

# COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 13, 2021

APPROVED 11/13/2021

12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

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**Present:** Judge Don Taylor; Ms. Laurie Allen, Mr. Juan Carlos Cordova; Mr. Juan Pablo Guzman; Ms. Kathy Schaben; Ms. Christy Visca proxy for Alfred Gonzalez; Judge Danielle Viola; Ms. Veronica Munoz

**Telephonic:**

**Absent/Excused:** Ms. Margarita Bernal; Judge Anna Huberman; Judge Catherine Woods

**Presenters/Guests:** Mr. Chris Bleuenstein

**Administrative Office of the Courts:** Ms. Catherine Clarich, Mr. David Svoboda, and Mr. Craig Washburn

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## I. CALL TO ORDER

### A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The August 13, 2021 meeting of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee was called to order by the Honorable Don Taylor, Chair, at 12:00 p.m. The Chair asked for Committee member roll call and introductions of staff and guests.

### B. Approval of the March 12, 2021 Minutes

The draft minutes from the March 12, 2021 of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee were presented for approval. The Chair called for any omissions or corrections to the minutes; there were none.

- Motion was made by Kathleen Schaben to approve the March 12 2021 minutes of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee. Seconded by Juan Carlos Cordova. Motion passed unanimously.

## II. REGULAR BUSINESS

## **A. ACICP Update**

Mr. David Svoboda in his role as AOC Language Access Coordinator presented updates on the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program. The written exam and OPIs were administered as scheduled in July 2021. The written exam had a 45% pass rate, with 43% of staff passing on this administration. The pass rate is in line with the national average for this exam. The staff pass rate is higher than the last 3 administrations. The OPI exam was also conducted with a 100% rate for this examination. Emergency health protocols were in effect for these test administrations.

The oral court interpreter exam was held in April and results were reported to candidates in mid-June 2021. 41 tests were administered during this sitting of the exam. 16 staff sat for this test, and four advanced to Tier 2 or higher. There was a greater variety of languages represented in this examination as other states have not been testing as frequently during the pandemic and more candidates came to test in Arizona. Overall, 29% of the candidates who sat for this exam achieved a passing score. Eight candidates advanced to a new credential.

The oral exam prep seminar was conducted online prior to the administration of the exams. 10 of the 13 participants from the prep seminar took the exam in April. 30% of those sitting achieved passing scores, which outperformed the overall average. The next prep seminar, including mock exams, will be held in late September before the November exam administration.

The program has issued over 500 credentials to approximately 350 individuals since inception. Most candidates can and are expected to earn multiple credentials, such as completing the Tier 1 credential before earning the Tier 3 credential. Most credentialed interpreters are in Pima and Maricopa counties. The remaining counties have 20 or fewer credentialed interpreters.

The Oral Court Interpreter Exam is scheduled to be held in Tucson and Phoenix in November. Registration numbers are high for this exam and seats are filling up. The program is continuing its partnership with Pima Community College and will be administering the Tier 1 exams to those students towards the end of the year. The written exam prep seminar will be held in December of this year.

The 2022 exam calendar has been published. This calendar includes two administrations of each of the exams with the Oral Court Interpreter Exam being held in May and November with the Written Exam and OPI being offered in January and July.

The Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has secured approval to extend the deadline for the recently modified Legal A licensure requirements for ASL interpreters until January 2023 due to the inability of these interpreters to test during the public health crisis of 2020. This extension will avert, for the time being, the downgrading of Legal A licenses of over 20 interpreters.

The committee addressed the Pima Community College partnership and pass rates associated with them.

## **B. Workgroup Updates**

Hon. Juan Pablo Guzman in his role as workgroup chair of the 2021 Interpreter Coordinator Summit Planning Workgroup presented the updates from the Workgroup to the Committee. The Workgroup agreed that the Summit should be in person at the State Courts Building in Phoenix on October 8<sup>th</sup>. The Workgroup has invited a former DOJ civil rights attorney to present to the Summit on language access compliance. The workgroup will meet again to finalize the breakout sessions for the Summit agenda.

Ms. Kathy Schaben in her role as workgroup chair of the Credentialing Streamlining Workgroup updated the Committee on that group's work. The Workgroup is continuing its focus on continuing education requirements for court interpreters. Based on feedback received regarding the draft policy presented to this Committee on continuing education requirements, it was determined that the administrative load would be too much for the Administrative Office to bear. The Workgroup reviewed the draft proposal to limit the administrative burden while emphasizing a need for continuing education. The committee agrees that the requirement for continuing education is valuable but also understands that incremental change may be the best route forward.

Mr. David Svoboda in his role as workgroup staff presented the updates from the Interpreter Pipeline Action Workgroup. No chair has been named for this workgroup as of this time. Initial workgroup actions are targeted towards interpreters who are struggling to pass the oral court interpreter exam. Background data collected from the candidates is being reviewed for commonalities among successful candidates.

## **C. Interpreter Mentorship Program**

Ms. Veronica Munoz in her role as ACIA President, updated the committee on the current status of the interpreter mentorship program. The program has 9 mentors and 15 mentees. Mentors and mentees are meeting online through the Zoom platform. Mentors are focusing on basic interpreting skills to help

build the necessary foundation for the mentees. Materials are made available through a virtual classroom. ACIA has found that more structure is needed for the program. Therefore, applications will only be accepted between January and March of 2022 for both mentors and mentees. The program is scheduled to run from April to October 2022. Continuing education units are being awarded by ACIA to the mentors for compliance in other states. Committee members agreed to assist with shadowing in court hearings for mentees.

### **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. 2022 Meeting Dates**

Mr. David Svoboda in his role as committee staff proposed meeting dates for the 2022 calendar year. The dates are March 4<sup>th</sup>, August 12<sup>th</sup>, and November 18<sup>th</sup>. The dates were accepted by the committee to be scheduled by staff.

### **IV. CALL TO PUBLIC**

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

A call to the public for any comments. No response was made to the call.

### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

#### **A. Adjourn**

- Judge Taylor, in his role as Chair of the Committee, adjourned the meeting at 1:31 p.m.

### **VI. NEXT COMMITTEE DATE**

November 19, 2021  
12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting