

OLA QUARTERLY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS, STATE OF HAWAII



Issue 9

Winter 2009 and Spring 2010

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ALOHA: FAREWELL AND WELCOME!

As we close the year 2009, we bid aloha and farewell to all four OLA staff who were laid off as a result of the state reduction-in-force (RIF) process. The four are Uilani Pauole de Sa, senior legal analyst; Jeremy Low, research analyst; Kendall Zukeran, research analyst; and Gail McGarvey, clerk. We would like to thank all of them for their dedication to language access and their hard work in implementing the goals and objectives of the OLA. As a token of their appreciation, members of the Language Access Advisory Council gave the departing staff a farewell lunch on November 18, 2009 at Makino Restaurant in the Aloha Tower Marketplace. We will miss them and wish them well. As they bade adieu, their parting word to OLA was – Imua!



[left to right] Jeremy, Kendall, Uilani, and Gail.

As we open the year 2010, we would like to say aloha and welcome to our two student interns. They are Eric M. Garcia and Ergel Grace C. Valenzuela, both senior Political Science majors from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Eric is with the U.S. Navy and is originally from San Diego, while Ergel is a student senator of the Associated Students of UH. Both are doing their community practicum which is required for graduation. Eric will be tracking legislations related to language access and doing an LEP mapping/demographic profile project for the office. Ergel will be updating the OLA website, producing the OLA quarterly newsletter, and assisting in the planning for OLA's language access month activities, including the language access conference. The arrival of the two student interns is a welcome relief to the office as it tries to continue performing its most basic functions during these difficult times.

We would like also to welcome the following students who will be spending fifteen hours each during this spring semester assisting the OLA with its other functions: Stella Bugarin, a social work major; Betty Bautista, a social work and Ilokano major; Alan Manzano, an Ilokano major; Joseph Daoang, an Asian Studies major; and Melody Tagama, also a social work major. The students are with the Ilokano practicum course of Dr. Aurelio Agcaoili at UH-Manoa. Their stint with the OLA is part of the community exposure that they are required to have before they can graduate. Specifically, the students will be translating parts of the OLA website, including some documents, from English to Ilokano and Tagalog, an initial step toward making the OLA website multilingual. Melody Tagama will be translating a couple of documents from the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program of the Executive Office on Aging into Ilokano as part of the collaborative project between OLA and the SMP.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

One result of the recent staff layoffs was the delay in the publication of our quarterly newsletter. Therefore, we decided to combine our newsletter's winter and spring issues – and possibly the summer and fall editions – this year.

In this issue, we bid farewell to our staff – Ui, Jeremy, Kendall and Gail – and we welcome our student interns, Eric and Ergel, as well as our practicum students Betty, Stella, Alan, Joseph and Melody. We wish our former staff well and thank them for their excellent and dedicated service. And we also thank our interns for their willingness to assist us, even for a short while, during these difficult times. I also acknowledge and appreciate the clerical and IT assistance being provided us by the Director's Office.

It will no longer be "business as usual" for the office starting this year and there will definitely be changes in what we do. So I ask everybody to bear with us. But we will look at innovative ways and try to do what we can to continue to oversee the implementation of the requirements of the language access law. In collaboration with, and with the support of our language access *ohana*, we hope to be able to find ways to serve the needs of the limited English proficient population of Hawaii. There will be challenges but, on a positive note, and reiterating the parting word of our former staff, I say, "*Imua!*"

The Maui interpreter community is active and growing. Here is a brief update.

Trainings

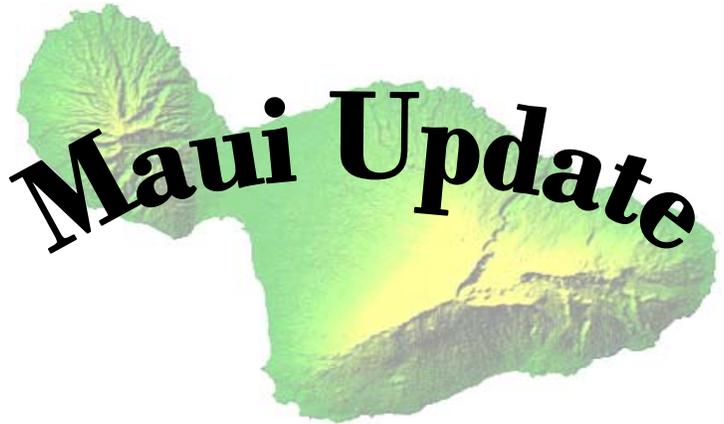
The Maui District Health Office recently hired two part-time interpreters and one full time bi-lingual health aide. This increases the capacity for the District Health Office staff to reach the Marshallese, Spanish, Ilocano and Tagalog speaking communities.

Trainings are being conducted for Department of Health Office staff who work with the interpreters and bi-lingual health aid. The purpose is to ensure that both providers and interpreters work together in the best manner possible to ensure communication between the client/patient and providers.

An Introduction to Medical Interpreting class is being taught at U.H. Maui College for the VITEC career training program. This 12 hour class will introduce the student to the basics of interpreting in a health care/social services setting. Emphasis will be put on understanding the roles, skills, ethics, and vocabulary needed for this field of medical interpreting.

Discussions have started between the Maui District Health Office and Maui Memorial Medical Center to find ways to support the Center in their provision of interpreter services to their patients.

The Judiciary recently completed another session of Court Interpreter Orientation classes for interested Maui interpreters. This is the first requisite toward court interpreter certification.



Maui Meetings

The next meeting of the Maui Interpreters Hui will be held this spring. It will bring together providers with practicing interpreters. This type of networking facilitates the use of trained interpreters in the community. For more information please contact Rachel Hecksher at 808 243 8649 or Mary Santa Maria at (808)984 8216 .

OLA NEWS

OLA TO HOLD RETREAT

The Office of Language Access will be holding a retreat on August 11, 2010 to revisit the language access law and the administrative structure and functions of OLA. The purpose of the retreat is to look at ways by which the language access law can be improved and how the OLA can be made more independent and effective. The event will be part of the Language Access Month activities in August. An ad hoc committee to plan the event was organized by the Language Access Advisory Council during its March 10, 2010 meeting and is composed of OLA executive director Jun Colmenares, council chair Dominic Inocelda, and council members Sr. Earnest Chung and Canisius Filibert. The retreat will primarily involve members of the Language Access Advisory Council, but is open to all interested in participating.

OFFICE ADOPTS ELECTRONIC REPORTING SYSTEM

The Office of Language Access will be using an electronic system which state agencies can utilize to submit semi-annual data reports, revised language access plans, and other documents. In this system, OLA's executive director or a designated staff will be able to receive and view the documents from all agencies, but each agency will be able to see only their document. The system provides for a two-way communication between OLA and the agency, and promises a quicker turn around for the submission, revision, and exchange of documents. The system was developed through the assistance of the DLIR Director's IT personnel (Casey Cho and James Doi), and will be available before the end of April 2010.

COMMON BILINGUAL STAFF LISTING

In a move to coordinate and to utilize existing resources to its maximum, the OLA, in consultation with state language access coordinators, is proposing a unified, common listing of bilingual staff of all state agencies. The plan was prompted by two issues: (1) due to the lack of financial resources, state agencies are relying more and more on volunteer bilingual staff for its language services and (2) state agencies do not have the capability to provide services in all languages. During its meeting on February 17, 2010, state language access coordinators agreed that OLA will issue a memorandum to all agencies regarding this proposal and organize a committee to look into certain requirements or parameters such as training of bilingual staff, use of work time, supervision, etc.

OLA REVISES REPORTING SCHEDULE

The Office of Language Access recently revised the reporting schedule for state agencies as a result of feedback received from agency language access coordinators. In a memo dated January 8, 2010, OLA informed all state agencies that:

1. Submission of reports is changed from a quarterly to a semi-annual basis.
2. Reporting periods shall be July to December, and January to June.

The report submission deadline is changed from 45 days to 60 days after the end of the reporting period:

<u>Reporting Period</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
January to June	August 31
July to December	March 1

These changes take effect immediately, beginning with the July to December 2009 reporting period. Agencies may continue using the reporting tool developed by OLA. The revisions are expected to give agencies more time to collect data and prepare the reports.

Promising Practices for Law Enforcement

Promising practices – practices that have proven to be effective – are useful to law enforcement because many criminal justice agencies do not have the time or resources to develop programs that may not work. By implementing a practice that was successful in another jurisdiction, agencies can reduce trial and error, helping them address language barriers efficiently. The following is an array of practical and creative solutions that have been deemed promising practices because they have been successful in overcoming language barriers in their respective jurisdictions. With some adaptation, many of these practices can be applied elsewhere.

Clearly identify a need. Developing a program before a need is clearly identified can lead to an unnecessary expenditure of time and resources. A more practical approach identifies community needs first and then works to address them.

Build on what already exists. Agencies working to overcome language barriers do not need to recreate the wheel; they can take what works elsewhere and tailor it to local needs.

Maximize resources. Faced with limited staff and budgets, agencies should rethink their use of resources to maximize their ability to overcome language barriers.

Leverage partnerships. Agencies can supplement limited resources by forging partnerships with members of the nonprofit, business, academic, and social service communities.

Enlist volunteers. Resourceful agencies draw upon volunteers, who often have needed language and cultural skills, to expand the services they provide.

Improve personnel skills. As they create programs to overcome language barriers, in addition to improving communication with communities, agencies can seek to cultivate and build staff skills.

Make the program permanent. When an effective program becomes institutionalized within an agency, not only can it grow, but it also becomes more likely to survive budget cuts or changes in leadership.

Use data to manage the program. Agencies can assess programs and flag areas for improvement by collecting and analyzing data.

Source: Susan Shah and Rodolfo Estrada, *Bridging the Language Divide: Promising Practices for Law Enforcement*, Vera Institute of Justice, New York, 2009.

NEWS FROM OTHER STATES

August 12, 2009

Welfare Agency Is Sued Over Translation Services

By **JENNIFER S. LEE**

An advocacy group sued New York City's welfare agency on Tuesday, seeking to force it to comply with laws and policies that require translation and interpretation services for its clients.

A 2003 city law, the Equal Access to Human Services Act, which was passed after being resisted by the Bloomberg administration, gave city agencies five years to phase in comprehensive translation services, supplied by phone or in person. In addition, it required that city forms be made available in Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian and Spanish. The deadline was February 2009.

The advocacy group, Legal Services NYC, filed the lawsuit in State Supreme Court in Manhattan on behalf of six clients. Because of language barriers, the suit contends, they lost benefits, their benefits were delayed, or they were unable to appeal benefits determinations effectively.

In 2006, the city's Human Resources Administration, which handles food stamp and welfare benefits, submitted a plan listing the processes it would adopt, including phone interpretation services, document translation priorities and cards that people could use to identify which of 21 languages they spoke.

In addition, the city negotiated a contract with Language Line, a phone interpretation service that assists pharmacies and the Police Department.

"On paper, it looks really strong," said Amy Taylor, who coordinates the language access project at Legal Services NYC, which examines city agencies for compliance with the law. But she said her group's surveys found that the translated forms and documents were rarely available at the Human Resources Administration. "In implementation, it's really lacking," she said.

The six plaintiffs named in the lawsuit speak Spanish, Mandarin or Cantonese Chinese, and Soninke, a West African language.

John C. Liu, a Democratic city councilman from Queens and immigrant from Taiwan who was a sponsor of the 2003 bill, said at the news conference announcing the lawsuit, "New York City, the international capital of the world, should not discriminate against New Yorkers who do not speak English well."

The commissioner of the Human Resources Administration, Robert Doar, issued a statement in response to the suit, saying his agency "provides between 7,000 and 8,000 interpretation services each year through our contracted services." It also provides interpretation services by hundreds of bilingual staff workers, and other community resources. The agency has also translated 800 client-contact forms, brochures and notices into the six required languages, he said.

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"This new (Language Access) law represents the state's commitment to ensuring that no individual living in the State of Hawaii is denied his or her right to critical services because they might not be able to speak or read English." (2006)

"Language should not be a barrier to preventing all residents of our state from becoming involved in important state government issues that will directly affect their lives and the future of our state." (2008)

— Governor Linda Lingle

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STATE OF HAWAII**

**"O KA OLELO KE OLA" - LANGUAGE IS
LIFE**



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HAWAII CROSS-CULTURAL HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

Three members of the language access advisory council were invited to speak at the Cross-Cultural Healthcare Conference held on February 11-12, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Hotel. The focus of the conference was on cultural competency in the healthcare setting.

Dr. Suzanne Zeng of the University of Hawaii Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies, looked into the intricacies of medical interpretation. Dr. Jun Colmenares, OLA executive director, provided a background to Hawaii's language access law, its requirements and implementation, while Gerald Ohta, vice chair and EEO of the Hawaii State Department of Health, talked about language access and its application to the healthcare setting. The conference was sponsored by the University of Hawaii's John Burns School of Medicine's Department of Surgery.

LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Governor Linda Lingle recently sent Governor's Messages to the State Senate reappointing a current member and appointing a new member of the Language Access Advisory Council. The 16-member Council advises the Executive Director of the Office of Language Access on the implementation of Hawaii's Language Access Law. Both appointments are subject to confirmation by the State Senate.

Dr. Tin Myaing Thein was reappointed to serve a full term of four years (July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2014). Dr. Myaing is the director of the Pacific Gateway Center and has had several years experience working with immigrants and the limited English proficient population in Hawaii. She is chair of the advisory council's subcommittee on special projects and has brought her expertise and experience to the work of the council.

Ms. Edelene Uriarte replaces current member Canisius Filibert who decided not to be reappointed due to the increasing demands of his work at the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL). Ms. Uriarte, who also comes from the Micronesian community, and speaks Palauan and Tagalog, will serve for a term of four years effective July 1, 2010. She is currently completing her Master's degree in Pacific Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.



DATES TO REMEMBER

- Save the dates:** August 11, 2010—2nd OLA Retreat
August 26, 2010—3rd Annual Hawaii Conference on Language Access
- March 31, 2010 Third Annual Pacific Preparedness Conference: Capacity Building to Address Vulnerable Populations in Natural Disasters, Japanese Cultural Center
- April 14, 2010 Language Access Advisory Council Meeting
- May 12, 2010 Language Access Advisory Council Meeting
- May 13, 2010 State Language Access Coordinators' Meeting
- July 1, 2010 Deadline for Submission of Revised Language Access Plans for Non-Federally Funded State Agencies