

## Utah's Mentorship Program

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*RID initiated a mentoring grant program in 2000. The four chapters who were awarded the grants will be reporting on their programs and the progress from time to time. The grant program will continue in 2001. Chapters considering applying may wish to closely monitor what these four chapters have done that caused their programs to stand out, and use that information in forming their own proposals for future programs.*

In the genesis of our profession, new interpreters were often taken under the wing of another interpreter or a Deaf person and "taught the ropes" of the job. We have since gotten away from that and have missed the learning and growth that came from such a relationship. However, recently there has been a shift back to a mentorship approach to learning.

In Utah, interpreters with temporary permits, recent graduates from interpreter training programs, and interpreters working in rural areas lack the contact with other more skilled interpreters and so have few resources, if any, to improve their skill or the quality of service they provide. Utah is in desperate need of finding a systematic way of improving the skills of those providing interpreter services. The most effective method of delivery is the establishment of our mentor program through RID. UIP (Utah Interpreter Programs, a state agency which, by law, is responsible for maintaining a list of certified interpreters in the state) has agreed to partner with Utah RID (UTRID) in these efforts. This program has several short term and long term goals:

### Short Term:

1. Train mentors in the mentorship process
2. Provide mentors to interpreters
3. Provide support to mentors

### Long Term:

1. Increase the quality of working interpreters in Utah
2. Increase the number of certified interpreters in Utah
3. Provide a network support system for interpreters in Utah
4. Provide a pool of mentors that can be utilized by schools and agencies

UTRID and UIP have identified Annette Miner, assistant professor in the Salt Lake Community College ITP to provide the training for the mentors. She has been an

interpreter educator for more than five years, and during the summer of 1999 attended a week-long training session in Colorado focusing on mentoring. She is currently working on her Ph.D. in Teaching Interpreting. Ms. Miner has agreed to train between 8-12 people to be mentors in the state over the next year and will be responsible for developing the curriculum. The training will begin the end of summer, 2001.

UTRID and UIP will collaborate with each college, university, interpreter service, and school district using interpreters to identify potential mentors. Each institution or agency can recommend a person to be trained as a mentor. If the interpreter is approved by the selection board, and if s/he accepts, s/he will be required to attend a total of four days of training (24 hours) and to mentor at least two people over the next nine months. They will be required to make contact with each interpreter at least twice each month. This contact could be done through video exchange, face-to-face visits, or written feedback. At least one face-to-face session must take place every two months.

Interpreter coordinators from each institution or agency will identify interpreters who would benefit from having a mentor. This would include interpreters not only in the urban areas, but the rural areas of Utah where training has been very limited. Interpreters will provide a video of their work as a pre-assessment for the mentor and again at the end of the nine-month program for a final assessment.

Since Utah is more than 90% Caucasian, it is difficult for any business or occupation to attract minorities. However, to put some focus on minority involvement as part of the stipulations of the grant, applicants who are members of a minority class will be given preference. Hopefully this will not only give minority applicants a chance to become involved, but will also help those already working to stay in the field. We will try to focus on

underserved areas, as well. There are many isolated, rural areas with interpreters who would benefit from this kind of opportunity.

The program will begin in March with a 2-day (16-hour) training as an introduction to mentoring. While the trainer will develop and implement the specific curriculum, the training will cover models of interpreting, miscue analysis, strategies for giving feedback, and as always, a lot of practice. All training will be provided free to the mentors. Using this information, the newly trained mentors will be assigned interpreters to work with. They will then go back to their respective institutions and mentor those interpreters.

After three months, the mentors will reconvene to discuss things that were successful and things that were not successful. During this day-long (8-hour) session, the trainer will also provide additional training based on the needs of the mentors. We anticipate a lot of work can be done during the summer with the interpreter lab located in our local Deaf Community Center.

Finally in September, the mentors will again meet together to discuss their successes and their concerns. They will also share resources that have helped the interpreters they are working with. Again, the trainer will provide guidance based on the needs of the mentors.

These meetings are a crucial part of the training UTRID and UIP will provide mentors in Utah. These meetings will not only provide training for the mentors, but will also give the mentors:

1. Feedback from their peers
2. Encouragement to continue the mentoring process
3. A forum to discuss concerns
4. Ideas/resources for further development

At the end of the nine-month period, mentors will write a short report detailing their accomplishments and the accomplishments of those they mentored. This information will be used to improve the mentoring program for the coming year.

Utah is very excited for such an opportunity. We anticipate that over the nine-month project UTRID in conjunction with RID and UIP will:

1. Train 8-12 mentors
2. Provide mentors to 16-30 interpreters throughout the state
3. Increase the number of certified interpreters in the state
4. Provide support to interpreters in rural areas ■