

CLAC
Central Regional Call
November 18, 2013

I. PARTICIPANTS

LASS State Representatives: Sophia Akbar (IL), Dan Bauer (MI), Ervin Dimeny (KY), Marco Hansen (TX), Win Johnson (AL), Lynette Ricks (MO), Polly Ryan (MN), Mara Simmons (AR), Jody Stewart (AL), Richard Williams (LA), and Mary Rose Zingale (TN)

Liaison: Carmel Capati (WI)

NCSC Staff: Sarah Esterbrook, Mayra Miranda, Jacquie Ring, and Konstantina Vagenas

II. INTRODUCTION

Carmel Capati thanked and welcomed everyone to the central regional conference call.

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATIONS AND CLAC'S 2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Ms. Vagenas' opening discussion addressed the Technical Assistance Grant opportunity funded by SJI. Currently, Ms. Vagenas is reviewing and accepting applications. Ms. Vagenas has been impressed with people emailing and reaching out to discuss areas of interest before submitting their applications, which has been helpful to facilitate molding their ideas into requirements for the SJI grant. Ms. Vagenas responded that the grants are split in increments of \$15,000-25,000, and will be awarded to multiple state recipients to further develop, improve, and enhance technical programs. The grant can (1) help develop or enhance Language Access Plans. Also, the grant can assist in (2) conceptualizing and developing court management systems that correlate to cases where Language Access resources are likely to be used. Lastly, the grant can be used to (3) evaluate current IT resources and suggest possible technology enhancements to apply the most relevant applications of Language Access technologies. Other ways the grant can benefit in the fields of technology is to administer guidance, standards, resources, and information on remote interpretation. Remote interpretation, which includes video remote interpretation, is a major interest for SJI to advance new 'cutting edge' principles.

The application process is on a rolling bases with no definitive deadline, but will end when funds are depleted.

CLAC's 2nd Annual Conference will be held in Portland, Oregon this year at the Doubletree by Hilton on April 27th through April 30th. Ms. Vagenas stated that we are still in the planning stages for the event, and she would like to recruit more volunteers to help plan necessary details. Thus far, the planning committee consists of Kelly Mills, Carmel Capati, Carol Mitchell, Emily Lopez, Mary Rose Zingale, Brenda Aiken, and the NCSC staff.

IV. VRI MANUAL COMMITTEE

Ms. Capati started the discussion by emphasizing that publishing the VRI Manuel has been a prolonged project extended throughout a couple of years. Ms. Capati announced that Mayra Miranda distributed the current updated draft by email on Friday, November 15, 2013. Ms. Capati thanked everyone that reviewed the recent draft, and provided comments and suggestions for improvement. Ms. Capati stated that she would like to have more feedback before submitting the final draft of the VRI manual in two weeks. Ms. Capati directed that additional comments and revisions should be emailed to Mayra Miranda. Ms. Miranda will compile all the responses and provide further updates accordingly.

V. NATIONAL MODEL CODE OF ETHICS

Ms. Zingale addressed that the deadline for summiting comments for the initial draft ended last Friday, November 15, 2013. Ms. Zingale extended the offer to anyone whom would like to send additional feedback is welcomed to email Ms. Zingale their suggestions. Ms. Zingale invited everyone to participate in the weekly conference call on Thursdays at 2:00pm, central time, to discuss further drafts and revisions. The final draft for the National Model Code of Ethics Manuel will be submitted December 5th, 2013. Then the final LAAC National Model of Code of Ethics Manuel will be published at the end of January.

VI. LASS STATE REPRESENTATIVES: STATE UPDATES AND DISCUSSION

Alabama: Win Johnson spoke on behalf of Alabama. Mr. Johnson expressed during the last 10 months the LASS department is catching up on new administration. Alabama is interested in pursuing a remote interpreting system because it is more reliable and accurate than the current system they are using, Google Translate. Mr. Johnson also mentioned that the remote interpreting system will save money, time, and be more efficient and effective for their Language Access program. Mr. Johnson

went on to say, at the present moment, Alabama is conducting testing for court certified interpretation.

Arkansas: Mara Simmons spoke on behalf of Arkansas. Ms. Simmons informed everyone that Arkansas just finished up training sessions for interpreters and is currently working on a seminar for legal interpreting. The seminar will cater to interpreters for both spoken and sign language. The seminar will be a three day training course workshop on July 31st, August 1st and 2nd. Ms. Simmons also stated that Arkansas is trying to develop a better training program for interpreters for their region.

Ms. Capati inquired if Ms. Simmons is going to bring interpreters from out of town for the seminar. Ms. Simmons responded that she is reaching out to a variety of expert trained interpreters that are not necessarily local, but are from regions such as Los Vegas and will train on topics pertaining to forensic interpretation. Ms. Simmons went on to say that she will bring a variety of expert interpreters to speak about different specific topics such as interpreting for expert witnesses, security matters, and so forth.

Illinois: Ms. Sofia Akbar spoke on behalf of Illinois. Ms. Akbar opened by saying that Illinois is still in its infancy stage of developing a Language Access Program, with just starting AOC in September of this year. Ms. Akbar was appreciative with the support and advice she has received from others. Ms. Akbar reported that Illinois is preparing for regional meetings in 6 to 7 locations across the state of Illinois, bringing together court personnel and judges. Ms. Akbar also disclosed that the Supreme Court of Illinois just created an Access Justice Commission, which the Language Access Committee is now a part of. Thus, the Language Access Committee is working on a Language Access policy in hope it will be considered and approved by the Supreme Court in March. Alas, the Supreme Court has already approved a Language Access template, which courts have online access to necessary forms containing specific information regarding Language Access Services. Ms. Akbar also revealed that Illinois is looking into video remote interpreting options and is reaching out to a company called Stratus. Ms. Akbar expressed her concern with Illinois not being a unified court system, and overcoming the difficult challenge to incorporate definitive standard requirements for certification under some counties restrictions of limited resources and funding. Ms. Akbar went on to say that they are trying to think of ways to minimize the cost but still have an effective program in place. Ms. Akbar opened up a discussion forum to get feedback if anyone has experience setting rates and dealing with active unions in a not unified court system.

Ms. Simmons responded, Arkansas is also not a unified court system and they faced a similar challenge with regards to setting rates for interpreters. Ms. Simmons has found the most effective way to ensure quality interpreters with fair rates is to implement a system where you are responsible for picking the interpreter and paying the bill. The downside to this scenario is that it does create a lot of responsibility and extra work.

Ms. Akbar ended the discussion by saying that they are reviewing a Code of Ethics policy.

Kentucky: Ervin Demeny spoke on behalf of Kentucky. Mr. Demeny remarked that they moved to a larger office facility and are still in the mist of getting adjusted to their new surroundings. Mr. Demeny explained during the past six months and projecting into the future, projects that Kentucky has been involved in has been centered on education of judicial employees, judges, and interpreters. Mr. Demeny remarked that there has been a lot of participation of the district and circuit judges in the educational reform programs. Through their success they have now coined the phrase “Linguistic and Culture Competency” to be used as a reference in legal settings. Mr. Demeny also mentioned the partnerships they have with different universities in developing different Language Access programs. First, the University of Louisville has now established an interpretation and translation department. Second, in the University of Arizona they are working together on a long term training program to implement a solid interpreter training curriculum. Third, Eastern Kentucky University is in the process of developing a degree for sign language interpreters. Fourth, the University of Cincinnati’s sign language department is working with the Law Schools to start a program for law students centered on Language Access. Mr. Demeny moved on to the next topic of their Domestic Violence Project, which has been piloting for three years. The foundation of this project is that one county has 24/7 court access of interpreters. These interpreters translate for domestic violence petitioners. In fact, the Juvenile department hired a domestic violence coordinator and is working on a state wide protocol providing access to domestic violence petitioners of all the translated documents and having online access to an interpreter of their spoken language. Lastly, Mr. Demeny mentioned that their IT department is working on video remote interpreting and creating a database that will be utilized as a scheduling tool for collecting all data necessary for upcoming interpretation assignments.

Louisiana: Richard Williams spoke on behalf of Louisiana. Mr. Williams started by disclosing the status of their SJI grant they received, which they are 80% completed

and how it benefited the kick start of their Language Access Program. Mr. Williams proudly boasted that their interpreter program received the Good Apple Award for Justice by Louisiana Appleseed. They are expected to get a lot of good publicity in January when the award is presented to them. Mr. Williams mentioned the futuristic goals are to set up an oral certification testing program for interpreters starting in the summer. Lastly, Mr. William said Loyola University started a part time program for interpreters, which they might utilize and send their court interpreters in the fall semester.

Michigan: Dan Bauer spoke on behalf of Michigan. Mr. Bauer acknowledged that the Supreme Court of Michigan mandated a rule that each of the 240 trial courts needs to develop their own Language Access Plan. Mr. Bauer then went on to say that the last two months have been spent training the courts how to correctly fill out the LAO Language Access Plan template. Mr. Bauer projected that the next 3 years they will have an implementation program similar to North Carolina; with the next steps being training court staff and setting up an orientation program. Mr. Bauer then disclosed that the Supreme Court in the near future will appoint a Foreign Language Board of Review to help provide guidance to the Language Access Program. Next, Mr. Bauer asked the question, is Google translate is a reliable resource for Vietnamese interpretation?

Mr. Demeny responded that he prefers using Language Line Telephonic as an interpreting resource to avoid typing because some people are English illiterate.

Mr. Hansen also responded by saying that using Google translate is a good resource if the court is not willing to spend money on an interpreter or telephonic language aid. Mr. Hansen made the argument that some aid is better than no aid.

Ms. Ryan also responded that she would be fearful that the court would generalize Google translate as a reliable resource not just for Vietnamese, but for other languages as well.

Second question, Mr. Bauer asked consisted of a request made by a court to develop a list of vendors, which includes the ideals of how the vendors should assist the court.

Ms. Capati responded to reference the Remote Interpreting Guide. There is an attachment within the Guide that includes lists of vendors that different states have used and their experience with those vendors.

Mr. Bauer asked another question concerning overcoming language barriers and allowing the interpreters to perform their service with more ease and accuracy; is there any standard terminology used to communicate this issue to the courts?

Minnesota: Polly Ryan spoke on behalf of Minnesota. Ms. Ryan stated that currently they are working on improving forms for translation. Ms. Ryan also mentioned they developed a new scoring matrix for testing. Ms. Ryan also included the fact that their certification testing just ended in October. Ms. Ryan expressed that their YouTube channel is now up and running for the Minnesota Judicial Branch. In the next 6-8 months Minnesota is going to try to achieve some implementation systematic changes, which include (1) eligibility roster to include a written test provided by NCSC, (2) require a shadowing or mentoring program and to encourage higher levels of education, and (3) being allowed to retest in only the categories failed.

Missouri: Lynette Ricks spoke on behalf of Missouri. Ms. Ricks declared that the first Language Access meeting took place in August, and followed by the second meeting on Halloween. Ms. Ricks is working on formalizing the application and background check policy. Also, Missouri is looking into a new payment policy especially concerning payment of interpreters that travel from out of town. Ms. Ricks is also looking into a continuing education policy and additional funding for supporting foreign language interpreters. Ms. Rick also mentioned that Missouri is holding its first Judicial Summit to gather and discuss the judiciary rolls within the courts and developing action plans that would help problem solve issues that they are being faced with. In conclusion, Ms. Ricks mentioned there is a possibility in creating a court operating room.

Tennessee: Mary Rose Zingale spoke on behalf of Tennessee. Ms. Zingale stated that Tennessee is struggling through their Remote Interpreter Project, and the challenges that they are facing involve court staff having problems using the equipment.

Texas: Marco Hansen spoke on behalf of Texas. Mr. Hansen recognized his first plan of action is to hire a court licensed interpreter to implement a program that allows an interpreter to be available on call in time sensitive situations. Next, Mr. Hansen wants to help develop and improve Language Access Plans for different courts in Texas. Lastly, Mr. Hansen wants to examine what resources are available in becoming a court interpreter.

Wisconsin: Carmel Capati spoke on behalf of Wisconsin. Ms. Capati talked about a new program she has in place called the brown bag lunch discussion for interpreters, which allows interpreters to come together and focus and discuss particular topics.

ADJOURNMENT

Submitted by: *Sarah Esterbrook (A temporary employee for NCSC)*