

# **STATE OF MINNESOTA GUARDIAN AD LITEM BOARD**

## **FY11-FY12 LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN**

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### **I. LEGAL BASIS AND PURPOSE**

This document serves as the plan for the Minnesota Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Board to provide services to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals in compliance with Federal law.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for the provision of timely and reasonable language assistance to those who come in contact with the Guardian ad Litem Program.

Services for persons with limited English proficiency are covered by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; persons who are deaf or hard of hearing are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Accommodations will be provided for deaf and hard of hearing customers including but not limited to sign language and/or deaf interpreters. Spoken language interpreters will be provided to LEP individuals who are “disabled in communication” when circumstances permit.

### **II. GUARDIAN AD LITEM BOARD BACKGROUND**

In 2010, the Minnesota Legislature created the state Guardian ad Litem Board (Minnesota Statutes 480.35) which moved the Guardian ad Litem program out of the state court system and under the Board. According to the enabling legislation, the purpose of the Board is to administer a statewide, independent Guardian ad Litem program to advocate for the best interest of children, minor parents and incompetent adults in juvenile and family courts.

Prior to 2010, the Guardian ad Litem program functioned as a mandated service that was supervised by State Court Administration and administered by the 10 Judicial Districts in accordance with statute, court rules of practice and judicial council policies and procedures. After the transition to the new Guardian ad Litem Board, the program remains district based with employees and volunteers serving as guardians ad litem. Volunteers are utilized primarily in the Second and Fourth Judicial Districts. The Guardian ad Litem Board appoints a program administrator who supervises the program managers responsible for the activities within their respective districts.

### **III. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE RESOURCES**

The Guardian ad Litem Board is responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to court services.

The following resources are available through the Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Program:

- [“Language Identification” Card](#)
- Language Line
- Deaf and hard of hearing accommodations

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<sup>1</sup> Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 45 C.F.R. § 80 et seq; and 28 C.F.R. § 42 et seq.

#### “Language Identification” Card

The “[Language Identification card](#)” is a list of over 170 languages available through the Language Line (see below). Employees and volunteers may use this document to help identify the language that an LEP individual speaks.

#### Language Line

Employees and volunteers may use the Office of Enterprise Technology (OET) Language Line to obtain a phone interpreter to assist LEP individuals.

#### Interpreter Accommodations

When the Guardian ad Litem Board learns that an individual who is limited English proficient or deaf or hard of hearing is in need of language assistance, reasonable accommodations are made when possible; this may include obtaining an interpreter.

### **IV. TRAINING**

The Guardian ad Litem Board is committed to providing LEP training opportunities for all employees and volunteers. LEP training is provided for new employees as a part of the New Employee Orientation. All employees may access LEP training through the Minnesota Judicial Branch internal website ([CourtNet](#)); volunteers may do so through the District Program Office.

The Guardian ad Litem Board partners with the Minnesota Judicial Branch to provide periodic training on LEP resources available at the Judicial Branch such as:

- [“Language Identification”](#) cards
- Language line
- Deaf and hard of hearing accommodations
- Interpreters

### **V. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF LEP PLAN**

#### **A. LEP Plan Approval & Notification**

The Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Board LEP plan is approved by the State Guardian ad Litem Board Program Administrator. Copies of Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Program LEP plan are available upon request.

#### **B. Evaluation of the LEP Plan**

This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis; changes will be made based on the review. The evaluation will include identification of any problem areas and development of required corrective action strategies. Elements of the evaluation may include:

- Assessing the frequency of language assistance requests
- Assessing current language needs to determine if additional services or translated materials should be provided

- Assessing whether GAL employees adequately understand LEP policies and procedures and how to carry them out

Any revisions made to the plan will be communicated by posting on the [Guardian ad Litem Board website](#).

Contact Person

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The effective date of this LEP plan is July 1, 2011.