

# Interpreter's Digest

October 2009

Volume 2, Issue 4



## Byrne Grant Funds!

The AOC is a recent recipient of a federal Byrne grant that will assist potential interpreters (particularly those in languages other than Spanish) with the costs of the credentialing process. Applications will be accepted through December 31, 2010. And information on the process is posted on AOC web page at: <http://www.tncourts.gov/geninfo/Programs/Interpreters/Interpreters.htm>

### Inside This Issue

Byrne Grant Funds .....	1
Newly Credentialed Interpreters.....	2
Whose Problem is This? Critical Questions to Ask Yourself .....	2
Written Exam and Spanish Oral Exam .....	3
AOC Update .....	4



# Newly Credentialed Interpreters

The Tennessee Court Interpreter Program is pleased to announce our newly credentialed interpreters as of July 2009:

Registered Spanish Interpreters: Blanca Taylor, Gilberto Morales and Rita San Martin.

Congratulations to all!

## Whose Problem is this? Critical Questions to Ask Yourself

By: Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps, Ph.D  
TN and Federally Certified Interpreter  
ATA Certified Spanish -- English Translator

*Before reading any further, first ask yourself:  
Are there trained professionals who know how to handle this situation better than I?*

### Could I be legally liable?

Could I be sued, fined or reprimanded for actions outside my role as an interpreter? Yes.

That is why I will not do administrative or medical tasks when asked. It is not my job and I have no training. I wouldn't expect the nurse to interpret for me, so why should she expect me to help her with a procedure.

She and the hospital have liability insurance to cover her for that and I do not.

That is also why I must correct my mistakes. I can be liable for my errors. Patients can die. Defendants can spend their lives in prison – all due to a misinterpretation.

### If this had happened to an English-speaking person...

Would anything be different? Better? Worse?

I am a trained linguist. Am I trained to know how or what someone thinks? How much or how little someone understands? What they should or shouldn't do? Who's telling the truth?

Do I want to risk my reputation and



livelihood by stepping outside my role?

### What is the goal of the legal system?

Justice – By being accurate and impartial I am an ally of Justice.

I need to remind myself that: Judges judge. Lawyers advocate.

These are not my job. I transmit accurate, complete communication.

### What is the goal of the healthcare system?

To provide appropriate care so that the patient outcome is good.

Have I studied Medicine? Nursing?

Then, I need to leave decisions and opinions about care to the trained professionals.

### What is the goal of social services?

To determine who should receive monetary, health or social benefits.

Have I been trained as a case worker?

Should I have an opinion as to who is given or denied benefits?

No. I should only concern myself with accurate, complete and impartial interpretation and let the professionals make their determinations as they would for an English-speaking client.

**What is the goal of the educational system?**

To educate each student.

Am I trained to educate the student?

Then, I must simply let learning occur through accurate and complete interpretation.

If you answer yes to any of the above, then you have to decide at once, which role will you take? For example, if you decide to act as a lawyer because you are a trained lawyer, go ahead. But then....you cannot interpret. You can only be one or the other.

That's why you always need to step back and ask yourself the essential question: Whose problem is this?

A good part of the time it is NOT yours!



## Upcoming Written Exam, Spanish Oral Exam and LOS Oral Exam

Registration forms are available on the AOC website at [www.tncourts.gov](http://www.tncourts.gov) to register for upcoming November written exam – Registration deadline is October 30, 2009.

To register, please follow the steps listed below:

- 1) Select Programs and Services
- 2) Click on Court Interpreters
- 3) Scroll down and select the exam and date under Registration Forms and Information
- 4) Submit registration form

Please note that the deadlines are coming up quickly for the registrations!

---

## Resources for Interpreters

New Jersey's AOC Simultaneous Exam Practice Exercises:

<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/interpreters/resources.htm>

---

## AOC Update



The AOC continues to have quarterly meetings with members of TAPIT (Tennessee

Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators) concerning interpreter issues. If you have any issues you would like discussed during these sessions or are interested in being involved in these discussions, please contact Mary Rose Zingale at [Mary.Rose.Zingale@tncourts.gov](mailto:Mary.Rose.Zingale@tncourts.gov).