



News Release

20 July 2016

GROUNDBREAKING NEW INTERPRETER TRAINING CURRICULUM FOCUSES ON VICTIM SERVICES

Washington, D.C. - Ayuda's Victim Services Interpreter Bank, in partnership with the District of Columbia's Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG), announced today the release of a groundbreaking new curriculum for interpreters, which is valuable to both spoken language and sign language interpreters. The set of training materials, titled "Breaking Silence: Interpreting for Victim Services," is now available to the public, for interpreter training sessions and self-study, and can be downloaded at <http://ayuda.com/wp/get-help/language-services/resources/>

The training provided in "Breaking Silence" prepares interpreters to work in a specialized field: victim-centered, trauma-informed interpreting, such as interpreting for victims of violent crime, domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

The training manual, workbook of role plays and exercise, and glossary of victim service terminology released today are the culmination of more than two years of work, which included two pilot interpreter training sessions that trained over 50 local interpreters. The authors of the curriculum are nationally recognized experts in interpreter training, including Marjory Bancroft of Cross-Cultural Communications.

"There is a deep need for trauma-informed interpreters who do not undermine the survivor's voice or take control, but instead allow the service provider and the survivor to communicate clearly and transparently," said Ms. Bancroft. "This new curriculum will allow interpreters to learn how to properly assist these survivors."

In developing this new training, the authors assessed the needs of the D.C. region's victim service providers by conducting a focus group and 20 individual interviews with interpreters and representatives from the Victims Assistance Network. Although the curriculum incorporates the experiences and advice of Washington, D.C. practitioners, the majority of the content is applicable to victim services work in any city.

"Not only is the survivor of a violent crime carrying the weight of their experience but they are also confronting cultural, linguistic, and social barriers that all too often prevent survivors from seeking and receiving help," said Carolina Herrera, Language Access Deputy Director of Ayuda. "The Victim Services Interpreter Bank project aims to remove the language barrier in order to enhance the safety and welfare for hundreds of crime victims every year."

Today, there are more than 36,000 Limited English Proficient people residing in Washington, D.C., and there are more than 5,500 Deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals in the city who may communicate using signed languages. This important new curriculum helps interpreters to better serve the needs of these growing populations.

“This critical resource will provide greater access to services while enhancing the safety of some of the most vulnerable victims of crime,” said Michelle M. Garcia, Director of the District of Columbia’s Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants. “The Breaking Silence curriculum will benefit not only providers and victims in the District, but all across the country.”

###

Launched in November 2014, the Victim Services Interpreter Bank works to meet the language access needs of victim service providers in Washington, D.C. In addition to training qualified interpreters to work in the victim services field, the project also runs an interpreter service. Through the Bank, victim service providers may request an interpreter at all hours of the day and night, whether on an emergency basis or by scheduling appointments ahead of time. The Bank arranges for telephonic interpreters when in-person interpreters are not available. Translation services are also available, allowing providers to conduct outreach in various languages and to communicate with particular clients in the appropriate written languages. The benefits of the bank are free to victim services providers because of funding from OVSJG.

Media Contacts

Carolina Herrera

Ayuda
Language Access Deputy Director
Washington, D.C.
Tel: +1 202 243 7315
Email: carolina@ayuda.org

Kelley Dillon

Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants
Washington, D.C.
Tel: +1 202 727 3934
Email: kelley.dillon@dc.gov

About Ayuda

Ayuda envisions a community where all immigrants overcome obstacles in order to succeed and thrive in the United States. We realize our vision by advocating for low-income immigrants through direct legal, social and language services; training; and outreach in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.