

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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GOVERNOR ABERCROMBIE RENEWS HAWAII'S COMMITMENT TO LANGUAGE ACCESS

In a memorandum dated June 2, 2011 and addressed to all executive department heads, Governor Neil Abercrombie reaffirmed the mandate of Hawaii's language access law and the state's commitment to language access.

The memo states that "despite the legal and public service obligations that require state agencies to ensure language access, monitoring surveys conducted by the Office of Language Access (OLA) in 2008 and 2009 showed significant variations in the extent to which state agencies are aware of, and in compliance with, language access requirements. While state agencies can be commended for establishing their initial language access plans in a timely manner, there is still much to be done in terms of implementation."

To ensure the state's full compliance with existing language access laws, and in line with the memorandum dated February 17, 2011 from the U.S. Attorney General, the governor urged state agencies to join him in recommitting to the implementation of Hawaii's language access law and Executive Order 13166 by undertaking a list of action steps. He directed OLA to issue further details of these action steps and to undertake periodic monitoring of these action items through follow-up language access surveys starting in 2012.

The memo also directed state agencies to cooperate with OLA as it performs its functions of providing oversight, central coordination, and technical assistance, as well as in monitoring state agencies for compliance with the requirements of the language access law.

DLIR DIRECTOR RECOMMENDS ABOLITION OF THE OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS

In a move that will have far-reaching repercussions among the multilingual immigrant community of Hawaii, the director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations on July 8, 2011 recommended to the Department of Budget of Finance the complete abolition of the Office of Language Access (OLA) as part of the "vertical cuts" that the administration is proposing.

OLA was established, after more than 25 years of community advocacy, as part of Hawaii's language access law which was passed in 2006 under the Lingle administration. The purpose of the law is to affirmatively address the language access needs of Hawaii's more than 140,000 limited English proficient population to ensure equal access to state services, programs and activities. OLA was established to provide oversight, central coordination, and technical assistance to 26 state agencies and more than 150 covered entities (agencies/organizations that receive state funding, including counties and nonprofits). It also conducts compliance monitoring of all state agencies, as well as investigates and resolves public complaints about language access violations through informal methods.



Message from the Executive Director

For the Office of Language Access (OLA), this is really “the worst of times.” As an initial step in their plan to eliminate state programs (vertical cuts), the director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations has recommended to the Department of Budget and Finance the total abolition of OLA. Letters supporting the continuation of OLA were sent by the chair of the language access advisory council, Catholic Charities Hawaii, Pacific Gateway Center, and the OLA director, and members of the advisory council also met with the director, to no avail.

The governor’s memo dated June 16, 2011 states that the vertical cuts will be based on “a systematic review of State programs and services.” The memo goes on to say that the “review will focus on departmental programs that are fully or partially funded by general funds.” Questions are being raised as to whether this process was followed and what criteria were used in determining the programs to be cut.

In my 6-page letter to the director, I pointed out the fact that the office was established by law, that it performs a vital government function, that it serves the needs and protects the rights of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals, that it is in line with the New Day vision (“to protect the human and civil rights of all regardless of categories”), and that it is cost-beneficial to the state to continue OLA because it safeguards the state from possible lawsuits that could be filed if language access is not provided since it serves as an intermediary for settling complaints using informal methods. I gave examples and pointed out the detrimental effects that the abolition of the office would have on the more than 140,000 LEP population and on the state of Hawaii. I ended my letter with the statement that *“it is wrong and unwise to abolish OLA. Not only does OLA serve the needs and protect the rights of a marginalized sector of Hawaiian society, but it performs functions that are a priority in the New Day vision for Hawaii, functions that are beneficial and important to the life of this multi-ethnic and multilingual state...”*

Notwithstanding the gathering clouds of its dissolution, OLA’s preparations for the August 31, 2011 4th Annual Hawaii Conference on Language Access continues in full swing. The committee has already confirmed one keynote speaker from San Francisco and is awaiting responses from two more speakers from Washington D.C. It is also in the process of identifying speakers for the plenary as well as for the break-out sessions under the conference’s two tracks—one for first responders (police, fire, EMS, ocean safety) and one for emergency hospital services. Flyers have been sent out and posted on the OLA website, including the registration form. The free conference is limited to 300 attendees and is open to all—state, county and non-profit agencies, the private sector, students, interpreters and translators, community organizations, etc. The deadline for registration is August 10, 2011 so I encourage everyone to register now.

WELCOME TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

OLA is getting two volunteers to help us out with the conference. Thanks to Charlene Cuaresma for lending out her research assistants from the Asian-American National Cancer Awareness, Research and Training (AANCART) and the UH Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity (SEED) programs. The two are Melvin Balantac and Jovanie de la Cruz.

Melvin is a B.A. in Health Sciences graduate from Hawaii Pacific University. Melvin also is an intern at the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawaii. He will be volunteering at OLA every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

Jovanie graduated from the University of Hawaii with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Filipino and Philippine Literature. Jovanie worked as a student assistant to Dr. Ruth Mabanglo at the Filipino Language and Literature Program at UH from 2007 to 2010. He speaks Tagalog and Ilokano. He will be volunteering at OLA every Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

In addition, Gail McGarvey, former OLA and DLIR clerk, will be volunteering with OLA to help out with its clerical/administrative needs. She will be volunteering at OLA every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Welcome and a big mahalo to our volunteers!

WELCOME TO ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Language Access Advisory Council welcomes its two new members.



Dr. Ruth Mabanglo, coordinator and professor of the Filipino language and Philippine literature program at the University of Hawaii, officially joins the Language Access Advisory Council effective July 1, 2011.

Ruth is an internationally-known Filipino poet, writer, translator, and scholar. She has been publishing poetry for over 30 years and has received numerous literary awards and honors, most recently the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature Hall of Fame Award, the 1992 Commission on Filipino Language "Makata ng Taon" (Poet of the Year) for the poem "Gahasa" (Rape), and the Manila Critics Circle 1990 National Book Award for Poetry for Mga Liham ni Pinay (The Letters of Pinay). Mabanglo has also published many academic works. Ruth is the current president of the Filipino Association of University Women.

Ruth will be serving the council for a full four-year term.



Also joining the Council is Melba Bantay. Born in Manila, Philippines, Melba Bantay has been with Catholic Charities Hawai'i since 1985. She is the Program Director of three of Catholic Charities' programs: Employment Core Services to Immigrants and Low-Income Persons, Immigration, and Refugee Services. Melba is accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals since 1994 to represent immigration clients before the USCIS. She earned her B.A. in Commerce from Far Eastern University in Manila, an M.A. in Religious Studies from Maryknoll School of Theology in New York, and a Masters in Public Health from the University of Hawaii.

Melba lived and worked as a missionary in Guatemala and Nicaragua using the Paulo Freire's approach to education and leadership formation, and worked with Spanish Jesuit priests in the formation of the Basic Christian Communities among the poor in Managua, Nicaragua. She was the Formation Director of the Maryknoll Sisters in New York before she moved to Hawaii in the early 80's. Melba is serving the remaining year of Sr. Earnest Chung' term.

ALOHA and BEST WISHES

The Language Access Advisory Council recently lost two of its original members —Sr. Earnest Chung and Dr. Suzanne Zeng.

Sr. Earnest is resigning from the Council effective immediately to accept a position with the Maryknoll Sisters in Ossining, New York. Sr. Earnest is the Policy Adviser for Catholic Charities Hawaii and she has been with the Council from the very beginning. She is chair of the Council's legislative committee and has assisted the Office of Language Access in its annual statewide conferences. She is also one of the original members of the Interagency Council on Immigrant Services, one of those who worked for the passage of the language access law, and has been an active advocate for community issues, particularly immigrant and civil rights.



Dr. Suzanne Zeng's term, which ends on June 30, 2011, has not been extended. Sue is a professor at the University of Hawaii's Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies. She has a Ph.D. in linguistics and is fluent in Mandarin. Sue has been providing training to state, county and nonprofit agencies on the use of interpreters and the role of bilingual staff, and has been actively involved in revising the multilingual posters and in organizing OLA's annual conferences. OLA will be losing a great resource in Sue.



Meanwhile, the term of Jennifer Dotson, another Council member, ends on June 30, 2011, but inasmuch as nobody has been appointed to take her place, Jennifer will remain as member in a hold-over capacity. Jennifer, who is executive director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), has been chair of OLA's annual conference for the past two years and is also chairing this year's conference.

A big mahalo to our two departing Advisory Council members for their contributions to the Council, the Office of Language Access, and language access in general. We will surely miss them.

REGISTER NOW!

4th Annual Hawai`i Conference on Language Access

Kōkua: First Responders – Addressing Language Access Needs In Emergencies



Wednesday, August 31, 2011

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Imin Conference Center, East-West Center

Conference Topics

- Use of interpreters during police, fire and medical emergencies
- Providing language access in hospital emergency room settings
- Federal and mainland perspectives on language access in day-to-day emergencies

Conference Speakers (Tentative)

- Deena Jang, Chief, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington D.C.
- Christina Lagdameo, Deputy Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, Washington D.C.
- Adrienne Pon, Executive Director, Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, City & County of San Francisco

Vendor and Non-Profit Exhibit Area is Available

Conference sponsorships and volunteer opportunities are also available. Please contact us for more information by phone 808-586-8730 or email dlir.ola@hawaii.gov.

Registration is Free

Register by August 10, 2011. Attendance is limited to 300 people. Download forms from the OLA website at <http://www.hawaii.gov/labor/ola>

Sponsored by the Office of Language Access (OLA) and the Office of Minority Health, Region IX.

News From Other States

ALLINA HOSPITALS AND CLINICS EXPANDS INTERPRETATION SERVICES

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Allina Hospitals & Clinics (“Allina”) selected the Language Access Network (“LAN”) as its exclusive partner to provide 11 of its hospitals video language interpretation services. Hoping to address its growing need, Allina is integrating LAN into the language services program for its Limited English Proficient and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing patient populations. These services will be delivered via LAN’S dedicated HIPAA compliant high-speed broadband network and through its proprietary remote video interpretation platform known as Martti™. Martti stands for My Accessible Real Time Trusted Interpreter.

“With LAN, we found a product and service that could address the on-demand needs of our hospitals” said Tom Falkowski, Director of Patient Access Strategies. He continued, “With over 11 hospitals throughout the state, we needed a solution that could meet the needs of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing populations in particular. As a company owned by medical providers, LAN understood our needs immediately and were able to provide a solution that exceeded our expectations.”

“We are pleased to be partnering with Allina to provide best of breed video interpretation via our proven Martti™ platform,” said Andrew Panos, COO of Language Access Network. “In a hospital environment, the quality of the service is directly related to the sound and image quality. We learned many years ago that traversing the public internet with video led to quality degradation, patient dissatisfaction and inhibited patient and provider communication. Missing frames can lead to critical communication errors and LAN is the only service we are aware of which has a dedicated broadband network to ensure our patients and providers don’t miss a thing.”

Allina Hospitals & Clinics is a not-for-profit system of hospitals, clinics and other health care services, providing care throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Allina owns and operates 11 hospitals, more than 90 clinics, and health care services, including home care, hospice care, palliative care, oxygen and medical equipment, pharmacies and emergency medical transportation.

LANGUAGE ACCESS CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE ESTABLISHED

MONTEREY, Calif., June 14, 2011 — Language Line Services, the worldwide market leader in interpretation and translation services, and the single largest provider of language access solutions to the healthcare industry, today launched its Language Access Center for Excellence. The Center offers experts to speak on key issues constantly facing healthcare providers.

Language Line Services’ customers can access subject matter experts on legal and regulatory compliance issues (including the new Joint Commission standards for effective communication), implementing language access programs, best practices for patient and hospital needs, interpreter certification and training, incorporating technology into patient-centered programs, cost-efficiency models for budget-sensitive healthcare organizations, and lobbying and advocacy efforts. Speakers are available free of charge upon request for conferences and events nationwide.

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS
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"O KA OLELO KE OLA" - LANGUAGE IS LIFE

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NEWS TIDBITS

ISRAEL BANS CHILD INTERPRETERS IN HEALTH CARE

Someone had to say "No"----and in this case, a whole country did. In February 2011, the Israel Ministry of Health published a cultural competence directive that appears to be the most detailed and comprehensive coming from any public agency in Israel. In a key provision, the Ministry made it *illegal to have minors interpret in health care*. In addition, like the language access law of 2004 in Washington, D.C., the Ministry specified a list of languages for which interpreters are needed: Arabic, Russian, English and in some cases Amharic.

WASHINGTON INTERPRETERS MAKE HISTORY

Medical and social services interpreters in the state of Washington last month ratified a groundbreaking contract with a 99-percent "YES" vote. This agreement is the first of its kind for independent contract interpreters, and it protects not only their pay but reimbursement for their mileage.

Here's an excerpt from a blog by the Washington Federation of State Employees about the milestone:

"In the big picture, it stands as a moral victory for some 2,000 medical interpreters under contract with the state---many of whom are first-generation Americans seeking the American dream of freedom and fairness. [...]"

The new agreement also aims to retain qualified and quality interpreters. Under their first-ever contract, the state medical interpreters achieved improved work rights and minimum hourly pay of \$30.

Dates to Remember

July 1, 2011—Deadline for the submission of revised language access plans to the Office of Language Access for state agencies receiving federal funds.

July 13, 2011—Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., DLIR Conference Room 320, 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.

July 20, 2011—Interagency Council on Immigrant Affairs Meeting, 2:30 p.m., Susannah Wesley Community Center.

August 10, 2011—Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., DLIR Conference Room 320, 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.

August 16, 2011—State Language Access Coordinators Quarterly Meeting, 10:00 to 12:00 noon, DLIR Multipurpose Room 310, 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.

August 31, 2011—4th Hawaii Annual Conference on Language Access, *Kokua: First Responders—Addressing Language Access Needs in Emergencies*, East West Center, sponsored by the Office of Language Access.

September 14, 2011—Language Access Advisory Council Meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., DLIR Conference Room 320, 830 Punchbowl Street, Honolulu.