

January 11, 2024

Happy New Year! I am excited for 2024 and feel like it's going to be a pivotal year on our journey to excellence! I am happy to be making this journey with YOU so read on for the latest and greatest!

Upcoming state holidays: The Nebraska Judicial Branch will be closed for business on February 19th in observance of President's Day.

Stop by and say hello: You can usually find me in my office (#1216) at the State Capitol in Lincoln where you're always welcome! Just please let me know if you're going to stop by so I can make sure I'm not in a meeting – I would hate to miss you! Here are some other locations you can find me in the upcoming month:

- February 14th Lancaster County Courthouse
- February 20th Douglas County Courthouse
- February 23rd Sarpy County Courthouse

Interpreter Certification Pathway:

- Have you signed up for Orientation or the written or oral exam? Visit the [Interpreter Certification Pathway](#) for dates, cost, and registration forms!
- Under current and proposed Rule amendments, all interpreters must attend Orientation. There are still a few spots open for the January 25th & 26th session.
- Are you current on CEUs? Registered and Certified Interpreters could earn 16 CEUs for \$150 by attending Orientation.

Interpreter Pay Rate Update: Senator George Dungan introduced [LB864](#), a \$600,000 appropriation for the current fiscal year for interpreters.

Interpreter Statement: I have been sending communications for 7 months on the correct way to fill out the Interpreter Statements but am still spending an average of 29 hours a month contacting interpreters because their Statements are not filled out correctly and/or are missing information. I would much prefer to spend those 29 hours on other projects to move our program forward. Instructions on how to correctly fill it out are on the back of the [Interpreter Statement](#). *Going forward, Statements that are not filled out correctly will be returned to the interpreter which may delay payment.*

Mileage Rate Increase: The Court has approved the mileage reimbursement rate increase from .655 to .67 cents per mile, retroactive to January 1, 2024. The new rate applies to travels happened on and after 1/1/24. The [Interpreter Statement](#) has been updated to reflect the increase.

Payment Pro Tips:

- If you interpret for the Public Defender, invoice them separately and directly.
- If you are contracted to interpret in Work Comp Court by a private attorney, put it on your monthly Interpreter Statement and submit it to me.
- Do you have a question about a correction made to your Interpreter Statement? Have you not been paid for past invoices? The most efficient way to get answers is by contacting Finance (not me!) at NSC.Finance@nebraska.gov.

Past Monthly Communications: Have you deleted one of the monthly communication blasts but need to review the information? An archive of past communications is available on our webpage under [Interpreter Resources](#).

Professional Resource:

- Register for the National Center for State Court's [2023 Survey of Public Opinion webinar](#) to be held January 22nd 3pm- 4pm
- Sign up now for the [NAJIT 45th Annual Conference](#) May 17th- 19th in Providence, RI.
- NAJIT Article [A Judge's Discretion](#)
- [NAJIT 2024 Elections: Call for Nominations](#)

Recognitions: Recognitions go a long way and carry us through the hard times. If you have a teammate that you would like to recognize, please email it to me so I can feature it in an upcoming communication!

- ✚ **Ben Hammar** was very good and professional in his appearance today. – *Kristin Woods, District 3A Specialized Probation Officer*
- ✚ **Irma Watt** was so helpful with a Q'anjob'al LEP, as it was unknown at the time and thought to have been a Spanish LEP. On top of that, she also came back to the courthouse after no interpreter needs were indicated for Prisoners until they got on the record and the jail ended up indicating there were Spanish interpreter needs. - *Melisa Tonniges, Courtroom Clerk Certified Electronic Reporter and Amiel Armijo, Justice Language Access Coordinator*
- ✚ **Juana Diego** willing to accommodate the courts' schedules in Saline County and help with additional defendants not on her list. - *Jaime Kreshel, Saline County Assistant Clerk*
- ✚ **Kari Corkle** and **Olivia Brockman** for giving insightful feedback when I have still come across court proceedings I don't comprehend fully. **Kari Corkle** for also helping me get in touch with an interpreter we both were struggling to contact. – *Amiel Armijo, Justice Language Access Coordinator*
- ✚ Appreciate **Barb Fisher's** professionalism and promptness to work with the court's schedules in setting hearings.- *Jaime Kreshel, Saline County Assistant Clerk*
- ✚ Kudos to **Salim Merza** for taking interpreter ethics and scope as seriously as he does! He is truly passionate about interpreter excellence to ensure true language access to justice. Thanks, Salim! - *Kari Corkle, Justice Language Access Coordinator*
- ✚ **Keak Kierkok** thank you for adjusting your busy schedule to cover a last-minute Detention hearing. - *Abbey Ruskamp, Sarpy Juvenile Court Bailiff*
- ✚ **Perla Alarcon-Flory, Shirin Chowdry, Abdi Elmi, Barre Hassan, Khalaf Hesso, Teresa Kilpatrick, Salim Merza, Nick Nersian, Norma Olivas, Sixta Sass, Leslie Shi, and Victoria Welles** are great at following protocol and reaching out to the courts and probation for remote confirmations! - *Kathleen, Adrian, Olivia, Kari & Amiel, Language Access Program*
- ✚ Good afternoon, I just wanted to pass along some praise for **Amiel Armijo**. My experience of working with her over the past months has been wonderful! She is timely in her communication

and readily available to assist with questions and needs. Even today, she saw that there was a cancelation of a Spanish interpreter and offered for that interpreter to come to Hall County to assist with Mass Arraignments. I have nothing but compliments to offer for her work as the interpreter coordinator for our county!- *Melisa Tonniges, Hall County Courtroom Clerk*

✚ Thank you to our team Amiel Armijo, Kari Corkle, Kathleen Valle, and Olivia Brockman for great work covering while I was on vacation, also Kelly Varguez and all interpreters for their support! – *Adrian Hinojosa, Interpreter Coordinator*

✚ The Ops Team (**Adrian Hinojosa, Olivia Brockman, and Kari Corkle**) won the Judicial Branch's [Outstanding Customer Service award!](#)

Remote Confirmation Update:

As I discussed in last month's email communication, there have been successes but also challenges when requesting court and probation staff provide confirmation of the services provided. As with any protocol change it takes time for the implementation to become a smooth process. Here's what I said I would do and what I asked you to do. I did my part, and I hope you are doing yours. Only by working together will we get there!

What Kathleen did:

- Recognized the courts and probation who are doing a great job confirming your remote appearances.
- Contacted the courts and probation who are struggling with this to see how Language Access can support them as they implement the new protocol.

What interpreters should do to help:

- Email the requester with something like, "Can you please confirm I interpreted for COURT OR PROBATION NAME on DATE from START TIME to END TIME?" This way they can then easily respond.
- If you have sent the email and followed up but are still not receiving a response, please forward me (not the Ops Team) the emails so that I can address it.

Sickness: It is inevitable that at some point, each one of us will get sick and will need to call in. We should not feel guilty for taking time off to recuperate or for being a good teammate and not infecting anyone else. Do your best to stay healthy and please don't come to work with a fever. Hand sanitizer and masks are available in each LAP office for your use. I would also encourage you to utilize the interpreter equipment since it allows for social distancing.

Did you know?

- A fossil word is a word that is no longer used in general speech but remains in use because it is part of an idiom. For example, amok as in "run amok" or turpitude as in "moral turpitude".
- Different dolphin species will attempt to speak a common language. When Bottlenose and Guyana dolphins come together, they change the way they communicate and begin using an intermediate language.
- Genders of articles affect the way users perceive objects. When asked to describe a key (a masculine word in Dutch and feminine in Spanish) Dutch speakers used words like "hard, jagged, and metal" and Spanish speakers used words like "little, lovely, and shiny".
- 69% of Luxembourgers and 53% of Belgians speak at least four languages.

If you have questions on any of this content, please feel free to reach out to me. Otherwise, we'll talk next month!