



# National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy

## **Getting it Right the First Time: Setting Up a System That Will Stand the Test of Time**

***Language Access Webinar III:  
Friday, May 29, 2009***



# About Our Speaker

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**Kleber Palma**

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**Kleber Palma serves as the Director of the New York City Department of Education's Translation and Interpretation Unit, which he established in 2004. The unit is responsible for providing translation and interpretation support to more than 1,400 schools that serve a highly diverse student population of over 1.1 million.**

**Prior to assuming this role, Mr. Palma was the Director of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Translations Unit (the second-largest school system in the country), a Language Specialist for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and a Translation Services Manager for a private firm in California.**

**Mr. Palma has also had years of experience as a freelance Spanish translator and is the Managing Director of Palma Communications, a language access consulting firm. He holds a BA in International Relations from the University of Southern California and an MBA from California State University, Los Angeles.**

# Language Access Strategy for the New York City Department of Education

**Kleber Palma**

*Director*

*Translation & Interpretation Unit*

May 2009



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

# Timeline

- > 2004 - The NYC Department of Education establishes the Translation and Interpretation (T&I) Unit
  - 40 full-time Staff (28 Translators)
  - 5 external language service providers
  - \$4 million yearly budget
- > 2006 - [Chancellor's Regulation A-663](#), issued by the NYCDOE, goes into effect
  - 9 identified languages covers 95% of student households
  - Schools receive translation funds for local needs
- > 2008 - [Executive Order 120](#), issued by the Mayor, goes into effect

# T&I Unit – Services Offered

## Translation Services

- > Requesting procedure established
- > Internal translation process established
- > Quality control procedures implemented

## Interpretation Services

- > On-site interpretation available only for certain events
- > Over-the-phone interpretation services available

## Additional Support

- > Vendor identification
- > Training and enforcement of language access

# Translation – Requesting Procedure

- > Translation Request Form is a must
  - Collects data
  - Details limits of available services
  - Informs how services will be delivered
- > Dedicated email inbox (fax/hard copies are discouraged)
- > Requests are processed on a first-come, first-served basis
- > Staff Project Manager is assigned to the job

**The T&I Unit receives, on average, 15 jobs a day!**

# Translation – Internal Process

## Project Manager:

- > Prepares the document for translation
  - Resolves formatting issues
  - Clarifies content ambiguities
  - Compares document to previous versions (if applicable)
- > Assigns the job to Translators/vendors and Proofreaders and determines deadline
- > Provides final quality control check

**A one-page translation job could involve up to 18 people!**

# Translation – Quality Control Procedure

- > Requests for system-wide dissemination go through a 3-step quality control process:
  - Translator → Proofreader → Project Manager
- > Bilingual glossaries and language specific style guides are used for all translations
- > Translators and vendors use translation memory (not machine translation)
- > Documents are reviewed for language access
  - Websites and telephone numbers are checked
  - Multilingual notices are included in the English original



# Language Access Promotion

The following field staff is trained:

- > School Parent Coordinators
- > Principals
- > School Safety Agents

Schools receive a Language Access Kit every year. It includes:

- > A multilingual poster for welcoming LEP parents
- > Instructions on how to access over-the-phone interpretation services
- > A Language Identification Card
- > T&I Unit informational brochure

# Language Access Promotion

Our website: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Translation> contains the following items:

- > Translated welcome signs and poster
- > Bilingual glossaries
- > Home language data for schools
- > Vendor information
- > Information on schools' translation funds
- > T&I Unit Request Forms
- > Downloadable versions of the T&I Unit brochure, Over-the-phone Card and Language Identification Card

**Multilingual content is available on the NYCDOE's homepage!**



# About Our Speaker

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**Vinodh Kutty**

*Coordinator  
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Office of  
Multicultural  
Services*

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**Vinodh Kutty grew up in South-East Asia. He was born in Malaysia and went to school in Singapore. After completing his National Service in the Singapore Armed Forces, he attended the Institute of Education at the National University of Singapore and taught at the high-school level before leaving for Macalester College and the University of Minnesota in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has certifications in education, anthropology and English.**

**He is passionate about community building and has worked to develop partnerships and collaborations in the refugee and immigrant communities in the Twin Cities and around Minnesota for the last 12 years. Currently, he works in Hennepin County leading its Office of Multicultural Services where refugees, immigrants, and Limited English Proficiency speakers get help connecting to county and community resources and programs. Before this, he worked at the MN Humanities Commission developing training curricula for teachers and in the private sector in sales and international marketing.**

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# Hennepin County Office of Multi-Cultural Services

Vinodh Kutty

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# Office of Multi-Cultural Services

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- Located in Minneapolis, MN
- Primarily serves immigrants and refugees
  - Latino, Hmong, Somali, Oromo, Latino, Bosnian, Russian, etc.
- Created in 2000
- \$2 million budget
  - Property tax dollars
  - Grants
- 50 staff
  - Community Liaisons
    - MAA co-locations
  - Interpreters
  - Immigration Advocate
  - Assured Access health discount program
  - GAP employment program

# My Position as Coordinator

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- Supervisor
- LEP Manager
  - Interpretation and translation vendor contracts
    - 13 contracts for 2006-2009
  - LEP Plan
  - LEP complaints
  - LEP Coordinators
  - Training for bilingual staff/interpreters
  - Training for staff who use interpreters

# #1: Services Match Clients' Needs

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- High volume validates continued need for services
  - Co-locations and partnerships with MAAs
  - Supervisors (and staff) who are well-versed in county programs
  - Alternative services/programs for clients who are ineligible for public programs
    - Referrals to free clinics
    - Assured Access discount program
  - Multiple services located in one hub
    - Health insurance, immigration assistance, housing, employment, etc.
  - Combination of extended hours, appointments, and walk-ins

## #2: Shared Internal Expectations for Language Services

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- Training for bilingual staff and interpreters
  - Day-long training on the ethics and competencies of interpreter
- Training for staff who use interpreters
  - Online module that touches on staff role and expectations of an interpreter



## #3: Creative Funding Strategies

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- 45% MA reimbursement for OMS FTEs
- Receive grant to operate MN DHS Language Line, which funds FTEs
- AmeriCorps VISTA & Hennepin Service Corps

# #4: Contracting and RFP Process

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- Extended contract period (e.g. 3 yrs)
  - Increase incentive for vendors
  - Reduce administrative work
- Offer rates to contracted business partners
  - Increase incentive for vendors
  - Clients receive services from already-vetted agencies
- Require vendors to describe training they provide to staff in RFP