

Language Access Signage and Technology Grants: Summary of Cycles 1 and 2 (FY 2019–20, FY 2020–21)

Overview

The Language Access Signage and Technology (S&T) Grant Program launched in September 2019. The first two years of the grants, covering Cycles 1 and 2 (FY 2019–20, FY 2020–21), have been a success, despite the challenges faced by some awarded courts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (which began in March 2020). Over \$4.5 million was allocated to courts as grants and the majority of the awarded courts were able to utilize most, if not all, of their awarded grant funding. Priority projects were successfully completed that improved access and service delivery for California’s limited-English-proficient (LEP) court users.

Language Access Plan

In January 2015, the Judicial Council adopted the [*Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts*](#) (Language Access Plan) that provides recommendations, guidance, and a consistent statewide approach to ensure language access for all of California’s approximately 7 million LEP residents and potential court users.

Grants Overview

To support judicial branch language access expansion efforts, the 2018 Budget Act included \$2.55 million in ongoing funding each year for language access signage and technology infrastructure support and equipment needs for the trial courts and the Judicial Council. In September 2019, the Judicial Council approved a grant program to disburse this funding to the 58 trial courts on an annual basis (up to \$1 million per year for language access signage and up to \$1.35 million per year for language access technology) and directed Language Access Services staff to review grant applications and develop recommendations for review and approval by the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness, Information Technology Advisory Committee, Technology Committee, and the Judicial Council.¹ Because funding is ongoing, courts are encouraged to apply for this grant on an annual basis.

Objectives of the S&T Grants

- Support courts with the development of multilingual signage to help LEP court users to navigate the courthouse.
- Assist courts that may need equipment or software that will facilitate communication with LEP court users and the courts.
- Allocate funds to as many trial courts as possible within the given budget to support language access signage and technology initiatives.

¹ Of the \$2.55 million per year, \$200,000 is allocated for the translation of Judicial Council forms and web content including updates to the Language Access Toolkit.

- Fund enhancements that provide LEP court users with greater access to the courts and to information in their language.
- Encourage courts to establish for grant funding an ongoing plan that coordinates with other facilities planning and/or with planned or ongoing technology initiatives that support language access as a core service of the court.

Funding Methodology

In Cycle 1 (FY 2019–20) and Cycle 2 (FY 2020–21), all available funding for signage (\$1 million) and technology (\$1.35 million) was awarded, including contingency funding. No more than \$100,000 was allocated to any one court for signage, and no more than \$135,000 was allocated to any one court for technology, unless total requests were lower than the total annual allocation. (See Appendix A, Cycles 1 and 2 Grant Summary.) For both cycles, all regions of the state (northern, southern, and central) were represented. In addition, courts of all sizes applied and received grant funding (see Appendix B, Map of Awarded Courts).

Court Size*	Courts Applied		Courts Applied for Signage only		Courts Applied for Technology only		Courts Applied for both Signage and Technology	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Small	6	2	3	0	1	2	2	0
Small / Medium	9	7	0	3	3	2	6	2
Medium	8	8	2	0	2	4	4	4
Large	6	6	0	0	0	2	6	4
Total	29	23	5	3	6	10	18	10

*Court size based on small (2–5 judges), small/medium (6–15 judges), medium (16–47 judges), large (48 judges or more).

Grant Priority Projects

The tables below summarize the number of project requests by grant prioritization category (courts are able to apply for as many projects as needed).

Table 1 – Signage Category

Grant Priority Projects	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
#1 Translation of Signage	9	4
#2 Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies	14	11
#3 Non-electronic Signage	6	2
#4 Automated Queue-Management System	1	1
Total	30	18

Table 2 – Technology Category

Grant Priority Projects	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
#1 Interpreter Equipment	18	11
#2 Telephonic/Video Remote Solutions	8	22
#3 Scheduling Software	6	3
#4 Multilingual Videos	1	5
#5 Infrastructure Enhancements	1	4
#6 Multilingual Kiosks	4	0
Total	38	45

Signage Projects

In both Cycle 1 and 2, the development of multilingual wayfinding strategies including electronic signage (Grant Priority 2) was the top priority among the awarded courts; 25 courts in total completed multilingual wayfinding strategies projects. Pictures of court projects funded by the grants are included in Appendix C, Signage and Technology Court Highlights.

As a result of the signage grant, the following goals have been achieved:

- The installation of multilingual wayfinding signs (static and electronic) and kiosks helped LEP users as they navigate the court system and identify areas of assistance provided in their language.
- The hiring of consultants to determine signage needs and wayfinding strategies helped courts to develop and implement plans to provide multilingual tools for LEP court users to navigate the courthouse and locate court resources.
- The translation of notices, live chat scripts, flyers, and an online court visitor satisfaction survey in several languages provided LEP court users with important information in multiple text-based formats and allowed them to participate in court surveys.
- Translation of court signage, web materials, and text for electronic displays or kiosks.

Technology Projects

In Cycle 1, acquiring new interpreter equipment (Grant Priority 1) was the top priority among the awarded courts; 18 courts purchased interpreter equipment. In Cycle 2, acquiring telephonic/video remote solutions equipment for LEP assistance (Grant Priority 2) was the top priority; 22 courts purchased telephonic/video equipment in Cycle 2. Pictures of court projects funded by the grants are included in Appendix C, Signage and Technology Court Highlights.

As a result of the technology grant, the following goals have been achieved:

- Purchase of video remote solutions equipment (including speakerphones, tablets, computer equipment, monitors, and other communication devices) allowed interpreters to provide interpreting services remotely, increase availability, and reduce delays.
- Integration of cloud-based interpreter scheduling software improved the ability of the court to efficiently assign interpreter resources.

- Purchase of interpreter equipment (including headsets, listening devices, charging stations, and wireless communication equipment) improved accessibility, ensured the safety of interpreters and court customers, and allowed interpreters to serve more LEP court users.
- Upgrades to interpreters' workstations and cabling upgrades have improved the interpreters' working conditions, allowing them to be more efficient and comfortable.
- Development of a multilingual video on how to file documents, in several languages, was made available on the court's website and provided both English-speaking and LEP litigants with easy-to-follow instructions on how to file documents in court.
- Use of computer-assisted translation and glossary management software helped speed up the translation of important administrative orders for jury trials, mask mandates, and courthouse access, enhancing access and increasing court efficiency.
- LEP customers are now able to access live chat services in other languages on court websites, including intelligent chat and live communication to facilitate access and public understanding of court processes.

Lessons Learned

- To mitigate requests for extensions, the contract term for Cycle 3 and future cycles was extended from 12 months to 18 to give courts more time to finish their projects, submit invoices for reimbursements, and submit one report for each completed project.
- To encourage courts to apply for higher amounts and mitigate the future need for allocating contingency funding, the maximum application amount for Cycle 3 and future cycles was increased to no more than \$200,000 for signage and \$270,000 for technology.
- Grant priorities were updated for Cycle 3 and future cycles to expand eligible projects for courts, including upgrades to their websites.
- The Language Access Services (LAS) program staff plans to develop a database to store all Signage and Technology Grant Program applications and year-end reports in one central location for easy access.
- LAS staff will also continue to work with courts to share vendor and project information, so that successful projects can be replicated.

Appendix A – Cycles 1 and 2 Grant Summary

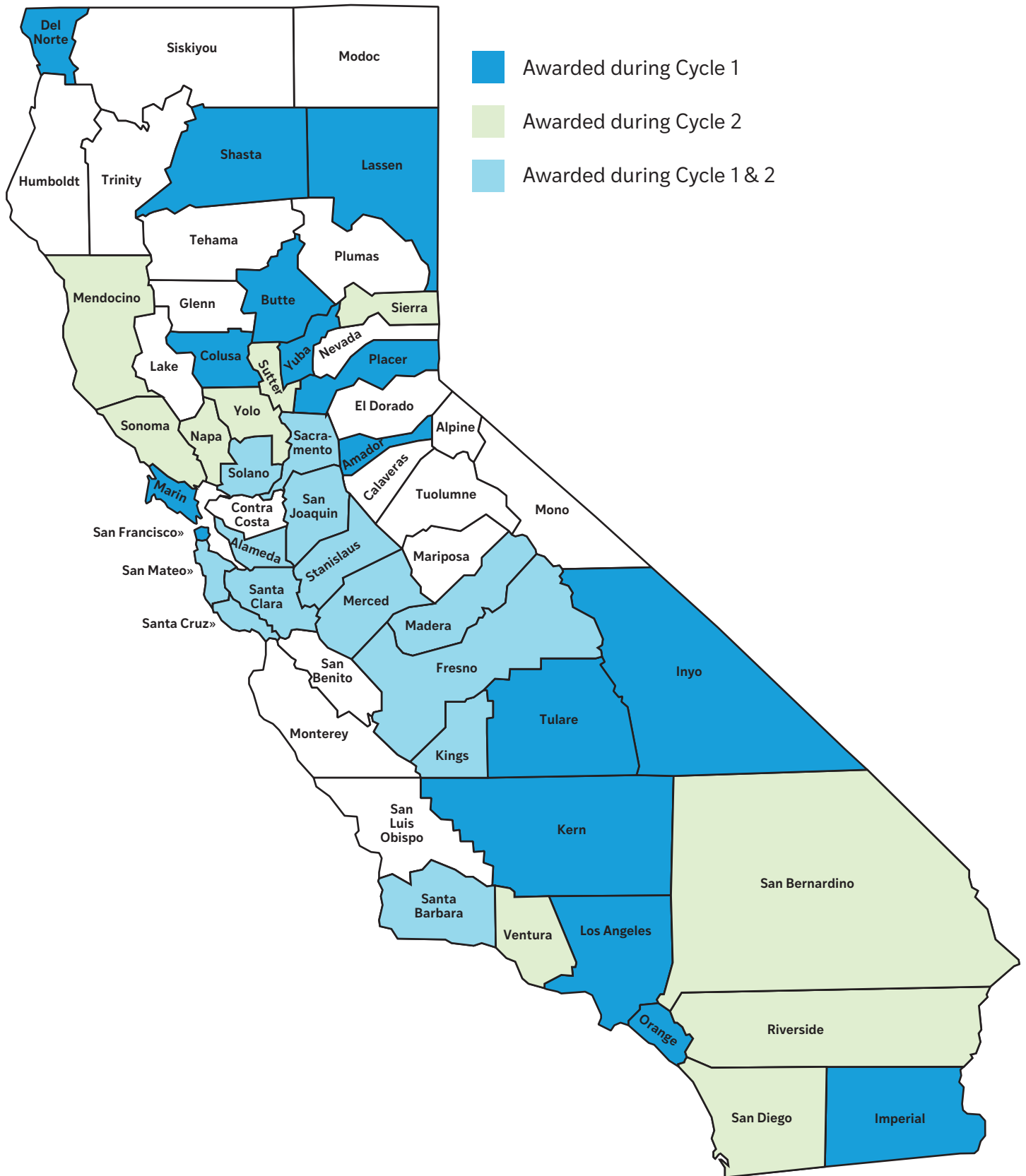
Court	Cycle 1 (FY 2019–20)* 29 awarded courts		Cycle 2 (FY 2020–21)** 23 awarded courts		Cycles 1 & 2 Total Amount Awarded
	Signage	Technology	Signage	Technology	
Alameda	90,000.00	80,548.00	181,058.68	40,000.00	391,606.68
Amador	20,000.00	29,094.00			49,094.00
Butte	57,023.47	10,000.00			67,023.47
Colusa		2,300.00			2,300.00
Del Norte	2,000.00				2,000.00
Fresno	44,622.44		3,250.00	55,898.63	103,771.07
Imperial	4,100.00	5,500.00			9,600.00
Inyo	10,000.00				10,000.00
Kern	1,973.09	30,704.24			32,677.33
Kings	52,863.00	14,837.42	48,471.00		116,171.42
Lassen	1,000.00	6,000.00			7,000.00
Los Angeles	85,000.00	135,000.00		141,042.27	361,042.27
Madera	43,833.49	18,044.07	29,919.67		91,797.23
Marin		23,080.00			23,080.00
Mendocino			10,500.00	5,700.00	16,200.00
Merced	75,000.00	135,000.00		79,189.07	289,189.07
Napa			41,605.00	6,800.00	48,405.00
Orange	89,430.00	135,000.00			224,430.00
Placer		36,340.00			36,340.00
Riverside				50,800.00	50,800.00
Sacramento	13,700.00	78,492.68	85,520.00	132,342.00	310,054.68
San Bernardino				118,435.81	118,435.81
San Diego			28,247.00	123,769.70	152,016.70
San Francisco	85,000.00	120,000.00			205,000.00
San Joaquin	57,357.00			44,947.17	102,304.17
San Mateo		81,250.00	21,718.00	127,532.32	230,500.32
Santa Barbara	90,000.00	135,000.00	181,058.68	21,020.68	427,079.36
Santa Clara	90,000.00	117,776.98	181,058.68	134,989.22	523,824.88
Santa Cruz	57,023.47	45,746.00	107,414.28		210,183.75
Shasta		34,256.61			34,256.61
Sierra				2,491.00	2,491.00
Solano	19,817.93	15,000.00		89,052.17	123,870.10
Sonoma			80,179.00	54,821.00	135,000.00
Stanislaus	6,184.00	7,395.00		43,030.26	56,609.26
Sutter				22,080.00	22,080.00
Tulare		53,635.00			53,635.00
Ventura				48,711.77	48,711.77
Yolo				7,346.93	7,346.93
Yuba	4,072.11				4,072.11
	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,350,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,350,000.00	\$4,700,000.00

* In May 2020, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County notified council staff that it would not be able to use its FY 2019-20 grant award due to the COVID-19 emergency.

** In March 2021, because there was remaining funding for Cycle 2, the council approved the remaining \$141,042.27 in the Cycle 2 technology contingency funding to be distributed to courts including Los Angeles with the court technology modernization funding as part of the Branchwide Remote Appearance Technology Program, including for video remote interpretation.

Map of Awarded Courts

Appendix B



Signage and Technology Court Highlights

Appendix C

Signage

Superior Court of Alameda County



Superior Court of Butte County



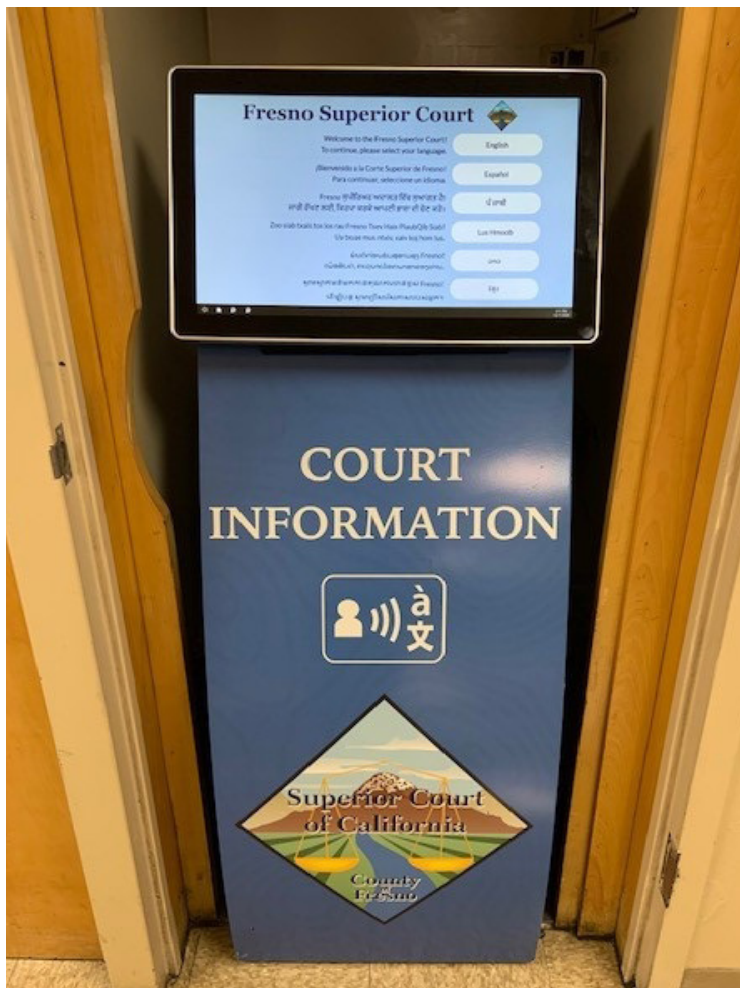
Superior Court of Del Norte County



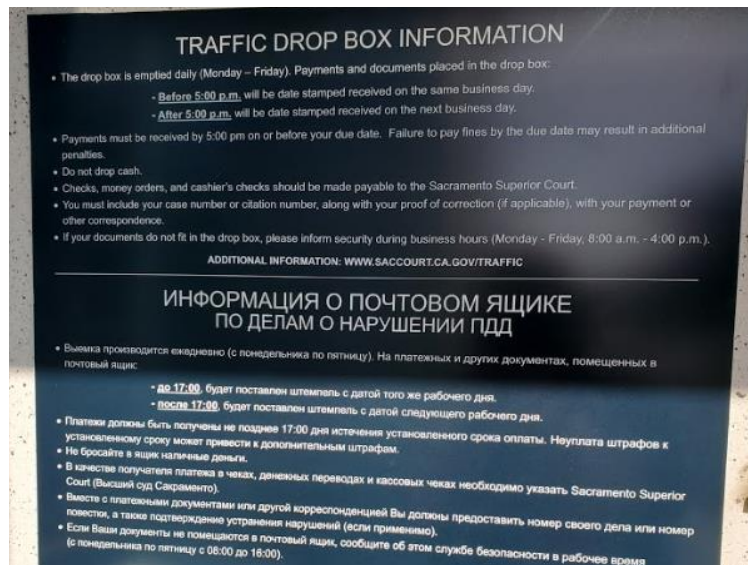
Superior Court of Merced County



Superior Court of Fresno County

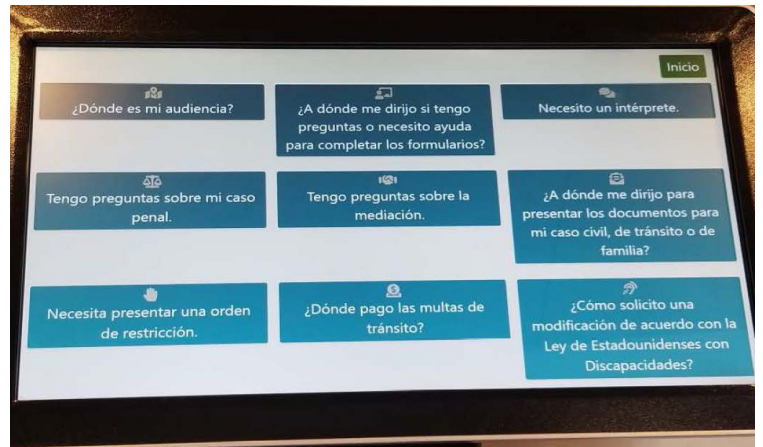
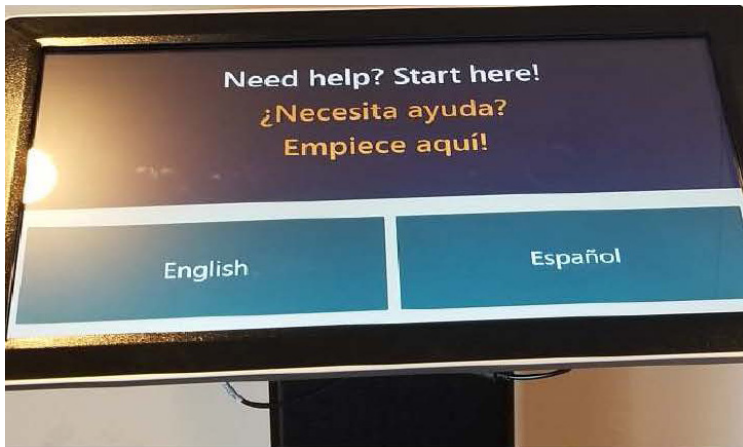


Superior Court of Sacramento County



Technology

Superior Court of Butte County



Superior Court of Kings County - Digi Wave Interpreter Translation System

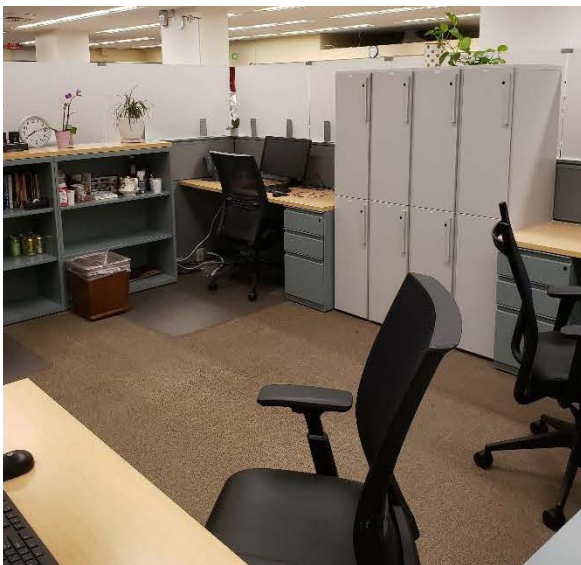


Side-by-Side, Pre-Covid



Socially Distanced

Superior Court of San Francisco County



Equipment and designated area with locking cabinets.

Technology

Superior Court of San Mateo County

Translated web content as well as an explainer video in plain language (shown below in English and Spanish) allows court users to easily navigate information they need and can understand (see www.sanmateocourt.org/self_help/).

Going to Court



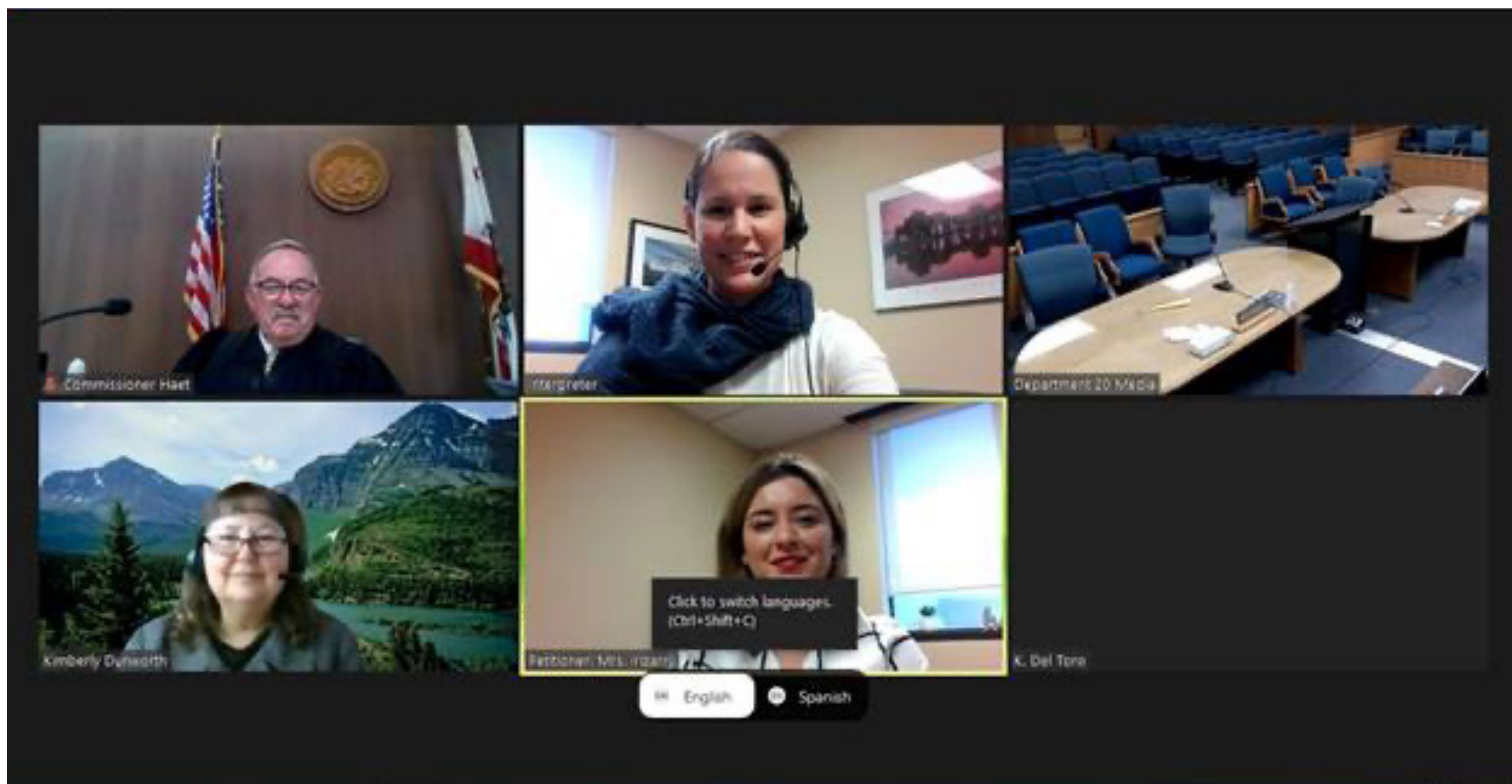
English

Ir a la corte



Spanish

Superior Court of Solano County



Screenshot of video remote interpreting of a Department of Child Support Services calendar.