



434th DISTRICT COURT

Fort Bend County, Texas

James H. Shoemake
Presiding Judge

July 27, 2016

Dear Fort Bend Commissioners:

As you all know, on January of this year the Fort Bend Justice Center launched a pilot Spanish interpreter program. This program has been very successful and the part time contract interpreter has interpreted for over 400 assignments during this past six months. In addition, all County Court forms and a large amount of District Court forms have already been translated into Spanish by her. However, we are still in dire need of training and equipment that will allow us to provide better services to Limited English Proficient Persons that have to face legal and administrative procedures.

Keeping this in mind, we have tried to explore the possibility of obtaining grants that would aid us to develop a Language Access Program. This program would allow us to comply with federal and state regulations and to ensure due process to the 24 percent Hispanic and 27.7 percent Asian population of LEP persons living in our County.

We are happy to inform that we have found a \$ 15,000.00 grant, through the National Center for State Courts, which will allow us to get started with the development of this project. We have already established contact with the NCSC and we feel confident that we can obtain this grant, which does not require a local match. For this reason we respectfully request your approval to pursue the possibility of obtaining this grant.

Respectfully,

James Shoemake
Fort Bend Local Administrative Judge

NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE

When the decision is made to apply for a grant, please fill out the information below and e-mail to the Grants Coordinator. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time at 281-341-8608. Thank you!

CONTACT INFORMATION

POINT PERSON APPLYING FOR THE GRANT

Judge James Shoemake

DEPARTMENT

434th Judicial District Court

EMAIL

434th@fortbendcountytx.gov

PHONE NUMBER

281-633-7653

COMMISSIONERS COURT AGENDA TARGET DATE

GRANT OR FUNDING AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY NAME

National Center for State Courts

GRANT NAME or TITLE

Language Access Service Section/Technical Assistance

GRANT AGENCY WEBSITE

www.ncsonline.org

APPLICATION DUE DATE

8/31/2016

GRANTING AGENCY TYPE

Federal State Private Other

Identify Other

COUNTY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TOTAL GRANT REQUEST

\$ 15,000.00

LOCAL MATCH REQUIRED

Cash In-Kind

VALUE OF LOCAL MATCH

Not required

If County resources are needed (other than the required match noted above), please specify the additional funding sources.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING SOURCE

If funding or resources will be provided by a third party, please include the third party name and contact information below:

PARTNER PROVIDING FUNDING

PHONE NUMBER

TOTAL PROGRAM COST FOR THE GRANT ACTIVITY

Mary Campbell McQueen
President

Daniel J. Hall
Vice President
Court Consulting Services
Denver Office

Language Access Services Section

Technical Assistance Request Form

1. **Site** Please indicate the court or other government organization requesting technical assistance.

Agency Fort Bend County - 434th Judicial District Court
Address 1422 Eugene Heimann Circle
City, State Richmond, TX Zip 77469
Phone 281-633-7653 Fax 281-633-7655
Email 434th@fortbendcountytexas.gov

2. **Primary Contact** - Indicate who will be the main point of contact for the technical assistance project, the person who will have decision making authority during the project.

Name Judge James Shoemake
Title Judge Presiding the 434th D.C. and Local Administrative Judge
Agency Affiliation N/A
Address 1422 Eugene Heimann Circle
City, State Richmond, TX Zip 77469
Phone 281-633-7653 Fax 281-633-7655
Email 434th@fortbendcountytexas.gov

3. **Project Overview** - Please describe in general terms the nature of this project.

The Fort Bend Justice Center is in one of the fastest growing counties in the nation, with at least 24 percent of its population being Hispanic and 20 percent Asian. In order for the FBJC to provide a fair and reliable access to the Justice System to this part of its population, we must develop practical and efficient protocols for the use of interpreters during court procedures. For this reason we have envisioned the creation of a Language Access Program that sets the policies and procedures for the use of interpreters and the translation of District and County forms that are commonly used in our courts.

4. **Technical Assistance Requested** - Describe the nature of the technical assistance requested from the National Center for State Courts in as much detail as possible, including what the assistance is intended to accomplish.

We are requesting technical assistance for the following:

- Implementing policies and procedures in order to comply with Federal and State regulations.
- Optimizing our resources and prioritizing assignments.
- Translation of forms in languages other than Spanish.
- Creation of a computer based log to keep track of interpreting assignments.
- Translation software to create a database for translations in order to standardize terminology use when translating.
- Interpreter whispering equipment for trials and PSI hearings. At least one transponder and two receivers.
- Training on the use of interpreters and how to deal with LEP persons for judges, court coordinators, bilingual staff, and interpreters.

5. **Project time line and Report Requirements** - What time lines have been established for the project? (Please provide dates, and any reasons for deadlines, i.e., funding time *frames*.) Do you require a written report?

- The FBJC will require at least 6 months to develop policies and procedures regarding LEP persons.
- The FBJC will require at least 6 months to comply with the translation of forms into Spanish.
- The FBJC will require at least 2 years to comply with the translation of forms into languages other than Spanish.
- The FBJC will require at least 1 year of training for all court staff regarding LEP persons.
- Quarterly reports will be prepared to keep track of progress.

6. **If you are not a State Court Administrator or a program manager, tell us how you heard about the NCSC Language Access Services Section Technical Assistance Program?**

The FBJC has a part time Spanish contract interpreter that attended a NAJIT conference and later on followed up on information received during the conference on how to obtain grants to comply with Title VI and other state and federal regulations.