

Executive Director AGM Report
November 30, 2023

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are so pleased to be presenting our 2023 AGM in person! It is our first in-person AGM since a few years ago. Our 2022 AGM was postponed until March 2023, but these past 8 months have flown by.

Contract Renewals

These past months have been focused on renewing contracts and ensuring that a higher hourly rate was secured. The costs continue to rise, and we want to be sure ECCOE's finances are consistent, and that we can provide services while maintaining a solid financial balance. Freelance/contract interpreter costs have increased by approximately 13% in the past 2 years and, therefore, these increases must be covered by higher fees for services costs.

Currently, ECCOE has two staff members away on maternity leave. As a result, a full-time one-year staff position has been advertised and applications are being received. The deadline for this position is today. We look forward to conducting interviews and will be sure to announce the staff addition to our team.

We are so pleased to welcome additional freelance/contract interpreters to complement those already supporting the many interpreting and intervening requests. To ensure that our on-call (emergency) services are maintained 365 days a year, a carrying incentive has been added. This incentive supports both staff and freelance/contract interpreters as being available after hours is not always easy. The feedback about these incentives has been very favourable and this on-call recognition will continue to be maintained.

Pro Bono/Free Interpreting

ECCOE continues to support interpreting requests that cannot be invoiced, however, the cost of providing these services has had to be distributed equally. Requesting payment for interpretation services is very difficult for ECCOE but the monies available to support these requests are limited. It is important to know that ECCOE does not receive funding to provide free interpretation services. ECCOE does receive funding from one government department, but that funding has remained the exact same amount for over 25 years. These monies are to be used for overhead and interpreter costs.

I have written proposals to various associations that will not pay for interpretation services. The responses are the same as they are not obligated by law to have to pay for interpretation services upon request and note that a request coming from an interpretation agency is not representative of the Deaf Community.

ECCOE is currently supporting a partnership with a Deaf organization seeking funding for interpretation costs related to Deaf seniors, i.e., Deaf persons who are 55 years of age or older. Should this funding be approved, this would alleviate the difficulty of securing payment for interpretation services for Deaf seniors for services such as dentists, physiotherapists, home supports, etc., that are currently not covered.

There are approximately 600 dentists in Manitoba. If each dentist donated \$10, this would cover an entire year of interpretation requests for all Deaf people. The same calculation

could be used for all other occupations that refuse to pay for the cost of interpretation for their Deaf clients. ECCOE takes the time to call these service providers and explain the importance of communication and the need to provide professional interpretation services. The service providers respond that unless they must by law or are mandated by the Deaf Community, they will not be paying for interpretation services.

I am hoping that a Deaf Community working group can be established to lobby these organizations for support. The Accessibility Manitoba Act (AMA), although supporting communication rights, has limitations on private businesses. Proposals must come from the Deaf Community and ECCOE would be happy to support proposal writing, etc.

Thank You

Thank you to my colleagues which includes our freelance/contract non-deaf and Deaf interpreters. Please know that your commitment to all communication requests, i.e., last-minute requests and changes, including requests for evening and weekend work is exceptional. I hope you know how much you are valued as every booking that is confirmed is always appreciated.

Thank you as well to the ECCOE Board of Directors as our meetings have helped me and the agency to continue to strive for additional goals and continued improvements. To have such supportive volunteers who truly care about ECCOE is such a gift to everyone.

Warmest regards,

Jane Langes,
Executive Director