

#BE READY 16

Summit on Language Access in Elections

University of Maryland, College Park

Samuel Riggs IV Alumni Center

June 2, 2016

In many communities throughout the United States there are citizens for whom English is a second language. When these individuals vote they may want or need to be able to read their ballot and other voting materials in their native language. Furthermore, United States law requires almost 250 jurisdictions to provide voting information to their voters in certain language other than English. It is against this backdrop that the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and Democracy Fund Action are sponsoring a meeting bringing together election officials, voting experts and language officials from across the country to discuss the challenges to serving these voters, and to highlight the many resources and opportunities that are available to meet their voting needs.

8:00-9:00 am Registration and Breakfast

9:00-9:10 am Welcome and Introductions: Thomas Hicks, Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), Adam Ambrogi, Program Director, Democracy Fund Action

9:10 -10:20 am **Overview of the Legal Requirements of Minority Language Coverage**

Moderator: Christy McCormick, Commissioner, EAC

This panel sets the context for the day by reviewing the various Federal legal and statutory requirements for serving voters who speak languages other than English. Topics including which languages are covered, which voting materials can or must be translated, the logistical and cost considerations for translating and providing these materials to voters, along with guidelines for designing minority language ballots, will be discussed.

Panelists:

Justin Levitt, U.S. Dept of Justice (opening remarks)

Michael Yaki, U.S. Civil Rights Commission

Jim Tucker, Author, *The Battle over Bilingual Ballots*

Dana Chisnell, Center for Civic Design

Katherine Culliton-Gonzalez, Voter Protection Advancement Project

Larry Conklin, Translations International, Inc.

10:20-10:35 am Break

10:35-11:00 am **SUMMIT TALK - Lance Gough, Election Director, City of Chicago, IL**

11:00 am-12:05 pm **Outreach to and Input from Minority Language Communities**

Moderator: Terry Ao Minnis, Senior Fellow, Democracy Fund Action

Panelists will offer perspectives on the types of language issues various communities are facing and how these issues may vary by geographic region and by community. Panelists also will explore the various methods, techniques and media outlets they are using to reach these voters.

Panelists:

O.J. Semans, Four Directions
Ivelisse Roig, Office of Elections, Cuyahoga County, OH
Andy Kang, Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Juan Cartagena, Latino Justice
Natalie Landreth, Native American Rights Fund (NARF)
Bart Haggerty, Queens County, New York Board of Elections

12:05-1:30 pm **LUNCHEON Speaker**

Michael Vu, San Diego County, CA Board of Elections

1:50-3:00 pm **Finding, Training and Keeping Bilingual Election Workers**

Moderator: Stacey Scholl, Program Associate, Democracy Fund Action

Recruiting, training and retaining bilingual election workers to serve communities in which voters may speak languages other than English is critical to running a successful election. This session explores specific techniques and successful practices for recruiting, training and retaining bilingual election workers. Panelists also will outline “does and don’ts” for working with this valuable and necessary group of workers.

Panelists:

Tonia Tunnell, Office of Elections, Maricopa County, AZ
Sonya Aston, Office of Elections, Harris County, TX
Grace Wachlarowicz, City of Minneapolis, Minnesota
Deanna Kitamura, Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Jon Sherman, Fair Elections Legal Network
Cameron Sasnett, Fairfax County Board of Elections, VA

3:00-3:15 pm **BREAK**

3:15-3:35 pm **SUMMIT TALK- Cherry Cayabyab, Project/Program Manager for King County, WA Department of Elections**

3:35-4:45 pm

Various tools and Best Practices to employ

Moderator: Matthew Masterson, Commissioner, EAC

This panel considers various tools being used to serve voters who speak in languages other than English. Election officials and language experts will offer insights and recommend resource materials to use when translating voting materials into multiple languages, when considering language differences by region or dialect and, and when working in a large or small voting jurisdictions.

Panelists:

Erin Hustings, National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)
Juanito Amor, Office of Elections, San Diego County, CA
Indra Arriaga, State of Alaska Division of Elections
Marlene White, Washington Secretary of State's Office
Theresa Tran, APIA Vote Michigan
Jonathan Williams, Cook County IL, Board of Elections

4:45-5:05 pm

SUMMIT TALK- Mee Moua, President and Executive Director, Asian Americans Advancing Justice

5:05-5:30 pm

Closing and Next Steps

Moderators: Thomas Hicks, Chair, EAC

Adam Ambrogi, Program Director, Democracy Fund Action

The meeting closes with the conveners summarizing highlights and important “takeaways” from the day along with proposing a series of possible next steps for panelists, election officials, language voting advocates and others, to consider.

May 24, 2016

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