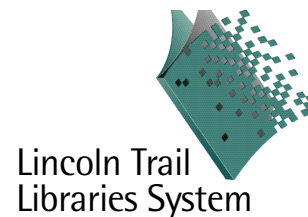


NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Lincoln Trail Libraries System Makes Library Interpreters Network a Reality

The PolyTalk Library Interpreters Network, a free telephone-based interpretation service, is now available to all Illinois libraries! PolyTalk expands the level of library service available to non-English speaking patrons by providing library staff with a secure database to locate and contact volunteer interpreters fluent in their patrons' languages. Volunteer interpreters provide real-time interpretation for the librarian and patron and help make library resources accessible to all patrons.

The network, called PolyTalk, is the first statewide effort to provide telephone-based interpretation services to all Illinois libraries. "Illinois librarians face a significant challenge communicating effectively with limited English speaking patrons," said LTLS Executive Director Jan Ison. "Nearly one in five Illinois residents speak a language other than English at home. This figure translates to over 100 distinct languages. The linguistic diversity of the communities served by Illinois librarians is increasing faster than the language capabilities of library staff. PolyTalk will expand the level of service available to limited English speaking patrons by enabling library staff to locate and contact a volunteer interpreter fluent in the patron's language. PolyTalk will allow us to bridge the language barrier in Illinois to make the resources of all libraries available to all patrons."

What is PolyTalk?

- PolyTalk is all about helping limited English speaking patrons make full use of the resources of Illinois libraries.
- PolyTalk is a secure volunteer interpreters database, available to library staff, for locating and contacting an interpreter fluent in the needed language.
- PolyTalk is a set of multilingual support materials to assist in basic library-specific interactions with limited English speaking patrons.
- PolyTalk is available free of charge to Illinois libraries.

PolyTalk will increase library awareness and library services to previously under-served populations. LTLS expects a noticeable increase in library use, as well as the establishment of local networks of librarians, interpreters, and non-English speakers.

"Just think how helpful it would be for you to have an English language interpreter available if you visited a library in a foreign country," said Project Director Joe Sciacca. "PolyTalk can open up the world of library resources and services to thousands of non-English speaking Illinois residents."

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To use PolyTalk, library staff and interpreters need to register for an account at <http://www.polytalk.info> (select the Login Now button). Library staff should select the Library Staff Account option. Interpreters should select the Interpreter Account option. Bilingual library staff are encouraged to sign up and may register for a Library Staff Account (check the box to indicate that they also wish to interpret). LTLS is still looking for bilingual speakers to be part of the PolyTalk library interpreters network. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer interpreter for PolyTalk or if you can identify local agencies working with the non-English speaking community in your area, please contact PolyTalk Grant Coordinator Randi Weiss at 217-352-0047, ext. 229 or complete the registration form at <http://www.polytalk.info>.

Lincoln Trail Libraries System (LTLS) was awarded a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant by the Illinois State Library to establish this library interpreters network for Illinois libraries.

Founded in 1966, Lincoln Trail Libraries System has headquarters in Champaign and is one of the 9 multitype library systems in the State of Illinois. System funding is provided by the Office of Secretary of State and the State Librarian Jesse White. LTLS serves 7 academic, 53 public, 45 school, and 17 special libraries in Champaign, Clark, Coles, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Piatt, and Vermilion counties. Lincoln Trail advocates, collaborates, and facilitates education and cooperation to empower information agencies to improve and expand access to and delivery of information resources.

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