



National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators

STATEMENT OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDICIARY INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS
IN RESPONSE TO THE
AUGUST 16, 2010 LETTER OF
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL THOMAS E. PEREZ

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) commends Thomas E. Perez, Asst. Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, and the U.S. Department Of Justice (DOJ) for the letter issued August 16, 2010, offering clear guidance to state court chief justices and court administrators, and reiterating the requirement that entities receiving federal funds must provide language assistance to limited English proficient (LEP) persons involved in proceedings or utilizing their services.

NAJIT is the largest professional association of judiciary interpreters and translators in the United States, and our members work in state and federal courts and quasi-judicial settings on a daily basis. We are aware that the obligation to provide competent language services is frequently overlooked or given short shrift. As is stated in the DOJ's guidance letter, the requirement for provision of language services for LEP persons extends to all criminal, civil and administrative proceedings, and beyond the courtroom to the clerk's office, the probation department, alternative dispute resolution programs, child custody and mental health evaluations, and even to signage in the hallways. Furthermore, the cost of these services may not be taxed back to the LEP participants as "court costs".

NAJIT urges all affected parties to read this most recent guidance from the DOJ and to review the documents it references. These include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended (42 U.S.C. § 200d *et seq*); the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3789d(c) (prohibiting national origin discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance); Executive Order 13166 (2000); and DOJ final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons (67 Fed. Reg. 41,455 [June 18, 2002]).

It is available on the Web at: http://www.lep.gov/final_courts_ltr_081610.pdf and as a link on NAJIT's website at: www.najit.org .