



2003 Meeting Minutes Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meetings

- December 19, 2003
 - November 21, 2003
 - October 3, 2003
 - September 19, 2003
 - August 22, 2003
 - June 26, 2003
 - June 13, 2003
 - May 16, 2003
 - April 25-26, 2003
 - April 11, 2003
 - February 14, 2003
 - January 10, 2003
-

Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2003
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST
Teleconference

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Chair Bruce Twomley opened meeting by welcoming everyone and a special warm welcome was extended to the guest speaker from Bentley College . The Chair stated there were no announcements this month. Once the roll call would be taken, the floor was opened to the guest speaker.

Roll Call & Confirmation of Quorum * (4)

Program Analyst Inez De Jesus took the roll call, and quorum was met; quorum=4 and 7 members (including the DFO) were present.

Panel Members Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem, Winchester, MA, Vice-Chair
- Nancy L. Ferree, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
- Delford Jones, Griffith, IN
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK, Chair

Panel Members- Not Present

- Sharon Lassar



TAP Staff

- Inez E. De Jesus (Program Analyst/Scribe)

MLI Program Owner(s)

- Toni M. Cross

Guest(s)

- Professor William Wiggins, Bentley College

Review/Approve Meeting Minutes of November 21, 2003

Panel Member Linda Bader requested that one change be made to the previous meeting minutes; on page 2, under the heading: Review on ESL (English as a Second Language) Initiative, third paragraph, first sentence, second line, "Ms. Sandy should be invited, be changed to **could**." There was no opposition to this from the committee. **Action: Program Analyst is to make this change.**

These minutes will be approved as amended.

Report on LITC Conference

Sharon Stetz, who attended the Low Income Tax Clinic (LITC) Nationwide Conference in D.C., during the week of December 8, 2003 , began by stating that she regretted that not everyone was given the opportunity to attend. Ms. Stetz was very impressed and felt very energized specifically with what she has learned that is being done for English as Second Language (ESL) individuals.

Ms. Stetz stated that this committee could be a catalyst. At this point, the floor was turned over to Professor William Wiggins from Bentley College who

Ms. Stetz had met during the conference and had invited him to participate on this call.

Professor Wiggins began by expressing his gratitude for this invitation and opportunity to share what Bentley College has been doing for the past 12 years to assist ESL individuals in various communities in the Boston area. Highlights of Professor Wiggins' presentation:

- Services in the immigrant communities are provided in the business arena; Bentley is known for the significant efforts with community-based organizations. Four years ago, Professor Wiggins got involved with LITC's specifically in Financial Planning and Taxation.
- Brief overview of 1998 legislation, which resulted in the creation of Low Income Tax Clinics (LITC's) with the goal of 1) to provide taxpayer assistance for low-income taxpayers who have a controversy with the IRS, and 2) as an outreach and education arena in ESL communities.
- Professor Wiggins stated, it seemed like a natural fit for Bentley College to become engaged with LITC's. This program is conducted by the students after training in tax law or tax accountant courses.
- There has been confusion among ESL individuals with thinking that IRS might be INS (Immigration and Naturalization Services).
- Bentley College has the human resources for translation. Seventy one percent of the population is Spanish speaking.
- There exist problems with communicating IRS vocabulary and tax terms.
- Professor Wiggins shared Bentley's basic tax curriculum. Professor Wiggins believes there could be a connection between what this committee is proposing.



- The ESL instructors introduce basic terms and concepts at the beginning of the class. The students are alerted to some things to think about, for example, on whether they receive cash as income and issues concerning their social security numbers, if they have one or not.
- For the past 6 months there is a 59-second video for local cable TV in Spanish/English in the Boston area. (Available in VHS and DVD). This tool has been working very well in helping people with the IRS in Boston.

Program Owner Toni Cross expressed to Professor Wiggins that this was an excellent presentation. She inquired if he was working with LITC folks in regards to the 59- second video. **Action: Program Owner obtained the professor's telephone number in order to follow-up on this and discuss it off-line.**

A question and answer period followed

Inquiries were made on the interaction between students and instructors as per the Bentley College ESL model program, and Professor Wiggins shared that pre-read materials are usually provided to the students up front and 10-15 minutes are allotted (depends on level of interest) whereby instructors interact with the students.

Lite refreshments are usually provided and this usually happens in the evenings. This way students are made aware that the instructors are available and the services that are available to them.

During this period, contact information is obtained and most importantly, trust level is created up front. During this period also, referrals are done according to the needs of the individuals. Other issues are involved, for e.g., immigration issues and/or domestic abuse issues.

A questionnaire on quality of service received (on an anonymous basis) is provided to the participants of the program. Usually by word of mouth is how others learn of this program.

Linda Bader shared that there is no LITC currently in St. Louis, MO and she wondered how do you see this working where there are no LITC's but lots of ESL classes. Professor Wiggins responded that one should then work with established organizations that do pro-bono work, for example, by attorneys and/or CPA's. He suggested that networking be set-up. Other means are by correspondence, telephone or by email. There are different means to work with individuals who are miles away. There is not always a need to do face-to-face work.

Another avenue is media relationships— by working closely with the Local Taxpayer Advocates (LTA's) in Boston. Professor Wiggins shared that the LTA's not only help with a case that is in controversy but also they are very helpful with outreach opportunities in helping to get the word out that LITC's are available for ESL individuals.

Before closing, Chair Twomley expressed his appreciation to Professor Wiggins for his time and for all the insights shared by him. Twomley welcomed the professor's willingness to work with this committee in the future.

Finalized Panel Recommendation-ESL Curriculum Proposal on Basic Tax Responsibilities

Linda Bader walked through the draft recommendation she had shared with all prior to this meeting. Ms. Bader began with the Statement of Issue: Recommend Cost Effective Ways to Address the Needs of Recently Migrated Immigration Groups to the Proposed Solutions.

The Chair and other members expressed that more time was needed in order to review the draft recommendation. Ms. Bader requested that all suggestions be sent to her as soon as possible and thanked those that have already sent their suggestions to her.



Ms. Bader also thanked DFO/Program Manager Nancy Ferree for providing her with the template that is used to elevate TAP Recommendations.

Professor Wiggins shared that Allan Goldberg, whom also attended the LITC Conference, will be very helpful in providing information on which clinics are doing only controversy cases.

Chair Twomley thanked Linda Bader for all her work on this project.

The committee agreed that it is ready to elevate this recommendation to the program owner(s). Program Owner Cross requested to know what were the expectations or intent of the committee by elevating the **ESL Curriculum Proposal on Basic Tax Responsibilities** Initiative.

Cross referred to the end of year report prepared by the former MLI Chair, Sharon Lassar, entitled TAP MLI Committee Report of Activities and Recommendations from October 2002- September 2003 as a guidance for the committee to follow.

DFO Ferree suggested that the ESL Curriculum be attached to the referral/recommendation.

The sub-committee decided to meet by telephone in order to finalize the draft recommendation on Tuesday, December 23, 2003, at 1:00 pm EST , Dial in number and participant's code will be shared by Analyst after this call. (**Action Item for Analyst**) (Participants: Bader, Stetz, Brodbine Ghoniem, Meissner and DFO Ferree) Sub-committee will also ensure that Assessment prepared by Lassar is also being adhered to.

Lassar's Year-end assessment will be shared with Professor Wiggins as well.

Chair Twomley also shared that he has a report that is due to the Joint Committee by January 8, 2004, and it would be a nice goal to have the recommendation completed by then if possible. National Taxpayer Advocate Nina E. Olson is automatically copied.

New Committee Assignments/Goals

Panel Member Sharon Stetz requested LITC survey feedback from Program Owner Cross which led to Program Owner's presentation on the 2003 Low Income Tax Clinic (LITC) Conference Survey which had been distributed to all electronically prior to today's meeting.

Program Owner Toni Cross shared that 32 of the 130 LITC sites responded to the survey during the LITC conference. The participants represented 22 different states. Regarding Participants Outreach Efforts

- 88% provide ESL instruction, and
- 47% provide ESL instruction only.

Program Owner Toni Cross suggested that the TAP MLI committee continue to partner with LITC's with ESL programs

News from the Staff

DFO Ferree shared that during the end of January 2004, the TAP Program Managers and Program Analysts will be partnering with LITC's staff in D.C., as part of the annual Continuing Professional Education (CPE).

DFO Ferree also shared that the original Citizen Advocacy Panel (CAP) had put together a videotape, which explained CAP, and its mission that was viewed at Post Offices via a loop. She sees a co-relation



between this and the 59-second video mentioned earlier by Professor Wiggins from Bentley College . There seems to be possibilities to make this happen to help get the word out to ESL individuals.

Program Analyst De Jesus confirmed the next teleconference meeting date and time and all agreed.

DFO Ferree informed all that she had learned this week that Assistant Program Owner Raymond Mills will be out for a couple of months due to minor surgery and on behalf of the committee requested that Toni Cross share get well wishes from all to him.

Public Participation/Input

None

Closing Assessment

Panel Member Delford Jones thanked Inez for distributing to the entire newspaper article regarding the recent federal program of \$1.5 million dollars allocated to the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services on a national level. (This may relate to Limited English Proficient (LEP) and ESL immigrants and the MLI program).

Delford Jones requested that he be kept informed.

Professor Wiggins expressed his appreciation for being invited to participate on this call.

Before bringing the meeting to an end, Chair Twomley thanked everyone for their participation and wished all Happy Holiday Greetings.

Confirm next teleconference meeting: January 16, 2004, from 1:00 PM-2:00PM EST



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

November 21, 2003
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST
Teleconference

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Chair Bruce Twomley opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and by reviewing the agenda. The committee was in agreement with the agenda as is.

Delford Jones reported that the National Taxpayer Advocate (NTA), Nina E. Olson, had recently attended his area committee's teleconference meeting whereby he had shared information regarding a recent federal program of \$1.5 million dollars allocated to the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services on a national level. NTA Olson expressed an interest in obtaining additional information regarding this program and the areas in which pilots most likely will be created. Jones promised to get this information to Ms. Olson as well as to the MLI Issue Committee members and program owners as soon as possible. **(Action item for D. Jones).**

The committee expressed an interest in learning more about this program since it may relate to Limited English Proficient (LEP) and English as a Second Language (ESL) immigrants and the MLI program.

Delford Jones also shared his contacts with the Hispanic Voices newspaper in Indiana and that a representative from the State of Indiana is on the Hispanic Council, by the name of John Aguilar.

Roll Call & Confirmation of Quorum *5- taken by TAP Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus.

- Quorum =5
- Total Members Present=7 and DFO

Panel Members Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem, Winchester, MA, Vice-Chair
- Nancy L. Ferree, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
- Delford Jones, Griffith, IN
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK, Chair

Panel Members Not Present

- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO

MLI Program Owner(s)

- Toni M. Cross
- Raymond G. Mills

TAP Staff



- Inez E. De Jesus (Program Analyst/Scribe)

Review/Approve Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2003

The minutes were approved unanimously.

Review on ESL Initiative (English as a Second Language)

Linda Bader began by inquiring if everyone had received the pre-read materials entitled Adult Education Short-Course on IRS Compliance & The Outline of Proposed ESL Tax Curriculum documents sent out earlier this week, and all confirmed they had. She also expressed her gratitude to Program Analyst De Jesus for assisting her in getting this information out to all.

Panel member Bader shared with the committee that she has learned that funding is needed in order to get a tax compliance curriculum written. She had recently met with Sally Sandy, the instructor from St. Louis that has been working with her on this matter, and learned that the current draft curriculum cannot be tested unless a grant or some type of funding is approved and provided. Bader also shared that Sally Sandy believes a test would be intimidating to some students.

Linda Bader proposed that if this committee has a meeting in St. Louis , MO in June 2004, Ms. Sandy could be invited to meet with the committee and have the opportunity to share her perspectives and experiences directly with the panel.

Linda Bader also addressed two other resources of information with the committee that might be useful in developing a curriculum:

- To analyze the current FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) program; FDIC insures bank accounts. (Smart Money and Adult Education Program) Bader has received their 30-pound curriculum that is used and available in English and Spanish since it is geared to a Spanish population.
- To analyze IRS Website- the How of Taxes on the IRS website, it seems to Ms. Bader that this tool is underutilized.

Program Owner Toni Cross inquired from Vice Chair Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem about partnering with Low Income Tax Clinics (LITC's) at Bentley College . Ms. Cross proposed an alternative to the ESL curriculum proposal since it would be difficult to come up with the money necessary for ESL curriculum development from the IRS, and, therefore, as an alternative, committee should consider having LITC's (as part of their commitment to do outreach) go to ESL programs to present tax information. In part because LITC's may not cover all of the people and geography that ESL programs do. Chair Twomley suggested both models ought to stay on the table before the committee, and the subcommittee should pursue and evaluate both models. (Linda's ESL and Elizabeth 's Bentley College model)

There was discussion about Global U, which has done some research on immigrants arriving in USA , which concluded that what they need is basic understanding of their tax obligations similar to what some LITC classes do. All agreed to use/piggyback on what already exists.

All committee members agreed that they support wholeheartedly Linda Bader's proposal on a tax compliance class for ESL individuals.

Action Item: Program Owner Cross made the following request from Linda and the committee:

- How much funding will be needed to fund the ESL initiative?
- A breakdown of how monies will be spent?
- Development cost.
- Training cost, for example, cost to train the teachers.



- Delivery cost, if there are any other costs, just indicate them on the list.

In order to get funding from the Advocate, we need to provide sufficient substantiation.

The committee applauded Linda Bader for all her efforts in working with this project.

Planning Session on ESL Program Owner

Chair Twomley asked Ms. Cross if she already had covered the discussion under ESL heading and she agreed that she had covered this topic under the ESL Initiative heading.

Program Owner Toni Cross made a commitment to elevate this committee's concerns once she receives a detailed breakdown of projected cost.

Toni Cross shared that she supports the idea of the MLI Issue committee members partnering with LITC's. When Ms. Cross made inquiries from the committee on their individual experience with their local LITC's, these are the responses received:

Sharon Stetz - has made contact with the LITC in Salt Lake City , Utah . There are foreign students that speak English that visit this LITC with their tax issues.

Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem - the LITC in Boston does a lot of outreach. Part of their charter is to do outreach. What Bentley College does is it reaches out to ESL individuals.

Joe Meissner - shared his experiences with LITC's in Ohio and shared how usually the first grant is limited to \$100,000 or less and this is a matching grant. Also, there are two different types of LITC's, one is to represent taxpayers who already have problems with the IRS, as legal representation, and the other aspect of LITC's is to educate the taxpayers. The LITC's should not be filling out tax returns for individuals unless it is part of the current tax issue they have with the IRS that is being resolved. LITC's cannot charge for their services.

In response to Bader's questions, Meissner shared that the population that usually visits LITC's versus ESL classes are those less familiar with taxes or recently arrived individuals with very basic taxes or with a tax bill.

Linda Bader - reminded everyone that currently there is no LITC in St. Louis, and that she would like to get one at the St. Louis University.

Committee agreed to continue to pursue target audience(s) for ESL and also to partner with LITC's.

Toni Cross's Summary on Committee's Focus :

- 1) ESL/LITC partnering
- 2) Direct contact with LITC's
- 3) Bader will do further work regarding the cost estimates for the ESL

Initiative.

*** Formation of a new TAP/MLI/ESL Sub-committee with the following participants was created:**

- Sharon Stetz, Chair of sub-committee



- Linda Bader
- Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem

In conjunction with the Program Owners, Cross and Mills.

Sharon Stetz shared that she has been selected to attend the LITC National Conference in D.C., during the week of December 8, 2003 , and this will be a great opportunity to partner with LITC's on a national level and to learn how they are currently handling ESL's individuals. The committee agreed that this is a great idea.

Chair Twomley suggested that each committee member make contact with their local LITC's and alert them of Sharon Stetz's presence at the conference with the goal of networking and obtaining all the updated information related to what LITC's are doing in relation to the ESL issue.

Summary

- 1) Committee agreed to continue to work with LITC's and attempt to model the Bentley College program. Committee agreed that it would be a good idea to work with a model that can be tested nationwide, keeping in mind that we are dealing with different populations.
- 2) Continue FDIC program as a resource.
- 3) ESL and LITC connection.
- 4) As part of Linda Bader's continuing exploration of an ESL curriculum, Linda will attempt to get an estimate of the cost.
- 5) Program Owner Cross suggested that a focus group be set up during the LITC conference whereby Sharon Stetz can get answers to questions the committee has. Cross will contact LITC Grants Administration Acting Manager Susan Gilbert to see if this can be arranged. The key concerns are: what do they have going on currently and what are the best practices. **Action item for all:** Please send all your questions directly to Sharon Stetz prior to her leaving for the conference on December 8, 2003 .
- 6) Linda Bader shared that she has the curriculum from Bentley College and will be sharing it with Sharon Stetz.

News from the Staff

Announcement was made that Bernie Coston has been selected as the TAP Director. He currently served as the Executive Assistant to the Director of Systemic Advocacy. (Members had questions regarding Mr. Coston's detailed background, and staff informed committee that since this is a new appointment, further information would be forthcoming, as managers will be meeting with him during the week of November 24th .)

DFO Nancy Ferree reminded the committee of the importance of filling out the TAP Speaker's Report form whenever they do outreach activities related to the MLI Issue Committee. Also, if there are any costs involved, prior approval is required since there are budget concerns. The committee was also reminded that this is also another way for the staff to capture outreach activities that are incorporated into a monthly status report.

TAP Program Analyst De Jesus informed the committee that Publication 4134, which lists all the Low Income Tax Clinics (LITC's) throughout the country, is currently being revised and that she has placed an order for them; as soon as the revised publication(s) arrive, Inez will be mailing these to all members and program owners. She also indicated that the new publication would be coded indicating



which clinics serve LEP's (Limited English Proficient) individuals as well as the language that is available.

2004 Face-to-Face Meetings (Vision & Timeframe)- Only one face-to-face meeting-

TAP Staff shared the news that due to budget concerns, each area committee and issue committee will be having one face-to-face meeting each, and the Joint Committee has been allowed so far to have 2 face-to-face meetings. Since the budget has still not been approved, it was suggested that any face-to-face meetings scheduled for January 2004 should be placed on hold for now.

This resulted in the Committee agreeing unanimously to:

- change the January 15 and 16, 2004 face-to-face meeting, to a teleconference meeting on January 16, 2004 at 1:00 pm EST instead, and
- The one face-to-face meeting will be on June 3, and 4, 2004, tentatively in St. Louis, MO.

Public Participant/Input

None

Closing Assessment

Chair thanked everyone for their input.

For the record, next teleconference meeting will be held on Friday, December 19, 2003, from 1:00 pm- 2:00 pm EST, same dial-in number and participant's code.

Attachment: Record of MLI Members Attendance/Absences Roster



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2003

1:30 PM - 5:00 PM- EDT

Face-to-Face Meeting
Grand Hyatt Washington Hotel
1000 H Street NW-Roosevelt Conference Room
Washington , D.C.

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Chair Sharon Lassar opened the meeting timely followed by the roll call.

Lou Romito will be Designated Federal Official (DFO) during this meeting.

Program Owner Cross introduced Program Analyst Raymond Mills who will be working with the committee during the upcoming fiscal year.

Roll Call & Confirmation of Quorum (5)

Taken by Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus.

- Quorum= 5
- Total Members Present=8

Panel Members Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Lou Romito, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
- Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem, Winchester, MA , Vice-Chair
- Delford Jones, Griffith, IN
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL , Chair
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Members Not Present

- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC- (Reassigned by choice to W&I-Reducing Taxpayer Burden Notice Issue Committee)
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA- (Reassigned by choice to SB/SE Payroll Taxes Issue Committee)
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO

MLI Program Owner(s)

- Toni M. Cross
- Raymond Mills

TAP Staff

- Inez E. De Jesus (Program Analyst/Scribe)



Review/Approve Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2003

Minutes were approved by consensus.

Sub-committee Reports

Chair Lassar reviewed with the committee and Program Owners the Report of Activities and Recommendations from October 2002 - September 2003 which she had previously emailed to everyone.

Highlights of the discussion were as follows:

Recommendation #2

The IRS should work with the federal and state agencies charged with oversight of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program to insure participants receive basic tax education. (Because this recommendation does not pertain solely to LEP taxpayers, will be presented to the TAP Joint Committee for consideration). Committee agreed.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the IRS reach out to notarios and provide training workshops in their native languages. Notarios may be licensed as notary publics in the communities they serve. The local government should be able to provide a mailing list of license holders. Program Owner Cross stated that this is an excellent recommendation and the committee feels that this recommendation needs to be worked further before elevating.

Chair Lassar explained that notarios work in all types of ethnic neighborhoods and help their clients with all types of paperwork, including tax return preparation. Some are unethical but many are honest individuals who do the best they can with limited tax knowledge. The issue of educating LEP (Limited English Proficient) individuals is crucial. Also, there is a need to educate tax preparers and notarios in the communities.

Committee agreed that committee members should try to obtain a list of notarios that are licensed in their local communities so that we can assess the viability of developing outreach to notarios. **(Action item)**

Committee agrees that an educational package is a great idea and work with media such as Telemundo in Miami, Florida would assist LEP's.

Some members mentioned that sometimes there is a literacy issue between LEP's even in their native language.

Recommendation #4

We recommend that the IRS provide a mechanism by which the unofficial documents and pamphlets prepared by LITC's (Low Income Taxpayer Clinics) can be freely shared by all communities and organizations that serve LEP taxpayers. For example, the Director of the LITC program could establish a web site for this purpose.- (This recommendation will be presented to the Program Owners for further discussion.- It should be noted that the IRS is aware of the fact that numerous unofficial translations of documents in Asian languages have been prepared and it has formed a task force to try to gather these documents so they can be shared.)

The committee agreed that this recommendation needs to be changed.

Program Owner Cross reminded the committee that before any official IRS pamphlet is translated, it needs to be brought to the attention of the Program Owner.



Committee agreed that each member will contact their local Low Income Tax Clinic (LITC). (A copy of Publication 4134, which lists the LITC's throughout the country had previously been shared with the committee.)

Since Publication 4134 is not coded, the committee requested that a list be obtained from the LITC Director which shows which clinics serve LEP taxpayers as well as LITC's email addresses. **(Action items for Analyst De Jesus)***

- Analyst learned and shared with the committee after this meeting that Publication 4134 is currently being revised and the updated version will be available November 2003. The revised publication will indicate which clinics service LEP's and the specific language that is available. In addition, email addresses are not available at this time due to constant changes in personnel and addresses of LITC's.
- *Program Analyst De Jesus will be mailing out updated publication to the entire committee as soon as she receives updated version of Publication 4134.
- *Program Analyst De Jesus has since this meeting shared with the committee, that if they need any assistance when dealing with their local LITC's, to please bring them to her attention and she would elevate to the Office of the Director, LITC

There was further discussion on why IRS cannot and does not recommend which clinic or accountant to go to. (This was discussed during the TAP Conference- general session on the previous day).

Committee member Delford Jones shared that he had contacted Immigration in Indiana inquiring about what system they had in place specifically with the test that they conduct for citizenship. What quality controls are in place for LEP's?

Committee member Linda Bader informed everyone that there is no LITC in St. Louis.

A. **ESL Initiative**

Committee member Bader addressed the committee with the Outline of Proposed ESL (English as a Second Language) Tax Curriculum which she has drafted with the assistance of Sally Sandy, Teacher, Program Director, Parkway Area Adult Education and Literacy in St. Louis , MO.

Committee agreed that they should partner with SPEC (Stakeholder, Partnership, Education & Communication). What does the IRS want to get across? Who owns it, the Board of Education or State? Research is also needed to find out about the funding of Adult Ed Classes.

Action item: Program Owner Cross supports this initiative and made a commitment to get someone from SPEC to work with Ms. Bader.

The committee and Program Owner agreed that the next step would be to prepare a test pilot (best practices) in order to test the waters.

Goal/Action: Linda Bader will coordinate with the teacher in St. Louis , MO, to test the curriculum with the assistance of the local SPEC

Vice-Chair Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem reminded everyone that Bentley College currently is doing something similar.

Program Owner Cross suggested the following guidelines for the MLI committee:



What: What do you want to communicate? What will it cost? (consistent information- what needs to be communicated?)

How: How will information be communicated?

Other related discussion by the committee:

- How do you determine the curriculum?
- What is the best method to teach?
- Regarding LITC's surveys- find out what LITC's are doing.
- Ask Ms. Sally to work this curriculum into her class and train instructors.
- The trust issue of where LEP's might want to go is very important.
- Test effectiveness of the course by creating a test.
- While Ms. Bader meets with Ms. Sally, an exit test at least with 5 questions needs to be created. **Action:** Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem will obtain a copy of what Bentley College uses.
- Find out from LEP-LITC's if they have such a program and if so, do they give a test to the LEP's students.
- Find out if the LITC's have any brochures they are willing to share. (Committee agreed that request should be made in 2 separate emails)

B. Vital Documents

Committee member Linda Bader shared with everyone a Voter's Guide pamphlet entitled Your Voice, Your Vote that she had obtained from the Elections Division in Jefferson City, MO. This publication is written half in English and half in Bosnic, and it is sponsored by the Secretary of the State and by Verizon Wireless.

Chair Lassar distributed to all copies of **Executive Order 13166- Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency** dated August 11, 2000. In essence, each agency has to develop a plan for the translation of all vital documents and each agency has to identify vital documents for translation. Example, the Health and Human Services has a consent form in different languages.

Also, Chair Lassar distributed to all copies of **Federal Register Notice dated March 7, 2001, Department of the Treasury- Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients on the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons-**

On page 13833- (2) Translation of Written Materials- is required by Law.

*As part of its overall language assistance program, a recipient must develop and implement a plan to provide written materials in languages other than English where a significant number or percentage of the population eligible to be served or likely to be directly affected by the program needs services or information in a language other than English to communicate effectively.

Question arose: Does that include every tax form?

Chair Lassar shared that the Department of Justice recently issued a guidance on same subject matter and there was a period of re-publication for comments on the Treasury's initial guidance; this period has expired. The committee decided to draft comments on the Treasury guidance. **(Action item- Lassar will prepare first draft)**



Committee also discussed the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA's) Report #2003-40-163- which recently conducted a study on how IRS executes Executive Order 13166.

Accordingly, in the report, the 1040 was recommended to be translated.

Recently the National Women's Law Center sent a letter to Commissioner Everson and Chair Lassar shared that she had the opportunity to converse with an individual from this organization. The letter called for the Commissioner to spend money targeted for the EITC pre-certification program on speeding up the translation of vital documents instead. The organization based their recommendation on the TIGTA report, not independent information.

On October 2, 2003 , at the TAP Conference in D.C., Commissioner Everson had shared that he does not agree that translation of all forms is the best way to serve LEP's. Committee decided to draft a letter to the Commissioner regarding the committee's views on reaching LEP taxpayers. **(Action item- Panel Members Meissner and Twomley to edit draft)**

The letter was circulated and edited by committee members via email during the week following the meeting. The final version was prepared on October 10 and mailed on October 13, 2003.

New Business/Report from Program Owner

Program Owner Cross expressed her gratitude to the committee for their efforts this past year and is looking forward to their continual partnership in addressing the needs of LEP's.

Election of Chair/Vice-Chair

Since Chair Lassar had previously announced that she would be stepping down as Chair, separate elections by ballots were performed for both the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. Election results:

- New Chair- Bruce Twomley
- Vice-Chair- Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem (no change)

Scheduled Meetings for 2003/2004

Committee agreed to the following:

Dates - Times - Via Telephone/Face-to-Face

- 11/21/2003, 1:00-2:00 PM EST, Teleconference
- 12/19/2003, 1:00-2:00 PM EST, Teleconference
- 01/15 & 16/2004, to be determined, Face-to-Face (Florida TAP Office-Plantation, FL)
- 02/20/2004, 1:00-2:00 PM EST, Teleconference
- 03/19/2004, 1:00-2:00 PM EST, Teleconference
- 04/16/2004, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT, Teleconference
- 05/21/2004, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT, Teleconference
- 06/03 & 04/2004, to be determined, Face-to-Face- St. Louis, MO
- 07/16/2004, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT, Teleconference
- 08/20/2004, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT, Teleconference
- 09/17/2004, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT, Teleconference

Teleconference Meetings- Dial-in number and participant's code will remain the same for now.

News from the Staff

None.



Public Input

None.

Closing Assessment

The committee expressed their gratitude to Sharon Lassar for bringing structure to the MLI issue committee, as well as for her leadership skills and hard work.

Also, appreciation was expressed to DFO Romito for filling in as Designated Federal Official, and welcome to the new Chair and Vice-Chair.

Next meeting

Teleconference call on Friday, November 21, 2003 at 1:00 PM EST. (Same dial-in number and participants' code)



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2003
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM EDT

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Chair Sharon Lassar opened the meeting timely followed by the roll call.

Roll Call & Confirmation of Quorum (6) - taken by Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus.

- Quorum= 6
- Total Members Present=6

Panel Members Present:

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Nancy L. Ferree, FL, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA
- Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem, Winchester, MA, Vice-Chair
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL, Chair
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH

Members Not Present

- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC
- Delford Jones, Griffith, IN
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT (Excused-At Area 6 Meeting)
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK (Excused-At Area 6 Meeting)

MLI Program Owner(s):

- Unavailable due to Hurricane Isabel
Washington D.C. Area Federal Offices Closed

TAP Staff:

- Inez E. De Jesus (Program Analyst/Scribe)

Guest(s):

- Kimberly Chin, Center of Budget & Policy

Review/Approve Meeting Minutes of August 22, 2003

Panel Member Gallegos-Bodle brought to the committee's attention, typo on bottom of page 2, second bullet, correct word should be where and not were taxes are not as important.

Committee agreed that once Analyst De Jesus makes the correction, the minutes would be recorded as approved as amended.



Report on ESL Initiative (Attachment #1)

Committee member Linda Bader began her presentation by sharing where she found the model she used in creating the ESL Tax Compliance Class outline. She also expressed appreciation for the assistance she received from Program Director Sally Sandy from the Parkway Area Adult Education & Literacy Program in St. Louis, MO.

The link to view the model used:

1. Go to irs.gov
2. Under Contents click on Individual
3. Then Click on Student
4. Understanding your Taxes
5. Teacher's site
6. Teacher's Homepage
7. Three quarters down the page, blue area, The How & Why's of Taxes
8. Then it is broken down to the Teacher's Lesson Plan, Students Lesson Plan, etc.
9. The tax form 1040EZ was used as a model.

Linda Bader inquired if kiosks should be mentioned in the final report and DFO Ferree affirmed that it would be appropriate to capture the information since originally the committee had considered looking into kiosks and how they tied in with the MLI objectives.

Linda also shared that the outline created is geared to the middle group of ESL (English as a Second Language) individuals and not the advanced or beginners. The objective is to make the ESL individual familiar with what will happen if he/she does not file a tax return, as well as the consequences of being given incorrect information if filing separately. Vice-Chair Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem assisted in providing suggestions to Ms. Bader.

The committee agreed that the Outline for ESL/Tax Compliance Class recommendation be forwarded/elevated to the MLI Program Owners, and suggested that Ms. Bader acknowledge the teacher, Sally Sandy, who assisted her on the report. This is a perfect example of the panel obtaining grassroots input. It was also recommended that a short bio of Ms. Sandy be included in the outline/final proposal.

Ms. Bader welcomed from the panel any last minute suggestions be sent to her before she finalizes the recommendation. The committee expressed gratitude towards Ms. Bader and Ms. Sandy for their excellent efforts.

Review of MLI TAP Committee Annual Report

Chair Lassar referenced the 2 documents she had sent out to all the previous day requesting comments back from the committee. These are:

1. The TAP MLI Assessment (Attachment #2)
2. The TAP MLI Annual Report (Attachment #3)

Chair Lassar realized that many might not have had the time to review, but would appreciate if feedback is provided to her **by no later than Thursday, September 25, 2003** so that she may submit these reports timely.

Regarding the TAP MLI Assessment, Chair Lassar referenced the Overall Grading portion of the report and intentionally left out the Chair's rating. Request was made that the members send their individual Chair rating to Inez and Inez will coordinate the total average. (**Action required by all**)



This also led to in depth discussion to whether providing specific and candid feedback instead of a grade would be more appropriate. Although there were some problems in the beginning, these have been corrected, specifically the delivery issues after promise was made by Program Owner.

Chair also addressed that since the Joint Committee requires that the assessment be one page only, she in addition prepared the TAP MLI Annual Report in order to capture the entire committees' activities. She apologized in case she left anything out, and again requested that feedback be provided to her at the most earliest convenience by each panel member.

Committee Assignments & Leadership Changes Commencing at October 2003 Meeting

Chair shared that during the upcoming Annual TAP Conference, members will have the opportunity to change issue committees if they so desire. Chair Lassar stated that she plans on remaining with the MLI issue committee, but would like to step down as Chair. Therefore, the selection of a new chair will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. **(Action required by Analyst/DFO)**

New Business/Report from Program Owner

Due to Hurricane Isabel in the Mid-Atlantic States area, the IRS National Office was closed on this date. (It was later learned that Program Owner(s) had power outages and therefore not able to participate on this call)

News from the Staff

DFO Ferree referenced the upcoming Annual TAP Conference meeting in D.C., and stated that all travel arrangements have been made and if there are any concerns to please contact their respective area TAP Staff for assistance. DFO Ferree expressed that she hoped everyone was planning on attending.

Based on questions asked, a brief overview of the agenda was shared with the committee.

The MLI Issue Committee will be having an open meeting on Friday, October 3, 2003, from 1:30 pm-4:30 pm ET. The general agenda for the conference is still in draft form but would be sent out to all prior to the meeting date. There will be breakout sessions whereby members will be attending workshops of their choice.

Chair Lassar also shared that each committee would be require to make a 10-minute presentation/review of what was accomplished during the past year.

The following members committed to assist by speaking on behalf of the MLI Issue Committee:

1. Linda Bader- on ESL Program
2. Joe Meissner- on LITC connection.

Panel Member Meissner asked if public participation would be allowed, and DFO Ferree said that according to the Federal Register Notice, written comments will be accepted. Mr. Meissner advised that one of the Low Income Tax Clinic representative that attended the MLI face-to-face meeting in Miami will be attending the upcoming TAP Conference.

Public Participation/Input

Ms. Kimberly Chin from the Center of Budget and Policy Priorities questioned: How do you advocate for ESL individuals? and was referred to the TAP website for information as well as to contact Program Analyst De Jesus for additional information.



Closing Assessment

Chair reminded everyone to please provide her with feedback by September 25, 2003 and that next meeting will be in D.C. TAP Annual Conference from October 2-4, 2003.



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

August 22, 2003
1:00 PM- 2:00 PM EDT
Teleconference

Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum * (6)-taken by Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus.

Quorum: 6
Total Members Present: 7

Panel Members Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Nancy L. Ferree, FL, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
- Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem, Winchester, MA, Vice-Chair
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL, Chair
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Members Not Present

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH
- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA
- Delford Jones, Griffith, IN
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO

MLI Program Owner(s)

- Nikki Oyefeso

TAP Staff

- Inez E. De Jesus (Scribe)

Guest(s)

- Maritza Michaud, Field Media Relations Manager, Communications & Liaison (C&L)

Review/Approve Meeting Minutes of June 26, 2003

Minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.

Guest-Maritza Michaud, Field Media Relations Manager C&L (Communications & Liaison) Area 5-

Chairperson Lassar welcomed Ms. Michaud to the meeting; Ms. Michaud began by sharing that she was one of the original members of the MLI Task force group, and had recently been informed by her manager that it would be a good idea for her to participate at a TAP MLI meeting. Ms. Michaud has worked in the past with Program Owner Toni Cross as well as with Program Analyst Rafael I. Maldonado from National Office.



Ms. Michaud is also interested in seeing what has transpired within the Multilingual Issue project since her involvement with the program.

Ms. Michaud works primarily with the media in the Hispanic community on a national and local level. (Radio, Print, and TV) She is also involved with the translation of News Releases. Within the Internal Revenue Service, Ms. Michaud is the Manager of Field Media Relations, Area 5, and together with two of her employees they handle all the Spanish media in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Ms. Michaud's primary goal is to inform Hispanic taxpayers of what is going on regarding their tax responsibilities, and any key messages important to the agency.

Discussion regarding need vs. preference as per Executive Order (EO) 13166, dated August 11, 2000, Improving Federal Access to Limited English Proficient Individuals was addressed. Executive Order 13166 requires written translation of vital documents for regularly encountered languages. Ms. Michaud stated that there have been many studies conducted by the IRS regarding this since there has been a demand for Spanish products to be translated from English.

Ms. Michaud shared her experiences during the time that President Bush issued the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 and she was a guest on a Univision Network Spanish television program equivalent to Good Morning America. During her 5-minute talk, whereby she explained how the economic stimulus plan would impact the Hispanic community, it resulted in managers of IRS walk-in offices receiving 1200 phone calls from Spanish speaking individuals who had watched the show and were inquiring about the refund. The overwhelming response indicates a preference for tax information to be delivered in Spanish.

Further discussion addressed the following:

- The main objective is to get Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals into the tax system and to learn of their tax responsibilities. There are other immigrants besides Spanish speaking that need to be addressed; for example, the Chinese.
- Ms. Michaud mentioned that many Spanish-speaking immigrants come from countries where taxes are not as important as it is in the United States.
- Chair Lassar reminded everyone we need to look at what the legal obligation/commitment is.
- There is the issue of reading and writing skills of the individual; some may be able to read and not write and visa versa. Some understand better in their own language. (Comfort level of the individual factor) Especially technical terms are very difficult to translate. The translator must have very strong language skills in both languages.
- There seems to be 2 categories: those who understand English but prefer Spanish or their language of origin, and other category is those who are not English proficient at all.
- The MLI committee's job is to focus on need and not preference. Currently there is no way to measure need vs. preference.
- Program Owner Oyefeso shared that there has been studies made on the toll free line. Callers on the Spanish lines typically have longer hold times. Many do opt for the English line which tends to have a shorter waiting time.

Panel member Joe Meissner shared his experiences with dealing with immigrant groups from his community in Cleveland, Ohio. There are groups that handle English very well, and there are some that have trouble with reading or writing or both. There is a scattered spectrum. One also needs to consider the educational level of the individual.

Ms. Michaud asked the team what improved service for LEP taxpayers were they addressing in order to reach this group and Chair responded that the TAP MLI was currently working on:



- An income tax component as an ESL (English as a Second Language) program, and
- Identifying documents that are vital for translation.

Conclusion arrived at is that need will always be there.

Sub-committee Reports

Due to time constraints, Chair reminded all to submit their written MLI activity reports to her as soon as possible as previously requested by email. Ms. Lassar mentioned she had received some activity reports but not all.

Panel member Linda Bader shared her current experiences in setting up an ESL curriculum with a teacher she's been working with locally in Missouri. Ms. Bader welcomes any suggestion the panel may have be sent to her by email. Ms. Bader expressed her gratitude since this teacher is volunteering her own time to work with Ms. Bader and at no cost. Regarding the lesson plan there are many resources already available.

Ms. Michaud responded upon request that the curriculum should be very basic, only need to know information. The key should be to make them aware of the importance of tax obligations; e.g. the April 15th deadline, and the responsibility of filing a tax return if needed. Also, it is very important to refer them to where they may obtain correct and accurate assistance.

The issue of making estimated tax payments may be a concern for self-employed individuals.

Ms. Bader also mentioned that there is a great need for information to be obtained via software since studies have indicated that people are using more computers these days.

Panel member Elizabeth Brodbine Ghoniem emphasized that the following should be communicated:

Obligations of the taxpayer: why are you paying taxes and the benefits for the individual. Ms. Michaud piggybacked on this and shared that when she conducts her speeches she often uses this as her opening statement who do you think makes up the roads? and who pays for the teachers' salaries at public schools?; start from the basics and stick to the basics.

How and why of taxes: taxpayer's responsibility and rights. The delivery of this information needs to be improved.

A general thought is the development of software (interactive site) that may be displayed in churches and/or other places where most immigrant folks trust. Question arose: does the IRS have the money for this? Bader shared that on the IRS website there is currently a lot of tax information available (teacher and student guide)

Importance of record keeping: Low Income Tax Clinics (LITC) should be contacted for guidance and input on how they communicate this to their clients.

Panel member Joe Meissner summarized the following concepts:

1. The why we have taxes needs to be communicated to LEPs.
2. Plan earlier since April 15th is the date the Form 1040 Individual Income Tax Return is due.
3. The importance of keeping records.

Mr. Meissner also reminded everyone of the MLI face-to-face meeting in Miami, Florida where there were guests from LITCs. It was discussed then how newcomers to this country do not understand the



tax concept and need to go where they feel they can trust the individuals that are assisting them. How do we get this information to them? There may need to be coordination between Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS), LITC, and VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) centers. Perhaps over the telephone interpreters might be an option to consider.

Action item: Program Owner Oyefeso will be sending Panel Member Bader the name of the LITC contact person in St. Louis.

Chair Lassar shared with all that the Ad-hoc committee recently is addressing a publicity regarding financial literacy campaign that is going on.

There are also videos that can be streamed from the IRS web site in both English and Spanish, which are crucial for small business individuals on many topics. For example, one discusses the difference between employees and contractors.

Chambers of Commerce may be a great resource.

It was suggested that Bader work on finalizing an outline of the ESL curriculum to be proposed and allow for teacher to add her own creativity. Chair Lassar asked Bader to request specific assistance she may need from the committee. The curriculum should also include information on finding a good preparer and that the preparer signs the return. (Head of household and EITC issues)

Chair concluded by stating that the legal aspect surrounding vital documents is overwhelming.

Committee's Task: By annual meeting scheduled for October 2-4, 2003 in D.C., this committee is to draft a position paper from MLI regarding the ESL Curriculum; best bet would be to create an outline and not the entire curriculum.

DFO Ferree shared that during the recent Tax Forum in Atlanta, Georgia, panel members George Sullivan (Area 3) and Chair Sharon Lassar had the opportunity to meet with National Taxpayer Advocate Nina E. Olson and Ms. Olson expressed that she is very supported of the work that the TAP MLI group is doing.

DFO Ferree asked Program Owner Oyefeso if the ESOL Curriculum project was in accordance with the goals and mission of the committee. Ms. Oyefeso expressed her support; she stated that such a curriculum would help deal with the issue of educating LEP taxpayers, and it fulfills some of the objectives of the MLI.

New Business Report from Program Owner

Oyefeso reviewed the TAP MLI PowerPoint presentation dated August 22, 2003 (attachment) that was distributed to all from Toni Cross on this same date. She gave a quick overview due to time constraints of the 19-page document.

In summary, out of 139 vital documents submitted by various units within the IRS, 65 documents had not been translated into Spanish. Analysis included revisiting vital documents: as defined by Executive Order 13166; and, Spanish is the only language being considered for translation at this time. Ms. Oyefeso shared that the Form 1040, and its related forms and publications seems to be a big issue. The question is do we want to do the form and instructions?

The current Recommendations (page 13) are:

- Translate the 30 High Impact Documents (approving 104 documents vital for translation)
- Pilot translation of 1040 instructions only,



- Provide the Tele-tax topics and narratives in Spanish on IRS Website.

Next steps (page 14):

- Obtain the Commissioner’s level approval of vital documents list, and
- Work with Business Operating Divisions to implement.

MLI Needs Assessment Process (page 16):

Demographic Assessment:

- Assessment of LEP persons eligible to be served or encountered.
- Used as a basis for determining needed/meaningful access.

Agency Assessment:

- Assessment of multilingual products and services available to LEP customers.
- Used to determine gaps and weakness in level of access.

Program Effectiveness Assessment:

- Provide a process for continual feedback from internal and external stakeholders.
- Used to ensure customer satisfaction.

Next steps: (page 19)

- Work with owners to formalize and document the MLI Assessment Process.
- Develop a Plan of Communication for the new MLI Assessment Process.
- Develop a Baseline Needs Assessment.

Chair Lassar shared with the committee that she had recently been invited to attend the August 4, 2003, MLI Executive Council meeting in Atlanta, and had received a better understanding of the tasks and issues that MLI face. Chair Lassar expressed her gratitude to the Program Owners for this invitation.

News from the Staff

- Tap Speak-**
DFO Ferree reminded the members who had not registered yet on TAP Speak to please do so as soon as possible. If assistance is needed the TAP Staff is available.
- Outreach Requests-**
DFO also reminded the members to keep the Staff aware of any outreach activities that may require funding approval.

Public Participation/Input

None.

Closing Assessment

Chair Lassar shared with the committee that during the upcoming Annual Business meeting, all committees are to give a 10-minute presentation on their accomplishments so far. Chair requested volunteers to coordinate the presentation.



Also Chair needs to coordinate all written reports before the Annual Business meeting.

Outline from Linda Bader is also expected before the Annual Business meeting.

Chair also asked: Vital Documents- do we as a committee, want to pursue this?

Since meeting went over the usual one-hour timeframe, DFO Ferree suggested that the next meeting be expanded to 90 minutes instead of 60 minutes; the committee agreed.

Next Teleconference Meeting will be held on Friday, September 19, 2003 at 1:00 PM-2:30 PM, EDT, Same dial-in number and participants code.



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2003

1:00pm-2:00pm EDT

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Chair Sharon Lassar opened meeting timely followed by the roll call. The order of the agenda was changed to accommodate the guest speaker.

Roll Call

Taken by TAP Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus

Quorum= 6

Total Members Present=7

Panel Members Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle
- Nancy L. Ferree, FL, Designated Federal Official
- Sharon Lassar, FL, Chair
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT

Members Not Present

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH (Excused)
- Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem, Winchester, MA (Vice-Chair) (Excused)
- Delford Jones, IN
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO (Excused)
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK (Excused)

MLI Program Owner

- Nikki Oyefeso

TAP Staff Present

- Inez E. De Jesus, Program Analyst/Recorder

Guest

- Randy Swartz, Director LITC (Low Income Taxpayer Clinic)

Review and Approval of Minutes (June 13, 2003)

Minutes were approved by consensus.

Information on grant to educate LEP (Limited English Proficient) taxpayers

Director of the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Program, Randy Swartz addressed the panel on this issue.



The following is a summation of Mr. Swartz's presentation to the committee:

- English as a second language (**ESL**) is part of the LITC Program. The LITC Program is a grant program for qualified non-profit organizations (or law school or business school affiliations) that may establish clinics to assist taxpayers who are in "controversy" with the IRS and/or to assist taxpayers for whom English is a second language. Emphasis was made that LITC cannot do tax preparation on behalf of the client, unless it is part of the "controversy". LITC's are not VITA sites. (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance).
- Organization(s) must provide low cost or no cost representation to individuals involved in tax disputes and the grants are worth up to \$100,000 for 2004 year.
- The application period for the 2004 LITC grant program is from May 1st to July 1, 2003. You must apply on a yearly basis.
- The application package (Publication 3319) is available on-line or may be ordered from the IRS Forms Distribution Center. (DFO Ferree will be placing an order for the MLI Committee members who are interested).
- The funding for **ESL** is to provide outreach and education to those in the community that the clinics serve.
- National Taxpayer Advocate Nina E. Olson is very supportive of this program; she initially served in the original Richmond, VA, LITC site.
- Vermont, Wyoming, and Puerto Rico do not have LITC's. Recently 2 applications were received from Vermont. Panel member Gallegos-Bodle inquired if there were any LITC's in California, and the response was "Yes, there are many". (DFO Ferree will be sharing this information with all panel members after this call.)
- Each year Congress approves additional monies towards this program. This year 7 million dollars and next year it will be 9 million dollars.

Chair Lassar requested to see an example of a "winning application", and the Director of LITC responded that this would not be possible since it would not be fair to other applicants. This is a very competitive program and this is a very sensitive issue. It was mentioned that under the Freedom of Information Act, this information might be obtained. Mr. Swartz emphasized that the best source would be to follow the instructions on Publication/Application #3319.

Lassar also asked whether the LITC are required to share materials, products or procedures they develop and could the requirement to share be a condition of receiving funding. **Swartz responded that grantees are invited to share best practices with LITC Program Office.**

Panel member Linda Bader requested that local ESL programs conducted by Adult Education & Literacy programs be linked with LITC's in order to develop a curriculum to assist **ESL individuals on their tax responsibilities and tax issues. Mr. Swartz informed the committee that organizations must be a 501 c (non-profit organization) to be eligible for a grant under the LITC program. He suggested that the Department of Education and the IRS work together to develop this issue further.**

Mr. Swartz suggested that ESL's programs be encouraged by panel members to apply individually for a LITC grant.

Upon request, Mr. Swartz shared his telephone number with the committee, and the committee expressed their gratitude for his time and the information shared.

Members were advised to visit their local LITC's when they receive the list with the locations nearest to them.



Action Items- DFO Ferree

DFO Ferree, following the conference call, will send electronic version: "IRS Accepting Grant Applications for Low Income Taxpayer Clinics" to the committee. Also, the link with the locations of the nationwide LITC list will be shared with the committee following the conference call. For the record: Publication # 4134 (Rev. 02-2003)

Update on survey for practitioner forums

Program Owner Nikki Oyefeso informed the panel that she recently learned that the survey has been sent to the printers already, and she apologized to the committee since they did not have the opportunity to provide feedback as they had wished.

Update on definition of "vital document"

Chair Lassar requested from Program Owner the IRS's interpretation of Executive Order 13166, "IRS GLS Memorandum on Executive Order 13166 and Vital Documents- Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency"; so far the TAP Staff has been unable to obtain this information. In essence, Ms. Lassar is seeking a "working definition" of vital documents and which ones are vital for translation.

Ms. Oyefeso promised to send this information to the committee, but in the interim responded by reading the following:

Definition of a "Vital Document"- "contains information that is critical for accessing the services, rights and/or benefits", or "is required by law."

The translation factors are:

1. Nature, importance and objective of the program,
2. Frequency of request by the taxpayer,
3. Frequency with which the document is needed,
4. Assistance or other means of meeting the taxpayer needs already in place, and
5. Cost versus resources available for meeting the taxpayer needs.

Status report from each committee member

a)Action plan progress-

In respect to time constraints, Chair Lassar will share with the committee by email her recent experience(s) with the "Hispanic Unity" group in Broward County.

Panel member Gallegos-Bodle briefly shared her recent experience with IRS office SPEC (Stakeholder Partnership, Education, and Communication) personnel in Los Angeles.

Panel member Sharon Stetz shared her recent positive experience when she was invited by the Salt Lake City Taxpayer Advocate to attend an all day program in conjunction with the Congressional Liaison Aides.

Panel member Joe Meissner also shared his recent contacts with:

- a) The old welfare system in Ohio, now known as TANS, Temporary System to Needy Families. He inquired how do they handle the topic of taxes and how does this agency handle dealing with people who have difficulty with the English language.
- b) The Hispanic community was also approached and asked the same questions.

Panel Member Meissner will have further information to share at the next teleconference meeting.



b)Planned attendance at Practitioner Forum focus groups

The Chair would like a MLI committee member be available to attend the focus groups that will be conducted at certain Practitioner Tax Forums. As previously discussed the focus groups are scheduled as follows:

- July 8 & 9, 2003 at Atlantic City, NJ
- July 22 & 23, 2003, Orlando, FL
- August 5 & 6, 2003, Atlanta, GA
- September 2 & 3, 2003 at San Antonio, TX
- September 16 & 17, 2003 at Las Vegas, NV

Panel member Sharon Stetz is scheduled to attend the Las Vegas Practitioner Forum and will be at the booth all day; she will attempt to get someone to staff the booth so that she can attend the focus group.

Panel member Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle expressed an interest in participating.

Panel member Linda Bader shared that she will be attending the forum in St. Louis on August 19th & 20th; there is no focus group scheduled at this site.

Chair Sharon Lassar has a conflict with her calendar on whether she will be attending the Orlando or Atlantic City forum.

DFO Ferree and Program Owner Oyefeso discussed the funding issue if a MLI Committee member were to attend the focus group(that is not already scheduled) who will pick up the tab? **Action item:** DFO Ferree will inquire from National Office and get back to everyone by email.

Action item for all members: Chair requested that the committee keep her informed of the activities they have been engaged in, and to do so in writing.

Public Participation/Input

None

Closing/ Assessment

DFO Ferree shared with the committee that there is a conflict with the date of the next scheduled teleconference meeting on August 15, 2003 since the staff, both she and Program Analyst De Jesus will be in travel status, returning from this year's Symposium in Atlanta. She proposed and it was accepted by consensus to re-schedule as follows: next MLI's Teleconference Meeting will be held on Friday, August 22, 2003, at 1:00 PM EDT (1 hour duration), same dial in number and same participant's code.

The Chair adjourned the meeting timely.

*Amended minutes (in bold): September 10, 2003, as per National Director, LITC
Approved by Chair & DFO September 10, 2003

Copies to all MLI Committee Members & Program Owners on September 10, 2003
& Posted to TAP Website & TAP Speak



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2003
1:00pm-2:00pm ET

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Chair Sharon Lassar opened meeting timely followed by the roll call.

Roll Call -taken by TAP Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus

Quorum= 6

Total Members Present=7

Panel Members Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC
- Nancy L. Ferree, FL, Designated Federal Official
- Sharon Lassar, FL, Chair
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Members Not Present

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH (Excused)
- Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem, Winchester, MA (Vice-Chair) (Excused)
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA- (Excused)
- Delford Jones, IN
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO (Excused)

MLI Program Owner

- Nikki Oyefeso

TAP Staff Present

- Inez E. De Jesus, Program Analyst/Recorder

Review and Approval of Minutes (April 25-26, 2003)

Minutes were approved by consensus.

Review and Approval of Minutes (May 16, 2003)

Minutes were approved by consensus.

Chair Lassar asked "Where are we?" & "Are we making any progress?"

The Chair inquired if everyone present had a printout of the most recent "Action Plan". She summarized that this committee now has 2 basic tasks instead of 3, which are "Education of Limited English Proficient (LEP)" individuals & "Vital Documents".



The Chair also emphasized the committee's interest in the "English as a Second Language (ESOL)" program, and surveys within communities. The "Action Plan" lists those the committee is going to survey.

Feedback on How Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons are Educated about IRS

Chair Lassar shared the following findings with the committee:

INS does nothing tax-wise; copies of tax returns are required prior to applying for citizenship, but there is no educational component.

"English Center" in Miami- no tax education there either, but there is a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) site there.

During the week of June 16th, the Chair has a scheduled meeting in Broward County with the Hispanic League, and will keep the committee informed of what she learns. She has also had preliminary talks with an employee at the Opa Locka community center that serves the Haitian community in Miami.

Chair feels that perhaps the idea of concentrating on the creation of a little brochure with basic information is the way to go in order to educate LEP persons on their tax obligations. Currently this is what the community centers are doing on their own.

"Work to Welfare" type of program- participants do get training since most likely they will be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Feedback on Services Provided by Organizations In Various Communities

Committee Member Linda Bader referenced IRS grant programs and News Release IR-2003-57, May 1, 2003, "IRS Accepting Grant Applications for Low Income Taxpayer Clinics". IRS is to fund programs, specifically with non-profit organizations. The news release mentions that funds are available for programs that inform LEP taxpayers of their rights and responsibilities. It is not clear if such a program has to be sponsored by a LITC. Bader would like to know what kind of organizations can obtain such funding and how to go about it.

Committee Member Joe Meissner reminded all of the committee's recent face-to-face meeting in Miami, on April 25th, whereby Guest Ms. Ryan represented a non-exempt organization that represented the Vietnamese community. Meissner stated that the welfare to work programs in Cleveland do not educate participants on tax matters.

Designated Federal Official (DFO) Nancy Ferree shared with the committee that she had recently contacted SPEC Territory Manager from Area 1 about partnering with the Core Planning groups and other coalition members a.k.a. "SPEC Coalition 2003". This listing may be able to identify a group for a specific LEP population. This is a means to partnership with citizens and community groups as an outreach effort in getting the word out of TAP's existence. Ferree is waiting to hear from the SPEC Territory Manager Sheldon Schwartz, and will keep the committee informed.

Other organizations mentioned: YMCA, and Consumer Credit Counseling.

Committee member Bader mentioned working with local ESOL teachers; writing a grant proposal.

ACTION ITEM: DFO Ferree is to obtain a copy of a successful Grant Application, winners from a previous year, e.g. from Randy Swartz, Director, Low Income Tax Clinics (LITC) and to inquire about the funding possibilities/restrictions for the LEP outreach programs.



Also, Committee Member Bruce Twomley will ask an organization of which he is aware how it obtains funding. Twomley asked if it would be possible to obtain a listing of organizations that have been funded by IRS grant programs for the areas that are represented on our committee. DFO Nancy Ferree will ask Randy Swartz.

Publication 3319, "Low Income Tax Clinics Grant Applications Package" was mentioned. Committee is interested in other grant recipients, for e.g. for EOSL.

An option may be to ask IRS for guidance. TCE (Tax Counseling for the Elderly) might be another option.

Mention was made of egrant@irs.gov/ telephone number 404-338-7006 404-338-7006 .

Feedback on Benchmarking Survey Created by Program Owner

No feedback received from team on the call. Written feedback from Lassar was submitted by email.

Chair asked Program Owner what is the purpose of the benchmarking survey. Where will it be administered? What did she hope to accomplish? What will be done with the information? What decisions could the information influence? It is important for the survey to be structured in a way that the intended outcome can be realized. Program Owner does not know the intended use of the information. The IRS is interested in what practitioners are doing. It plans on administering the survey during the practitioner forums. It has not yet been decided whether the survey will be part of a packet that all practitioners receive or simply administered at the booth. Revisions can still be made. Program Owner has a deadline by the end of this month.

Feedback on Survey Re: Vital Documents Created by MLI Chair

Chair is working on developing a survey that would not be too burdensome for respondents. It is a difficult task because so many documents are on the preliminary list of vital documents.

Committee discussed that even if we were to translate some of the IRS terms do not translate well and sometimes the individual may not be literate even in his or her own language.

Chair asked Program Owners for an electronic version of the vital documents list. Chair would like to liaison with someone within the IRS on trying to characterize the list of vital documents into a small number of groups of related documents.

MLI's Planned Activities for Tax Practitioner Forums and Whether a Survey May be Administered

The Chair asked the Program Owner if it would be possible to have computers at the forum in order to conduct on-line surveys. Chair asked how many had experience with on-line surveys. Also, to encourage participation in a survey, could respondents be entered into a drawing for a prize? For example, respondents could be entered into a drawing for a cruise and the drawing could be administered at the last forum so that only one prize would be needed. Chair could ask a Miami cruise company to donate the prize. Oyefeso stated that logistically, not possible, due to traffic and that IRS policy states that only something of nominal value can be distributed. In essence, there are no plans for this year to have computers available to conduct surveys.

To distribute surveys at the booth is not included in the package.

Committee Member Bader shared that she will be participating at the Tax forum in St. Louis on August 19-20, 2003, and Sharon Stetz will be participating at the Tax forum in Las Vegas on September 16-17, 2003.



Chair asked Program Owner if there would be focus groups at the tax forums, and if so, she suggests that a MLI committee member be present to observe. Goal would be to get engaged with one or two focus groups. Oyefeso responded as follows:

No focus group in St. Louis. (information seminar only)
Atlantic City (July 8-9, 2003) Yes, afternoon of the 8th
Orlando (July 22-23, 2003)- Yes
Atlanta (August 5-6, 2003) - Yes (Panel Members George Sullivan & Tim Jarrell)-not MLI members.

San Antonio (September 2-3, 2003) Yes
Las Vegas (September 16-17, 2003) Yes

Chair would attempt to attend either Orlando or Atlanta tax forum.

Chair asked the committee to think of ideas on how to conduct surveys.

Public Participation/Input

None.

Overview of "New Operating Procedures"

As a result of the Joint Committee's face-to-face meeting, one of the primary changes made to the operating procedures is that in the past, if a member missed 3 consecutive meetings, the entire TAP committee would have to vote and agree on removal of the member, but now:

"A member, who fails to attend three consecutive regular business meetings of the panel without good cause, as determined by the Chair, may be recommended for removal to the Joint Committee. Prior to the recommendation to the Joint Committee, the Issue Committee chair should have a discussion with the chair for that member's Area Committee."

Other minor changes discussed briefly were the incorporation of the "ground rules" under "Members' Responsibilities" and the staff's procedure for the processing of meeting minutes.

Closing Remarks Chair emphasized that committee needs to keep on plugging along, and feels it is imperative that members attempt to attend the upcoming tax forums. There was no "New Business". Chair concluded meeting by stating that committee members should continue to work within their communities.

Meeting Adjourned- by Chair timely.

Next Meeting:

The committee agreed to change the next scheduled meeting from June 19th to June 26th due to staffing issues and the fact that various panel members are not available.

Next MLI Teleconference meeting will be held on: Thursday, June 26, 2003, 1:00 pm EDT- Dial-in number will be the same. DFO Ferree will amend the Federal Register Notice.

June 26, 2003



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2003
1:00pm-2:00pm ET

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Acting Chair Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem opened the meeting.

Roll Call - taken by TAP Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus

Quorum= 6

Total Members Present=6

Designated Federal Official Judi Nicholas confirmed at the beginning of the meeting that since quorum had not been reached yet, meeting could proceed but no decision-making could be done.

Panel Members Present

- Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem, Winchester, MA-Acting Chair
- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA
- Judi Nicholas, Seattle, WA, Designated Federal Official
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Members Not Present

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH
- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC (Excused)
- Nancy L. Ferree, FL
- Delford Jones, Griffith, IN
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL (Excused-Travel to Area 3 Committee Meeting)
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO (Excused)
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH

TAP Staff and IRS Staff Present

- Toni Cross, MLI Program Owner
- Inez E. De Jesus, Program Analyst/Recorder
- Nikki Oyefeso, MLI Program Owner

Guests

- Sue Sottile, Director of Strategic Planning (SPEC)-Stakeholder Partnerships, Education & Communication

Review and Approval of Minutes (April 25-26, 2003)

Several panel members addressed amendments they would like to see reflected in [the minutes](#).

Bruce Twomley requested that Attorney Chad Schatzle's recommendation regarding the fact that not all limited English-speaking individuals are literate in their first language, information therefore must



be provided in a clear and simple manner that an interpreter can provide an understandable translation. **(Action Item: Analyst will update previous minutes)**

Acting Chair Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoneim requested that a comment made by Attorney Chad S. Schatzle regarding "access to customer's accounts" needed clarification as to who and under what circumstances. (Page 2, under Public Participation Input, paragraph 5) **(Action Item: Analyst will update previous minutes)**

Analyst requested that other panel members send their proposed amendments to her and she will update current draft and issue revised version to all.

The review and approval of these minutes were tabled till next meeting.

Update on Questionnaire Status

Program Owner Nikki Oyefeso apologized for not submitting information earlier but in order to avoid duplications, she felt it would be in the best interest of all that the committee used the same "survey template" being used by MLI National Office. Questionnaire will go out today before close-of-business and feedback to Nikki should be shared with all.

The updated "action plan" was sent out by Oyefeso today prior to this teleconference meeting, and not all members on the call had the time to review the updated information. Oyefeso gave a brief overview of the action plan for the benefit of those that had not seen it.

Panel members expressed that they wanted to review the templates.

Consideration will be given to panel members without assignments, e.g. Abigail Alicea, Mary Balmer, and Bruce Twomley.

Brodbine-Ghoniem & Oyefeso both agreed that committee is behind schedule and they do not want to lose the momentum. (No official forms until June 13th)

Brodbine-Ghoniem & Oyefeso both agreed that from now on, when sending comments by email to Program Owner Oyefeso, all committee members should be copied as well.

Update from Members on any Actions to Date Based on Face-to-Face Meeting

Committee was waiting for "Design Data Gathering Instrument" promised during last meeting.

Committee Member Bader shared that she recently learned of loan applications for LITC (Low Income Tax Clinic) through the ESL (English as a Second Language) Program. Bader also expressed that she would like to continue to proceed with the project to share information regarding the grant process to ESL teachers.

Acting Chair Brodbine-Ghoniem also shared that she also had recently learned that Bentley College's LITC in collaboration with ESL had developed a course on what it means to be a taxpayer. She will forward the contact information to Linda Bader.

Public Participation/Input

None

Closing Remarks

Committee Member Twomley requested that on the updated "Action Plan" the Lead Person should be



reflected and clarify that this lead person in some cases is the synthesizer of the information, e.g. Welfare to Work program and ESL.

Program Owner Nikki Oyefeso will be sending the "Asian Directories" to TAP Program Analyst De Jesus for distribution to the panel members. **(TAP Staff: Action Item)**

Program Owner Nikki Oyefeso will be sending slides on how people learn English as well as a 50-page report.

Committee Member Twomley expressed that he will not be able to attend the next two scheduled meetings. Acting Chair requested from Program Analyst De Jesus to send an email out to the committee inquiring if anyone else had a conflict with the dates, and if so, request alternate dates; it is important to have quorum especially during the decision making process. **(TAP Staff: Action Item)**

Program Owner Oyefeso extended an invitation to the committee to the upcoming 2003 Nationwide Tax Forums. There will be a focus group serving tax practitioners. Designated Federal Official Judi Nicholas shared that there will be 2 panel members at each of the forums. Due to budget constraints, the goal is to have members attend local tax forums at no cost. Sharon Stetz shared that she will be at the Las Vegas Tax Forum in September 2003 representing Area 6 committee; and, Linda Bader shared that she will be at the St. Louis Tax Forum in August 2003. The MLI Project Office will have seminars at all 6 forums. **Action item:** Designated Federal Official will be discussing this with other TAP Program Managers and will liaison with Nikki Oyefeso in sending out information on Tax Forums to all.

Meeting Adjourned-by Acting Chair Brodbine-Ghoniem.

Next Meeting:

Friday, June 13, 2003, teleconference meeting, 1:00 pm ET

June 13, 2003



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

April 25 2003

8:30am - Noon & 1:00pm-4:00pm EST (Day #1)

AND

April 26, 2003

8:30am-Noon EST (Day #2)

Hotel Inter-Continental Miami
100 Chopin Plaza
Miami, FL 33131

Meeting Day #1

Quorum= 6

Total Members Present= 9 (both days)

Panel Members Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem, MA-Vice-Chair
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA
- Nancy L. Ferree, FL, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
- Delford Jones, IN, (New Member)
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL-Chairperson
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Members Not Present

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH (Excused)
- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC (Excused)
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO

TAP Staff and IRS Staff Present

- Nikki Oyefeso, MLI Program Owner
- Inez E. De Jesus, Program Analyst/Recorder

Guests

- Chad J. Schatzle, Attorney, Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. (April 25, 2003)
- Gia-Hoa Ryan, Director, Low Income Tax Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio (April 26, 2003)

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda/ Ice Breaker Chairperson Lassar opened meeting timely by welcoming everyone, and a special welcome to new MLI Issue Committee Member Delford Jones from Indiana.



Each committee member and staff person was provided with the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Review and Approval of Minutes (April 11, 2003)

Approved as amended.

Review Action Items from the Previous Meeting

None.

Public Participation/Input

Chair Lassar's Guest: Attorney Chad J. Schatzle, from the Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., (Low Income Tax Clinic - LITC) provided the panel with insights based on his experiences with clients who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). He shared with the panel the documents used by Legal Services that are translated into different languages.

Esquire Schatzle suggested that the first initial step when attempting to reach a person who is limited with the English Language is to be able to lead them in the right direction. (Educate)

Secondly, the panel should consider a basic notice on important documents needed. If English is not the basic language, the individual needs to know primarily via an interpreter of what is expected or required of him/her. This information should be provided on an English Language document; e.g. "Please call specific number for assistance". Information is crucial.

Esquire Schatzle & Program Owner Nikki Oyefeso both discussed the ITIN (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number), recent changes and issues that arisen have since September 11, 2001.

Schatzle also suggested that there needs to be **an improvement to the accessibility of customer's accounts. Once a power-of-attorney is provided to the IRS, the LITC representative usually has to wait weeks before obtaining information (tax transcripts and statements of account) in written form. (Perhaps being able to get on-line information is a possibility providing a disclaimer to protect taxpayer information is worked out.)**

Chair Lassar suggested that perhaps the panel should consider identifying 5 documents, and focus on "How and Where You Can Get Help" and then stop; it appears that translating forms is not where the committee needs to concentrate on.

The panel expressed appreciation to the guest speaker for his input and suggestions.

Updates/Reports from the 3 Subcommittees

Problem Statement #1 (Subcommittee #1)- "Recommendations on how the IRS Can Better Assist Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Taxpayers in navigating the IRS system and understanding its processes" - led by Ken Logan. (Members: Balmer, Ghoniem, Logan & Stetz-

Committee member Mary Balmer was not able to be present at this meeting, but she and DFO Ferree obtained from the IRS the following IRS documents for all to view, which currently exist that assist taxpayers in navigating the IRS system:

- Publication 678, Small Business Workshop 2002 Edition
- Publication 3700 A Virtual Small Business Workshop CD Rom
- Publication 1518, IRS Tax Calendar 2003
- Publication 850 IRS English-Spanish Glossary of Words & Phrases
- Publication 579SP How to Prepare the Federal Tax Return (Spanish Version)



- Publication 596 SP Earned Income Tax Credit (Spanish Version)

Vice-Chair Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem shared that this sub-committee is realizing that the goal of the MLI committee should be to create a simple document (a Primer) with the purpose of directing the individual to where he/she needs to go for assistance. They also realize that the website is not a solution for everyone.

The committee as a whole should review the documents the IRS already has that are aligned with Problem Statement #1. A partnership with the IRS needs to be created.

A question that arose is: "How is the MLI Issue Committee Going to Fill The Gap Where Services is Concerned for the Taxpayer?" There appears to be a need to review the products, services, and processes already available.

Problem Statement #2 (Subcommittee #2)- Recommend Ways to Externally Identify and Validate Vital Documents" - led by Sharon Lassar. (Members: Lassar, Twomley, & Gallegos-Bodle)

Chair Lassar emphasized that as previously discussed, once a document for taxpayers with LEP is created, then Subcommittee for Problem Statement #2 would need to narrow down which documents are vital as per Executive Order 13166 & Vital Documents-"Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency."

Committee Member Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle shared research she recently conducted with the California Board of Equalization Translation Program. Examples of the informational documents they provide in Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese were shared. The California Board of Equalization has recognized the importance of being able to communicate with their diverse population in order to administer their tax programs.

Out of the preliminary list of vital documents that have been identified, which are the most important documents? The committee needs to look at the process being used and what gets translated and how.

Additionally, (consistent with Attorney Chad Schatzle's recommendation and in view of the fact not all limited English-speaking individuals are literate in their first language), critical information must be provided at the critical time and must be sufficiently clear and simple that an interpreter can provide an understandable translation.

Problem Statement #3 (Subcommittee #3)- "Recommend Cost Effective Ways to Address the Needs of Recently Migrated Immigrant Groups" - led by Linda Bader. (Members: Bader, Alicea & Meissner)

Committee Member Linda Bader shared that she has identified a partner via the ESL Program (English As A Second Language) via the Adult Education & Literacy Courses in St. Louis, MO. This program is funded and available nationwide. This may be a beneficial avenue for this committee to explore since a system is already in place, and a great way to reach recently migrated immigrant groups in teaching them their tax responsibilities and obligations. This concept was well received by all and will be pursued. **Motion to agree/Action Item for All:** Linda Bader is to continue to pursue ESL & each committee member is to contact their local ESL for related information and details. **All information is to be forwarded to Linda Bader.**

Bader also shared her discovery of the Walgreen Prescription bags that display an advertisement entitled: "Our New Prescription Label Speak to You in Eight Different Languages." Prescription



instructions are available to many. Bader brought sample copies for all. This is another means whereby information can be assimilated to LEP individuals new to the American Taxation System.

Bader shared her experiences at the Cincinnati IRS Office where she took photos of the "Kiosk" which she shared with all. For the record, IRS Kiosk is a system, which provides users with access to services and information. The problems with low utilization by multilingual recently immigrated groups, is the lack of adequate understandable information, and the cost at \$25,000 each plus programming and upkeep, left Ms. Bader with the feeling there might be a better cost effective way to get information to this group.

Program Owner(s) Presentations

Program Owner Nikki Oyefeso distributed the Multilingual Initiative (MLI) "Team Process Guide" to all.

Action item for the TAP Staff: Analyst De Jesus will ensure that committee members not in attendance receive copies of the MLI Team Process Guide.

Program Owner Oyefeso will be emailing to all the latest 32 Service-wide Recommendations for Improvements by the Acting Commissioner of the IRS in reference to the Multilingual Initiative. **(Action Item).**

Some of these Recommendations are:

- Improving Forms, Notices, Letters. (If requested, providing these in Spanish Language).
- Tracking "Spanish" Correspondence (currently the target is the Spanish Language)
- Improving Processes for Bi-lingual Services. (Tele-tax)- 151 topics on the Website.
- Improving Tools and Training for Employees.
- Improving Communication &Taxpayer Education.
- The IRS continues to work on making improvements to the bi-lingual telephone service.
- Improvements to the Exam Line &Collection Line.
- 7 Recommendations on ITIN's (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) revising forms and instructions was recently done.
- Emphasis on Tracking and Monitoring.
- Checkbox for another language preference.
- Staffing Issue-currently there are staffing studies to look at the demands being made on the Employees.
- Creating a depository of all the IRS documents translated into other languages.
- IRS Partnering with various other groups.
- IRS has to provide access to the LEP individual.

Breakout Sessions- Next Action Plans-Validate Recommendations

After discussion and under the direction of the Program Owner, the Problem Statements have been narrowed down to 2 problem statements instead of 3: "Updated MLI's Objectives" are as follows:

- **Education of LEP-** working to educate people on how to access information. Dissemination of information to LEP, on the why and how in a cost effective efficient manner. Create additional ways.
- How to get help when problems arise.
- Ensure understanding of importance of paying taxes.
- Partners- who are they and what have they done so far.
- **Vital Documents-** (Forms, Publications, Notices and Letters)- Committee is to review essential documents that need to be translated. If we want everyone to be in compliance, this is what he or she needs to do.



Education:

Information needed- Data Collection

1. What products/services provided by partners (SRM-Stakeholder Relationship Management)
2. What products/services provided by the IRS.
3. Who are IRS partners-focus on LEP. What are the products LEP are receiving? **Action item:** Nikki Oyefeso is to create a survey and distribute to all.
4. Information provided by other agencies, e.g. SSA, INS.
5. IRS SPEC, TEC, TAS, GLS, C&L Units, & Non-filer Initiative.
6. Identify Other Initiatives by non-IRS groups for LEP's/related organizations.

Closing Remarks

Committee agreed by consensus that commencing from today's meeting, "excused" absences will be annotated accordingly on the meeting minutes.

Due to budget constraints, the TAP Issue Committees will be holding only one face-to-face meeting, until further notice. As a result, the MLI Meeting Calendar will change as follows:

June 13-14, 2003 Face-to-Face meeting will instead be a Teleconference Meeting on Friday, June 13, 2003, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT. (Same Dial in number and Passcode)

In addition, the committee agreed to hold an extra teleconference meeting during the month of June: Thursday, June 19, 2003, 1:00-2:00 PM EDT. (Same Dial in number and Passcode)

Action item for the TAP Staff: Analyst De Jesus will update the MLI Calendar and distribute updated information to all concerned.

Meeting Close

* * *

Meeting Day #2

Public Participation/Input

Panel Member Joseph Meissner's Guest: Gia-Hoa Ryan, Director, Low Income Tax Clinic, (LITC) Cleveland, Ohio, provided the panel with insights based on her experiences in the Vietnamese community. She shared that it is very important to establish an environment of trust when you are dealing with immigrants. The one-on-one approach is very effective. This results in one family telling another family of their positive experiences and the word is spread throughout the area.

Ms. Ryan also emphasized on the importance of "Outreach". The LITC she is affiliated with distributes a flyer entitled: "Are you being Cheated?" This is used as a means to educate the community on what services and IRS credits are available to them. What benefits are available and how to obtain these is part of the educational outreach approach. Ms. Ryan said: "Show the bigger picture and provide tax preparation for the individuals."

Ms. Ryan also suggested that the committee partner/network with ethnic community groups. e.g. "Welfare to Work Programs" & "Office of New Americans".

Education is the key component for the MLI Issue Committee.



Ms. Ryan expressed gratitude for being allowed to share her views with the panel and in exchange the committee extended their appreciation to the speaker.

Action Items for DFO Ferree & Program Owner Oyefeso:

- Slide on the definition of Vital Documents.
- List of who are IRS's formal partners.
- VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) website links.
- The Asian Directory.

The committee agreed that in order to move forward based on all the information shared so far, the following **action items** need to be worked on within the time frame as indicated:

Specific Activity	Coordinator	Due Date
*Design Data Gathering Instrument	Nikki Oyefeso	05/02/2003
Research ESL-English As a Second Language Courses in Members Local Areas (ALL)	Linda Bader	05/09/2003
Explore "Welfare to Work Program"	Joe Meissner	05/09/2003
Solicit Information for USAA (Insurance Company)	Delford Jones	05/09/2003
Service & Products Provided by SPEC (Stakeholder Partnerships, Education & Communication)	Sharon Stetz	05/09/2003
Service & Products Provided by TEC (Taxpayer Education & Communication)	Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem	05/09/2003
Service & Products Provided by GL (Governmental Liaison)	Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem	05/09/2003
Service & Products Provided by TAS (Taxpayer Advocate Service)	Sharon Lassar	05/09/2003
Service & Products Provided by C&L (Communications & Liaison)	Delford Jones	05/09/2003
State (CA) LEP Tax Initiatives	Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle	05/09/2003
Other Agencies		
Social Security Administration (SSA)	Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle	05/09/2003
Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS)	Sharon Lassar	05/09/2003
Small Business Administration (SBA)	Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem	05/09/03
Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)	Delford Jones	05/09/2003

Committees Goals & Commitment Dates

SUBMIT SUMMARY REPORTS TO NANCY/INEZ

Submit informational reports to Lead Contacts

Progress Reports due by May 16, 2003

*Please notate that these dates are tentative and subject to change/modification

Currently, the goal is to finalize by Friday, May 30, 2003 (Analyze Everything by then)

Compile Summary Report by June 6, 2003

Submit to TAP by June 11, 2003

Present to Committee by June 19th (justification for additional teleconference meeting)

Develop Recommendations & Draft Report



Closing Assessment

Chair Lassar suggested that a survey be developed as TAP; in the past, non-response to surveys has been a big problem.

Upcoming Tax Forums and Practitioner Seminars were briefly discussed.

In summary:

- the committee hopes to externally validate and identify vital documents.
- Develop a process and determine demand for written documents in a language other than English.
- Ensure due process is served in the administration of tax issues.
- Obtain critical information within a critical timeframe.
- Information is needed from community groups on what they think is necessary information. (Information necessary for translation.)
- Look into SPEC Vita Training (bi-lingual volunteers)
- Look into companies that have done software translations.
- Look into official IRS documents.

Meeting Close

Next Meeting:

Teleconference Meeting- Friday, May 16, 2003, 1:00pm-2:00pm EDT-Same Dial-in and Pass code.

Chair Lassar will be attending her Issue Committee's face-to-face meeting; therefore, Vice Chair Brodbine-Ghoniem will chair the May 16th teleconference meeting.

June 13, 2003



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2003
1:00pm-2:00pm EST

Welcome/Announcements/Review Agenda

Roll Call -taken by TAP Program Analyst Inez E. De Jesus; quorum was reached.

Quorum= 6

Total Members Present=7

As of April 1, 2003, the TAP Program Managers will serve as the Designated Federal Officials (DFO's) for the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel Issue Committees.

Panel Members Present

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH
- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC
- Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem, MA-Vice-Chair
- Nancy L. Ferree, FL, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL-Chairperson
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Members Not Present

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodley, Oxnard, CA
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH

TAP Staff and IRS Staff Present

- Toni Cross, MLI Program Owner
- Inez E. De Jesus, Program Analyst/Recorder
- Nikki Oyefeso, MLI Program Owner

Guests

- Dan Rinke, Commercial Clearing House (CCH)

Chairperson Lassar opened meeting by welcoming all and proceeded to address agenda items.

Review and Approval of Minutes (February 14, 2003) These minutes were reviewed and accepted.

Review Action Items from the Previous Meeting Sub-committees for all three MLI Problem Statements have met since the last teleconference meeting.

Subcommittees Status Reports



Problem Statement #1 (Subcommittee #1)- "Recommendations on how the IRS Can Better Assist Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Taxpayers in navigating the IRS system and understanding its processes"- led by Ken Logan. (Members: Balmer, Ghoniem, Logan & Stetz-

Committee Member Mary Balmer shared that she has received some documents that are related to LEP, and she will be reviewing these before the face-to-face meeting. Although she will not be in attendance, she will make sure to share her findings with all.

In essence, the committee is realizing that the focus should perhaps be on not so much on the translating of IRS materials into foreign languages, but on creating a document in English that informs the Limited in English individual through an interpreter, where to get assistance and what their tax obligations are. Balmer also shared that VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) has publications that provide this form of guidance.

Conclusion: find a document for taxpayers with LEP to understand their tax obligations and responsibilities which could be transitioned into Problem Statement #2.

Problem Statement #2 (Subcommittee #2)- Recommend Ways to Externally Identify and Validate Vital Documents" - led by Sharon Lassar. (Members: Lassar, Twomley, & Gallegos-Bodle)

Chairperson Lassar shared that she and Committee Member Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle have made several contacts. Lassar has received feedback that just letting the taxpayer know where to get assistance will be more helpful than translating documents.

There seems to be a great similarity between Problem Statement #1 and #2.

Chairperson Lassar also mentioned that the voluntary compliance system is a whole new process for Limited English Proficiency taxpayers. Lassar has noticed this with immigrants in Miami. These individuals just need to know how and where to get help. (Legally what documents are necessary.)

Chairperson Lassar shared that her contact with the Low Income Tax Clinic (LITC) personnel in Miami resulted in that they are interested in attending MLI's upcoming face-to-face meeting in Miami.

Committee member Balmer expressed that literacy may be an issue as well and that creation of a video might be another avenue to explore.

It was brought up during discussion that Form 911, "Application for Taxpayer Assistance Order - ATAO" had not been identified as an IRS document to be translated and Program Owner Oyefeso informed all that the IRS is addressing this.

The IRS has addressed the Spanish-Speaking community. Perhaps the next group to address should be the Chinese Community.

Problem Statement #3 (Subcommittee #3)- "Recommend Cost Effective Ways to Address the Needs of Recently Migrated Immigrant Groups" - led by Linda Bader. (Members: Bader, Alicea & Meissner)

Committee member Abigail Alicea reported that this sub-committee is in the beginning stages of seeking migrated groups.

Program Owner Oyefeso mentioned the importance of "outreach" activities by the panel members.



Final Plans for MLI's Face-to-Face Meeting

DFO Ferree reminded all that haven't made their travel and hotel reservations yet to please do so, and that the TAP Staff is available for assistance.

Program Owner Oyefeso asked if sub-committees needed copies to please let her or DFO Ferree know prior to the face-to-face meeting. Also, if any sub-committee wanted information from another sub-committee to please let this be known as well.

Public Participation/Input

None

Closing Remarks

None

Meeting Closed-by Chairperson.

Next Meeting:

Face-to-Face Meeting: Friday/Saturday, April 25/26, 2003, in Miami, Florida

April 25, 2003



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2003
1:00pm-2:00pm EST
Teleconference

Opening of the Meeting

Acting Chair Lassar opened the meeting at 1:02 p.m. Eastern Time by welcoming all members. She announced the resignation of Mary Lou Beyreis and Carl Hansen.

Roll Call -taken by TAP Analyst Marisa Knispel; quorum was reached.

- **Quorum**= 6
- **Total Members Present**= 7

Panel Members Attending

- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC
- Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem, MA
- Inez E. DeJesus, Fort Lauderdale, DFO,FL
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Absent

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT

TAP Staff and IRS Staff Attending

- Marilyn Correa, MLI Program Owner
- Toni Cross, MLI Program Owner
- Nancy L. Ferree, Program Manager
- Marisa Knispel, TAP Analyst (Note Taker)

Guests

- Dan Rinke, Commercial Clearing House

Review and Approval of Minutes (January 10, 2003)

Acting Committee Chair Lassar led discussion on the [minutes of the January 10, 2003 teleconference meeting](#). Member Ghoniem made motion to accept and Member Bader seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Re-election of Permanent Chair and Vice Chair

Designated Federal Official (DFO) DeJesus indicated due to former Chair's departure, members had nominated Sharon Lassar to become permanent Chair via email. Consensus was reached in accepting



Member Lassar as Chair of the MLI Committee. At the same time, DFO suggested to the group to elect a vice-chair. She asked for volunteers and nominations. Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem volunteered for the position and consensus to accept was reached.

Face-to-Face Meeting

Chair Lassar reminded members that April 25th and 26th were chosen as the dates to hold a face-to-face meeting. DFO DeJesus indicated that the most feasible locations are: Miami, Indianapolis and Dallas. Miami would be the most cost effective for the committee. Member Balmer raised the question of why is a face-to-face meeting necessary to work issues and Member Meissner expressed that this type of meeting allows for more personal relationships among the members and a more comfortable working environment. Member Bader added that her recent Area Committee's face-to-face meeting proved to be very productive.

After some deliberating, Miami was chosen as the location for the first face-to-face meeting of the MLI Committee on April 25 and 26, 2003. Meeting to conclude on Saturday, the 26th at noon.

DFO DeJesus asked the members if they would like to visit the IRS Taxpayer Assistance Center (TAC) office in Miami. Member Meissner responded that he'd like to visit a Low Income Tax Clinic in the area, instead. Chair Lassar asked if it would be possible to have a speaker at the meeting. She understands that Miami has a good outreach program for EITC and for low- income taxpayers.

Review of Action Items

DFO DeJesus summarized the purpose of the three established MLI subcommittees and reminded all members to select their participation in one. She asked Member Meissner to reply to this request.

Member Meissner asked if there was a list of IRS materials, forms and publications written in languages other than English to assist low-income taxpayers.

Member Lassar said that there are 256 publications and documents that IRS has translated into Spanish but there is no source in other languages. Meissner expressed his concern of how readable these translated versions might be for the Limited English Proficient (LEP) taxpayers when the English versions have been proven difficult to understand for the English-speaking population.

Next Steps for Subcommittees

Following the previous comments, Program Owner Toni Cross joined the call and stated that the MLI office felt very comfortable with the problem statements chosen by the subcommittees. She continued by identifying the process of the MLI office to work a recommendation. The process, she said, involves: 1) identifying the problem, 2) validating the problem, 3) developing a recommendation, 4) approval of the recommendation, 5) development/rolling out the recommendation and finally, 6) evaluating the results.

Program Owner Cross asked each subcommittee lead to identify at which step in this process they found their subcommittee to be.

Problem Statement #1 (Subcommittee #1)- "Recommendations on how the IRS Can Better Assist Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Taxpayers in navigating the IRS system and understanding its processes"- led by Ken Logan. (Members: Balmer, Ghoniem, Logan & Stetz) In Member Logan's absence, Member Ghoniem responded that she had no opinion or nothing to contribute at this time for she just joined the committee. She has not met Member Logan and is unaware of the plans for the subcommittee. Program Owner Cross advised the members present in the call to propose a recommendation to the problem. Member Balmer commented that this would be a challenging process considering the difficulties met in navigating the IRS even for those taxpayers who are English speaking.



Problem Statement #2 (Subcommittee #2)- Recommend Ways to Externally Identify and Validate Vital Documents" - led by Sharon Lassar. (Members: Lassar, Twomley, & Gallegos-Bodle) Chair Lassar made a reference to the 2002 Report to Congress where the National Taxpayer Advocate refers to this problem and that of navigating the IRS. She asked the Program Owners if the IRS relied on census data to analyze the language concentration and the necessity of its products to be translated. Program Owner Cross explained that IRS relies on the census data as well as external sources to validate the vital documents and the selection of language. These external sources are surveys conducted among the public.

Problem Statement #3 (Subcommittee #3)- "Recommend Cost Effective Ways to Address the Needs of Recently Migrated Immigrant Groups" - led by Linda Bader. (Members: Bader, Alicea & Meissner) Program Owner Cross suggested that the subcommittee recommend the improvement and usage of kiosks. Member Bader indicated that she has two contacts to liaison with to assist in translation of IRS materials. She shared with the group some research on companies like Walgreens that provide services in other languages to customers. Walgreens, Bader explained, provides prescription directions in seven languages in all their stores.

To achieve a proposal for the improvement of kiosks, Program Owner Cross is willing to have the subcommittee meet the person responsible for the maintenance of kiosks. Working in collaboration, a recommendation could be made.

Following this comment, Chair Lassar asked if the subcommittees could request specific information and assistance to accomplish their working process. Program Owner Cross asked that any request for information or need of assistance be emailed to her. She added that information and education are part of the validation step #2. To this, DFO DeJesus added that when needed, the subcommittees may hold their own private teleconferences to discuss their issues. Member Balmer provided the toll-free number for members to call and schedule a teleconference. (1-888-543-8027 1-888-543-8027).

When asked the difference between the IRS's bilingual vs. multilingual initiatives, Program Owner Cross explained that all translation efforts are part of the Multilingual Initiative Program. When asked about the possible addition of forty-nine kiosks across the country, Cross explained that immediate expectations are to add five kiosks whose locations have not been identified.

Public Participation/Input

Chair Lassar requested members and guests' comments on the meeting.

Closing Remarks

Chair thanked all members for their participation.

Meeting Close

Committee Chair Lassar closed the meeting at 2:06 PM.

Next Meeting(s):

- Teleconference Meeting: Friday, April 11, 2003, 1:00-2:00pm EST (Dial-in and participants code will remain the same until further notice)
- Face-to-Face Meeting: Friday/Saturday, April 25/26, 2003, in Miami, Florida (Specific information will be forthcoming.)

April 11, 2003



Multi-Lingual Issue Committee Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2003
Teleconference Meeting

Opening of the Meeting

Committee Chair Beyreis opened the meeting at 1:04 p.m. Eastern Time by welcoming all members.

Roll Call - taken by TAP Program Analyst Marisa Knispel; quorum of 7 was reached.

Panel Members Attending

- Abigail Alicea, Nashua, NH
- Linda Bader, Chesterfield, MO
- Mary Lou Beyreis, Jacksonville, FL, Chair (Temporary)
- Elizabeth Brodbine-Ghoniem
- Inez E. DeJesus, Fort Lauderdale, FL, DFO
- Yvonne Gallegos-Bodle, Oxnard, CA
- Sharon Lassar, Miami, FL
- Bruce Twomley, Juneau, AK

Absent

- Mary Balmer, Chapel Hill, NC
- Carl Hansen, Indianapolis, IN
- Kenneth Logan, Blue Springs, MO
- Joseph Meissner, Cleveland, OH
- Sharon Stetz, Salt Lake City, UT

TAP and IRS Staff Attending

- Marisa Knispel, TAP Program Analyst (Note Taker)
- Nikki Oyefeso, MLI Program Owner
- Nancy L. Ferree, Program Manager

Guests

- Susan Morgenstern, Esq, Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
- Dan Rinke, Commercial Clearing House

Election for Permanent Chair/Vice-Chair

Designated Federal Official (DFO) De Jesus reported the following results received from the email she had sent to all:

Chairperson: Mary Lou Beyreis
Vice-Chairperson: Sharon Lassar

Since there were no objections, these will go on record as being TAP MLI's permanent Chair and Vice-Chair and "Congratulations" were extended to both Mary Lou and Sharon.



Review and Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair Beyreis led discussion on the minutes of the November 22, 2002 teleconference meeting. Member Bodle made motion to accept and Member Bader seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Face-to-Face Meeting

Discussion ensued on the prescheduled face-to-face meetings for February and June. Chair Beyreis indicated that in the last Joint Committee meeting, participants were told that it is not mandatory for the Issue Committees to hold face-to-face meetings since an issue has already been assigned to them. Program Owner Oyefeso and some members shared the view that working in a face-to-face environment would allow all committee members to know each other, to establish a better working relationship, provide an educational experience and work on an action plan. Other members felt it is unnecessary and premature to hold a face-to-face meeting as early as February since the subcommittees have not developed their problem statements.

Consensus was reached to postpone the first face-to-face meeting for some time until after the filing season taking into consideration those members involved in tax preparation. The decision caused a change in the Committee's calendar: next teleconference meeting to be held on February 14, 2003 at 1:00 p.m. EST.

Action item: DFO DeJesus will review the TAP master calendar to determine the best time to hold the face-to-face meeting and share this information with the members via email.

Finalization and Next Steps for Problem Statements

Program Owner Oyefeso briefed the committee on absentee Member Logan's Problem Statement (**a. Recommendations on how the IRS can better assist LEP taxpayers in navigating the IRS system and understanding its processes**). The problem, according to Member Logan, is for those taxpayers receiving IRS notices who seek the phone assistance indicated in the notice and become more confused when calling due to language barriers. This causes the taxpayers to 1) seek the paid services of an accountant, 2) follow the misunderstood advice of IRS personnel and thus continue accrual of penalties and interest, and/or 3) change company name and continue operating under another name to avoid the problem. As a solution to the problem, **Member Logan recommends** a direct contact to IRS personnel who will assist Limited English Proficient (LEP) taxpayers to resolve IRS problems in their language. Vice-Chair Lassar suggested that the Multilingual Initiative be implemented in the Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) offices of each state in the country. Program Owner Oyefeso added that the IRS units involved in taxpayer education provide liaisons with organizations that offer tax assistance and problem resolution to LEP taxpayers.

Action item: DFO DeJesus will do research to confirm that each state has a TAS office available.

Vice-Chair Lassar made three recommendations in her Problem Statement (**b. Recommend ways to externally identify and validate vital documents**) - 1) for TAP to follow up on the MLI Vital Document Needs Assessment Report (June 2002), 2) to develop a systemic approach to identify which languages IRS should consider for translation, 3) to develop a system for IRS to monitor and update translation needs. From these recommendations, Vice-Chair Lassar has developed the following action items for TAP: 1) to develop a formal recommendation on translation services from IRS's form usage and census data statistics, 2) to recommend implementation of a Spanish assistance phone-line that would be advertised on IRS notices. This recommendation would be forwarded to Issue Committee on Notices, 3) to develop partnerships with LEP stakeholders (other than Spanish-speaking), 4) to visit LITC or Walk-In site to assess LEP needs, 5) to develop a checklist and/or survey for visits to Walk-In sites. Program Owner Oyefeso indicated that the recommendation to implement an assistance phone-line in Spanish as already been initiated. She will share written information on this recommendation via email. Member Lassar added that the phone-line and other efforts should be considered at a multilingual level.



Member Bader presented her Problem Statement (**c. Recommend cost-effective ways to address the needs of recently migrated immigrant groups and educate them on tax compliance**) - on communicating and educating immigrants in "pocket communities" on their responsibility to file taxes. She recommends using IRS partnerships with local organizations to carry on this task.

All Problem Statements were shared with committee members prior to teleconference.

Action item: Chair Beyreis requested that DFO DeJesus e-mail all members a list of Problem Statements subcommittees to select their preference in participating in them. (Problem statements a,b,and c will be from now on referenced as #1, 2, and 3) in the order as indicated above)

Public Participation/Input

Chair Beyreis requested guests' comments on the meeting.

Ms. Morgenstern thanked the committee and explained that her interest lies mainly on problems with the EITC IRS Notices received by LEP taxpayers.

Mr. Rinke also thanked the committee for allowing him to participate.

Recommendation: (reached by consensus)- was made to formalize a statement that proposes that the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) culled from the kiosks be made available on the website. These FAQ's would be posted in the same language(s) that are available on the kiosks.

Closing Remarks

DFO De Jesus informed all that she would be sharing cost comparison of locations for future face-to-face meetings once dates and specific locations are finalized.

Chair thanked all members for their participation.

Meeting Close

Committee Chair Beyreis closed the meeting at 2:02 PM.

The next MLI Teleconference meeting will be on Friday, February 14, 2003 at 1:00pm EST. (same dial-in number and participants code will be used until further notice)

February 14, 2003