

Civil Protection Order Language Access Improvements Report

January 4th, 2024



King County

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I. Proviso Text

Ordinance 19546, Section 35, Judicial Administration Budget¹

ER2 EXPENDITURE RESTRICTION:

Of this appropriation, \$50,000 of criminal justice expense reserve moneys shall be expended or encumbered solely to develop language access materials and resources and make improvements to online and in person processes for non-English-speaking petitioners and respondents as described in Proviso P2 of this section. Moneys may be used to assist other county agencies, including the department of public safety, superior court, district court and the prosecuting attorney's office in providing language support materials for protection orders.

P2 PROVIDED FURTHER THAT:

Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits a report to the council describing the expenditures related to improving language access for both petitioners and respondents of protection orders and a motion that should acknowledge receipt of the report and a motion acknowledging receipt of the report is passed by the council. The motion should reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance number, ordinance section and proviso number in both the title and body of the motion.

A. The report shall include, but not be limited to the following information:

¹ Ordinance 19546 [\[LINK\]](#)

1. A summary of best practices for providing court information to non-English-speaking participants online and in person;
2. A summary of protection order resources developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts for non-English-speaking population and how the clerk's office is making those resources easily accessible for in person and online petitioners and respondents;
3. A description of the language access improvements implemented with moneys restricted in Expenditure Restriction ER 2 of this section to support petitioners and respondents in navigating the protection order process, including support navigating virtual environments and getting process and administrative questions answered; and
4. A description of efforts to ensure petitioners and respondents are informed of language supports available to them throughout the protection order process, including during petition submission, participation in remote and in person hearings and receipt of an order.

The executive should electronically file the report and motion required by this proviso no later than January 4, 2024, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the law, justice, health and human services committee or its successor.

II. Executive Summary

In accordance with Expenditure Restriction ER2 and Proviso P2 of the Judicial Administration budget in Ordinance 19546¹, this report describes the expenditures related to providing language access for both petitioners and respondents of protection orders. This report, due to the Council January 4, 2024, satisfies the requirements of subsection A of the proviso. All information is up to date and current as of December 20, 2023.

III. Background

Expenditure Restriction ER 2 and Proviso P2 of the Judicial Administration budget in Ordinance 19546¹ designates \$50,000 to develop language access materials and resources and make improvements to online and in person processes for non-English-speaking petitioners and respondents. P2 requires a report describing the expenditures related to language access improvements for Civil Protection Order participants. Reporting requirements include a summary of the best practices for supporting non-English speaking customers, a summary of resources developed by AOC for non-English speaking Civil Protection Order (CPO) participants, a summary of how DJA makes the AOC resources available, a description of how DJA has utilized the funds provided under ER 2 requirements, and a description of DJA's efforts to inform participants of language access supports available (Ord. 19546, Sec. 35, P2).¹ This report fulfills the requirements of Subsection A of the Proviso.

Report Methodology

This report was written in collaboration between the Department of Judicial Administration (DJA) and King County Superior Court (KCSC), reflecting the partnership central to the Civil Protection Order Pilot Program. Information on this partnership and the Civil Protection Order Pilot program are available in the report² submitted June 1, 2023, in response to Proviso P1.A in Ordinance 19546.¹

Language Access Plan Development

On January 19, 2023, DJA and KCSC jointly established a workgroup to develop a language access plan for Civil Protection Orders (CPOs). In developing the plan, the workgroup assessed language access resources available for customers navigating the civil protection order process, and identified aspects of

the CPO process that could use additional support for ESL (English as a Second Language) and LEP (Limited English Proficiency) customers. The plan established by the workgroup is summarized in the first report for Proviso P1² of the Judicial Administration budget in Ordinance 19546.¹

Stakeholder Feedback on Language Access Resources

Stakeholder feedback was collected by the language access workgroup to assess and improve the accessibility of the CPO process for LEP and ESL participants. A stakeholder survey was used to gather external feedback on the language access supports initially developed through the Civil Protection Order pilot program. Stakeholders surveyed included attorneys, legal aid providers, advocates, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and members of law enforcement agencies. The survey was sent to stakeholders via email and was open from June 16, 2023 through June 30, 2023. A total of 34 survey responses were received.

As a follow-up to the survey, DJA hosted a stakeholder focus group session on October 11, 2023 in collaboration with King County Superior Court and King County District Court. Focus group participants provided valuable feedback on language access resources for the CPO process. A summary of meeting outcomes is provided in Appendix A. Stakeholder Meeting on Language Access Improvements – Meeting Outcomes and Summary (10/11/2023). This meeting helped inform the work outlined in this report to improve language access for ESL and LEP participants navigating the CPO process.

IV. Report Requirements

1. Summary of best practices for providing court information to non-English-speaking participants online and in person

Best practices for supporting non-English speaking (LEP and ESL) litigants throughout the CPO process were identified by DJA and KCSC through a comprehensive review of current policies, practices, and the recommendations of advocates and stakeholders that serve LEP and ESL clients.

Review of Established Best Practices for Providing Court Information to ESL and LEP Litigants

Information on established best practices for providing court information to ESL and LEP litigants is available through the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) Guide on Language Access for Washington State local governments³, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Deskbook on Language Access in Washington Courts⁴, the American Bar Association's (ABA) Standards for Providing Language Access in Courts⁵, as well as other resources provided by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC).⁶

These recommendations address areas including the provision of interpreter services, digital accessibility for website design, development and dissemination of translated materials, and recommendations for ongoing review and improvement of practices. Recommendations from these

² Proviso Report P1.A [\[LINK\]](#)

³ Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) Language Access [\[LINK\]](#)

⁴ AOC Deskbook on Language Access in Washington Courts [\[LINK\]](#)

⁵ ABA Standards for Providing Language Access in Courts [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶ NCSC Interpreter Info Page [\[LINK\]](#)

sources are summarized in Appendix B. Summary of Literature on Best Practices for Providing non-English Speaking Litigants with Court Information.

CPO Process Alignment with Established Best Practices and Recommendations

KCSC and DJA practices for providing court information to LEP and ESL CPO participants meet or exceed best practices identified in the literature. The language access workgroup continues to identify new ways to incorporate feedback from the LEP/ ESL communities served, in addition to regularly reviewing customer touchpoints to identify areas for improvement. Practices currently in alignment with those identified in the literature for providing court information to non-English speaking CPO participants are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. KCSC and DJA Practices Currently in Place for non-English Speaking (LEP and ESL) CPO Participants

Practices in Place for Providing non-English Speaking CPO Participants with Court Information
Practices relating to interpreter services: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide video interpreter services for CPO participants at the DJA CPO offices• Provide phone interpreter services to CPO participants who call DJA or Superior Court• If a CPO party is identified as needing an interpreter at the initial hearing with the court, the party will not need to request an interpreter for future hearings; the Court will schedule an interpreter for the hearing• Provide materials for petitioners and respondents on how to request an interpreter before their initial CPO hearing
Practices relating to translated materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide translations of CPO forms and instructions in the languages most requested by CPO participants• Assess resources and information available to CPO customers on a yearly basis• Make information and materials easily accessible for virtual and in-person CPO participants
Practices relating to website accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that common civil protection order information and resources on the Superior Court and Clerk’s Office website are available in other languages• Preference for certified professionals when translating public webpages• Simplify webpage design and language to improve ease of navigation and understanding
Practices relating to continual improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the Civil Protection Order Websites to improve the user experience and ensure materials, forms, and instructions are easily accessible for non-English speaking CPO participants, and available for both petitioners and respondents• Review the entire customer journey from start to finish to ensure that all customer touchpoints are accessible for ESL and LEP customers• Gather feedback from stakeholders including advocates and other agencies that serve ESL and LEP participants• Continue to provide and improve training for judicial officers on support for LEP/ESL litigants• Review the King County Superior Court Language Access Plan

2. Summary of protection order resources developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts for non-English-speaking population and how the clerk’s office is making those resources easily accessible for in person and online petitioners and respondents

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) provides forms and instructions in multiple languages to support CPO participants (Table 2). Resources include translated instructions and forms for the civil protection order process which are available on the Washington State Courts Website.⁷ Materials are translated into the following languages:

- *Korean*
- *Russian*
- *Spanish*
- *Vietnamese*
- *Filipino*
- *Chinese*

DJA makes the translated instructions and forms provided by AOC available on the Civil Protection Order page of the King County Superior Court Clerk’s Website.⁸ Printed instructions and forms are also available for in-person customers at DJA’s protection order offices.

Table 2. AOC Resources Available in Multiple Languages

AOC Resources for non-English Speaking Petitioners and Respondents
Petition for Protection Order
Instructions for Petition for Protection Order
Instructions for Notice to Vulnerable Adult
Instructions for Temporary Protection Order and Hearing Notice
How Do I Serve the Respondent/Other Party with my Petition for a Protection Order?
Protection Order
Instructions for Protection Order
After your protection order hearing, what happens next?
Instructions for Process Server (Vulnerable Adult)
Understanding Washington State Protection Orders
Instructions for Extreme Risk Protection Order
Instructions for Temporary Extreme Risk Protection Order - Without Notice
Instructions for Extreme Risk Protection Order - Respondent Under 18 Years
Instructions for Petition for Extreme Risk Protection Order
What can an Extreme Risk Protection Order do?
Are you a minor served with an Extreme Risk Protection Order? - Respondent Under 18 Years
Were you served with an Extreme Risk Protection Order?

⁷ Washington State Courts – AOC Forms [\[LINK\]](#)

⁸ Civil Protection Order Webpage, King County Superior Court Clerk’s Website [\[LINK\]](#)

3. Description of the language access improvements implemented with moneys restricted in Expenditure Restriction ER 2 of this section to support petitioners and respondents in navigating the protection order process, including support navigating virtual environments and getting process and administrative questions answered

Direct Development of Language Access Improvements by DJA

The \$50,000 of funding provided under Expenditure Restriction ER 2 of this section supports language access improvements identified in Table 3. All forms and instructions developed by DJA are translated into the following languages:

- Amharic
- Chinese (traditional)
- Chinese (simplified)
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

Languages selected for translation of CPO materials reflect the languages most requested by DJA customers (Appendix C. Languages Requested by Customers by Resource. As a result, available languages differ from those identified as the Top Tier Languages for King County as of 2021 (Table 10), and translations available for AOC forms. DJA uses language rankings that are averaged across language access resources customers interact with to determine the languages selected for translations (Appendix C. Languages Requested by Customers by Resource).

Table 3. Improvements Implemented by DJA with ER 2 Funding

Improvements Made	Resource	Format
Updated and translated the Civil Protection Order Website to improve language access	Webpage	Online
Updated and translated messaging on the KC Script Portal where Civil Protection Orders are submitted electronically	E-Submission Portal	Online
Translated instructions on how to submit evidence for a CPO case for the full hearing ⁹	Instructions	Online/Paper Copies
Translated survey responses from participants relating to the Civil Protection Order process	Survey Responses	Online
Translated instructions and materials for petitioners and respondents	Instructions	Online/Paper Copies
Purchased magazine racks to hold translated materials for in-person customers	Office Materials	Physical Materials
Initial work to improve DJA’s website to ensure that translated instructions and forms from AOC are easily accessible.	Instructions and Forms	Online
Developed instruction sheet for petitioners and respondents on how/when an interpreter should be requested	Instructions	Online/Paper Copies

⁹ How to Submit Evidence in a Protection Order Case for the Full Hearing [[LINK](#)]

Facilitation of Language Access Improvements for Other County Departments

In addition to direct development of translated materials, funds DJA received from the County for the expansion of language access resources were used to support improvements throughout the CPO process in partnership with other County departments. DJA provided a funding opportunity to the King County Advocacy Protection Order Program (PAOP), King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO), King County Superior Court (KCSC), King County District Court (KCDC), and the King County Law Library (KCLL) to improve language access for non-English speaking participants navigating the civil protection order process. This funding opportunity is in accordance with the ER 2 restrictions outlined in DJA's budget.¹

Applicants requesting funds were required to submit to DJA a request form providing information on how their project would support non-English speaking parties in navigation of the Civil Protection Order Process, and a financial quote for the project costs. Project costs were required to be one-time in nature. Project requests were submitted and reviewed by the DJA/KCSC Language Access Workgroup.

King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, King County Superior Court, and King County District Court submitted requests for funding to improve language access in the CPO process. These three requests were approved by DJA, and each department will implement their projects in 2024. Funded requests include the translation of CPO related materials and instructions (KCSC, PAOP) and the purchase of iPads for video interpretation at counters (KCDC). DJA will provide a second funding opportunity in 2024 with the remaining funds.

4. Description of efforts to ensure petitioners and respondents are informed of language supports available to them throughout the protection order process, including during petition submission, participation in remote and in person hearings and receipt of an order

Feedback from community stakeholders and ongoing review of the CPO process have shaped efforts to ensure that CPO participants are informed of the language supports available to them. Processes and resources implemented to support LEP and ESL CPO participants are summarized below. Each stage of the CPO process includes important touchpoints where participants are provided with information on the language supports available to them.

Starting and Submitting a Civil Protection Order Petition

Table 4. Improvements to Language Access for Participants Initiating a Civil Protection Order

Touch Point	Processes and Resources Implemented
Clerk's Office (DJA) Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Completed initial work to simplify the website to plain language making it easier to read for LEP customersReorganized information to display language supports and translated materials prominentlyDeveloped additional instructions and materials in other languages to help LEP & ESL customers navigate the CPO processInstructions on using the e-filing system developed and made available in multiple languages
E-Submission Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Simplified the CPO main landing page to make it available in plain language, and easier to read for non-English speaking customersUpdated the electronic portal messaging to include translations in multiple languages

Materials for Counter Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DJA made tablets available to non-English speaking customers for video interpretation at service counters to provide immediate support • Magazine racks were installed in DJA’s protection order offices to display multi-lingual protection order forms, instructions, and resources
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During and After Hearings

Table 5. Improvements to Language Access for Participants During and After Civil Protection Order Hearings

Touch Points	Processes and Resources Implemented
CPO Hearing Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a hearing participant has had an interpreter for any other King County Superior Court case, they are automatically assigned an interpreter for any subsequent case or hearing • Court staff track interpreter needs for each calendar so as cases progress through the CPO process, the court is aware and can address the needs of each party without requiring further efforts from participants

Resources Made Available to Respondents

Table 6. Improvements to Language Access for Participants Responding to a Civil Protection Order

Touch Points	Processes and Resources Implemented
Clerk’s Office (DJA) Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial work completed to add information specific to CPO respondents on the website which will be available in multiple languages
Service Packets with Hearing Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental document created on how and when an interpreter should be requested. This document is also provided to law enforcement agencies to provide the respondent while serving a civil protection order if ordered by the court

V. Next Actions

King County Superior Court and the Department of Judicial Administration recognize the importance of improving the accessibility of civil protection order processes for LEP and ESL petitioners and respondents to ensure equitable access to justice for all participants. Resources allocated by Ordinance 19546 have been essential for improving the civil protection order process to better support non-English speaking customers through in-person, electronic, and telephonic means. Improvements include the development of new translated materials, instructions, and messaging for virtual and in-person participants, and the redevelopment of existing resources including CPO webpages and the CPO e-submission portal messages to better support the needs of LEP and ESL participants.

The funds also supported improvements to language access in the CPO process through interdepartmental fund sharing with key King County departments. A second round of funding will be offered in 2024 to continue advancing system-wide improvements to language access.

In alignment with the best practices for providing court information to non-English speaking participants identified by this workgroup (Table 1. KCSC and DJA Practices Currently in Place for non-English Speaking (LEP and ESL)), King County Superior Court and the Department of Judicial Administration will continue to assess and improve the accessibility of the civil protection order process for participants who do not speak English in consultation with community stakeholders.

VI. Appendices

Appendix A. Stakeholder Meeting on Language Access Improvements – Meeting Outcomes and Summary (10/11/2023)

Department of Judicial Administration, King County Superior Court, and King County District Court Meeting with Civil Protection Order Stakeholders

Meeting Hosts: Iván Sandoval (DJA), Melinda Johnson Taylor (KCSC), Kevin Deprez (DJA), Samantha De Abreu (DJA), Todd Bandazy (Renton KCDC), Andrea Belanger (Training Consultant, KCDC), Elizabeth Biehn (Burien KCDC), Yanna Filippidis (Ops Mgr., District Court), Kim Howells (Seattle KCDC).

Meeting Attendees: Michelle Hunsinger de Enciso (Outreach & Training Coordinator, PAOP), Cynthia Reyes (DV Advocate, Consejo), Ilce Gonzalez Rodriguez (Bilingual Language Advocate), Kate Francis (DV Advocate, KCBA), Kim Todaro (Attorney, KCBA DV Program), Lauren Abrams (Attorney, KCBA DV Program), Maritza Hernandez (Advocate, Project Be Free) Colleen McInalls (Advocate, PAOP), Megan Allen (dir. Advocacy, Sexual Assault Resource Center), Riddhi Mukhopadhyay (Sexual Violence Law Center), Sandra Shanahan (Enforcement, Sexual Violence Unit), Kimberly Morrill, (Assistant Director of Legal Advocacy, New Beginnings)

Positive Feedback from Stakeholders on Language Access

Table 7: Positive Feedback from Stakeholders on the Accessibility of the CPO Process for non-English Speaking Clients

Positive Feedback
Technology has improved access for participants
Online and in-person support from Clerk’s Office is appreciated
Consistency with the new CPO process is useful

Suggestions for Language Access Improvements to the CPO Process

Table 8. Suggested Language Access Improvements for the CPO Process

Suggestions for Improvement
Work with a focus group to improve CPO website navigation
Improve Superior Court website to make it easier to navigate to the CPO filing page
Improve the usage of plain language in the electronic system to make it easier for customers to understand, especially those with limited English skills
Continue training Judicial Officers to support LEP and ESL litigants
Add clear information on the Clerk’s website on the process to get a renewal for a protection order
Develop materials to help participants understand what to do after they have received a temporary order

Appendix B. Summary of Literature on Best Practices for Providing non-English Speaking Litigants with Court Information

Table 9. Summary of Literature on Best Practices for Providing non-English Speaking Litigants with Court Information

Best Practices for Supporting LEP and ESL Participants
Practices relating to interpreter services: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide video or phone interpretation for walk-in customers^{4,5}• Ensure that interpreters and translators are qualified and competent^{4,5}• Utilize remote interpretation to support LEP customers⁶
Practices relating to translated materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use qualified translation services^{4,5}• Employ a multi-faceted approach with written and oral translated materials throughout the court system⁵• Make information on how to access the court system widely available in multiple languages⁵
Practices relating to website accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When developing new content, consider adding translated materials in the most common languages⁵• Create video and audio translations for court websites⁵
Practices relating to continual improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regularly review prioritization of materials selected for translation⁵• Compile data on translation needs of communities served from multiple sources⁴• Regularly review and update court language access plans^{3,4}• Provide training for court staff and judicial officers on language access requirements and resources⁶

Appendix C. Languages Requested by Customers by Resource

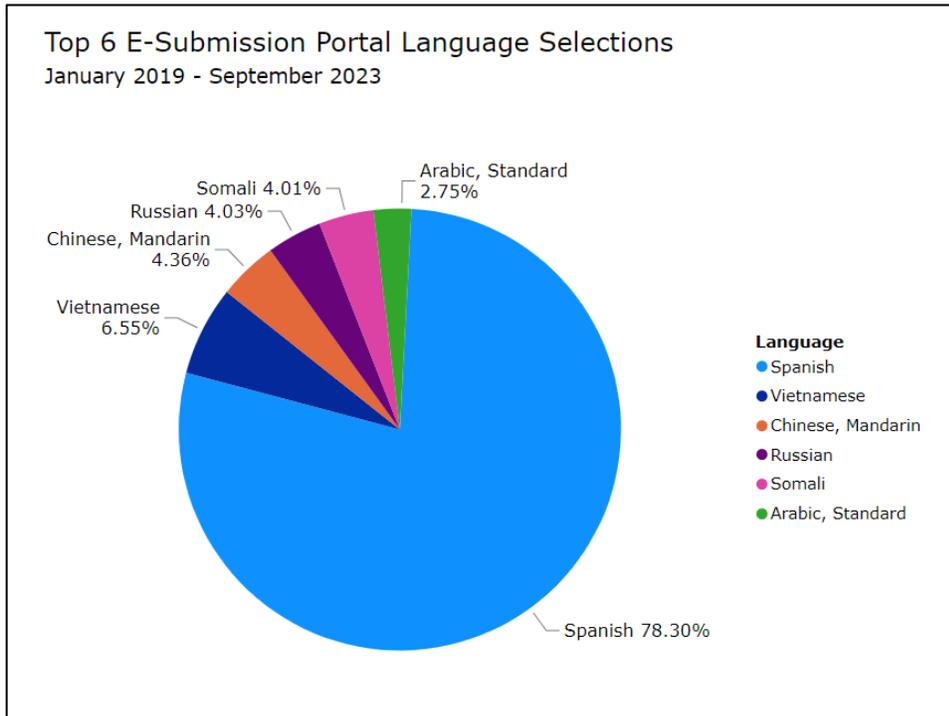


Figure 1. Top Languages Requested for Interpretation in the CPO Portal (KC SCRIPT)

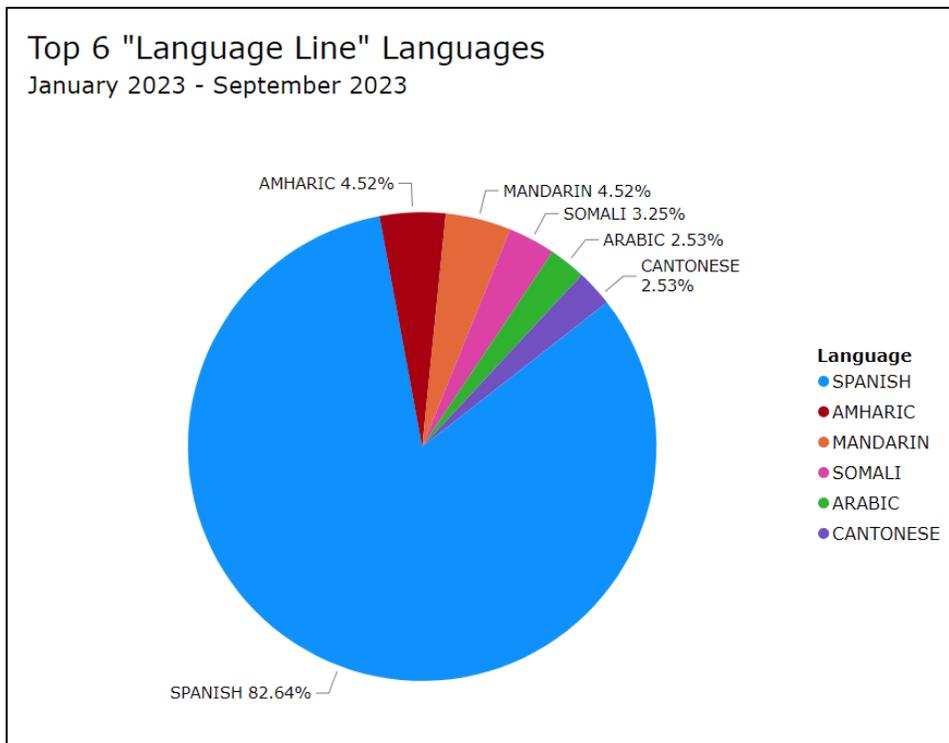


Figure 2. Top Languages Requested on the Language Line Service

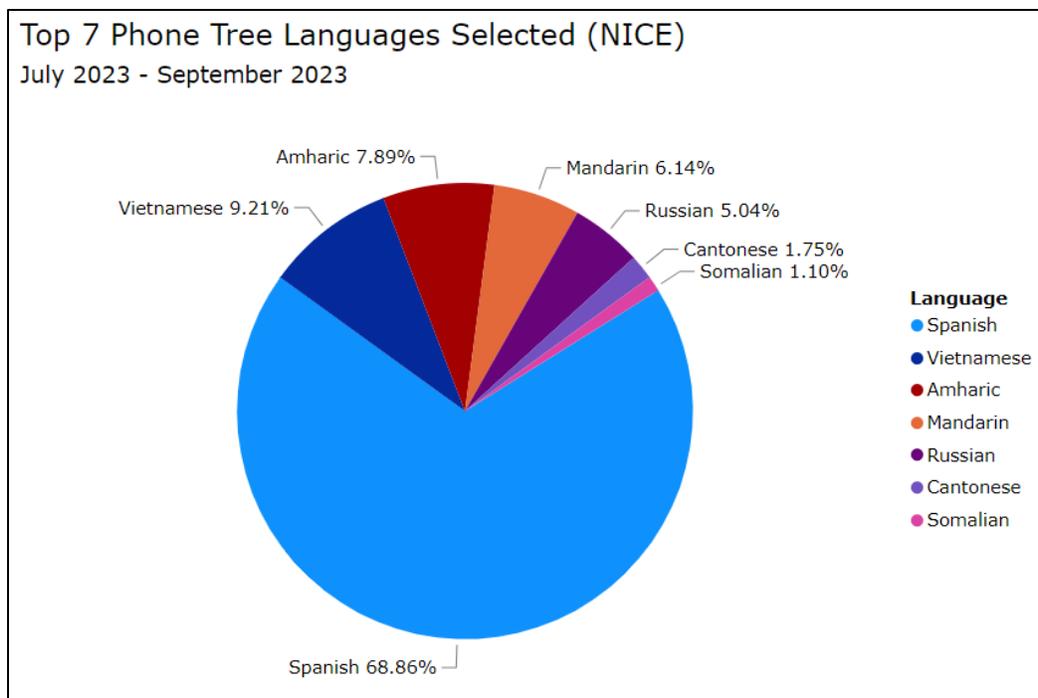


Figure 3. Top Languages Used through the NICE Program

Table 10. Top Languages by Resource

Language	CPO E-Portal	Phone Tree Selections	Language Line Support	King County Top Tier Languages	DJA Rank Average
Date Range	Jan 2019 – Jul 2023	Jul 2023 – Sep 2023	Jan 2023 – Sep 2023	2021	Jan 2019 - Sep 2023
Spanish	1	1	1	1	1.0
Chinese, Mandarin	3	4	3	2	3.0
Vietnamese	2	2	8	3	3.8
Somali	5	7	4	4	5.0
Russian	4	5	7	5	5.3
Amharic	9	3	2	9	5.8
Chinese, Cantonese	12	6	5	2	6.3
Ukrainian				7	7.0
Panjabi, Eastern	7				7.0
Arabic, Standard	6		6	10	7.3
Korean	10			6	8.0
Portuguese	8				8.0
Tigrigna			9		9.0
Tagalog	11			8	9.5
Mongolian			10		10.0
ASL			11		11.0
Turkish			12		12.0
Farsi			13		13.0