

## Project Narrative & Budget

### **Give a brief description of the proposed project for which grant funds are being requested.**

The Alaska Immigration Justice Project requests \$5000 to support the FY 2009 medical interpreter training program sponsored by the Language Interpreter Center, a component of the Alaska Immigration Justice Project. The Language Interpreter Center (LIC) is dedicated to increasing access to social, legal and health care services for limited English proficient (LEP) Alaskans. Our goal is to create a cadre of trained and certified Alaska Native and foreign language interpreters and translators that removes communication barriers for LEP individuals. The proposed 40-hour medical interpreter training continues the LIC interpreter training program. Fifty-two interpreters have participated in the March and July 2008 interpreter training programs facilitated by Holly Mikkelson, an internationally-known interpreter trainer and adjunct professor at the Monterey Institute in California. Both of these training programs focused on the ethics and terminology of social service and legal interpreting. To meet the enormous needs of LEP Alaskans in need of health care, the LIC seeks funding to organize a medical interpreter training program.

### **Describe the geographic region and populations served by this proposal.**

The LIC will potentially impact all Alaskans. The LIC is developing an interpreter training program for Alaska Native and foreign language interpreters who reside throughout Alaska. The March and July 2008 interpreter training programs occurred in Anchorage and Barrow. The March 2008 interpreter training also included a statewide video-teleconference with Alaska Native interpreters. The LIC has facilitated interpreter forums in Bethel, Juneau, Fairbanks and Barrow to learn of the specific interpreter needs in each of these communities. All businesses and state, federal and non-profit agencies can access the LIC if they are in need of a qualified language interpreter and want to ensure that LEP Alaskans have access to their services and information.

### **What is the community need that the project is meeting?**

*A Hmong-speaking patient with potentially life-threatening high blood pressure went to a community clinic for medical assistance. He brought with him his young teenage daughter who spoke some English but had difficulty explaining her father's medical condition. It took the attending physician an hour to understand that the father had cut his blood pressure medication in half to save money, resulting in his present medical condition.*

Effective delivery of quality language interpretation contributes to the safety and well-being of all Alaskans. This vignette describes the kind of health provider/LEP patient communication problems that occur when qualified interpreters are not employed. Census data indicate burgeoning LEP populations in Alaska. Over 90 different languages are spoken by children enrolled in the Anchorage School District. In 2005, the Alaska Court System conducted a statewide survey to assess the need for interpreter services. Surveys were distributed to for-profit and non-profit businesses and government agencies. The survey presented three significant findings: 1) The most common languages encountered are Spanish, Yupik, (an Alaska Native language), Russian, Tagalog, Korean, Ukrainian, and Inupiaq (an Alaska Native language); 2) survey respondents are currently spending more than **1 million dollars annually** on interpreter services from untrained and possibly minimally skilled individuals; and 3) 63% of the respondents are "very unsatisfied," "unsatisfied," or "neutral" with the way their organization handles limited-English proficient clients. Court and medical certification tests are available to assess the skill level of interpreters. There are no interpreters in Alaska who have been able to pass either of these certification tests. For this reason, the LIC is dedicated to interpreter skill-building training so Alaskan interpreters can achieve certification. No other agency is facilitating a training program specifically dedicated to oral language interpreters working in the health care arena.

### **What are the goals, objectives or anticipated impacts?**

The LIC is the result of a public/private collaboration. Financial stakeholders of the Language Interpreter Center include: Rasmuson Foundation, United Way of Anchorage, Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska Department of Transportation, Alaska Court System, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, ConocoPhillips, Anchorage School District, Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Alaska Public Defender Agency, Alaska Office of Public Advocacy and Alaska Bar Association. Each of these entities has contributed funding to ensure the LIC's long-term sustainability.

#### Overall Goals of the LIC:

The goals of the LIC are to: 1) institutionalize an interpreter training program in Alaska; 2) maintain a statewide registry of qualified interpreters and provide interpreter referral services; and 3) train the legal, medical and social service community on the roles and responsibilities of working with interpreters. The primary goal of this proposed project will be to improve the health outcomes of LEP individuals by increasing the capacity of the State of Alaska to provide linguistically and culturally competent medical interpretation in hospital and clinic settings.

#### Specific Objectives for the Proposed Project:

1. Host a medical interpreter training program for 30 interpreters in Anchorage;
2. Improve the medical interpretation competencies of program participants;
3. Train interpreters in medical terminology; and
4. Improve access to culturally and linguistically competent medical interpretation for Alaska's healthcare providers

### **How will you monitor your work and how will you measure success and/or effectiveness?**

The LIC measures its success in two ways. First, the LIC program manager evaluates the skill level of the interpreter trainee participants prior to and at the conclusion of each of the interpreter training programs. Interpreters are sent on assignments only if the instructors determine that they have the requisite skill level. Interpreters also provide evaluations of the training program at its conclusion.

### **Interpreter Trainee Quotes:**

*I truly enjoyed the Interpreter Training Seminar with Holly Mikkelson last week. It was informative and inspiring as well as intellectually and emotionally rewarding. Thank you [Superintendent Comeau] for your support of the Language Interpreter Center and your leadership in bringing high quality services to our community.*

*The interpreter training opened my eyes to an incredible world of job opportunities. It gave me the opportunity to evaluate my weakness in Spanish as well as English and that it is never too late to study, to improve and to succeed in the interpreting and translating field.  
There are no excuses why we cannot succeed in this profession and make the Alaska community a better place to live – helping all immigrants resolve their problems in the medical, legal, and social environments.*

The LIC also measures its success by requesting evaluations from the LIC customers using the trained interpreters.

### **Outline a draft budget for your proposal; identify other potential and actual revenue sources**

<b>Expenses:</b>		
<b>40-hour Bridging the Gap medical interpreter training</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>	The Language Interpreter Center is currently researching the most appropriate medical interpreter training program for Alaska. Bridging the Gap, a nationally-known Seattle-based interpreter training program, provides a 40-hour medical interpreter training in English.
<b>Bridging the Gap travel</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	
<b>Korean language interpreter trainer consultant</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	
<b>Tagalog language interpreter trainer consultant</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	
<b>Hmong language interpreter trainer consultant</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	
<b>Travel for language specific interpreter trainer consultant</b>	<b>\$1500 x3 = \$4500</b>	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$40,500</b>	

In addition to the English-language medical interpreter training, the LIC proposes to bring three additional interpreter trainers to focus on the specialized medical terminology in Hmong, Korean and Tagalog. These trainers will each offer a two-day training to interpreters in these languages.

**Actual Revenues:**

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault	\$7,500
Anchorage Neighborhood Health Clinic	\$5,000
United Way of Anchorage	\$10,000
Anchorage School District	\$7,500

**Proposed Revenue Sources:**

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority:	\$5,500
Alaska Community Foundation	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$40,500</b>

**If relevant, where do you expect to find future support?**

The LIC is committed to its long-term sustainability. The LIC has diverse revenue streams, including revenues generated from the interpreter services provided to the dozens of agencies and businesses that are seeking qualified interpreters. The LIC began providing an interpreter referral service in April 2008 and has generated approximately \$4000 in revenues since its inception. Financial stakeholders are also committed to support the LIC as it continues to build its capacity. In addition, the LIC has initiated a partnership with the University of Alaska Anchorage to implement an interpreter training program through the university system. The goal is to create an interpreter degree program through UAA so that bi-lingual Alaskans can access education and employment opportunities within Alaska.

## Attachments

In addition to the application and project narrative please attach the following:

1. Verification of tax-exempt status
2. Mission statement of the organization
3. List of the Board of Directors

### **List of key staff members involved with the project, including titles and main functions**

#### **Robin Bronen, Executive Director**

Ms. Bronen is responsible for the fiscal operation of the Alaska Immigration Justice Project and provides supervision to Ms. Jacobs in the implementation of the interpreter training program. She is also the primary contact between the Language Interpreter Center and the public and private organizations that have made a financial contribution to the LIC.

#### **Barb Jacobs, Language Interpreter Center (LIC) Program Manager**

Ms. Jacobs is responsible for the development and implementation of a statewide interpreter training program and serves as the curriculum advisor and educational program manager. She recruits and screens interpreters and is the main contact between the customer and the interpreters. Barb is responsible for the fiscal operation of the LIC. She formerly worked for 22 years with the Anchorage School District and was most recently the Assistant Principal at Hanshew Middle School.

#### **Anastacia Smelova, Project Specialist**

Ms. Smelova is responsible for administrative tasks that include operating the interpreter database to keep track of appointments, logistics of screening the interpreters, developing newsletters, and any other special projects for the Language Interpreter Center. Ms. Smelova is bilingual in English and Russian.