



# Multilingual Boards of Directors: Setting the Table for Community- Led Justice

By Jessica Jewell, Executive Director<sup>1</sup> and Alena Uliasz, Language Justice Manager,<sup>2</sup> California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

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## Introduction

At CRLA, our mission is to fight for justice *alongside* our clients and the communities that we serve.



Jessica Jewell (L); Alena Uliasz (R).

As a social justice organization, it is critical that we recognize the inherent dignity in each person and understand that their lived experience gives them the knowledge for self-determination and meaningful power. Change can only happen when we recognize the power of individuals and community. Because of this,

one of CRLA's core organizational values is to value community leadership. We listen to communities as they identify what they need and want based on their lived experiences, and we strive for *community-led* justice. Community leadership is embedded in everything we do, including striving to share knowledge and leadership through community education campaigns, establishing client advisory committees to inform our local advocacy efforts, and supporting the leadership development of external community groups and organizations.

CRLA firmly believes you cannot have a community-led organization without having community voices at the table where decisions are made. This is what we fight for in our advocacy — for example, holding cities and counties accountable to hear the voices of their constituents in decision-making — so it is only right that we hold ourselves accountable as well. For CRLA, our board of directors (BOD) is the governing body providing organizational oversight and a strong partner for our executive staff in setting the direction of the organization. In fighting for community-led justice, inclusion has to be a core value of our BOD. This means having board members with direct, current lived experience of the conditions faced by our clients to actively guide our work. It is easy to assume that the perspectives of our client communities are already represented when many staff and attorney board members are drawn to the organization because of our own personal stories, having come from immigrant

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families, having lived in poverty, identifying as a member of a marginalized community, or otherwise having common experiences with our clients. Those perspectives are valuable; however, it is critical to acknowledge the privileges we likely have now. We cannot assume to know the experience of our clients despite our past similarities, recognizing the value in hearing directly from those with current lived experience. We must ask ourselves, what do we stand to lose if we cannot directly hear the voices of all community members?

Ensuring we have diverse representation on CRLA's board from the client communities we serve, inevitably (and fantastically!) leads to diverse language needs on our board. In many ways, not only is the challenge making sure people are at the table, but quite literally making sure their voices are heard. Leveraging the expertise of CRLA's Language Justice Initiative, we have developed best practices for ensuring multilingual board meetings and board communications are possible. We continue to iterate and grow, holding ourselves accountable to our values while giving ourselves grace to get things wrong and learn from our mistakes. In this article, we discuss what it means to strive for language justice in a multilingual society by providing a case study of what we have learned in our practice, and we leave you with practical advice about how to create your own multilingual board meetings.<sup>3</sup>

### Conceptual Framework: What is Language Justice?

At CRLA, we understand that in a multilingual society like ours, a decision-making body that functions only in English perpetuates *linguicism*. Linguicism is defined by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas<sup>4</sup> as "Ideologies, structures and practices which are used to

Because of linguicism, non-dominant language speakers often struggle to make their voices heard in community decision-making, are prevented from fully participating in public schools, and are frequently barred from receiving life-sustaining healthcare and legal services.

legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues)." Because of linguicism, non-dominant language speakers often struggle to make their voices heard in community decision-making, are prevented from fully participating in public schools, and are frequently barred from receiving life-sustaining healthcare and legal services. Linguicism frequently works in concert with racism and xenophobia by deepening the inequities faced by immigrants of color.<sup>5</sup> For example, Wiley and Lukes<sup>6</sup> point to the long history in the U.S. of using discriminatory English language and literacy requirements to bar people of color from immigrating, voting, and accessing employment. Furthermore, linguicism intersects with audism<sup>7</sup> in the barriers faced by Deaf people in a society that privileges spoken over signed languages.

Throughout history, communities targeted by linguicism have fought for their *language rights*. We refer to the Indigenous, immigrant, and Deaf communities targeted by linguicism as *linguistically marginalized communities* or *non-dominant language users*, intentionally avoiding the deficit-based term used in many U.S. laws and policies, Limited English Proficient or LEP.<sup>8</sup> All over the world and here at home, linguistically marginalized communities have sustained histories of struggle and resilience that center individual and collective language rights, including the right to be free from linguistic discrimination, to have meaningful access to public services and civic participation, and to maintain non-dominant languages and pass them on to future generations. Chen<sup>9</sup> provides this broad definition of language rights:

*Language rights are the rights of individuals and collective linguistic groups to non-interference by the State, or to assistance by the State, in the use of their own language, in perpetuating the use of the language and ensuring its future survival, in receiving information and State-provided services in their own language, and in ensuring that their exercises of other lawful rights (e.g. the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right to receive education, the right to employment), will not be handicapped or subject to discrimination for linguistic reasons.*

In the U.S. context, language protections for spoken languages are rooted in the prohibition of discrimination based on national origin and ethnic identification, such as Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Language protections for sign language users are rooted in disability

discrimination laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), though it should be noted that many Deaf communities reject the disability designation and advocate for recognition as a distinct linguistic community. Despite being recognized differently by the law, Deaf and hearing language rights advocates are increasingly working together in solidarity.

*Language justice* is a liberatory response to linguicism and an active embodiment of language rights. At CRLA, we often define language justice as the systemic fair treatment of people of all language backgrounds and a commitment to equitable communication. In the language justice toolkit created by Trilce Santana with the Right to the City Alliance,<sup>10</sup> language justice is described as a praxis that includes the following components:

- “The right that we all have to communicate in the language(s) in which we feel most powerful and articulate, to understand, and to be understood. (These languages may be signed, spoken or involve other ways of communicating).
- The right that we have to express ourselves in all of the different ways that we communicate even when we are using the “same” language.
- The right of people with disabilities and neurodiverse people to lead and participate fully in our movements, accessing all of our spaces and materials.
- The right to preserve our languages and the acknowledgement of the loss of our languages because of colonization and imperialism.
- A collective orientation and practice of creating equitable spaces in which no language dominates another.
- The rights of bilingual workers, interpreters and translators to fair pay and good working conditions.”

As illustrated by the definition above, language justice is an evolving, multifaceted concept that advocates and communities are bringing to life in different ways in myriad contexts. For CRLA, an essential component of language justice is *communicative autonomy*, a concept coined by Sofía García-Beyaert<sup>11</sup> that refers to the right to self-determination about how we communicate, including the ability to choose what you want to communicate and how you want to express it, and the ability to understand what others around you are communicating and how you would like to respond. Communicative autonomy rejects the notion that a person should have less agency or

decision-making capacity by virtue of not being fully proficient in a society’s dominant language. Language justice best practices aim to respect communicative autonomy by ensuring that everyone can participate equitably and that no one is excluded due to differences in linguistic proficiency. At CRLA, we grapple with how to put these ideals into practice on a daily basis. The rest of this article will focus on how we are walking a path of language justice alongside members of our board of directors.

## CASE STUDY: CRLA’S MULTILINGUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Quotes from CRLA Board Members

“Lo miro muy importante en la cuestión que hay igualdad entre todos. Es muy importante y fundamental que hay interpretación en la mesa para poder comunicarnos.” *I believe it’s very important in terms of having equality between everyone. It’s very important and essential to have interpreting on the board so that we can communicate.*

— José Juan Valdovinos, President of the Comité de Comités, CRLA Board of Directors

“Our board is at its best when we are able to truly communicate with each other. We believe our board members communicate most effectively in their own language. We firmly believe that multilingualism encourages participation, creates a sense of inclusion, values the thoughts of the individual director as well as broadens the conversation. Embracing multilingualism opens the door for more discussion. We are stronger as a board if we feel that our ideas contribute to solutions, that they have been heard. This is why Language Access is imperative in modern society. Through this practice, it is our hope that our BOD members are communicating effectively and feel more confident about speaking their mind and making the important decisions that are necessary for the betterment of the corporation.”

— Roberto de la Rosa, President, CRLA Board of Directors

### Quotes from CRLA Board Members

“Para mí, es importante incluir a miembros que hablen otra lengua, ya sea una lengua indígena u otra lengua, porque estos miembros llevan la información a su propia comunidad en su propio idioma para que la comunidad, como mi comunidad que habla Mixteco, pueda saber dónde obtener ayuda cuando la necesitan.” *For me, it’s important to include members who speak another language, whether it is an Indigenous language or another language, because these members bring information to their own community in their own language so that the community, like my Mixteco-speaking community, knows where to get help when they need it.*

— Honorina Carrasco, Member, CRLA Board of Director

“As an organization that advocates for civil rights, it is critical that our board models and implements the values underlying CRLA’s advocacy—inclusion and racial justice. All our directors’ voices are important, and providing language access is critical to treating all directors with dignity and respect. Language access ensures we are all able to participate as equals and to be fully heard by each other. Moving beyond the boardroom, our language access efforts also help our board empathize with and better understand the practical barriers to access that our clients and advocates face in the field.”

— Camille Pannu, Vice President, CRLA Board of Directors

For the CRLA board of directors, cross-language communication is the norm. Our directors do not share a common language and communicate using Spanish and English as our primary languages.<sup>12</sup> While all board members are proficient in at least one of these languages, some multilingual members have another mother tongue such as Mixteco, an Indigenous language of Southern Mexico. Our board members also reflect the diversity of rural California in terms of differences in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and access to formal education. A key dimension of diversity that intersects

with language is tech access, and we have board members along a broad spectrum related to using tech-based tools for communication, such as email and videocalls, as well as access to smartphones, computers, and high-speed internet at home. With a board that functions only in Spanish and English, CRLA cannot claim to reflect the rich linguistic diversity of a state where over 200 spoken and signed languages are used, 44 percent of residents use a non-dominant language at home, and 19 percent self-identify as not being proficient in English.<sup>13</sup> However, we consider our Spanish-English bilingual board of directors, with their myriad identities and experiences, to be a strong start to putting our vision of community-led justice into practice.

At CRLA, we aim to weave language justice into all communication with and among board members.<sup>14</sup> While having interpreters and translated documents at board meetings is key,<sup>15</sup> these highly visible elements are just two components of a holistic approach. Language justice planning begins with having a formal language access plan and protocols, dedicated language justice program staff, and a budget to support language services as essential building blocks of the infrastructure of inclusion. We have also learned that promoting tech access and fluency is inseparable from language justice in an increasingly online world, as is embracing a multi-channel (not just multilingual) approach to communication in which we respect both digital and analog methods. Finally, we have developed strategies to support the success of board members with programming that responds to the priorities and needs voiced by members related to leadership development, equity, and inclusion.

### Multi-Channel Communication

Inclusive multilingual board communication is more than interpreted meetings. A cornerstone of our approach is having an executive administrator who is proficient in the languages used by our board and who communicates with members using the methods that work best for them. We live in a multi-channel world in which some people rush to try the latest smartphone app, while others rely on hardcopy documents that arrive by mail. Just as we strive to create environments in which one language does not dominate any other, we should not privilege one communication channel over others. We should be especially mindful to avoid letting our nonprofit norms (i.e., communication in English via email) dictate the communication methods used by multilingual community-led boards. We have found it

helpful to survey board members about their preferred communication methods and then provide communication about meeting notices, reminders, and minutes using those channels. As a result, we use a combination of snail mail, email, text messages, and phone calls in the primary language of members. We have learned that we must be mindful that communication over different channels with board members is timely. For example, it can be tempting for busy staff members to send out board meeting notices via email in English first and follow up with phone calls in Spanish several days later. This approach gives English speakers with high tech access more time to accommodate their schedules to attend meetings than Spanish speakers who rely primarily on oral communication, prioritizing the participation of board members who already benefit from multiple layers of privilege. Making sure our board members are notified about meetings in an equitable way is one of many small daily decisions that give us the chance to live out our values. Despite the challenges, we believe our best bet is to embrace a flexible multi-channel approach and to eschew any communication method that promises to be one-size-fits-all.

### **Collaboration with Interpreters and Translators**

For board meetings, CRLA protocols prioritize collaboration with professional interpreters and translators. Our Language Justice Initiative (LJI) staff works together with our executive administrator to coordinate translation of board minutes, notices, and other communications between English and Spanish. Translations are completed by a dedicated team of Independent Contractors (IC) who are not only qualified translators,<sup>16</sup> but also well versed in specialized terminology related to CRLA programs and services as well as a culturally responsive approach to accessible translation for our board. Similarly, we work with a dedicated team of qualified interpreters<sup>17</sup> for board meetings, most of whom are certified by the California Judicial Council and/or graduates of the

Language justice planning begins with having a formal language access plan and protocols, dedicated language justice program staff, and a budget to support language services as essential building blocks of the infrastructure of inclusion.

CRLA Engaged Interpreting Training. Like our translators, our interpreters are familiar with the community contexts, social justice movements, and terminology preferences relevant to CRLA board members. Over time, they have built the trust needed to interpret in sensitive and confidential settings. CRLA has learned that the best approach for us is to collaborate with external professional interpreters and translators rather than relying on internal staff members for language services, allowing us to create effective multilingual meetings without compromising the roles or capacity of multilingual staff.<sup>18</sup>

At CRLA's board meetings, we utilize tools like bidirectional simultaneous interpreting to promote equitable communication. We reject the common model in which meetings are almost exclusively led in English and non-dominant language users are the only participants who rely on interpreting, relegating them to a role as passive recipients of information with little opportunity to share their unique perspectives and wisdom. Instead, our goal is to promote the full participation of Spanish and English speakers in meetings, including access to spoken and written information in their primary languages and equivalent opportunities to ask questions, contribute to group discussions, and participate in decision-making. Both Spanish and English speakers wear interpreting headsets at onsite meetings and choose a language channel on videoconference platforms. Both languages are actively used to lead the meeting, with many presentations being delivered in Spanish and slides being displayed in both languages.

### **Tech Access is Language Access**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, CRLA has learned that a creative approach to using technology must be integrated into our language justice practices. Our board and executive leadership, LJI staff, and IT department worked together to make the transition to remote meetings in 2020, including facilitating the purchase of tablets for board members and one-on-one training for members about how to use their new devices and participate in bilingual videoconference meetings with remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI). In 2022, we transitioned to hybrid bilingual meetings, utilizing a combination of onsite interpreting equipment and a specialized audio system with RSI to enable board members to participate both in-person and virtually. After extensive research, we learned that the best approach for us was to invest resources in the one-time purchase of a specialized audio system as well as

### Key best practices for multilingual meetings include:

1. Bilingual meeting notices and outreach using multiple communication platforms, e.g., mailed hardcopy documents, phone calls, text messages, and email;
2. Hiring a team<sup>19</sup> of at least two qualified interpreters to provide bidirectional simultaneous interpreting for each language combination;
3. Using wireless simultaneous interpreting equipment for onsite events and RSI video conference platforms for virtual meetings;
4. Providing in-language tech support for participants in onsite and remote meetings;
5. Providing translated written materials such as slides, signage, and handouts in the primary written languages of meeting participants;
6. Promoting an inclusive environment by avoiding room configurations or group activities that segregate people based on primary language.

At CRLA, we find that when we carefully design bilingual board meetings to promote equitable communication, we more fully benefit from the insight and experience of different members, leading to stronger relationships and better decisions.

to involve our IT and language justice staff in planning and implementing each meeting.

To develop our approach, CRLA LJI staff co-founded a Community Tech Access Working Group (CTAWG) with international participation from interpreters and language rights advocates. CTAWG developed a set of best practices related to tech access for multilingual online meetings<sup>20</sup> that includes the components listed on page 41.

At CRLA, we are excited about the promise of multilingual hybrid board meetings to increase accessibility for our members. For some members, participating remotely from home is the best option because they live far from CRLA offices, have health concerns that

make travel challenging, or care for family members. For other members, participating onsite is the best option because it eliminates the need to navigate unfamiliar tech platforms at home while providing the opportunity to connect in-person with colleagues. Hybrid multilingual meetings can be a daunting endeavor and the research, training, and planning required should not be minimized, but we believe the results are worth the investment. Currently, our executive and board leaders work closely with our LJI and IT staff to coordinate board meetings. When combined with professional IC interpreters and translators, we have a behind-the-scenes dream team who make multilingual hybrid meetings as effective and inclusive as possible.

### Supporting Board Members Success

Ensuring voices are heard is only the beginning of what a social justice organization can do to support board member success, especially the success of board members who come from marginalized communities. At CRLA, we have developed special programming for client board members around leadership skills and other skills needed to be effective board members and community leaders. Like our other community-led approaches, this special programming was designed after multiple meetings with client leaders to brainstorm goals and identify needs. The client board members took these goals and needs, developed a multi-year learning plan, and committed to monthly meetings facilitated by CRLA staff where members learn together and from each other.

It is important to CRLA to invest in all of our board members. Everyone, whether community member, client, or attorney, makes a valuable contribution to the leadership of CRLA and everyone has areas to grow. Some members may come to the table with on-the-ground community experience but need support learning more about organizational finances and how to read financial documents, while others may bring extensive financial expertise but need to grow their learning on white supremacy culture. Embracing a culture of learning and of valuing all experiences, and devoting the staff and organizational resources to support this culture, can only make a board stronger and, in turn, greater benefit the communities served by the organization.

### Conclusion

CRLA recognizes that language justice is not a destination, rather a lifelong process in which we will continuously reevaluate, learn, and grow. Currently, our

## CTAWG Best Practices for Online Multilingual Meetings

### *Before the event:*

- a. Conduct a “tech audit” to find out what devices and internet access are available to all presenters and participants, as well as their preferred languages. Create a support plan based on the specific needs of the group.
- b. Schedule a Tech & Logistics Coordinator (TLC) for each meeting with RSI to be the “host,” manage the interpreting function, provide in-language tech support, monitor language channels, and support the interpreters.
- c. If possible, it is helpful for the TLC or event organizers to lead in-language practice sessions to provide training for presenters and participants about how to participate in a multilingual online meeting in advance of the event. This provides a supportive, low-pressure space for learning to use new tech.
- d. If possible, provide space where participants can come in-person to use devices and internet provided by the organization and receive in-language tech support. If appropriate for the event, make sure the space is private and provide a separate space for childcare.
- e. Plan for a Tech Check before every event with RSI. A good practice is for the TLC and interpreters to arrive 30 minutes before the event begins and for the presenters/facilitators to join 15 minutes before the event begins to test audio and review guidelines.
- f. Provide guidelines for presenters, facilitators, and participants, including:
  - » Everyone will need to connect via an internet-connected device, e.g., a smartphone, tablet, or computer.
  - » Please connect from the quietest place with the strongest internet connection available to you.
- g. Set up a way for the TLC to provide tech support to participants during the event outside of the online meeting. This could be a phone number that people can call for help and/or providing the TLC with a participant contact list so they can reach out to participants who have trouble, e.g., people who are unable to connect to audio in the online meeting.

### *After the event:*

- a. *Debrief:* The TLC, interpreters, and event organizers should discuss the event, including what went well and what should be improved related to technology and interpreting. Identify lessons learned and barriers that should be addressed.
- b. *Document:* Create a log of tech issues that came up to use for troubleshooting.
- c. *Evaluate:* Include questions about the quality of interpreting, translation, and tech access in participant evaluations.

bilingual board of directors is a successful model for including speakers of two widely spoken languages, yet we have a long path ahead to include board members who primarily communicate using other non-dominant spoken and sign languages. We welcome opportunities to acknowledge the places in which we are not fully living our values so we can see how to best

reroute, continuing the journey with humility, integrity, and grace. At the same time, we hope to inspire other legal services organizations to forge a path toward multilingual boards of directors so that community voices can truly guide our organizations, actualizing our commitment to community-led justice.

### Budgeting for Language Justice

We all know that a budget is a statement of values. Nonprofit legal services organizations are accustomed to budgeting for travel, food, lodging, and venue fees for board meetings, but budgeting for language justice may be new. What belongs in your budget to support inclusive and effective multilingual board meetings?

- Two interpreters for each language combination for each meeting at approximately \$100 per hour per interpreter, plus travel, lodging, and meals.
- Professional translation of board notices, minutes, and other communication at approximately \$0.20 per word in the source language.
- For onsite meetings: Wireless simultaneous interpreting equipment. Costs vary widely, but you might estimate \$3,000 for a set of equipment to accommodate a group of 50 people.
- For remote meetings: A videoconference platform that supports Remote Simultaneous Interpreting (RSI). Costs vary widely, from \$200 per year for a subscription-based videoconferencing platform with an RSI add-on to \$200 per hour for a specialized RSI platform.
- For hybrid meetings: A specialized audio system; costs vary widely. See the hybrid meeting list for more info.
- Dedicated language justice and IT staff to work with your executive and board leadership to plan and implement meetings: Priceless (but check your salary scale for specifics).

### Hybrid Multilingual Meetings

What do you need to create effective hybrid multilingual meetings so your board members can participate in-person or remotely in their preferred language? At CRLA, our IT and language justice teams collaborated on research and planning and invested in a specialized audio system that includes the following:

- Wireless interpreting equipment for onsite participants
- Videoconference platform with remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI)
- 50+ wireless tabletop delegate mics
- 2 meeting Owls
- A portable sound system (mixer)
- 2 portable tabletop interpreting booths
- 2 wireless mics for presenters
- 2 high-quality mics for interpreters
- 5 laptops for connecting audio input and output between the Owls, portable sound system, interpreting equipment, and online language channels
- USB to audio adapter
- Multiple aux cables
- Rechargeable batteries and chargers

1 Jessica Manriquez Jewell is the Executive Director at California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA), a statewide law firm fighting for community-led justice and individual rights alongside the most exploited communities of our society. Jessica was raised in the Central Valley in Riverbank, California where a passion for working with her community was instilled in her early on by her immigrant parents and extended family. She is the proud alumni of public schools and obtained her higher education in the Central Valley. Jessica minored in Theatre Arts and received her BA in Criminal Justice from California State University, Stanislaus. She then went on to receive her JD from Humphrey's College, Laurence Drivon School of Law. Jessica has chosen to dedicate her career to legal services. After working as a

legal aid advocate in Southern California, Jessica moved back to her hometown and has been working with CRLA since 2009. Since then, Jessica has served CRLA clients in a variety of roles, including as a Community Worker, Staff Attorney, Directing Attorney, Regional Director, Deputy Director, and now Executive Director. Throughout her time at CRLA, Jessica has worked to secure habitable and affordable housing in CRLA client communities, and language access rights for low-income tenants. Jessica has also successfully represented low-wage workers in employment discrimination litigation and was part of a team of attorneys that reached a successful settlement revamping discipline policies to combat discrimination and bias in a local school district. Jessica now resides in Turlock, and is the proud mom of Jennavieve and Julietta, and a whole zoo of pets.

2 Alena Uliasz is CRLA's statewide Language Justice Manager. Alena has 20 years of experience as a facilitator and organizer focused on dismantling oppression and promoting equity and inclusion. Alena completed a certificate in Spanish-English court and healthcare interpreting at San Francisco State University and has participated in, coordinated, and facilitated training for



- community and educational interpreters since 2011. She holds a master's degree in Community Development from the University of California, Davis, where she conducted community-based participatory research about Indigenous language justice in collaboration with the Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP). Before moving to Northern California, Alena lived on the CA Central Coast, where she co-founded Just Communities' Language Justice Initiative and co-led educational justice and sexual violence prevention efforts. She enjoys paddleboarding, yoga, and is a life-long aspiring meditator.
- 3 To learn about language justice in legal services more generally, please see: Lee, J., M. Lundin, A. Noguez Mercado, & A. Uliasz. (2019). "Language Justice in Legal Services." *Management Information Exchange Journal*.
  - 4 Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1988). Multilingualism and the education of minority children. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas & J. Cummins (Eds.), *Minority education: From shame to struggle* (pp. 9-44). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
  - 5 Alim, H. S. (2016). Introducing raciolinguistics: Racing language and languaging race in hyperracial times. In H. S. Alim, J. R. Rickford, & A. F. Ball (Eds.), *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race* (pp. 1-30). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
  - 6 Wiley, T. G., & Lukes, M. (1996). English-only and standard English ideologies in the U.S. *Tesol Quarterly*, 30(3), 511-535.
  - 7 Audism can be defined as "the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or to behave in the manner of one who hears." Tom Humphries, *Communicating across cultures (deaf-hearing) and language learning*. (Doctoral dissertation. Cincinnati, OH: Union Institute and University, 1977), p.12.
  - 8 Advocates in the language justice movement have criticized the term "limited English proficient" or "LEP" for reinforcing a deficit view of people who do not use English as their primary language. Alternatives to LEP are terms such as "non-dominant language users" and "linguistically marginalized communities." We acknowledge that LEP is still widely used and relevant, particularly with respect to legal mandates, obligating its use in certain contexts. To the extent that LEP is used, people-first language should be utilized, i.e., "people with limited English proficiency."
  - 9 Chen, A. H. (1998). The philosophy of language rights. *Language Sciences*, 20(1), 45-54.
  - 10 Santana, T. (2023). *Language justice: A toolkit for organizers*. Right to the City Alliance. Available at: <https://www.righttothecity.org/resources>
  - 11 García-Beyaert, S. (2015). The role of the community interpreter. In M. A. Bancroft, S. García-Beyaert, K. Allen, G. Carriero-Contreras, & D. Socarrás-Estrada (Eds.), *The Community Interpreter: An International Textbook* (pp. 359—442). Culture & Language Press.
  - 12 Primary languages are the spoken, signed, and/or written languages that an individual indicates they prefer to use to have meaningful access to a program or activity. The determination of a person's primary language must be made by the individual, not by an agency or organization.
  - 13 U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Language spoken at home. *American Community Survey*. U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office.
  - 14 To learn more about how to weave language justice best practices into your legal services organization, see the Organizational Language Justice Protocols Assessment created by LAFLA and API-GBV, available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5988acb43e00be429f4a4459/t/644153d7d9ee9b3e2401b579/1682002904019/ENG+Organizational+Language+Justice+Protocols+Assessment.pdf>
  - 15 Interpreting and translation are two distinct fields of professional practice. Interpreting refers to using spoken or sign language to transmit a message from one language into another without adding, deleting, or changing the meaning, register, or tone of the message. Translation refers to a similar process of transmitting meaning across languages but is specific to written text. Some language professionals provide both translation and interpreting services, but many do not.
  - 16 A "qualified translator" means a person with advanced written proficiency in their working languages, knowledge of professional practices, and adherence to a translator's code of ethics, who has been determined to be qualified by a formal certifying body such as the American Translators Association or based on experience, education, and references.
  - 17 A "qualified interpreter" means a person with advanced oral or signing proficiency in their working languages, knowledge of professional practices, and adherence to an interpreter's code of ethics, who has been determined to be qualified by a formal certifying body such as the California Judicial Council or the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters or based on experience, education, and references.
  - 18 A "multilingual staff member" is a qualified staff member or employee who, in addition to their duties, is also proficient and has been assessed in spoken, signed, and/or written communication skills in multiple languages. Multilingual employees should not interpret or translate unless they have separately met the requirements of being a qualified interpreter or translator. Multilingual employees should be given clear roles and expectations regarding whether they are performing their job duties in-language or serving as qualified interpreters or translators.
  - 19 It is a research-based best practice for two interpreters to

© A KEY DOCUMENT FOR NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION, *Continued from page 23*

4. Using information gained as a board member to help other parties adverse or potentially adverse to the organization (such as grant competitors).
5. Undermining the reputation and integrity of the organization by denigrating the organization to others outside the organization.
6. Micromanaging the organization’s budget, such as requiring approval for small or routine expenditures.
7. Exerting pressure on program staff to hire friends of board members.

I hope that readers find these lists helpful. Additionally, I would encourage board members, old or new, to work with their executive directors to seek out periodic training for the board to maximize their effectiveness as board members. Part of an executive director’s job is to provide support for the board’s work. MIE has within its library a host of board training materials which can also assist in this regard.

1 Jan Allen May is the retired Executive Director of AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly, a board member of MIE, a long-time trainer in legal services, and a frequent contributor to the *MIE Journal*. He has written about 130 articles on legal services management issues. The author would like to take this opportunity to thank Patricia Pap for her valuable comments and edits to the original draft of this article.

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- work as a team for simultaneous interpreting. See: Vidal, M. (1997). “New study on fatigue confirms need for working in teams.” *Proteus*, Vol. VI (1).
- 20 Community Tech Access Working Group (2022). “Best practices for remote simultaneous interpreting on Zoom.” Available at: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PYtP4W—4VWETNrwjO7V5LUF1n3ySaJugzyUFl8ho\\_Y/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PYtP4W—4VWETNrwjO7V5LUF1n3ySaJugzyUFl8ho_Y/edit?usp=sharing).

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