

**Shared Remote Interpreting Governance Committee
Meeting
Conference Call
12:00 p.m.
February 21, 2017
Meeting Summary**

Members in attendance:

Judge Elizabeth Metzger, Judge J. Keven Abdoney, Mathew Benefiel, German Bernal, Noel Chessman, Win Ellenwood, Jeffrey Fuller, Elizabeth Garber, Gilberto de Paz, Tom Genung, Gary Hagan, Judge Leandra G. Johnson, Craig McLean, Roosevelt Sawyer, Mark Weinberg

Members absent:

Astrid Rodriguez

Others in attendance:

Judge Diana Moreland, Arlene Johnson, Patty Harris, Victor McKay, Lisa Bell, Kris Slayden, Lindsay Hafford, Jessie McMillan

I. Welcome and Introductory Remarks

After having the members introduce themselves, Judge Metzger welcomed them to the first Shared Remote Interpreting Governance Committee (Committee) meeting. She also thanked them for their willingness to serve. As a way of background, the Supreme Court directed the establishment of a Shared Remote Interpreting Governance Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to oversee the management and administration of shared remote interpreting services in the trial courts. Although shared remote interpreting is a new model, Florida is leading the way in implementing of this technology. In 2014, a technology pilot was successfully completed and has been implemented in only a few circuits. Though much of our work is uncharted territory, Judge Metzger mentioned that she is confident with the knowledge of this Committee and it will respond to our charges satisfactorily.

II. Membership

The meeting packet contains a letter from Judge Diana Moreland, Chair of the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability (TCP&A) that established the Committee under TCP&A. Additionally, The Committee will also work with other governance groups such as the Florida Courts Technology Commission, the Trial Court Budget Commission, and the Court Interpreter Certification Board.

AOSC16-105 (AO) outlines the charges of the Committee and how it shall be composed. The Committee, composed of 15 members, will rely on the experience, expertise, as well as the position, and location of each member. The AO also directs that the Committee will be comprised of judges, trial court administrators, the State Courts Technology Officer, and circuit court staff, including technology officers and court interpreters, representing small, medium, and large circuits that serve a two-year term.

III. Review Purpose and Goals of Committee

A. AOSC16-105 RE: Shared Remote Interpreting Services in Florida's Trial Courts

In December 2011, TCP&A submitted a reports to the Court that proposed several new policies in *Recommendations for the Provision of Court Interpreting Services in Florida's Trial Courts*. The recommendation proposed the expansion of interpreting services to all divisions and court-managed events. This directive was ultimately not approved. As a result, the Court directed a feasibility study on the viability of remote interpreting technology. In 2014, A Joint Workgroup on Shared Remote Interpreting Services (Workgroup), consisting of the members from TCP&A, the TCBC, and the Court Interpreter Certification Board was convened to make recommendations, based on the results of a regional technology pilot, and on the business processes for sharing remote interpreting resources. The Workgroup conducted several reviews of a technology pilot that was underway in several circuits. They also initiated a six-month data collection effort on the current workload for court interpreters. After drafting and approving the report, the Workgroup advanced six recommendations on the concept of sharing interpreter resources using Virtual Remote Interpreting (VRI). The recommendations below were approved by the Supreme Court in December 2016. They would:

1. Establish a statewide pool of qualified interpreter resources. The Workgroup recommends the Trial Court Budget Commission, during its annual resource allocation process, consider the number of hours (per week) each circuit will be required to contribute to the pool. The allocation should be based on a workload threshold to ensure equitable distribution of interpreter workload across circuits.
2. Establish statewide education and training provisions, including materials and resources, to ensure remote interpreters and courtroom participants understand and are able to operate video remote interpreting technology appropriately.
3. Ensure that all remote interpreters participating in the statewide pool track their events by entering data, for each remote interpreting event, into a local reporting system or Activity Form. Monthly reports shall be provided by each circuit to the OSCA, in a format prescribed by OSCA, by the 15th day of each succeeding month.
4. Ensure all certified staff interpreters take an oath as administered by a presiding judge at the initial start of employment. The oath shall be considered valid for the duration of the interpreter's employment barring situations such as lapse of certification, disciplinary action, or suspension.
5. Establish a governance committee to make recommendations to the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability, the Court Interpreter Certification Board, and the Trial Court Budget Commission regarding oversight of shared remote interpreting services.
6. Direct the governance committee to monitor funding needs of the circuits in consideration of making recommendations to the Trial Court Budget Commission on changes to existing allocations, standard rates, and cost recovery/sharing practices, to

ensure the highest efficiency in the use of the interpreter resources within the shared remote interpreting model.

The VRI solution allows the interpreter to control the audio and video from a remote location while allowing the interpreter to be virtually present in the courtroom. The interpreter would be able to do simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. While using both video and audio components, VRI allows remote interpreters to provide service as if they were located in the courtroom without any degradation of service. A statewide pool provides improved access to certified court interpreters currently in short supply as well as bringing efficiencies in the use of in-person interpreters who often have down time associated with travel between court events.

Data will be needed to monitor the pool, thus, one recommendation addresses the need to collect additional data points. The current UDR system is recommended, however, it needs to evolve in the long-term. Until this enhancement happens, the Workgroup recommends each interpreter participating in the pool track their workload events in a separate data collection system for submission to OSCA, along with UDR.

Because of the shift in the delivery of court interpreting services, the Workgroup recommended a governance committee be established to assist in the management and operation of the statewide pool. Also the Committee will monitor operational and funding level needs of the circuits and make recommendations to the TCBC, TCP&A, and the Court Interpreter Certification Board, as appropriate. The recommendations advanced significant business changes on how court interpreters are currently utilized and offered a model that is blended (similar to court reporting) to allow both traditional in-person services for certain case events (e.g., felony trials) and VRI services for other case events.

B. FY 2016-2018 Work Plan

A draft work plan, found on page 73 of the meeting materials packet, was developed in anticipation of the tasks before the Committee. The charges of this Committee are to:

1. Establish the statewide court interpreting pool for remote interpreting;
2. Develop recommendations to the TCBC for its review and consideration on additional funding needs, as requested by the circuits, for interpreting services associated with shared remote interpreting. These recommendations should be based on standardized room models/costs, for both state and county obligated portions of remote interpreting technology, as developed by the TCBC;
3. Collect workload data and needs-based funding information for shared remote interpreting for the circuits;
4. Oversee administration/management issues. This shall include procedural changes to the shared remote interpreting model based upon periodic review of circuit data, as well as feedback and recommendations from the circuits regarding operational issues

arising from the use of virtual remote interpreting, with modifications made as appropriate; and

5. Establish Memorandums of Understanding between circuits and the governance committee.

An initial tasks list for the Committee was presented to help guide members on the tasks associated with the charges. One task includes considering a quote from CISCO on bridge equipment. Staff has been working to try to make some progress on adding enhancements to the statewide call manager. Other tasks include:

- Developing governance strategies
- Drafting a Memorandum of Understanding
- Surveying circuits on remote interpreting equipment
- Developing a methodology for shared pool of interpreters
- Determining operational procedures
- Determining data collection needs for shared remote interpreting
- Developing a data collection framework
- Developing a framework for generating funding needs information for TCBC for shared remote interpreting

1. Discuss Quote for Statewide Call Manager

In September 2016, the OSCA received a quote of \$227,000 from PRESIDIO for proposed enhancements that would allow other circuits to join the shared remote interpreting Model. Due to the high cost of the enhancements, it was determined the Committee should have the opportunity to review. That quote has since expired. On February 7, 2017, staff sent a survey to the circuits in order to get an idea of their business needs. The supplemental item on page nine is a summary of the results. The Committee formed a sub-group to help finalize the responses and move forward with obtaining a re-quote from CISCO. Craig McLean, Roosevelt Sawyer, Gary Hagan, Matt Benefiel and Tom Genung volunteered to become members. The first conference call for the sub-group will be scheduled prior to the meeting on April 13.

2. VRI Initiative Update (National Level)

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has been working for the past 3 years to collect interpreter data from various states and develop a classification scheme based on select criteria related to training and testing. From that, interpreters could be classified into three criteria. Because the NCSC is the repository for this data and can work with a preferred national vendor, states would be able to use the interpreters from the database to meet a particular state's need for securing interpreters. With this idea, the NCSC partnered with Stratus. That relationship was unsuccessful due to Stratus not being able to execute the terms of the contract.

This information is outlined in an email found on page 98 of the meeting materials. The NCSC and the Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) are in the process of regrouping to determine what next steps to take. LAAC indicated it may take three

months to determine how to proceed in the next phase. Staff will share information as it becomes available.

IV. Next Steps and Meeting (TBD)

An in-person meeting is scheduled for April 13th at the Orange County Courthouse in Orlando. Staff is currently working on the official meeting notice. This meeting will provide a more detailed overview of VRI services. The 9th Circuit staff has agreed to provide a demonstration of shared remote interpreting. The members discussed the possibility of inviting Cisco representatives to attend this meeting to provide an overview of the technology model used with shared remote interpreting.

With no further business, I adjourn this meeting.

DRAFT