



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROVIDING
ACCESS AND FAIRNESS

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROVIDING ACCESS AND FAIRNESS

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

March 15, 2021

12:15-1:15 p.m.

By Conference Call

Advisory Body**Members Present:**

Hon. Luis Lavin, Hon. Kevin Brazile, Hon. Sue Alexander (Ret.), Gurinder Aujla, Kim Bartleson, Gina Cervantes, Hon. Manuel Covarrubias, Hon. Mark Cullers, Janet Hudec, David Levin, Hon. Elizabeth Macias, Hon. Lia Martin, Sasha Morgan, Julie Paik, Michael Planet, Michael Powell, Hon. Victor Rodriguez, Janice Schmidt, Hon. Sergio Tapia, Hon. Bobbi Tillmon, Hon. Terry Truong, Hon. Juan Ulloa, Twila White.

Advisory Body**Members Absent:**

Ana Maria Garcia, Hon. Mary Greenwood, Mary Hale, Hon. Victoria Kolakowski, Hon. William Murray, Jr., Hon. Mickie Reed, Hon. Erica Yew.

Others Present:

Lisa Chavez, Irene Balajadia, Douglas Denton, Charli Depner, Andi Liebenbaum, Hon. Louis R. Mauro, Danielle McCurry, Amanda Morris, Catherine Ongiri, Heather Pettit, Hon. Michael Sachs, Elizabeth Tam, Greg Tanaka

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. Quorum achieved

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1)

Item 1

Recommended Guidelines and Minimum Specifications for Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) for Spoken Language-Interpreted Events (Action Item)

Presenters: Judge Victor Rodriguez, Justice Louis Mauro, and Douglas Denton

(Language Access Services)

Judge Rodriguez, Justice Mauro, and Douglas Denton presented on the Recommended Guidelines and Minimum Specifications for Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) for spoken language-interpreter events. Judge Rodriguez shared that an Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) working group was formed in December 2020 to review and revise the VRI guidelines to reflect changes in technology and to support VRI in both physical and virtual courtroom settings. ITAC approved the invitation to comment for the revised VRI Guidelines in January. The public comment period took place from January 28 – February 16, 2021. Sixteen public comments were received from various individual interpreters and organizations, including courts, legal services organizations, the Access to Justice Commission and the California Federation of Interpreters.

Justice Mauro provided a summary of the public comments and discussed the revisions to the VRI Guidelines. Some of the consistent comments included a need for more specific equipment requirements, consistency in platforms across the courts, and challenges experienced with VRI during the pandemic. Based on the public comments, several revisions were made, such as obtaining LEP court user consent to using VRI as a best practice, ensuring that VRI solutions allow for privileged communications before, during, and after hearings, acknowledging the digital divide, and providing more clarity on technological solutions.

Mr. Douglas Denton shared several updates relating to VRI. Language Access Services staff is working with Information Technology (IT) to provide funding for VRI equipment to courts and VRI trainings, which will be led by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). He also shared that for the Branchwide Remote Appearance Technology Program, funding for grants was approved by the Judicial Council on March 12. A total of 21 courts will receive funding for remote video and interpretation solutions. Language Access Services is also collaborating with IT to develop resources and best practices to support the courts and court users regarding the use of VRI. There is also discussion to potentially create a remote technology workstream that would strategize to improve remote technology and support remote interpreting needs for the branch as we move forward.

The presenters opened the meeting to questions and discussion.

Several questions and comments were raised by a PAF member. The questions and comments were reflective of some of public comments received during the public comment period, including the request for a uniform platform across all courts, expressed challenges with simultaneous interpretation, court infrastructure needs, and a need for additional training for court staff and jail staff.

Questions and comments were addressed by the presenters, other PAF members, and Judicial Council IT staff. Before calling for a motion to approve the revised VRI Guidelines, presenters reminded PAF the purpose of the guidelines is to provide courts with general guidance and minimum technology specifications for VRI, to allow flexibility for the courts, and to promote future advances in technology. It was also stated that other resources, including best practices, education efforts, and equipment and technical recommendations will be developed separately to support these guidelines, due to the constantly evolving nature of technology.

Action Taken: Ms. Kim Bartleson moved to approve Recommended Guidelines and Minimum Specifications for VRI for Spoken Language-Interpreted Events. Motion seconded by Judge Kevin Brazile. Ms. Janet Hudec and Mr. Gurinder Pal Singh Aujla abstain. Motion carries.

I. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on April 15, 2021.