

## LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL (LAAC) MEETING MINUTES

### ZOOM MEETING

Join by phone: Mobile: (699) 900-9128

Meeting ID: 924 6091 9939

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

**PRESENT:** Terrina Wong, Interim-Chair; Aphirak “A.P.” Bamrungruan, Ex-officio; Robin Wurtzel for Bill Hoshijo, Ex-officio; Colin Whited for Francine Wai, Ex-officio; Cristina Arsuaga; Charlotte Huang; Linda Nuland-Ames; Lydia A. Pavon; Jade Wong; Valentina Yarovaya; Suzanne Zeng

**EXCUSED:** Tulpe Day, Cari Uesugi; Shirl Schumacher

**GUESTS/STAFF:** Philios Uruman, guest, Patricia Rolland, guest, Māla and Carie Sarver, ASL interpreters; Edward Wada (OLA); Wei Geng Lum (OLA); Gail McGarvey (OLA)

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION
<b>1. Call to Order</b>	At 9:33 AM the meeting was called to order with quorum by Terrina Wong, Interim-Chair.
<b>2. Welcome and Introductions</b>	Terrina Wong welcomed council members and asked each person to introduce themselves. This was the council’s first virtual meeting held online via Zoom. Philios Uruman, a Chuukese interpreter and Patricia Rolland, a French interpreter were present as guests. New OLA staff members Edward Wada and Wei Geng Lum, respectively were introduced. Māla and Carie Sarver were the two ASL interpreters.
<b>3. Approval of Minutes December 11, 2019.</b>  <b>Minutes Approved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motion was made to approve the meeting minutes by Cristina Arsuaga. Seconded by Robin Wurtzel. No discussion.</li><li>• Minutes for December 11, 2019 were approved.</li><li>• MOTION CARRIED.</li></ul>
<b>4. OLA Executive Director (ED) Report</b>	ED reported on the following: This was the council’s first Zoom meeting.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>OLA’s new staff.</b> ED introduced new LARC manager, Edward Wada, program specialist V, who started back in January of this year and Wei Geng Lum program specialist IV whose first day was in mid-May, they are working together on the OLA Language Access Resource Center (LARC), to do trainings and community outreach programs.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New council member.</b> Tulpe Day from Hawaii Island is the newest council member and represents Hawaii County. She works at the Immigration Information Office for the county providing much needed services for LEP clients. Ms. Day is a multi-lingual who is fluent in Kosraean, Pohnpeian and English.</li> <li>• <b>OLA move.</b> OLA has officially relocated to Keoni Ana at 1177 Alakea Street at the corner of Alakea and South Beretania Streets. Although a “temporary” move, OLA will be there for several years. We are in the basement and there is no cell phone reception.</li> <li>• <b>COVID-19.</b> OLA has been very busy during this pandemic with COVID-19 related translations for DOH (Department of Health), posting all translated materials on OLA website and multiple government agencies, such as the Gov’s ofc, DOE (Department of Education), DHS (Department of Human Services) DBEDT (Department of Business, Economic Development &amp; Tourism), the Judiciary and C&amp;C of Honolulu as well as providing language access technical assistance to non-profits and/or affiliated groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OLA has also helped out Hawaii Tourism Authority office with technical assistance.</li> <li>○ <b>DOT</b> Department of Transportation – OLA staff is assisting with contact tracing for LEP travelers who must do a 14-day quarantine when they return to Hawaii.</li> <li>○ <b>DOH, KNDI radio.</b> OLA assisted DOH with Covid-19 PSAs regarding hand washing and social distancing in 14 languages. This will be aired on KNDI radio between May-July 2020.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Report of the Interim Chair</b></p>	<p>Terrina Wong, Interim-Chair, reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Immigration Task Force (ITF).</b> Terrina Wong, Cari Uesugi and AP Bamrungruan sit on this task force. This advocacy task force group is an ad hoc advocacy of persons coming together during the pandemic. More information about it will be presented at the next IAC meeting. ED said the Task Force is mainly about immigrant rights and language access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Related to LEP Covid-19 needs and issues the Task Force needs more information.</li> <li>○ Task Force is asking for more LEP data, just need to give them some guidance on how to get the info.</li> <li>○ They are asking what are LEP access to benefits, want to know more about LAP (Language Access Plans, and state front line training for employees.</li> <li>○ A serious concern is the lack of language access for LEP persons specifically the COFA population who apply for Unemployment benefits during Covid-19 pandemic.</li> <li>○ There is an Op-Ed (Opinion-Editorial) soon to be published by ITF regarding Covid-19 pandemic immigrant funding says the government fails to include LEP workers in terms of eligibility and practical access and that the governor’s “safety net” failed LEP workers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Unemployment for immigrants is very high due to their jobs in the hotel and food service areas. There is a lack of benefits for undocumented immigrants who are denied UI even though they pay taxes.

- **2020 Language Access Conference.** Due to the present Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing, lack of funding, and short time frame, there will likely be no conference in August this year. It will have to be postponed until further notice. The ED said the council should agree to postpone the conference for now. OLA will have to look at alternative formats. The UH CES (Conference and Events Services) has suggested an electronic format for conferences. Terrina Wong said that she had attended a virtual Zoom meeting that had about 200+ persons with plenary and breakout sessions all done online.
  - Budget for the new FY 2021 is still unknown. OLA does not know how much funding we will be getting for operations. The council discussed about not having a conference. Sue Zeng brought up an important point that due to Covid-19 crisis there are a lot of pressing issues right now and if we can use Zoom it might be a good idea to still have an e-conference this year.
  - The council will defer decision making on postponing the conference to next meeting. It was pointed out by Charlotte Huang if we do not have one this year, it will make two years without a conference.
- **Language Access Issues During Covid-19.** The council discussed many language access issues especially those concerning LEPs and the DLIR UI (Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Unemployment Insurance).
  - LEP persons applying for UI were not able to get assistance. The UI phone number for LEP did not work. LEP persons needed to send an email to UI to request an interpreter.
  - Philios Uruman, guest, Chuukese interpreter, said the system was overloaded with huge problems, not everyone was able to get help.
  - ED said UI has a non-English website for information in other languages. Due to the enormous numbers of claims they could service only a small amount of the 200,000+ claimants. The system could not handle the large numbers of all claimants.
  - Philios Uruman, gave an account of his experience helping others. The LEP person is not computer literate, they do not understand English on the DLIR website or the UI application. If the application is filled out incorrectly it is not a qualified claim and gets left in a queue for a lengthy time. He feels immigrants get left out getting UI assistance.
  - Sue Zeng asked what can LAAC do to help immigrants process UI claims? ED has made several attempts to contact DLIR to offer OLA's help, but he never received a response.
  - Sue Zeng recommended that OLA make demands of DLIR to help LEP persons. ED pointed out that he needs specific hard evidence that DLIR did not respond to requests from LEP persons asking for help.
  - Terrina Wong will alert ITF to email ED with specific incidents that show LEP's did not get language access by law from UI.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Robin Wurtzel urged the council to have people file a complaint with HCRC (Hawaii Civil Rights Commission). They are open but have restricted hours, no walk-in contact. You must call or contact them by email through their website.</li> <li>● <b>Strategic Planning.</b> Cari Uesugi was not present to give an update on status, defer to next meeting agenda.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Next Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Next council meeting date Wednesday, August 12, 2020 via Zoom, same time.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Announcements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● IAC (Inter-agency Council) meeting next week Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 2:30 pm, Susannah Wesley Community Center.</li> <li>● Linda Nuland said their department needs basic language access training and she asked if there was any training available. ED will send PPT on language access basics. Sue Zeng said she would email PPT on LEP training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sue Zeng also recommended an LEP training video at LEP.gov and the website for Washington State Department of Health as excellent for LEP individuals. A link was provided. (<a href="https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/HealthEducation">https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/HealthEducation</a>) She will also send PPT. Lastly, she complimented OLA on their excellent, excellent website.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>8. Adjournment</b>	The Interim-Chair, Terrina Wong officially adjourned the meeting at 11:07 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Gail McGarvey