

Announcement of Director and Chief Counsel of Language and Access to Justice Initiatives

Over 25 years ago C CJ (Conference of Chief Justices) and COSCA (Conference of State Court Administrators) supported the creation of the Consortium for Language Access to develop and share certification and testing tools for certification of language interpreters in the state courts. Today 44 states share testing and certification of interpreters in 20 languages. As further recognition of the importance of language access, COSCA appointed a task force to develop a plan for providing increased language access services to state courts.

I am announcing the appointment of Konstantina Vagenas to the position of Director and Chief Counsel of Language and Access to Justice Initiatives. Tina is an experienced lawyer working over 15 years in the legal and judicial communities. While serving as Chief Counsel and Associate Director for the Justice Center at the ABA, Tina supported the ABA Task Force on Preservation of the Justice System chaired by David Boies and Ted Olson, a responsibility she continued when moving to the NCSC. Tina provided legal counsel to the C CJ/COSCA ABA Language Access Standards work group and serves as a member of the NCSC team working with state courts to understand and address language access directives issued by the Department of Justice and to provide technical assistance. Her career spans a broad spectrum of court and legal issues including judicial ethics, prosecutorial experience and access to justice issues. While counsel to the Justice Center she managed all programs and initiatives of the Standing Committee on Judicial Independence and the Standing Committee on Federal Judicial Improvements including the Immigration Justice Project; the Diversity Database; the Media and the Courts Project and the Least Understood Branch Project. Tina's experience also includes a tour of duty with the State Department at the American Embassy in Athens, Greece. Growing up in a bi-lingual household Tina is personally familiar with issues facing parties with Limited English Proficiency and brings those personal experiences to her new position.

Tina will attend the C CJ/COSCA Annual Meeting in St. Louis to support the recently established Language Access Advisory Committee and looks forward to launching the newly established Council for Language Access Coordinators. I know you join me in congratulating Tina on her new position.

Mary C. McQueen | President

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