

COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 6, 2020

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

State Courts Building

1501 W. Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85007

Conference Room 345

Approved 8/14/2020

Present: Judge Don Taylor; Mr. Juan Carlos Cordova; Mr. Alfred Gonzalez; Judge Anna Huberman; Ms. Kathy Schaben; Judge Danielle Viola.

Telephonic: Ms. Diane Culin; Mr. Juan Pablo Guzman; Judge Catherine Woods.

Absent/Excused: Ms. Margarita Bernal

Presenters/Guests:

Administrative Office of the Courts: Ms. Kelly Gray, Ms. Cathy Clarich, Mr. Craig Washburn and Mr. David Svoboda.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The March 6, 2020 meeting of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee was called to order by the Honorable Don Taylor, Chair, at 12:06 p.m. The Chair asked for Committee member roll call and introductions of staff and guests.

B. Approval of the November 1, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The draft minutes from the November 1, 2019 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 Judge Anna Huberman to approve the November 1, 2019 minutes of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee. Seconded by Kathy Schaben. Motion passed unanimously.

II. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. ACICP Update

Mr. David Svoboda, in his role as the AOC Language Access Coordinator presented the ACICP Update. Mr. Svoboda presented the exam scores from the most recent testing cycle.

Scores for the English Written Exam are following a downward trend. However, the overall pass rate in Arizona since the program began is still in line with the national average. Mr. Svoboda indicated that Arizona scores are in line with those of other states.

Mr. Svoboda talked about the recent written exam preparation seminar that was hosted at the AOC. The results from the most recent test are prompting a reevaluation of the material covered in the class as well as other resources to be presented during the seminar. Mr. Svoboda raised the possibility of creating a two-day orientation class for interpreters as is done in other states.

The Committee discussed the lack of prerequisites required to become an interpreter. Members noted that this program represents the first skills and language testing that many interpreters are given. Members inquired into the possibility that geographical differences, such as rural versus urban, are limiting factors on skill building and education for the exams.

Mr. Svoboda presented data on the most recent administration of the Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI). This group of candidates showed strong language ability compared to other groups that previously tested. AOC staff continues to notify candidates in the Advanced-Low category that additional development is recommended prior to attempting the Oral Court Interpreter Exam.

Mr. Svoboda then presented the data from the most recent Oral Court Interpreter Exam in November. Several candidates, including a number of staff interpreters, advanced to Tier 3. Those candidates attending the Oral Court Interpreter Exam preparation seminar continue to see improved test scores. The combined average of all exams to date is still above the national average. A total of 11 staff interpreters have benefited from the deadline extension with one test cycle remaining. Members of the Committee discussed the challenges of the exam and options available to provide performance feedback to candidates.

Mr. Svoboda presented the credentialing status of staff interpreters listed on the 2019 personnel survey of the courts. Only those individuals with the title of Interpreter are counted; AOC is unable to reliably identify staff in dual role positions via the personnel survey (e.g., clerks who also act as interpreters). A majority of Interpreters in Superior Courts are compliant with the credentialing requirements. Limited jurisdiction court interpreters have experienced more

difficulty meeting the credentialing requirements, with some showing no engagement with the program to date. Overall compliance across the state is at sixty percent of all identified positions.

Mr. Svoboda discussed the Pima Community College (PCC) collaboration. The Tier 1 testing took place in December of 2019. The pass rate was very low on the English Written Exam. Consequently, the Oral Court Interpreter Exam scheduled for the Spring Semester was suspended. AOC will work with PCC to refine the curriculum and recruitment for the class, and plans to continue with the collaboration in the Fall of 2020.

Committee members discussed ways to introduce people to the court interpreter profession through community outreach to high schools and other existing programs such as the Maricopa County Courthouse Experience and mock trial program.

B. Mentorship Program

Mr. David Svoboda, in his role as Language Access Coordinator presented a proposal for a court interpreter mentorship program to the Committee. The program would be designed to bring credentialed interpreters together with those that are working to pass the exams and who may benefit from a more individualized approach to skill building than the program is currently equipped to provide.

The following areas were discussed about the mentorship program:

- Selection of participants
- Interest Survey to best connect mentors and mentees
- Expectations of the program
- Incentives for both the mentor and the mentee
- Evaluation standards for the program

Committee members discussed the potential of the program and buy-in from courts. Members suggested creating a train-the-trainer program for Mentors, and also discussed the possibility of creating a curriculum that could be accredited for continuing education or COJET requirements.

Committee staff will investigate coordinating a partnership with the local interpreter organizations to assist with building, managing, and possibly administering the program.

A motion to support the formation of a mentorship program was made by Judge Danielle Viola. The motion was seconded by Juan Carlos Cordova. The chair called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Workgroup Reports

Mr. Juan Carlos Cordova, in his role of workgroup chair for the Interpreter Recruitment Packet Workgroup, presented the workgroup's progress since the November 1st meeting when the workgroup was formed. Mr. Cordova presented the areas for the recruitment and retainment of qualified court interpreters. The guide aims to provide information as to the posting of positions through the evaluation process. The evaluation process also examines the situation of a court interpreter being supervised by a non-Spanish speaking individual. The Workgroup will finalize the packet in the coming weeks and present it to the Committee prior to the August meeting.

Ms. Kathy Schaben, in her role as workgroup chair presented for the ACICP Policy Streamline Workgroup. The workgroup has not met yet. The workgroup's first task is a survey of every court in the state to inquire about their interpreters and related topics. A timeline was given to have volunteers for performing the survey arranged by the end of March and to have the survey completed by the end April. Workgroup members will be recruited from other Arizona Judicial Council Standing Committees.

D. ACICP Policy Discussion

Ms. Kathy Schaben, in her role of workgroup chair for the ACICP Policy Streamline Workgroup, requested input from the Committee as to which policies the Workgroup should focus on. The following topics were proposed: the tier system & its nomenclature; and the disparity in requirements between staff and contracted interpreters. The Committee also discussed the possibility of a binary system of credentialed or not credentialed.

The Committee discussed the potential to differentiate between interpreters in the Spanish language and languages other than Spanish. The possibility of restricting interpreting in the courts to those who have obtained a specific level of credentialing and applying to all languages was also discussed. The point was raised regarding lesser used languages that out-of-state interpreters are often required and any restriction on them would require some exception. Additionally, for some languages, credentialed interpreters simply do not exist, which poses other challenges. Concerns were also raised about interpreter agencies and telephonic providers. Concern was expressed about the impact changes to the policy might have on candidates working through the program.

The Committee proposed expanding experiential training for judicial officers outside of the ongoing training conducted with Justice Gould. The New Judge Orientation program was offered as an adequate audience for this training. The goal of the training would be to promote a better understanding of the

interpreter's role in the court and the challenges faced by interpreters. It was also requested that the training be offered to the State Bar.

III. CALL TO PUBLIC

A. Good of the Order/Call to the Public

Call was made. There was no answer.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

A. Adjourn

- Motion was made by Ms. Kathy Schaben at 3:00 p.m. to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Juan Carlos Cordova. Motion passed unanimously.

V. NEXT COMMITTEE DATE

August 14, 2020
12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
State Courts Building, Conference Room 119
1501 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007