

The Third Judicial District Gender Fairness Committee Presents:

“Language Access and Domestic Violence: Speaking the Victim’s Language”

3.0 CLE credit hours (pending)

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Overview:

In the past, the voices of domestic violence victims were too often silenced by fear, intimidation and the fact that many in our systems simply were not listening. With much effort over the years, this is beginning to change.

But now a related problem has become prominent involving victims with Limited English Proficiency (LEP): A recent report by the National Center for State Courts and Center for Court Innovation revealed a nationwide lack of specialized training pertaining to domestic violence and sexual assault cases. Domestic violence/ sexual assault proceedings are particularly stressful for non-English speaking individuals and particularly challenging for interpreters.

Caregivers, advocates, police and courts, as willing as they may be to give victims a voice, cannot be fully effective if they are unable to understand what the victim is saying—and if the victim cannot fully comprehend what he or she is hearing. That language barrier discourages victims from seeking what may literally be life-or-death assistance.

The Unified Court System and its Office of Language Access have begun addressing one of the issues with a pilot program in which temporary and final orders of protection are issued in an English/ Spanish interlinear and bilingual format to ensure that the orders are fully understood by LEP parties. But more needs to be done.

12:45 – 1:00 p.m.      Registration

1:00-1:50 p.m.      Introduction to Language Access Landscape for Survivors and other Litigants in New York State: Special Issues Facing Victims of Domestic Violence

- Gwen Wright, Executive Director, New York Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
- Hon. Deborah Kaplan, Supreme Court, Civil Branch, New York County and Statewide Coordinating Judge for Family Violence Cases

1:50 – 2:05 p.m.      Break (15 Minutes)

2:05 -2:55 p.m.      New York’s Executive and Legislative Responses to Language Access and Domestic Violence

- Ellen C. Schell, General Counsel, NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

2:55 -3:05 p.m.      Break (10 Minutes)

3:05-3:55 p.m.      Nuts and Bolts of Working with Interpreters and Programs Currently Under Development

- Nida Abbasi, Center for Court Innovation

3:55-4:00 p.m.      Closing Remarks