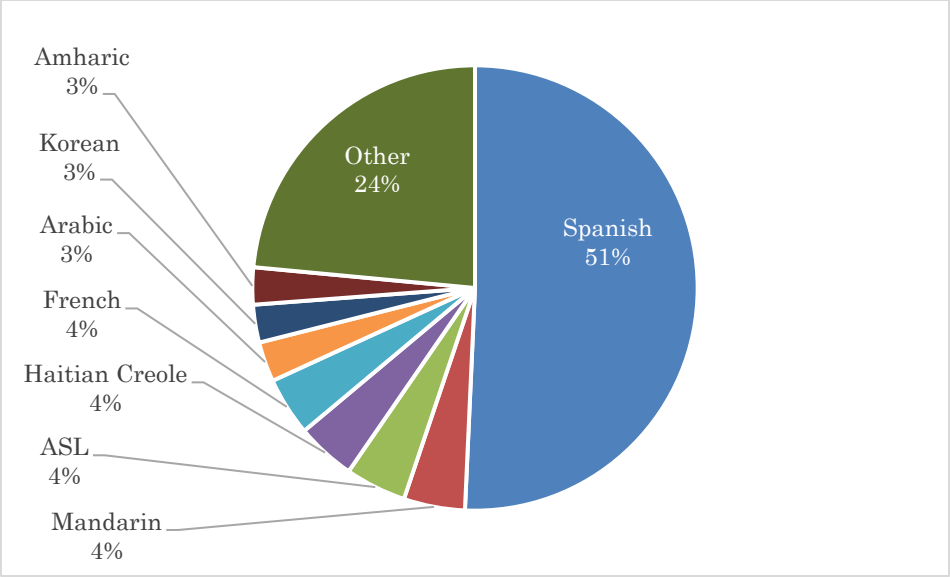

FIGURE 5. DISTRICT COURT - INTERPRETER ASSIGNMENTS BY LANGUAGE - FY25

Spanish remained the most requested language with nearly 5,000 assignments, while ASL remained the second most requested language at over 400 requests. Interpreters for a few new languages were requested in District Courts for the first time in fiscal year 2025, including Croatian, Fante, Foochow, Kirundi, and Luganda, reflecting the growing diversity of the Maryland communities served by the courts.

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TABLE 4. COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM EVENT TYPES - DISTRICT COURT - FY25

EVENT TYPE	EVENTS	PERCENT
Commissioner	16	0%
Court Referred Service	16	0%
Courtroom Proceeding	9,806	100%
Other	2	0%
Total	**9,840**	**100%**

Court interpreters are provided in a full range of District Court case types. In fiscal year 2025, the District Court experienced a noticeable increase in interpreter demand for criminal and traffic cases. Requests in family civil matters declined, while non-family civil cases showed a modest upward trend. Overall, the data shows that interpreter services in the District Court are increasingly concentrated in

criminal and traffic proceedings, which together account for the largest share of assignments.

TABLE 5. COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM CASE TYPES - DISTRICT COURTS - FY25

CASE TYPE	EVENTS	PERCENT
Civil - Family	378	4%
Civil - Non-Family	2,033	21%
Criminal	2,815	29%
Juvenile	5	0%
Traffic	4,184	43%
Unassigned	423	3%
Grand Total	**9,840**	**100%**

STAFF INTERPRETERS

The Maryland Judiciary currently employs thirty (30) Spanish-speaking staff interpreters. These full-time employees are available to interpret on-demand for court proceedings, court-related services, and between court staff and Spanish-speaking court users.

TABLE 6. STAFF INTERPRETERS (SPANISH) IN MARYLAND COURTS - FY25

DISTRICT COURT	CIRCUIT COURT
Anne Arundel (1)	Anne Arundel (2)
Baltimore City (3)	Baltimore City (1)
Baltimore County (1)	Baltimore County (2)
Frederick (1)	Frederick (1)
Howard (1)	Howard (1)
Montgomery (4)	Montgomery (6)
Prince George's (4)	Prince George's (2)

In fiscal year 2025 the Maryland Judiciary continued to expand the number of staff interpreters available to courts. In addition to providing interpretation in the courtroom, staff interpreters support local courts by helping to plan for language needs, raising awareness about available language services, and fostering relationships with the Spanish-speaking community. Open staff interpreter positions are posted on the Judiciary's career page.

TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION SERVICES

The Maryland Judiciary provides assistance to the public at numerous points of service within courthouse facilities, including clerk's offices, information counters, and self-help centers. To ensure meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency, the Judiciary utilizes Language Line telephonic interpretation services to facilitate real-time communication between court staff and customers. Posters and dual-handset phones are prominently displayed in clerk's offices and other high-traffic public areas to alert visitors to the availability of free language assistance and to encourage its use when needed.

In fiscal year 2025, the total number of events for which Language Line interpreters were provided grew by 17%, rising from 35,506 calls to 41,429. The largest increase occurred in the circuit courts, which saw a 31% increase in the use of Language Line services. Significant growth also took place at the Maryland Court Help Centers (25% increase) and in the District Court clerks' offices (26% increase), reflecting the expanding demand for telephonic language services at court counters and help centers. By contrast, interpreter use at the District Court commissioners' offices grew only slightly, up 5% from the previous year. Telephonic interpretation is not generally available for in-court proceedings where the use of Registry interpreters is preferred.

TABLE 7. TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION EVENTS - FY25

PROGRAM USER	FY2024	FY2025	PERCENT INCREASE
Circuit Courts	6,894	9,044	31%
District Court - Commissioners	17,197	18,022	5%
District Court - Clerks	4,664	5,916	26%
Maryland Court Help Centers	6,751	8,447	25%
Total Number of Events	**35,506**	**41,429**	**17%**

CIRCUIT COURTS

In fiscal year 2025, the circuit courts' use of telephonic interpretation increased by 31%. The Circuit Courts for Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, and Howard County reported the highest increase in the demand for telephonic interpretation services.

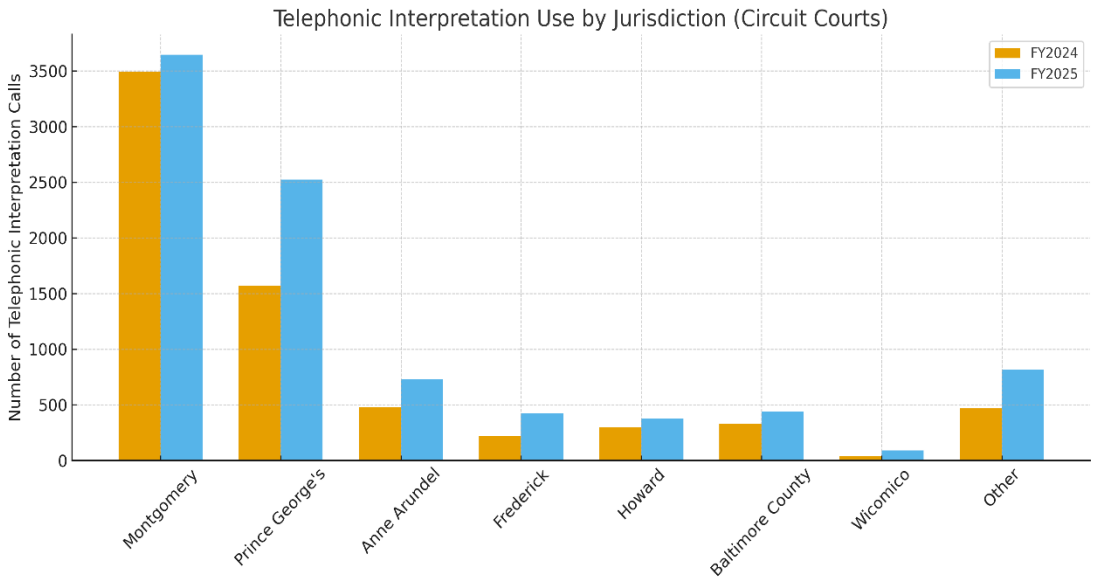

FIGURE 6. CIRCUIT COURTS - TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION BY JURISDICTION - FY24-FY25

The top six languages accounted for most telephonic interpretation requests, with Spanish alone making up 84% of all calls. Requests for interpreters were fielded in 13 new languages in fiscal year 2025, highlighting the expanding linguistic diversity in Maryland's courts, even though most of these new languages had very few requests: Ewe, German, Hebrew, Igbo, Indonesian, Japanese, Mongolian, Polish, Romanian, Rundi, Sinhala, Tamil, Wolof, and Zyphe.

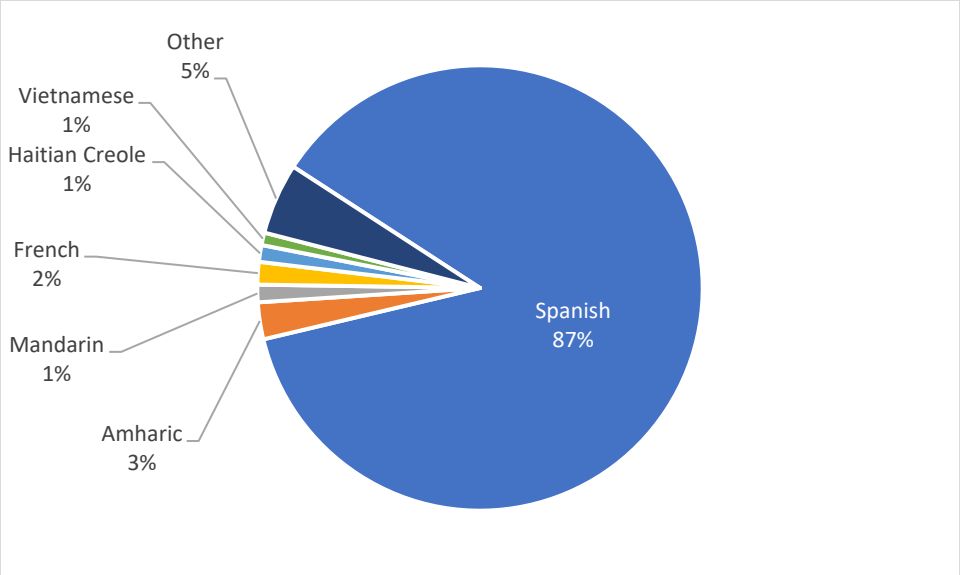

FIGURE 7. CIRCUIT COURTS - TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION BY LANGUAGE - FY25

DISTRICT COURT

District Court locations use telephonic interpreting extensively in commissioners' offices, at clerks' counters, and in District Court Help Centers.

CLERK'S OFFICE

In fiscal year 2025, telephonic interpretation requests at District Court clerks' offices rose by 27%. Spanish was requested in the overwhelming majority of requests, accounting for 82% of all calls, while Haitian-Creole and French also grew steadily. Other languages saw only minor changes. Interpreters in several new languages were requested for the first time in fiscal year 2025 including Bosnian, Ewe, Fulani, Gujarati, Krio, Lingala, Mam, Moroccan Arabic, and Kurdish Sorani, reflecting Maryland's increasingly diverse population.

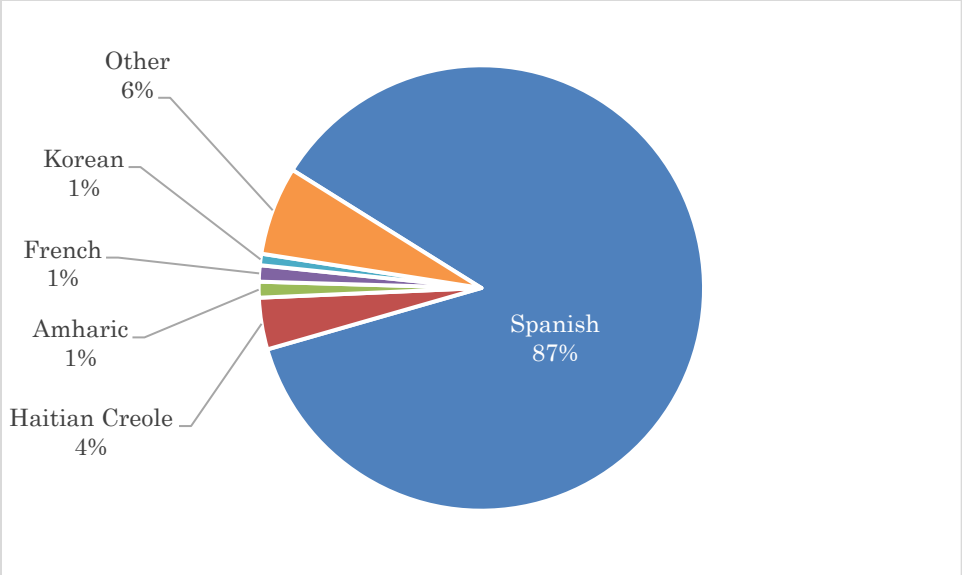

FIGURE 8. DISTRICT COURT - TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION BY LANGUAGE - FY25

COMMISSIONERS

District Court commissioners are judicial officers who are often the first point of contact for individuals who have been arrested. They conduct initial appearance hearings, determine probable cause, advise defendants of their rights, and set conditions for pre-trial release. Commissioners also review and issue arrest warrants, charging documents, and interim peace and protective orders in cases involving intimate partner violence and other matters. Commissioner stations operate 24-hours a day, seven days a week, year-round.

In fiscal year 2025, interpreter requests at District Court commissioners' offices grew slightly, with Spanish making up more than 90% of all calls. Notably, Romanian ranked among the top three languages, even though it is typically considered a lesser-use language for onsite interpreter requests. Several new languages, including Azerbaijani, Dinka, Fuzhou, Mandinka, Slovak, and Sylheti, were also requested for the first time.

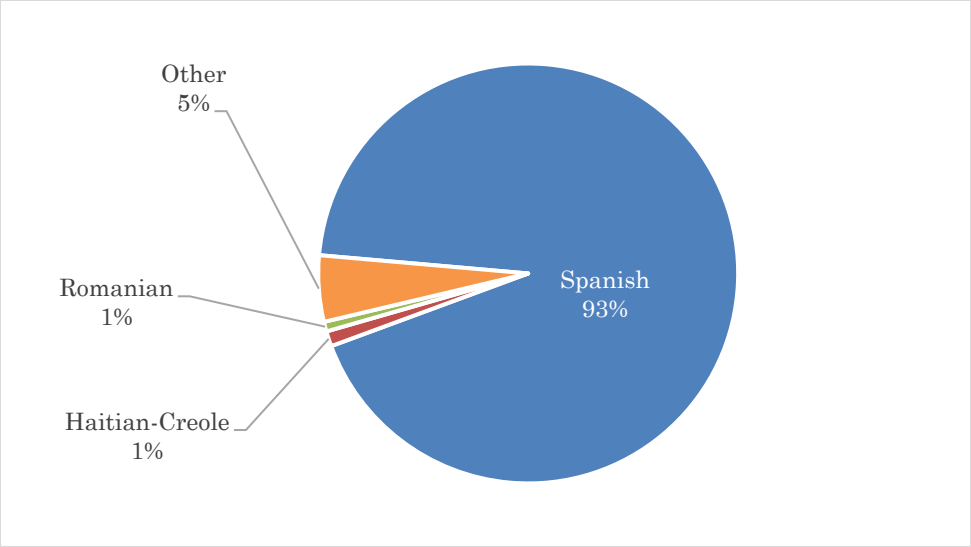

FIGURE 9. DISTRICT COURT COMMISSIONERS - TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION BY LANGUAGE - FY25

Location-based information for commissioners' use of telephonic interpretation is reflected in the chart below.

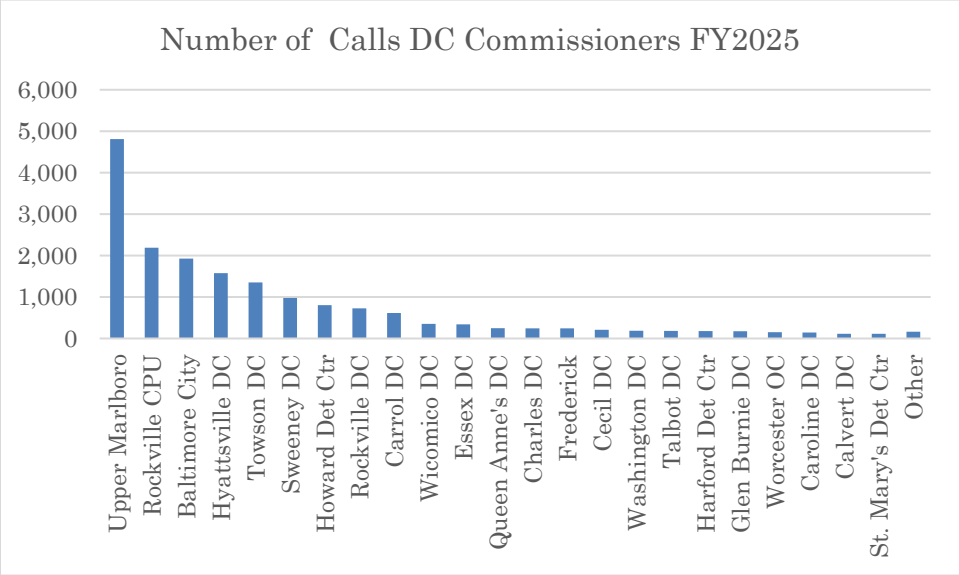

FIGURE 10. DISTRICT COURT COMMISSIONERS - TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION BY LOCATION - FY25

Court Help Centers

Through its statewide network of Court Help Centers, the Maryland Judiciary provides critical assistance to self-represented litigants as they navigate court processes and resolve legal issues.

In fiscal year 2025, the Maryland Court Help Centers recorded 8,447 telephonic interpretation calls, up from 6,751 calls in fiscal year 2024, representing a 25% increase in usage.

While Spanish continued to dominate, the demand also grew for several other languages, including Haitian Creole, Amharic, French, and Mandarin. Importantly, fiscal year 2025 saw the addition of nine new languages not requested the prior year, such as Ewe, Hebrew, Igbo, Khmer, Krio, Romanian, Sudanese Arabic, Toishanese, and Uzbek, reflecting both the Judiciary's expanding reach and the increasing diversity of limited English proficient communities seeking assistance.

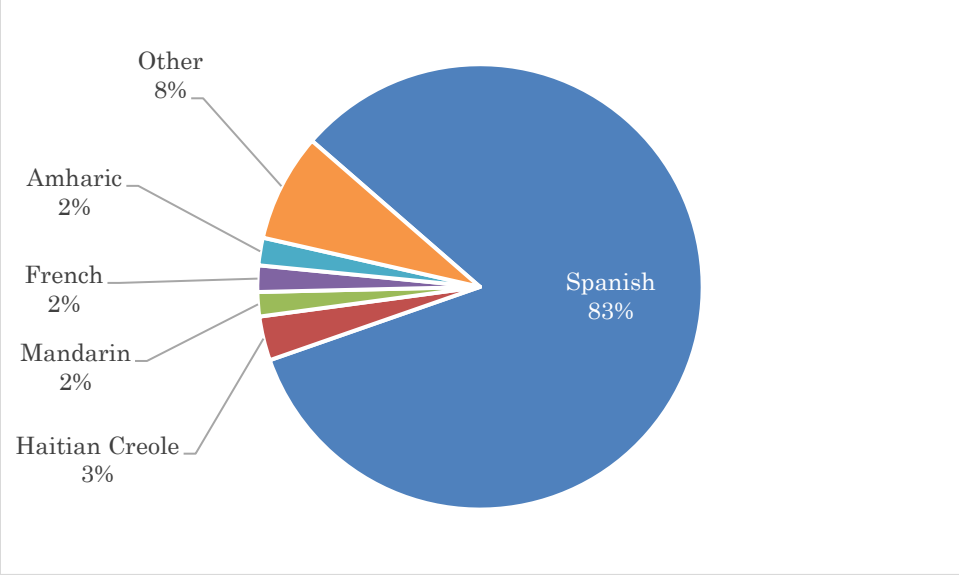

Figure 11. District Court Help Centers - Telephonic Interpretation by Language - FY25

VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING (VRI)

CIRCUIT COURTS

The Court Interpreter Program continues to enhance and refine the use of video remote interpreting (VRI) and related policies to ensure it remains an effective and reliable language access resource. In fiscal year 2025, the overall VRI usage in the circuit courts decreased by 17% compared to fiscal year 2024, reflecting a gradual return to in-person interpreting for more complex and high-stakes proceedings.

Larger jurisdictions such as Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, and Prince George's counties reported declines, while several smaller courts, including the circuit courts in Carroll, Charles, and St. Mary's counties, saw increases. These trends suggest that VRI in circuit courts is used strategically and when appropriate.

DISTRICT COURT

In the District Court, the Judiciary saw a significant expansion in VRI usage: an 89% increase over fiscal year 2024. Nearly every jurisdiction reported growth, with the largest increases in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll, Dorchester, Harford, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. The strong upward trend demonstrates the District Court's continued commitment to leveraging technology to provide timely and meaningful language access statewide. Video remote interpreting has proven to be an effective and efficient solution for handling District Court cases, which are typically brief and less complex in nature than circuit court cases.

REMOTE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE SERVICES

In fiscal year 2025, the Judiciary recorded 307 on-demand ASL video interpretation calls, up from 284 in fiscal year 2024, representing an 8% increase in the number of calls. However, the total number of minutes of service decreased from 9,117 to 8,282, reflecting a 9% reduction in total usage time. These figures suggest that while on-demand video ASL interpreting was used more frequently, the average duration per session decreased, which may indicate shorter, more routine interactions, such as assistance at clerk's counters, commissioner stations, or Court Help Centers. The increase in call volume is a great indicator of the growing comfort among court staff in using the on-demand platform to assist deaf users.

TABLE 8. REMOTE ASL SERVICES - FY24-FY25

	FY24	FY25	INCREASE
Transactions	284	307	8%
Minutes	9,117	8,282	-9%

TRANSLATION SERVICES

To ensure quality and consistency, Access to Justice uses an outside vendor to provide translations of official court forms, signs, brochures, video scripts, court instructions, and court web pages. Court Interpreter Program staff manage all translation projects, fielding requests from District Court Headquarters, individual courts, and others within the Maryland Judiciary. The Judiciary Translation Policy can be found at: https://www.courts.state.md.us/interpreter/translationservices

TABLE 9. TRANSLATION PROJECTS - FY25

REQUESTING COURT / DEPARTMENT	NO. OF PROJECTS REQUESTED
Access to Justice	34
District Court Headquarters	442
Office of Problem-Solving Courts	2
Wicomico Co Circuit Court	10
Total	**488**

In fiscal year 2025, the Judiciary completed 488 translation projects, a 22% decrease from 624 projects in fiscal year 2024. The majority of requests continued to come from District Court headquarters. Spanish, Chinese, French, Korean, and Russian remained the Judiciary's core translation languages, although Haitian Creole requests rose sharply from one project in fiscal year 2024 to eleven projects in fiscal year 2025, and Farsi translations were requested for the first time.

TABLE 10. TRANSLATION PROJECTS BY LANGUAGE - FY25

LANGUAGE	NO. OF PROJECTS REQUESTED
Arabic	1
Chinese	91
Farsi	1
French	91
Haitian Creole	11
Korean	91
Russian	91
Spanish	111

Court forms continued to dominate in fiscal year 2025, but declined slightly as a proportion of total requests, while publications and outreach materials increased.

TABLE 11. TRANSLATION PROJECT TYPES - COMPLETED - FY25

DOCUMENT TYPE	NO. OF PROJECTS REQUESTED
Brochure	10
Form	428
Notice	11
Publication - Other	28
Video Script	4
Web Content	7

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

Qualified Bilingual Program. Building on the success of the previous phase when the Qualified Bilingual Program was rolled out to five jurisdictions in fiscal year 2025, the program is now in the process of being expanded to all Maryland jurisdictions. Access to Justice and Human Resources continue to collaborate on the implementation and external recruitment to expand the program's reach. Bilingual individuals interested in serving the public directly in Spanish are encouraged to check the Judiciary's Career Page periodically for qualified bilingual position openings. This expansion supports the Judiciary's goal of improving access to justice by ensuring that Spanish-speaking court users can communicate effectively with court staff in their native language.

Judicial College Collaboration. The Court Interpreter Program will continue its partnership with the Judicial College of Maryland to deliver ongoing professional development for judges, magistrates, and court staff. Future trainings and presentations will focus on best practices for conducting proceedings with remote interpreters, ensuring that all Judiciary personnel remain equipped to manage interpreter-assisted hearings effectively and in compliance with established standards.

Interpreter Training and Recruitment. The Court Interpreter Program remains committed to strengthening the pool of certified and qualified interpreters through

ongoing recruitment of bilingual individuals interested in becoming listed as court interpreters. Interested bilingual individuals can find the information on eligibility and application procedures on the Maryland Court Interpreter Program webpage. Program staff will also continue to provide continuing education classes for current registry interpreters to promote professional growth and ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality interpretation services statewide.

Community Outreach. The Court Interpreter Program will continue its community outreach efforts to increase public awareness of the language services available in Maryland courts. Outreach activities will include collaboration with community organizations, local agencies, and advocacy groups that serve limited English proficient and deaf or hard-of-hearing populations. These initiatives aim to ensure that Marylanders understand their right to language assistance in court and know how to request interpreters or accommodations.

Prepared by:

Maryland Judiciary

Access to Justice, Court Interpreter Program
Administrative Office of the Courts
187 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(410) 260-1291
interpretermd@mdcourts.gov