



U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

*Federal Coordination and Compliance Section
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW-NWB
Washington, DC 20530*

June 21, 2016

Mr. Gerald Marroney
State Court Administrator
1300 Broadway, Suite 1200
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Complaint # DJ 171-13-63

Dear Mr. Marroney:

I am pleased to notify you that the U.S. Department of Justice, through the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section of the Civil Rights Division, has determined that the Colorado Judicial Department has fulfilled the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that resolved our investigation of this administrative complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The complaint alleged that the Colorado courts were not providing interpreters for limited English proficient parties in civil cases. Through this letter, we are closing the file on this matter and completing our engagement.

In 2011, Colorado court leadership made the decision to improve the assistance afforded to limited English proficient court users, and voluntarily agreed to make dramatic changes pursuant to Title VI. In less than three months, we signed the MOA and former Chief Justice Michael L. Bender amended Chief Justice Directive 06-03 to mandate that appropriate language services be provided in all court proceedings and operations effective immediately and at no cost to court users. The Chief Justice promptly designated a court interpreter oversight committee that included court representatives as well as eight members of the bar. Eight months later, the Office of Language Access published with our approval a comprehensive strategic plan to enhance delivery of language services statewide through 35 court-selected improvements. Although the deadlines in the plan required subsequent adjustment, oral language services were available from the beginning and the planned improvements were ultimately completed early this year. Access to justice in Colorado has been significantly improved to the ongoing benefit of residents with limited English proficiency, the public, and the court itself.

The Colorado Courts are to be commended not only for the results achieved, but also for the productive working relationship between my staff and yours. Language Access Administrator Emy López brought commendable and consistent expertise, dedication, candor, and affability to the table and was given broad authority by senior administrators and counsel to collaborate directly with our staff to negotiate issues and solve problems. At various times, former HR Director Mindy Masias, assistant counsel Jeannette Walker Kornreich, Court Services Director Sherry Stwalley and Deputy Director Steven Vasconcellos worked with us with similar professionalism and courtesy, as have many other judges, staff, and interpreters.

In addition to completing the work required by the implementation plan earlier this year,

the court system has successfully completed the monitoring and reporting requirements for the period of time set forth in the MOA. As part of our agreement to close the case, the Colorado Courts have committed to translating vital forms and signage into six languages other than Spanish (LOTS) as set forth in the April 2016 Appendix to the Translation and Bilingual Signage Policy and completed 69 LOTS translations. In addition, we agreed that the new language access plan that the Colorado Courts will adopt this year with input from the Advisory Committee on Language Access will include provisions for considering the use of registered interpreters, who presently need not pass standardized tests or oral proficiency interviews. The plan will identify changes to reduce utilization of registered interpreters as presently defined, which might include raising the qualifications needed to be classified as a registered interpreter. Relying on these commitments, and as provided by the MOA, we are now closing the case.

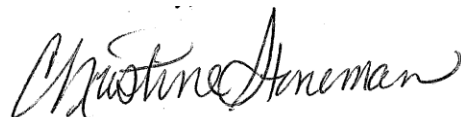
We are obligated to notify you that this letter relates only to the complaint referred to above; it does not address other actual or potential claims of discrimination that may arise from the activities of the Colorado Courts. This letter also does not affect any rights that the complainant may have to file a private lawsuit regarding the concerns raised in its complaint to DOJ. We will retain the complaint for our records and take the information provided into account if we receive similar future complaints against the court.

We are further obligated to inform you that recipients of federal financial assistance may not intimidate, threaten, coerce, or engage in other discriminatory conduct against anyone who has either taken action or participated in an action to secure rights protected by the civil rights laws DOJ enforces. The protection against retaliation extends to recipient employees who provide information or otherwise cooperate with DOJ's review. Any individual who alleges such harassment or intimidation may file a complaint with DOJ. We would investigate such a complaint if the situation warrants.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release information, related correspondence, and records shared by recipients and complainants upon request. In the event that we receive such a request, we will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personal information that, if released, could constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

Thank you for your cooperation and leadership in resolving this matter. If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact attorney Paul M. Uyehara at paul.uyehara@usdoj.gov or (202) 305-9813.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Stoneman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Stoneman
Acting Chief
Federal Coordination and Compliance Section
Civil Rights Division

cc: John F. Walsh
United States Attorney

Nancy E. Rice
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Colorado

Mindy Masias
Chief of Staff
Office of the State Court Administrator

Jeannette Walker Kornreich, Esq.
Assistant Legal Counsel

Sherry R. Stwalley
Director of Court Services and Legislative Relations

Emy López
Language Access Administrator