

# COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**November 17, 2023**  
12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting

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**Present:** Ms. Shifa Alkhatib; Ms. Laurie Allen (proxy); Ms. Elizabeth Carmona (proxy); Mr. Alfred Gonzalez; Hon. Juan Pablo Guzman; Ms. Kathy Schaben (Acting Chair); Judge Danielle Viola.

**Telephonic:** None.

**Absent/Excused:** Judge Don Taylor; Mr. Juan Carlos Cordova; Judge Catherine Woods; Jordan T. Reardon

**Presenters/Guests:** Mr. Joshua Allen; Mr. Chris Bleuenstein; Judge Joshua Rogers; Ms. Ruth Cruz.

**Administrative Office of the Courts:** Ms. Catherine Clarich; Ms. Kelly Gray; Mr. David Svoboda; Ms. Amy Medley.

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## I. CALL TO ORDER

### A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The November 2023 meeting of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee was called to order by Acting Chair, Kathy Schaben, at 12:05 p.m.

### B. Approval of the August 2023 Minutes

The draft minutes from the August 8, 2023, meeting of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee was presented for approval. The Acting Chair called for any omissions or corrections to the minutes; there were none.

- Motion was made by Judge Viola to approve the August 8, 2023, minutes of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee. Seconded by Ms. Alkhatib. Motion passed unanimously.

This is the last meeting for Judge Viola who served on the committee for 4 years, and for Mr. Gonzalez who has served for 8 years. Acting Chair Ms. Schaben thanked them for their service and welcomed guests Judge Rogers and Ms. Cruz who have been nominated to fill the upcoming vacancies.

## II. REGULAR BUSINESS

### A. ACICP Updates

Mr. David Svoboda, in his role as Language Access Coordinator, presented updates on the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program (ACICP).

The September Oral Exam Prep Class was held online and spanned 3 weeks. A new vendor was used for this session, the National Center of Interpretation (NCI) at the University of Arizona. The course included a full mock exam with personalized feedback for each participant, as well as online modules of activities and discussions boards. 14 participants were enrolled with 10 sitting for an Oral Exam in the October/November session. The cost of the program was elevated, due to the inclusion of a mock exam with individualized feedback and was shared between the ACICP and attendees. The Oral Exam results of the candidates that participated in this course will be tracked to determine cost effectiveness.

Oral Exams were held in late October and early November. 39 candidates sat for the exam, 33 Spanish, 3 Mandarin, 1 French, 1 Korean, and 1 Vietnamese. The results are expected to be released by January 2024.

The Written Exam Prep Seminar is scheduled for November 29<sup>th</sup> – December 1<sup>st</sup> with co-presenters from Coconino and Yavapai Counties.

The ACICP partnership with Pima Community College (PCC) is now a full semester course instead of a trimester. Students have the potential to earn a Tier 1 credential upon completion of the necessary requirements which are included in the class curriculum.

The 2024 calendar has been published online and includes two cycles of each exam in Phoenix and Tucson with the Written Exam scheduled for January.

If there is interest, ACICP program staff are open to administering tests in other locations, granting the location can guarantee a minimum of 3-5 candidates. An OPI can be administered by court staff, but Written Exams and Oral Exams must be proctored by program staff.

As acting chair, Ms. Schaben posed a question regarding how the ACICP could further assist candidates in being successful. One suggestion made by the committee was to offer the ability for aspiring interpreters to shadow credentialed interpreters in the court room. The group discussed different methods that this is currently being accomplished in various counties and ways it could be promoted statewide by the program. Mr. Svoboda will reach

out to coordinators across the state to determine which courts can offer shadowing, and how best to promote these options.

Another suggestion made was to implement or support current mentorship programs like the program at ACIA. The ACIA program has been slow to restart and is still in need of both mentors and mentees. Mr. Svoboda asked for information on how the ACICP could promote this program and was given a point of contact for follow-up.

## **B. 2023 Summit Planning Workgroup Discussion**

Mr. Svoboda, in his role as Committee staff, presented on the Court Interpreter Coordinator Summit held in October. This event has been held annually over the last 10-12 years.

The Summit included two Keynote Speaker presentations: from Mr. Scott Loos, former Interpreter Supervisor with the Superior Court of Maricopa County, and Ms. Tonnya Kohn, the State Court Administrator for South Carolina. Ms. Kohn also led an interactive activity on the intersection of language access and DEI which was well received.

Participants actively engaged in afternoon breakout sessions which were filled with topics surrounding the work of the Compensation and Education Workgroups as well as outreach efforts and the new CEU requirements for credentialed interpreters. Further group discussion was generated during plenary topics such as Language Access Plans, ASL interpreter issues and forms assistance and scribing.

## **C. Interpreter Education Workgroup Update**

Mr. Joshua Allen updated the Committee on the discussions of the Interpreter Education Workgroup.

The workgroup is making progress, with one developed course already presented through an ACIA partnership. The course, 'I'm Credentialed, Now What?' created and presented by Ms. Judith Costello, Mr. Alfred Gonzalez, and Ms. Veronica Olivares was well attended and received. The development team have evaluated the course and determined the updates needed to record the course and offer it to a wider audience.

A course created by Mr. Allen on Firearms is close to completion; along with a course created by Mr. Carlos Reyes on Automotive Terminology. The Workgroup continues to brainstorm ideas for additional future courses. All trainings will be recorded and possibly turned into computer-based trainings. The next workgroup meeting will be Dec 21.

## **D. “Streamlining” Workgroup Update**

Ms. Schaben updated the Committee on discussions held by the ACICP Streamlining Workgroup regarding possible structural modifications to the interpreter credentialing program.

The workgroup is currently focusing on the Tier 1 credential and how it has evolved. This credential was meant to be a foundational tier for languages that have skills test available, however it has caused confusion and provided the opportunity for un-tested interpreters to promote themselves as more highly qualified than they are. This has provided a lack of incentive for them to seek a higher credential.

Based on data extracted from a survey of credentialed interpreters, the workgroup is proposing a recommendation to eliminate the Tier 1 credential for Spanish interpreters. A discussion was held regarding the effect this will have on courts and interpreters with questions posed concerning the verification process that courts are using when hiring freelance and contract interpreters. A point was made that there are not currently enough Tier 3 and 4 interpreters to handle the current workload. A suggestion was made that possibly the recommendation should be amended to have the Tier 1 credential have an expiration date.

The Streamlining Workgroup will continue to meet to discuss recommendations related to the tier structure of the credentialing program.

## **E. Interpreter Compensation Workgroup Update & Discussion**

Ms. Schaben updated the Committee on the discussions held by the Interpreter Compensation Workgroup.

A survey has been sent to court administrators and supervisors to determine the pay practices that currently exist. Due to the anonymity of the survey and the fact that several of the Superior Courts provide services for some or all of the limited-jurisdiction courts in their county, it is difficult to determine if all courts have responded. The goal is for the workgroup to develop recommendations and guidelines for courts that would lead to more consistency in pay ranges, and aid in recruitment and retention of qualified candidates. A final reminder to complete the survey will be sent out with the hope of receiving more responses to be studied by the workgroup.

## **F. Outreach Discussion**

Mr. Svoboda opened a discussion to brainstorm ways to utilize pipeline and other outreach sources to connect with potential court interpreters. Current partnerships in place include Pima Community College, South Mountain Academy, the Legal Futures program, and a proposal for a Bachelor's-level program which ACICP staff is drafting in partnership with staff at the University of Arizona.

After further discussion on the topic, a suggestion was made to provide an outreach video as a PR piece that could be geared toward individual county needs. This type of promotional piece may have a further reach. Judge Viola made a motion to recommend the development of an enhanced PR campaign. The motion was seconded by Hon. Guzman. The motion passed unanimously.

### **G. Interpreting SAFE-AI Task Force**

Mr. Svoboda informed the committee of the Interpreting SAFE-AI Task Force, on which he serves as a member of the Survey Subcommittee. The task force has made an opinion survey about the use of AI in translation and interpreting available to various stakeholder groups and has asked the survey to be shared widely. The link to the survey has already been shared with CODEJ and court administrators. Committee members are encouraged to complete the survey and share it with other interested parties. Survey results are expected to be available in early 2024.

### **H. 2024 Meeting Dates**

Committee staff shared available dates for the 2024 meetings of CIPAC. Meetings will be scheduled for March 15<sup>th</sup>, August 9<sup>th</sup>, Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## **III. CALL TO PUBLIC**

### **A. Good of the Order/Call to the Public**

A call was made to the public for any comments; there were none.

## **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

### **A. Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

**V. NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE**

March 15, 2024  
12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting