

OLA QUARTERLY

Official Newsletter of the Office of Language Access, State of Hawai'i

‘O ka ʻōlelo ke ola - Language is Life

BRIDGING LANGUAGE BARRIERS: OLA TRAINING WORKSHOP UPDATE

On May 13th and 15th, over 230 Hawaii State and County employees attended free training workshops at the State Capitol, provided through the OLA. Language Access Advisory Council Member, Dr. Suzanne Zeng from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies (CITS) and L. Dew Kaneshiro, a private consultant, conducted the trainings for front line workers, supervisors, managers, language access coordinators, and bilingual staff. In an effort to help employees bridge language barriers with their customers, the training included how to use interpreters effectively and how to simplify one's own speech to make it more comprehensible to persons, whose native language is not English.



(Photo above) L. Dew Kaneshiro addresses the audience during one of the OLA workshops.

The morning sessions, "Serving LEP Individuals Through Interpreters", addressed topics such as: *The Do's and Don'ts of Working with Interpreters; How You Can Tell If Your Client Needs an Interpreter; and What Makes an Interpreter Competent?*

During the afternoon trainings, "The Role of Bilingual Staff", covered relevant material including: *Cultural Competency; Ethics of Interpretation; How to Self-Assess Your Own Language Abilities; and The Proper Role of an Interpreter.*

These workshops were designed to address the growing requests for education and training as agencies implement their language access plans and to raise awareness on how to better serve limited English proficient customers.

Most of the attendees shared that they enjoyed the workshops and some wanted to delve further into topics such as screening or selecting interpreters, red flags, and other important language access related issues. The OLA hopes to sponsor more training workshops to further address these areas and include non-profit agency staff members as well.

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"Skills + Ethics

=

Competent

Interpreter"

Zeng/Kaneshiro

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Aloha! Welcome to the Summer 2009 edition of our quarterly newsletter.

The Legislative session has ended, and we are happy to report that the bill designating the month of August as “Language Access Month” in Hawai‘i was passed by the Legislature and recently signed into law by Governor Lingle. We will be holding events during August in celebration and encourage agencies from the public and private sectors, and the community, to join us in this celebration. Congratulations also to our newly confirmed members of the Language Access Advisory Council!

During the quarter, the OLA conducted two training workshops, “Serving LEP Individuals Through Interpreters” and “The Role of Bilingual Staff”, on May 13 and 15, 2009 at the State Capitol. The free workshops were attended by over 230 employees from state and county agencies.

Earlier in the year, on April 25, 2009, the OLA presented a panel discussion on “Protecting Our Kupuna Through Language Access”, during the Hawai‘i Anti-Fraud Conference at the Hawai‘i Convention Center. The OLA staff also attended trainings and hosted a couple of webinars organized by viaLanguage and the Migration Policy Institute. Finally, the OLA staffed a community table at the Annual Filipino Fiesta.

While we continue to face challenging economic times, the OLA remains optimistic and is still planning future activities, particularly the “Language Access Month” celebration in August, the 2nd Hawaii Language Access Conference in September, and another round of training workshops for state, county, and non-profit agencies in October.

LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER CONFIRMATIONS



OLA staff members gather with (L to R): Azi Turturici, Senator Dwight Takamine, Senator Mike Gabbard, Betty Brow, Senator Clarence Nishihara, Senator Sam Slom, Jennifer Li Dotson, and Senate Judiciary Chairman Brian Taniguchi, after the confirmation hearings.

On April 15, 2009, three of the newest members of the Language Access Advisory Council, Betty Brow, Jennifer Li Dotson, and Azi Turturici, appeared before the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations. They were subsequently confirmed by the Senate before the close of the Regular Session of 2009.

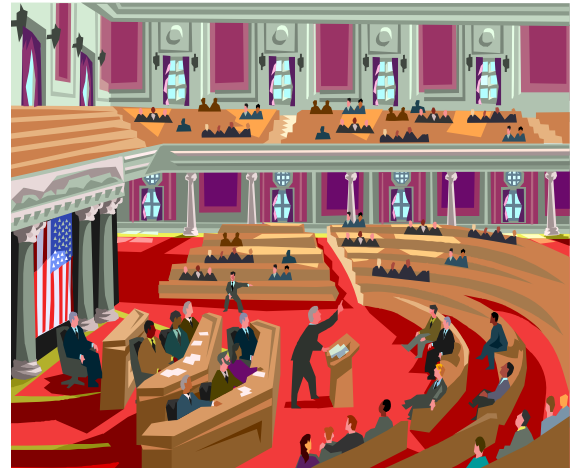
The confirmation of new and reappointed existing Council members, Lito Asuncion, Alohalani Boido, Namaka Rawlins, and Mary Santa Maria, also occurred earlier in this year’s regular Legislative session. Therefore, the LAAC now has 16 confirmed members.

A big “Mahalo” goes out to everyone who submitted testimonies and offered their support for these individuals.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES: REGULAR SESSION 2009

The month of August has been designated as “Language Access Month” in Hawai‘i. On August 11, 2000, former President Clinton issued Executive Order No. 13166, directing all federal agencies to publish written policies on how recipients can provide access to LEP persons and improve language accessibility to programs. In 2006, Hawai‘i’s language access law was enacted, mirroring the federal language access law. Act 69/HB813 HD1 SD1 CD1

The House of Representatives passed a resolution requesting the establishment of a task force consisting of members of the Legislature and representatives of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Department of Transportation, OLA, and tourism-related private sector industries such as the hotel industry, car rental industry, and restaurant industry. The task force is responsible for: (1) Evaluating current language accessibility in the visitor industry, including airports and private sector tourism-related industries; (2) Reporting on current practice and the anticipated needs of the influx of tourists from Korea and China; and (3) Studying the cost of implementing services related to providing increased Korean and Chinese language access. A report of its findings and recommendations, including cost estimates and any necessary legislation, is to be submitted to the Legislature before the convening of the Regular Session of 2010. *HR157*



A concurrent resolution requests the Executive Office on Aging and the Center on Aging at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa to continue their research and analyses and report on developing a cash and counseling model and to apply for related grants; determining how best to compensate caregivers for respite services, accommodate language barriers, and overcome access to long-term care services barriers; determining best practices for state agencies to collaborate and coordinate with area agencies on aging and local community service providers; enhancing funding from all sources for Medicaid and Medicare services; and identifying more funding sources for long-term care services. *HCR13/HR17*

THE HAWAI‘I ANTI-FRAUD CONFERENCE



Photo (L to R): Valorie Taylor, Child & Family Services, OLA Executive Director Jun Colmenares, and Dr. Tin Myaing Thein, Pacific Gateway Center Executive Director and Language Access Advisory Council Member, congregate before heading to their panel presentation.

The Office of Language Access organized and presented a panel discussion titled "Protecting our Kupuna through Language Access" during the Hawai‘i Anti-Fraud Conference (*Keeping Hawai‘i Safe for Our Kupuna*), which was held at the Hawai‘i Convention Center on April 25, 2009. The conference was sponsored by the State Executive Office on Aging, SMP Hawai‘i, and the Elderly Affairs Division of the City and County of Honolulu. About 300 participants attended the event. The panel included Gerald Ohta (DOH) as moderator, Serafin Colmenares Jr. (OLA Executive Director), Dr. Tin Myaing Thein (Pacific Gateway Center), and Valorie Taylor (CFS Gerontology Program) as panelists. Given the fact that approximately 35% of the 130,761 LEP population in Hawaii are age 60 years and above, the panel looked at various ways by which elderly LEP individuals can be provided with correct information in their native languages, and how to access language services in the state.

LANGUAGE ACCESS CHECK-UP: HOW ARE YOU DOING?

Quick Indicators of Basic Language Access Deficiencies:

- The program encourages relatives or friends to interpret for clients.
- The intake database lacks a mandatory data field for the client's primary language.
- No formal arrangements are in place to obtain professional interpreters.
- Neither bilingual nor monolingual staff have been trained on interpreting techniques.
- No articulated policy on delivering services to LEP clients exists.
- Case handlers send non-translated letters (or no letters at all) to clients who don't read English (or Spanish).



Source: Uyehara, Paul M. (for Language Access Project, Community Legal Services, Inc.) "Making Legal Services Accessible to Limited English Proficient Clients." Management Information Exchange Journal (Spring 2003): 33-37.

THE OLA PARTICIPATES IN THE 17TH ANNUAL FILIPINO FIESTA

The Filipino Fiesta, the largest cultural event of the Filipino community in Hawai'i, took place on Saturday, May 9, 2009 at Kapiolani Park. This was the 17th edition of the festival, which showcased various aspects of the Filipino history and culture. The theme, "*Kabataan: Pag-asa ng Bayan*" (Youth: Hope of the Fatherland), focused on the role of the youth in building a nation and the promise that they bring to the Filipino community in Hawaii.

This year's celebration included a historical and cultural parade in the morning from Fort DeRussy to Kapiolani Park, an all-day fiesta featuring local and Philippine entertainers, food booths, a keiki village, and booths comprised of numerous business organizations and non-profit agencies. OLA Executive Director, Jun Colmenares, was the chairman for this annual event and the OLA staff manned one of the booths.

The evening was capped off by a "Santacruzian Festival", which was highlighted by Filipino beauty contestants. The contestants represented various religious and historical personages.

The fiesta was sponsored by the Filipino Community Center in collaboration with the Congress of Visayan Organizations, the Honolulu Filipino Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Oahu Filipino Community Council, and the United Filipino Council of Hawaii.



LANGUAGE ACCESS NEWS AROUND THE NATION

Housing Office Expands Website to Help LEP Families Gain Access to HUD Programs

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has unveiled an enhanced website in its efforts to promote equal access to housing programs by providing important HUD documents in 12 different languages. HUD's expanded Limited English Proficiency (LEP) website features fact sheets, housing brochures and other forms not only in English but also in Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, French, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

The forms include Model Leases; Family Self-Sufficiency Program FSS Escrow Account Credit Worksheet; and Statement of Homeowner Obligation; posters - We Do Business in Accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Law; Fair Housing, It's Not An Option, It's the Law(2007)); information about HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8), and a Resident Rights and Responsibilities brochure.

These documents are free to the public on <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fneo/promotingfh/lep.cfm>.

"When buying or renting a home, obtaining important housing information should not depend on how well people speak English... This website greatly expands HUD's ability to offer all families access to our programs and services, regardless of the language they speak." - John Trasviña, HUD's Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

Texas Governor Rick Perry Signs Bill Establishing a Committee to Oversee Healthcare Interpreter Qualifications

<http://www.pr.com/press-release/161004>

Houston, TX June 24, 2009 - On June 19th, 2009 Governor Rick Perry signed a bill establishing a committee to oversee healthcare interpreter qualifications. The bill will establish a committee representing multiple stakeholder groups to ensure effective communication within health care for the 6.8 million Texas residents that speak a language other than English in the home. The bill is the first step in addressing the billions of dollars lost annually as a result of patients not understanding what doctors are communicating to them and will help ensure that disparities in health status and access can begin to be eliminated.

The bill affects both sign language and foreign language interpreters, and may affect how healthcare providers classify and utilize bilingual staff. The unanimous support of the bill by the Texas Senate and subsequent signature of the Governor underline the support the Texas Legislature is giving the Texas healthcare community.

The Texas Association of Healthcare Interpreters and Translators (TAHIT) applauds the Texas Legislature and specifically Governor Perry for his vision in ensuring competent communication between physicians and their limited English proficient patients. Establishing uniform qualifications for healthcare interpreters will begin to alleviate the difficulties inherent in providing healthcare services for these patients.

Research indicates that up to 31 errors per patient encounter occur when utilizing untrained staff to facilitate multilingual communication. Such errors result in adverse outcomes, increased liability, and substantial fiscal waste.

For more information please contact:

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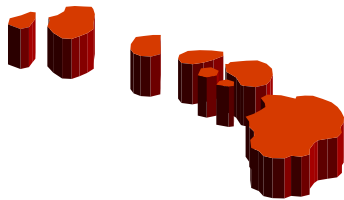
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THE MICRONESIAN CULTURE AWARENESS PROJECT (MCAP)

The Micronesian population is rapidly growing in Hawaii, with the majority residing on the island of Oahu. Many continue to arrive for various social, medical, and financial reasons. As a result, agencies across the state have needed to adjust to this influx of newcomers. The need for Chuukese, Marshallese, and other Micronesian language interpretation and translation services for example, has increased significantly over the past few years.

The Micronesian Culture Awareness Project, otherwise known as MCAP, was formed to better educate the public about the Micronesian people and cultures. This group is comprised of individuals representing the various islands of Micronesia and have been very active in sharing their knowledge and insights with audiences throughout Hawai'i.

In early June, Lillian Segal from MCAP, gave an informative presentation at the OLA Language Access Coordinators' meeting. Various slides and videos were utilized to provide a picture of life back in the Micronesian Islands. Ms. Segal also shared about the different cultures, challenges being faced by the Micronesian immigrants, how agencies can strengthen relationships with the Micronesian community, and many other relevant issues.

For more information about the Micronesian Culture Awareness Project (MCAP), you may direct your inquiries to Segal@hawaii.edu.

DATES TO REMEMBER

7/1/09	Revised Language Access Plans due from state agencies receiving federal financial assistance
7/8/09	Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, DLIR Conference Room #320, 9 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.
7/22/09	State Language Access Coordinators' Meeting, DLIR Conference Rooms 310-314, 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.
8/1/09 - 8/31/09	"Language Access Month" in Hawai'i
9/10/09	State Language Access Coordinators' Meeting, DLIR Conference Rooms 310-314, 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.
9/28/09	2nd Hawai'i Conference on Language Access, State Capitol Auditorium, Chamber Level, 8 A.M. - 4 P.M.