



Pacific CEED Projects Promising Practices & Progress Report Form

Project Name/Title:

Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition Interpreter/Translator Training Project

Project Date/Duration:

November 2009 to September 2010

Jurisdiction/Island/Village:

State of Hawaii

Audience Reached:

Micronesians living in Hawaii who have some interpreting/translating experience and are interested in pursuing such a career. The participants in this pilot project were selected from the current pool of interpreters & translators already involved in the Micronesian community who have the highest need for language access.

State Providers:

- WIC Program
- Social Workers
- Outreach Workers
- Medical Health Providers
- State of Hawaii Judiciary
- Department of Education
- Department of Public Health
- Immigration Department

Community:

- Community Health Clinics
- KNDI radio listeners
- Olelo TV viewing audiences
- Interpreting and Translation Agencies
- Schools of Language

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Participant Quote:

'Tell the project story'

(Please ensure consent and include the person's contact information.)

Mrs. Carmina Alik
 Marshallese Interpreter/Translator:
 Telephone#: (808) 429-2265
 Email: c_alik8690@hotmail.com

"This interpreting program is a pilot program so there were many aspects of it that were not developed yet, but with all the help and support for folks at CEED and at the UH, Manoa College of Interpreting & Translating Services and the Outreach program, we are able to accomplish what we set out to do. So far we've had many requests for our interpreters to work in the Judiciary as well as out in the community, and it is evident that many providers want to utilize our services, but are waiting patiently for the certification to be finalized."

Mrs. Tarnin Katjang
 Marshallese Interpreter/Translator:
 Telephone#: (808) 341-0734
 Email: tkatjang@yahoo.com

Mrs. Innocenta Kikku-Sound
 Chuukese Interpreter/Translator:
 Telephone#: (808) 351-4354
 Email: innocenta.soundkikku@gmail.com

"I thought the classes were really cool as they taught us what specifically identified our roles as an interpreter and not an advocate. We just bridge the two speakers and not be an advocate. I used to think that it was my responsibility to explain some procedure or how the system works but as an interpreter, that is not my role. My job is just to make sure that I bridge the gap between the client and the provider."

Mr. James Kikku
 Chuukese Interpreter/Translator:
 Telephone#: (808) 499-8673

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The Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition (MHAC) has filled an important gap in the community by serving as 'convenor' of all Micronesian leadership. MHAC called on the leaders of the Micronesian organizations, churches, and advocates in Honolulu to meet at the Willows Restaurant in Honolulu to strategize effectively how to rally the Micronesian community in Hawaii to come together as one to best help their weak and long term patients who desperately need their state health benefits reinstated. There was a good turnout for the meeting and committees were formed to target the different aspects that needed focus to achieve their goal of moving forward with the fight against the Basic Health Hawaii plan.

"It (Interpreter Program) was a profound and rewarding experience for me. My knowledge and understanding of professional interpreting has improved considerably. Subsequently, my performance as well as my confidence level in doing my task has increased greatly. I am honored and grateful to have been a part of this commission to improve resources, communications, and provide a means for better services through the pursuit of professional interpreting for the Micronesians with Limited English Proficiency."



Micronesian Leaders:

"Together we can accomplish even more and fight the BHH to make sure we have health care for everyone who needs it."

History/Background:

MHAC is an organization recently spun off from MCN and other Micronesian community initiatives to mobilize the community's participation in the Hawaii Health Equity Summit and to respond urgently to recent policy proposals to eliminate health insurance for Micronesians living in Hawaii. The intention of this project is to improve access to health related services for Micronesians in Hawai'i by developing an interpreter and translation curriculum and training individuals from the community as medical and community interpreters/translators. The curriculum is developed in partnership with the University of Hawai'i Center for Interpretation and Translational Services that provides participants with certificates of completion. The project selectively recruits and trains individuals to become professional interpreters/translators from the Micronesian community in Hawai'i. The course would provide certification for general, community and medical interpretation. This interpreter project is a pilot project; first of its kind. It is an adaptation from the Spanish curriculum for Certification in Interpretation and Translation.

Goal and Objectives:

The overall goal of this project is to help eliminate health disparities in the Micronesian Communities in Hawaii by providing quality Language Access for the Micronesians in need of this service.

- To form a non-profit Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition, comprised of Micronesian professionals with health-equity focus
- To rapidly mobilize Micronesian communities in Hawaii to prepare for and present at the Hawaii Health Equity Summit and develop key contributions to the State’s Health Equity Strategy
- To publicly advocate against the implementation of Basic Health Hawaii Plan
- To educate Micronesians residing in the state of Hawaii on health issues affecting them
- To advocate for Micronesians residing in the State of Hawaii on current health inequity issues
- To collaborate with other Micronesian interest groups, including Micronesians United, Micronesian Community Network, Nations of Micronesia, Micronesian Culture Awareness Project
- To provide quality training in the field of Interpreting/Translating in Medical, Community, and Legal settings for participating Micronesians.
- To place the trained interpreters to work out in the community while they complete their training and after completion of training at UH.
- To establish MHAC’s non-profit status to be able to apply for further funding.
- To serve as conveners of all Micronesian group leaders to come together and mobilize as one force in its positive movement towards changing policies to reinstate health insurance for Micronesians living in Hawaii.
- To educate and develop ways to assist the Cancer Control Coalition of Hawaii in their research programs and provide language access to their Micronesian patients, ultimately eliminating health disparities in the community.

Planning & Development:

Below is the list of multiple partners that were instrumental in 1) the formation of the Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition and its inherent goals of organizing community champions and professionals and pursue its development of a non-profit status; 2) the organization of Micronesian leaders/advocates to attend the 2009 Hawaii Health Equity Summit; 3) the organization of effective advocacy among COFA migrants against the Basic Health Hawaii Plan; and 4) the future planning to train Micronesians to become certified interpreters/translators in alignment with the National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

Partner	Role
Micronesians United (MU)	Active partner in public advocacy for Micronesian health equity & in public rallies against proposed Basic Health Hawaii Plan
Micronesian Community Network (MCN)	Active partner & Hawaii-based Pacific CEED subcontractor. Obtained additional funds from Pacific CEED to support MHAC members to attend Hawaii Health Equity Summit and to sponsor trainings with HANO (Hawaii Association of Non-Governmental Organizations)
Nations of Micronesia (NOM)	Network of health providers who are strong supporters of Micronesian clients/issues
Micronesians United – Big Island	Active partner who advocates for Micronesians on health, equity, and educational issues, the public on Micronesian issues on the Big island
Pacific CEED	Strong supporter of MHAC & major funder of activities including HANO training and logistical costs of MHAC attendees to the Health Summit
Hawaii Alliance for Non-profit Organizations (HANO)	Provided training for MHAC in organizing to acquiring non-profit 501(C)(3) status
Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA)	Organizer of Hawaii Health Equity Summit dedicated to

	improving public health. Offered discount HPHA membership to 5 MHAC leaders & champions.
Lawyers for Equal Justice (LEJ)	Legal Counsel for COFA migrants who filed the original case for TRO against the state's implementation of the Basic Health Hawaii. Recently, the Micronesian leadership has formally entered into a contractual agreement with the Lawyers for Equal Justice (LEJ), to provide services primarily on pro bono basis. LEJ has also agreed to assist MHAC with their application for 501c3 as well as annually review their nonprofit status to assure compliance with state requirements.
JABSOM Department of Family Medicine and Community Health	Actively participates in meetings, hearings, testimonies, presentations in various avenues to bring light to the COFA migrant issues
Richard S. Williamson School of Law (UH, Manoa)	Actively participates in meetings and provides a network of recommended contacts and expertise in Non-profit and Business Law as MHAC attempts to establish itself as a non-profit entity.
Center for Pacific Islands Studies (UH, Manoa)	Actively participates in meetings and various events to help educate students on Pacific Island issues relating to racial and cultural barriers.
Kokua Kalihi Valley Clinic (Lei Hipuu Project)	Provides training and collaborates in various ways with MHAC to provide capacity building in the Micronesian community in Hawaii.
Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH)	Employs several members of the Micronesian communities and advisors and act as source of information/resource
Volunteer Resource Center of Hawaii (VRCH)	Fiscal Agent for MCN and MHAC (Round Two Legacy Projects grantees)
University of Hawaii's Center for Interpretation and Translation Services (UH-CITS)	Provides Interpreting/Translating training for Micronesians through MHAC's funded Language Access Program to increase the number of certified Micronesian translators/interpreters
Hawaii State Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (BCCP)	Partner to pilot test the trainees of the Micronesian Language Access Program
The Supreme Court Committee on Language Access	Advocacy and membership of MHAC member(s) provides direct contact with policy makers. First-hand information/resource/education of the issues in Language Access especially issues pertaining to the Micronesian community. Membership of MHAC member(s) allows advocacy and collaboration with policy makers from within the committee itself.

Implementation:

- 1) Formation of the Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition and its inherent goals of organizing community champions and professionals and pursue its development of a non-profit status:
 - First meeting of interested community leaders, advocates, professionals was organized by Barbara Tom in July 2009
 - Interim officers were elected among the group with plans for regular meetings & invitations to other interested community leaders
 - It was through the Pacific CEED contract with MCN (with VRCH as fiscal agent) that MHAC was able to hire HANO for non-profit training (see photo)

- 2) Mobilization of Micronesian leaders/advocates to attend the 2009 Hawaii Health Equity Summit in Honolulu, September 10-12, 2009:

- Strategic planning meetings & teleconferences with colleagues on the neighbor islands took place from July 2009 to prepare strategic priorities for Hawaii Health Equity Summit
- Recruitment of other Micronesians leaders including those from the Neighbor Islands
- It was through the Pacific CEED contract with MCN (with VRCH as fiscal agent) that MHAC was able to mobilize & organize representation for the Health Summit (see photo)

3) Organization of effective advocacy among COFA migrants against the Basic Health Hawaii Plan:

- Meetings were held among MHAC members, other Micronesian groups (such as MU, MCN, NOM, Pa Emman Kabjere), Department of Human Services, key state legislators
- Solicitation of involvement/Increase awareness of key COFA government officials
- COFA migrant testimonies at state hearings & informational sessions
- COFA migrant rallies at the state Capitol organized by Micronesians United (see photo)
- Attempts to meet/have a voice with the Governor & her administration
- Retaining the services of Lawyers for Equal Justice to file for TRO
- Olelo TV and KNDI Radio allowed airtime spots to explain the Basic Health Hawaii in two Languages, which were produced with the help of Project LEARN, also under Pacific CEED. These shows were to educate the Micronesian population. Additionally, written literature was also developed to educate the population on their coverage under Basic Health Hawaii.

4.) Advocacy extended nationally with In-Country leaders

- Met with Legislators and the President of the RMI to brief them on the Basic Health Hawaii Issue
- Met with Tina Stege who was contracted to create an Orientation Program for RMI families migrating to the United States; lent input on information needed for the Orientation program.

5) Future planning to train Micronesians to become certified translators in alignment with the National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS):

- Rapid submission and receipt of Pacific CEED Legacy Projects Award

Evaluation:

- To form a non-profit Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition, comprised of Micronesian professionals with health-equity focus
- To rapidly mobilize Micronesian communities in Hawaii to prepare for and present at the Hawaii Health Equity Summit and develop key contributions to the State's Health Equity Strategy
- To publicly advocate against the implementation of Basic Health Hawaii Plan
- To educate Micronesians residing in the state of Hawaii on health issues affecting them
- To advocate for Micronesians residing in the State of Hawaii on current health inequity issues
- To collaborate with other Micronesian interest groups, including Micronesians United, Micronesian Community Network, Nations of Micronesia, Micronesian Culture Awareness Project
- To help eliminate health disparities by providing trained, certified, professional Micronesian Interpreters/Translators.

Lessons Learned:

Strengths:

- Micronesian owned concerns & issues
- Strong Micronesian support network in Hawaii
- Brought increased awareness to Micronesians health, educational, and social issues in Hawaii
- Launched new community action groups, such as Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition
- Revived & energized existing Micronesian action groups
- Pulled the diverse Micronesian communities together to focus on common health concerns
- Brought attention to Micronesian issues at various levels of the government

- Encouraged COFA governments to take a more active stance on matters concerning Micronesians in HI and in the Continental US
- Micronesian groups and citizens used as resources
- Increased collaboration among Micronesian groups and others, such as UH-CITS, Pacific CEED, Hawaii's BCCP
- Retention of Lawyers for Equal Justice for COFA migrants
- Engaged full support of the Hawaii Legislators, namely Rep John Mizuno, Sen Suzanne Chun Oakland, and Sen Kalani English
- Support of the Hawaii Congressional Delegates in Neil Abercrombie, Daniel Akaka, and Daniel Inouye
- Increased awareness in Hawaii for the need for trained, professional interpreters/translators.
- Increased awareness and collaboration among the Pacific Island student organizations at the University of Hawaii schools on Oahu, thus, engaging them in MHAC activities and in turn, providing them with educational, cultural, and professional enrichment specific to their field of study.

Weaknesses/Challenges:

- Misconceptions, misunderstandings, stereotyping among the Micronesian communities as well as the general public in Hawaii persist
- Time away from work, families to attend the Hawaii Health Equity Summit, meetings, hearings, informational sessions
- Raised misunderstanding between various Micronesian groups
- There are still Micronesians in the community that are misinformed or unaware of the issues
- Legal challenges and unknowns
- COFA migrants not given a voice with the Governor and her administration
- The State's plan to pursue Basic Health Hawaii despite multiple hearings, rallies, and letters
- Challenges in providing qualified, professional interpreters/translators due to the lack of funding at the state agency level.
- Lack of understanding at the state agency level on how to access trained, professional interpreters/translators.
- Challenges in establishing contractual agreements with medical providers due to fear of liability issues with interpreting/translating. Liability insurance is a requirement that medical providers impose on sole proprietors who are interpreters, as well as incorporated interpreting agencies.

Recommendations:

- Support MHAC's pursuit in acquiring non-profit status through funding for TA in drawing up its articles of incorporation and bylaws
- Pacific CEED's continued support with the Legacy Projects Grant for the first class of MLAP to start in January 2010
- Continue to establish and solidify partnerships with other community action groups
- Lend input to Office of Language Access and monitor any legislative changes related to Language Access for the community that may be instituted this legislative session.
- Continue to work with COFA governments (counsel generals) to work with the US federal government in reversing the 1996 PRWORA to deem COFA migrants eligible for Medicaid
- Continue to work with state legislators, congressional leaders, other community stakeholders to advocate against the state's Basic Health Hawaii plan
- Implement original COFA Task Force Report to increase support services for FAS citizens through preventive care *by CLAS standards*
- Continue to fund the training of Micronesian interpreters/translators to help eliminate the issues pertaining to Language Access.
- Discussion with potential in coming Governor to advocate and educate him about the need for access to health care for all Micronesians legally residing in the State of Hawaii.