

OLA QUARTERLY

Official Newsletter of the
Office of Language Access, State of Hawai'i
O ka 'ōlelo ke ola - Language is Life



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OLA STAFF POSITIONS FILLED

Some good news for the New Year! The request to establish and fill the two OLA positions that were restored by the state legislature was finally approved and the two positions are in the process of being filled.

The OLA clerk-typist position was upgraded to OLA secretary, and returning to fill the position is Gail McGarvey. Gail has been helping OLA while working with the DLIR Director's office and volunteering with OLA for the past several months. (Picture on the right shows Gail volunteering during the 2011 Annual Hawaii Conference on Language Access—with Dominic Inocelda and Jennifer Dotson).



Filling the position of OLA senior legal analyst will be Rebecca Gardner, a graduate of the UH Richardson School of Law and currently staff attorney for the House Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee. She will join OLA in May 2012 after the legislative session is over. In the meantime, the OLA is hiring an 89-day hire to help out the office in the next three months. Joining the office as a temporary hire is Sonya Chung-Hirano. Sonya used to work with the Susannah Wesley Community Center as its development officer.

A warm welcome to our new staffers!

BILLS TO TRANSFER OLA PROPOSED

As part of the administration's legislative package, two bills are being proposed to transfer the OLA from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to the Department of Health. The purpose of the transfer is to house the office in a department with congruent purposes, thereby strengthening and making it more effective in performing its functions. The bills are HB2581 and SB2843.

Similar bills were also filed in the House by Health Committee chair Ryan Yamane and Deputy Speaker Joey Manahan (HB2374) and in the Senate by Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland (SB2658).

As of this writing, HB2374 has passed the House Health and Labor Committees, and has been referred to the House Finance Committee.

Message from the Executive Director

Happy Holidays to all! I just returned from a 15-day tour of Spain, Portugal and Morocco. It was a fun but exhausting trip. Not only were I able to see places which I have only read about, but actually being able to meet and talk to people there has strengthened my belief in the importance of being able to speak foreign languages. Most of the people I talked to can speak Spanish, English and French, in addition to Portuguese and Arabic, so that it made me feel more at ease. I got to practice the little Spanish I have too.

The New Year brings good tidings to OLA in the form of the approval of the request to establish and fill the two positions (clerk typist and senior legal analyst) that have been restored by the state legislature since 2010. Special thanks to the governor for acceding to our request, and to Amy Agbayani who has continuously championed the cause of OLA and language access. Thanks also to Mila Kaahanui and other members of the community for their support. And welcome to our new staff members.

The new year could also see OLA finding a new home at the Department of Health, depending on the outcome of legislation that has been proposed in the legislature.

Meanwhile, negotiations with the Maryland-based company, Cross Cultural Communications, led to OLA doing the honors of hosting the initial testing of a new distance learning equipment that the company will be using to hold trainings for interpreters nationally and internationally. We are also looking at holding a 40-hour community interpreter training sometime in March this year.

OLA is partnering with the Senior Medicare Patrol program of the Executive Office on Aging to hold town hall meetings in Kauai, Lanai, Maui and the Big Island in February and March of this year to discuss Medicare fraud prevention among the Ilokano population.

Finally, plans are afoot for holding the 5th Annual Hawaii Conference on Language Access in August of this year.

OLA Tests Distance Learning Equipment

The OLA recently hosted the first-ever testing of a distance learning equipment that will be used by Cross Cultural Communications, a Maryland-based company engaged in the training of interpreters, in its training program nationally. The test was conducted last December 5, 2011, from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m., at the DLIR conference room 320 with eleven members from the community participating. The testing, which was on an interactive basis, consisted of a mock training session, evaluating video and audio feeds, and discussing problems encountered from both ends.

Marjory Bancroft and Lourdes Rubio-Fitzpatrick conducted the testing from the Maryland end, while the following participated from the Honolulu end: Jun Colmenares, Dominic Inocelda, Sue Zeng, Debi TulangdeSilva, Melody Kubo, Patricia Harpstrite, Robert Lorin, Dianne Lim, Josephine Albert, Jessica Daniel, and Reupena Sheck. Casey Cho of the DLIR director's office provided technical assistance.

Based on feedback received from the attendees, there are many technical issues that still need to be ironed out. Among them are: (1) audio going in and out, i.e., inaudible and progressively getting worse especially toward the end; (2) could not read what was written on the wipeboard by the instructor, i.e., not clearly visible due to glare caused by lighting from their end; (3) loss of video feed on several occasions; (4) blinking screen, which made it hard on the eyes—contributing to the fatigue factor; (5) network issues (within the building), which led to unclear/static-filled video streaming; (6) DVDs shown at smaller size/lower resolution making it difficult to read subtitles and other text, pixelated images during transitions, etc. The length of the planned training for interpreters—40 hours—could be very exhausting, but arrangements can be made to conduct the training in shorter hours and over a span of time.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPEAKS AT MAUI CONFERENCE

OLA Executive Director Colmenares spoke at the *Kababayan, Magkaisa Tayo!* A Conference on the Spiritual, Emotional and Physical Health of Maui's Filipino Community, held at the Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center on December 2, 2011. His paper was titled Language Access, Health Care and Hawaii's Filipinos, and covered topics such as language and health care, federal and state mandates promoting culturally and linguistically appropriate services, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Hawaii's LEP population, and why language access is important to Filipinos.

The conference was sponsored by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health. Director Colmenares took the opportunity to distribute the new multilingual posters to agencies in attendance.

CROSS-CULTURAL HEALTH CARE CONFERENCE

The 2011 Cross-Cultural Health Care Conference was held at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Hotel last October 7-8, 2011. OLA Executive Director Serafin Colmenares and Language Access Advisory Council Vice-Chair Gerald Ohta were invited as panelists on the topic: Federal and State Requirements and Guidelines Impacting Cross-Cultural Healthcare.

In view of the ongoing strike by hotel workers and his expressed support for them, Executive Director Colmenares decided not to be physically present to deliver his paper but made his PowerPoint presentation available to the attendees on line. Gerald Ohta became the sole presenter and tried to cover some of the topics from Director Colmenares' presentation.

The conference was sponsored by the UH John A. Burns School of Medicine and the Department of Surgery.

MEMO ON LANGUAGE ACCESS COMPLIANCE

Bruce Coppa, chief-of-staff of Governor Abercrombie, recently called on state agencies to comply with certain requirements of Hawaii's Language Access Law.

In a memorandum dated January 12, 2012, he directed the agencies to do the following:

1. Submit revised language access plans every two years.

This is in compliance with Chapter 371-343(b) of the Hawaii Revised Statutes. The memo states that for federally-funded state agencies, the deadline for submission of revised language access plans was July 1, 2011. Out of 18 federally-funded state agencies, only 10 have so far submitted their revised plans. The memo also reminded non-federally-funded state agencies that the deadline for the submission of their revised plans is July 1, 2012. Revised plans may be submitted by mail or as an attachment to an email.

2. Designate language access coordinators.

Chapter 371-343(c) of the Hawaii Revised Statutes requires that each state agency designate a language access coordinator who shall establish and implement their language access plan. As of this date, some agencies have not designated their language access coordinators.

The memorandum directs agencies concerned to submit their revised language access plans and/or to designate and submit the names of their language access coordinators to the Office of Language Access no later than May 15, 2012.

NEWS FROM ALL OVER

LONG BEACH CITY COUNCIL TO CREATE LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

November 4, 2011—Sixth District Councilman Dee Andrews, in conjunction with Ninth District Councilman Steven Neal, put forth a City Council Agenda Item Tuesday to create a policy to provide equal language access to all City of Long Beach residents. The item passed unanimously.

Over 50 community members addressed the Long Beach Mayor and City Council members about the language barriers that they currently face. Many members of the community expressed a desire to be involved in Long Beach City government and City services; however their limited proficiency of the English language acts as a barrier.

"Access to City Government and services are key for the continued growth of our City and the language barrier is stunting our growth. It is very important that all the residents that make up Long Beach are equally invited, involved, and educated about our City's practices, especially vital services such as public safety, health, and general welfare", said Councilman Dee Andrews.

The item suggests that a policy be created so that all City Departments, Board meetings, Commission meetings, City Council meetings and City organized/hosted community meetings be accessible to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons through the use of interpreters. Additionally, the item stipulates that vital City documents be translated into the primary languages spoken by Long Beach residents, and the City's website be available in languages other than English.

"Everyone deserves the right to have equal access to his/her government. Each person has something of value to offer, and it would be a shame to miss great opportunities because of language barriers", said Councilman Steven Neal. "Language access is the #1 barrier to the success of immigrant integration for the residents of Long Beach. The policy will lead to the improvement of economic development, civic engagement and better quality of life", said Sara Pol-Lim, Executive Director United Cambodian Community.

The item requested that the City Manager work with the City Attorney and community partners with expertise in this area, including the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, the Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition, Housing Long Beach, Centro C.H.A. and United Cambodian Community, to draft a city-wide Language Access Policy with consistent city-wide standards, and report back to the City Council within 90 days.

LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES INTRODUCES WEB-BASED LANGUAGE ACCESS PORTAL

All-In-One Integrated Portal Designed for Mission-Critical Language Access and Cultural Compliance Needs of Healthcare Organizations

MONTEREY, Calif., Dec. 14, 2011 /PRNewswire/ – To provide healthcare organizations nationwide a place to stay informed with information related to language access in healthcare, Language Line Services has launched a new all-in-one, multi-device online portal (<http://healthcare.languageline.com/>).

Language Line Services is enabling access to healthcare providers to aid in the support of effective communication between healthcare providers and limited English proficient (LEP) patients.

New regulatory requirements for patient-centered and effective communication from The Joint Commission require hospitals to ensure programs and policies are in place to mitigate risks to patient safety. Medical professionals can now manage important tasks including access to professional interpreters, translation of vital medical documents, localization ("translating" Web content), cultural sensitivity training, legal compliance, language proficiency testing and a myriad of other tools and resources through this portal.

"This will be the only language access portal I will need," said Louise Behiel, Manager of Interpretation and Translation Services for Alberta Health Services. "What this site does is speak directly to healthcare professionals in an extremely organized way. It's great to be able to go to one place and click one button. It's intuitive, and you can even access the portal from your smart phone or tablet computer."

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Hawaii's LEP Population

Upon OLA's invitation, Dr. Eugene Tian, acting administrator of the research and economic analysis division of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), gave a presentation on Hawaii's limited English proficient population during the quarterly meeting of the state language access coordinators held on November 23, 2011 at the DLIR conference room 310. The purpose of the presentation was to give state language access coordinators needed information to assist them in understanding and assessing the needs of their target populations.

Using the most recent population data from the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2005-2009 American Community Survey of the U.S. Bureau of Census, Dr. Tian pointed out that Hawaii is among the most ethnically diverse state in the union. In addition, the data showed the following:

- 24.4% of Hawaii residents 5 years and above (310,820) speak a language other than English at home. The national average is 19.6%. Of this, 45% or 140,791 are limited English proficient or LEP (speak English less than very well), constituting 11% of the total population.
- The top 3 non-English languages spoken at home in Hawaii are: Tagalog, Japanese, and Ilokano. Among the LEP population, the top 3 are: Ilokano, Tagalog, and Japanese.
- More Asians speak a language other than English at home. Among the LEP population, Asians make up 86%.
- More senior citizens speak a language other than English at home. 35% of the LEP population are 60 years old and above.
- More low income residents speak a language other than English at home. 48% of the LEP population have an annual income of less than \$15,000.
- Educational level is correlated with English proficiency. 67% of LEP individuals did not go beyond high school (37% have less than a high school education).
- 82.7% of the LEP population are foreign-born.
- Most LEP individuals in the labor force are found in the agriculture, hotel and restaurant industries.

Dates to Remember

January 11, 2012—Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., HIOSH Conference Room 427, at 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.

January 18, 2012—Opening of the Hawaii State Legislature.

February 8, 2012—Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., DLIR Conference Room 320, at 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.

February 22, 2012—State Language Access Coordinators' meeting, 10:00 to 12:00 noon, DLIR Conference Room 310, at 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu. Presentation on

March 12-16, 2012—Cross Cultural Communications training on Community Interpretation. Site TBA.

March 7, 2012—Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., DLIR Conference Room 320, at 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.

April 11, 2012—Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., DLIR Conference Room 320, at 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.