



Interpreter Commission
Friday, August 24, 2012 (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)
AOC SeaTac Facility, 18000 International Blvd., Suite 1106, SeaTac, WA 98188

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Justice Steve González
Dirk Marler
Sam Mattix
Mike McElroy
Kristi Cruz
Theresa Smith
Frank Maiocco

Members Absent:

Judge James Riehl
Judge Gregory Sypolt
Judge Judith Hightower
Steve Muzik
Leticia Camacho

AOC Staff:

Katrin Johnson

Guest Participant:

Callie Dietz

Observers:

Jenny Tupper
David Behar

The meeting was called to order by Justice González at 9:05 a.m.

I. May Meeting Minutes

Unanimously approved. They will be posted on the AOC Court Interpreter Program website.

II. National Summit on Language Access in the Courts

The National Center for State Courts obtained a grant to sponsor state teams of five individuals at a national conference on language access in the courts in Houston, TX. After considering the recommended representatives, Chief Justice Madsen selected the following individuals to represent Washington:

- Judge Charles Snyder of Whatcom County Superior Court
- Judge Janis Whitener-Moberg of Grant County District Court
- LaTricia Kinlow, Administrator of Tukwila Municipal Court
- Sam Mattix, Certified Lao and Registered Thai Court Interpreter
- Shirley Bondon, Manager of Court Access Programs at AOC
- Katrin Johnson, Court Interpreter Program Coordinator

The structure of the conference will be a combination of educational sessions and state team working sessions. Each state team will develop an action plan with the priorities for improving language access in their states.

III. Court Interpreter Program Update

Testing and Training Update: The mandatory orientation class was held in Bellevue and Moses Lake. There were approximately 25 participants in Moses Lake, which is one of the largest turn-outs for the Eastern side of the state. Judge Whitener-Moberg volunteered to teach the students on legal terminology at Moses Lake, and Judge Alicea-Galvan presented on legal terminology at Bellevue.

1st Pacific Northwest Court Interpreter Conference: This was an event jointly coordinated by the AOC Court Interpreter Program and the Oregon Judicial Department's Court Interpreter Services. The organizations combined funds and staff time. The three-day conference delivered content specific to interpreters aspiring to become certified, continuing education for interpreters who are already credentialed, and Spanish language-specific training. The event was held in northern Portland and was well attended by court interpreters from both states.

Targeted Court Interpreter Training Initiative: The TCITI is an SJI grant-funded initiative to help certify more interpreters. Participants were selected based on previous exam results – they were close to passing, and thus have a demonstrable aptitude for court interpreting. The training includes three weekend workshops and nine webinars. To date the first weekend workshop and two webinars have been completed. The trainer is Ine Marie van Dam, former faculty of the Monterrey Institute. Her practical and instructional experience is primarily from conference interpreting, and therefore the training techniques from that field will be applied to court interpreting. Participants represent seven different languages, and come from different areas of the state. Travel costs for weekend workshop participant are reimbursed for those living a long distance from the training location. Upon completion of the training program, the participants will take the oral certification exam in January. Their test results will be compared against previous test results to measure the degree of improvement. The budget for the entire project is approximately \$30,000.

Upcoming Events:

- In September the AOC will host the Ethics/Protocol class for interpreters completing the process to become Court Registered.
- AOC staff will co-present with Russian Certified Interpreter Emma Garkavi on working with interpreters at a WSBA attorney training event.
- Also in September will be the oral certification exam held at Bellevue College.

Interpreter Reimbursement Program: The AOC will contract again with a select number of courts for 50% reimbursement of qualifying interpreter expenses, and the AOC has allocated the same level of funding as last year. The AOC is considering adding a new provision to the upcoming contracts, requiring participant courts to submit a written report describing their language access services. The reimbursement program

has been in effect since January, 2008, but thus far the AOC has not coordinated the collection of qualitative data to identify improvements and/or changes in language access services. The Court Management Council has reviewed the proposed report template, and overwhelmingly supported the reporting requirement. Should the Judicial Branch choose to seek additional funding from the Legislature for interpreter reimbursement, this data will help make a stronger case on the impact the state funding has. The Commission members were supportive of including the report as a contractual requirement, and encouraged the AOC to seek responses from courts and clerk offices that don't receive reimbursement.

The Commission also discussed whether to support modifying the program funding conditions regarding the use of registered interpreters. The funding conditions were written in 2007, when the registered category was new. Courts are encouraged to use registered interpreters whenever available, and are required to pay them \$50/hr. Staff proposed modifying the conditions to now require the use of registered interpreters for reimbursement eligibility, similar to the requirements for the use of certified interpreters. The Commission discussed advantages and disadvantages to changing the standards, and supported requiring the use of registered interpreters in languages for which there are registered interpreters for reimbursement qualification.

IV. Adding New Languages for Certification

Washington's oral certification exams are made available through a national organization, and recently new languages have been added to the bank of exams, and previously existing exams have been updated and are now available for use. Exams that are available again are Levantine (Arabic), Bosnian, and Khmer, and those will be incorporated into the 2013 testing cycle. New exams which are available are Tagalog and Punjabi. The Commission discussed whether to transition Tagalog and Punjabi to the Certification languages. In the past when Registered languages have transitioned to Certification, the existing Registered Interpreters were given a period of three years to pass the certification exam. If they fail to do so, they fall off the AOC interpreter list. The Commission supported transitioning these languages to certification, but recommended revisiting the issue in one year to determine the effects of the transition.

V. BJA Resolution on Language Access

On July 20th the BJA passed the resolution on language access in the courts, indicating its support for courts to provide and pay for interpreters in non-indigent civil matters. The Commission discussed what steps it could take for implementation and support. Feedback from courts has been inquiring as to whether BJA will seek additional funding from the state to offset the additional expenses. The AOC has worked with the BJA on drafting possible decision packages to expand state funding of interpreter expenses. In previous surveys of the courts, results showed that the majority of courts are already paying for expenses in all civil cases. Justice González suggested that he and Katrin meet prior to the next meeting to identify some implementation options to discuss at the next meeting.

VI. Commission Membership

September 30 marks the close of several terms on the Commission. The terms of Frank Maiocco, Steve Muzik, and Leticia Camacho will end. They were thanked for their leadership and contributions to the Interpreter Commission, and the impact of their work in helping improve access to justice for limited English speaking persons.

The Commission received a nomination of Marti Maxwell, Administrator of Thurston County Superior Court, to serve as the next court manager representative on the Interpreter Commission. The members voted unanimously to approve Ms. Maxwell's application.

The Commission received multiple nominations for the court interpreter representative to the Interpreter Commission. After extensive discussion in executive session, a majority of the members voted to approve Ms. Linda Noble's application.

At the next meeting, the Commission will discuss committee assignments and committee projects.

VII. Judicial Education Session Proposals

The Commission discussed possibilities for educational proposals for judicial conferences in 2013. After discussion, members agreed that the proposal should include a session which addresses the following topics:

- Interpreting from the perspective of the litigant. Recent effective presentations have been made at WSBA training events, headed by Judge Alicea-Galvan, with a Spanish court hearing. This places the audience in the perspective of the LEP court participant.
- Comparison of the state legal requirements versus the federal legal requirements in the provision of interpreters and other language access services.
- Video Remote Interpreting

VIII. Demonstration of the WASCLA Interpreter Directory

Kristi Cruz gave a demonstration of the mock-up of the upcoming WASCLA (WA State Coalition for Language Access) online interpreter directory. This directory is intended to give service providers a one-stop-shopping approach to finding interpreters, and matching their experiences/skills to the types of assignments.

Next Meeting: Friday, Nov. 30, 2012, 9:00 – 12:00 noon, AOC SeaTac Office, small meeting room

Minutes approved via e-mail vote.