

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**"Heritage of Excellence"**

**2016 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: VIDEO INTERPRETATION SERVICES PROGRAM**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:** JULY , 2012  
 (Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2015)

**PROJECT STATUS:**  Ongoing  One-time only

**HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?**  Yes  No

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 The Public Defender must effectively communicate with clients in order to provide  
 2 quality legal representation. Staff attorneys supplement "in-person" client jail interviews  
 3 with video conference interviews. The challenge was to leverage and maximize our two  
 4 in-house Spanish language interpreters to assist with these interviews when the  
 5 attorney and interpreter were not co-located. The solution was to bring the interpreter  
 6 into the attorney-client jail video call by either making it a 3-way video call or by having a  
 7 co-located attorney and interpreter use special dedicated video conferencing  
 8 equipment. Interpreters can now be located at any one of our offices and still participate  
 9 in the attorney-client interview originating at any of our 31 offices. The quality of our  
 10 representation of our Spanish speaking clients is directly improved by the project. By  
 11 2015, more staff had video access and three new interpreters were hired and available  
 12 to assist with video interviews. Between March 1, 2015 and February 29, 2016, 453  
 13 interviews were conducted with interpreter assistance via video, 755 trips were  
 14 eliminated with an estimated savings of \$18,754 in mileage costs, and 830 hours of  
 15 travel time were avoided at an estimated cost of \$35,250 for a total of \$54,004.

**BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY**

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 35,250	\$ 18,754	\$ 0	\$ 54,004	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

<b>SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Public Defender 210 West Temple Street, 19 <sup>th</sup> Floor Los Angeles, CA 90012	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-974-2801
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<b>PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME</b> Joanne Rotstein/Noble Kennamer	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-974-3591/562-866-3256 <b>EMAIL</b> <a href="mailto:jrotstein@pubdef.lacounty.gov">jrotstein@pubdef.lacounty.gov</a> <a href="mailto:nkennamer@pubdef.lacounty.gov">nkennamer@pubdef.lacounty.gov</a>
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<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Joanne Rotstein <i>Joanne Rotstein</i>	<b>DATE</b> 7-6-16	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-974-3591 <b>EMAIL</b> <a href="mailto:jrotstein@pubdef.lacounty.gov">jrotstein@pubdef.lacounty.gov</a>
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<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> Ronald L. Brown <i>Ronald L. Brown</i>	<b>DATE</b> 7-6-16	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-974-2801
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**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project.

**CHALLENGE**

The Public Defender has a responsibility to provide effective legal representation to indigent clients charged with a criminal offense. The California Supreme Court has held that "effective representation includes the duty to confer with the client without undue delay and as often as necessary to elicit matters of defense."

Over 2.5 million Los Angeles County residents are limited English proficient meaning they speak English less than "very well" and face language barriers on a daily basis. Latino communities face the greatest challenge with 48% experiencing difficulty communicating in English. In order to interview clients requiring the assistance of an interpreter in our offices or at the jails, we use our in-house Spanish language interpreters or seek assistance of an interpreter by a court appointment order. A significant number of our clients who are limited English proficient require the assistance of a Spanish language interpreter to communicate with their attorney.

Staff attorneys supplement their in-person jail client interviews with video conference interviews. Since 2000, Public Defender staff has been communicating with incarcerated clients at local jails using video conferencing units at individual offices. To increase client communication and increase video usage, video capable laptop computers were rolled out to most felony attorneys and investigators by the end of 2012.

The challenge was to leverage and maximize our two in-house Spanish language interpreters to assist in attorney-client interviews when the attorney and interpreter were not co-located in order to avoid both the attorney and the interpreter traveling to the jails.

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**SOLUTION**

The solution was to bring the interpreter into the attorney-client jail video call by either making it a 3-way video call (attorney, client and interpreter) or by having the co-located attorney and interpreter use the larger interpreter video unit to connect with the client at the jail.

To increase client communications and video usage, video-capable laptop computers were rolled out to most felony attorneys and investigators by the end of 2012. In July of 2012, felony attorneys in four of our offices had received their video-capable laptop computers. We piloted this project in those four offices (and all other offices as they received their computers) whereby felony attorneys could conduct interviews with their incarcerated clients using their video-capable computers with the assistance of one of our centrally located Spanish language interpreters.

By providing our in-house Spanish language interpreters with dedicated video conferencing equipment, interpreters could be located at any one of our offices and still participate in the attorney-client interview originating at any of our 31 offices. By 2015, all attorneys, investigators, paralegals and social workers had video access. Three additional in-house Spanish interpreters were hired and available to address the needs of our Spanish speaking clients and to expand this project.

**BENEFITS**

Our Video Interpretation Services Program has been successful in leveraging the use of Public Defender Spanish language interpreters, regaining interpreter availability while not driving to and from County jail facilities, reducing driving time for both the attorney and the interpreter, reducing travel reimbursement costs, and making it easier to maintain effective attorney-client communications. The Program has significantly increased the flexibility of our interpreter staff and the number of client interviews that our in-house interpreters can assist with on any given day.

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**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS):** Providing video capable computers to Spanish language interpreters enables them to join attorney-client jail video interviews and maximize their services to assist more Public Defender clients department-wide. This program supports the countywide goal of maximizing the effectiveness of process, structure and operations to support timely delivery of customer-oriented and effective public services. It also expands the Public Defender’s Communications Video Strategy to support its duty to provide effective representation to indigent clients charged with a criminal offense.

Our five in-house Spanish language interpreters utilized a combination of dedicated video units, video-capable computers and large monitors to facilitate video conferencing. Program statistics for March 1, 2015 through February 29, 2016 show that 453 video interviews were conducted by Public Defender attorneys with the assistance of our Spanish language interpreters. The estimated total travel costs saved for mileage and avoided travel time during the 12-month period is \$54,004.

Program costs cover a multi-point video unit and five video-enabled computers and large monitors. An equipment investment of only \$16,150 makes the cost savings for eliminated mileage expenses and avoided travel time a significant return on our investment. The equipment has a 5-year life cycle and each year we are compounding the benefit of our investment. The program has also helped us leverage our interpreter resources. Interpreters can assist attorneys at locations where the interpreter is not co-located by just joining the video conference call. By reducing unproductive travel time, interpreters have greater availability to assist with cases at their assigned office location and with cases via video conferencing.

The program has increased the number of Public Defender staff who can communicate with clients via video and has increased the frequency of attorney-client communications throughout the court process.

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**COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY):** If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

**Revenue:** Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$ 35,250	\$ 18,754	\$ 0	\$ 54,004	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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Four jail facilities are located in Castaic, two are in the downtown civic center, and the women’s jail is located in Lynwood. On average, a roundtrip from any Public Defender office to any jail facility is 46 miles and takes 1.1 hours of travel time.

Program statistics for March 1, 2015 through February 29, 2016 demonstrate that 453 video interviews were conducted by Public Defender attorneys with the assistance of our Spanish language interpreters. We know that attorneys may conduct more than one interview per trip and have estimated that they conduct 1.5 interviews per trip. Therefore per our calculations, we estimate these 453 interviews equate to 302 trips saved (453/1.5). Interpreters generally conduct one interview per trip saving 453 trips. Therefore, we have calculated that these desktop video interviews have saved a total of 755 trips between the attorney and the interpreter. Total estimated savings from the eliminated trips is \$ 18,754. We calculated this by multiplying the number of trips by 46 miles (the average from any office of the Public Defender to any one of the seven County jail facilities) by the County mileage reimbursement rate of 54 cents per mile (755 trips X 46 miles round trip X .54/mile).

We also calculated the estimated travel time and the cost of travel time saved. For attorneys, we multiplied the number of saved trips (302) by 1.1 hours per/trip (the average travel time from any Public Defender office to any one of the seven jail facilities) by \$75/hour (average hourly rate for a Deputy Public Defender III). Attorney travel time saved is 332 hours at a cost of \$24,915. For interpreters, we multiplied the number of saved trips (453) by 1.1 hours/trip by \$20.74/hour (average hourly rate for a Public Defender interpreter). Total interpreter time saved is 498 hours at a cost of \$10,335. We estimate total travel time saved for both the attorney and the interpreter is 830 hours at a cost of \$35,250.

Therefore, total estimated travel costs saved for mileage and travel time during the entire 12 month period is \$54,004. An equipment investment for the interpreters of only \$16,150 makes the cost savings a significant return on our investment. In addition to saving the County money on travel costs, the program has helped us leverage the five staff interpreters.