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## **New Mexico Supreme Court Introduces NM Center for Language Access**

### **New Program to Offer Multilingual Interpreting and Translation Certificate Programs**

*Santa Fe, New Mexico* - Chief Justice Edward L. Chávez of the New Mexico Supreme Court today introduced the New Mexico Center for Language Access, which will help those interested in enhancing their bilingual abilities earn certificates in medical interpreting, justice system interpreting, and bilingual communication. The Center will begin accepting students this fall.

Created and led by the New Mexico Judiciary, this unique collaborative higher education project will be managed through the University of New Mexico - Los Alamos in collaboration with Doña Ana Community College and Central New Mexico Community College. Oversight of curriculum development, student recruitment and effectiveness of the training based on students' on-the-job performance will be provided by an interdisciplinary Advisory Council comprised of the collaborators and representatives of a diverse spectrum of public agencies.

According to Chief Justice Chávez, "The New Mexico Judiciary is pleased to bring together and join with our higher education partners in this important endeavor. The Center for Language Access will help the justice system and other public agencies ensure that all New Mexico citizens have equal access to services regardless of their English language ability. Equally important, the Center's programs will offer a wonderful opportunity for those multilingual citizens among us to leverage their language abilities into a professional career. This is uniquely significant in our largely bilingual state and especially so in these challenging economic times."

The New Mexico Center for Language Access will use a unique, hybrid (on-line and face-to-face) learning model to ensure access across New Mexico and beyond. Additionally, all Center programs are multilingual including, but not limited to, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Navajo, or American Sign Language. Assignments and mentoring with language experts and working professionals in each target language and on-the-job internships will round out students' experience.

Dr. Cedric Page, Executive Director of the University of New Mexico – Los Alamos, is clear about his institution’s commitment to the Center: "The New Mexico Center for Language Access is impressive in the degree of collaboration and commitment by our public agencies and higher education institutions to serve the needs of New Mexicans engaged with our judicial and healthcare systems. UNM Los Alamos is honored to be a part of this initiative that will become a model of inter-organizational cooperation and responsiveness nationally."

For more information about the New Mexico Center for Language Access, contact Paula Couselo, Director, at [paulacou@unm.edu](mailto:paulacou@unm.edu).

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