

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided to facilitate communication accessibility. CART captioning and this realtime file may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.

Activating Change

Thursday, February 23, 2023

10:30 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. ET

Remote CART Captioning

[Recording in progress announcement]

>> OLGA TRUJILLO: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm just going to wait another minute or so as people are joining our webinar. And then I will get us started. Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for joining our webinar today. Before we get started, I want to provide some information about the accessibility features of our Zoom webinar platform. As well as how you can interact with us throughout the session today. You should be in listen only, view only mode. That means you can hear and see us, but we cannot hear and see you. If you would like to turn the captioning on, please go to the closed captioning symbol at the bottom of your screen and select the arrow to the right of that icon. The words underneath the icon should say "live transcript". Today we will have American Sign Language interpretation available. If you have any issues with the interpreters or captioning, please let us know in the chat. We value access, complete access in our virtual sessions. If we have a technical problem, we will pause to address the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, we may have to cancel the session. And if that happens, we will send you an email with further information. We will be recording today's webinar. The webinar recording and materials will be posted on our Safety and Justice Challenge web page. And I would like to now invite my colleague, Nancy Smith, to introduce herself and our webinar today. Nancy.

>> NANCY SMITH: Thank you so much, Olga. Hi, everyone. My name is Nancy Smith. And I am the executive director of Activating Change. Activating Change is a national non-profit to address two of the most prevalent, yet overlooked injustices in the lives of people with disabilities and Deaf people. Victimization and incarceration. Welcome to the third installment of our three-part webinar serious, overrepresented and overlooked, people with disabilities and Deaf people in the criminal legal system. I am joined today by three of my colleagues at Activating Change, Olga Trujillo, who you just met, Kaitlin Kall and Gregorio Mata. And I would like each of them to join me in introducing ourselves. At Activating Change, we provide visual descriptions of ourselves and our surroundings to ensure the information is accessible to everyone attending this webinar. This includes people with low vision, people who are blind, people who may be joining by phone only and many more. I will start our introductions and then I will invite each of my colleagues to introduce themselves. Again, my name is Nancy Smith. I am a white gender non-conforming woman with brown hair in a Mohawk. I'm wearing a

black blazer and shirt. There's a photo of my dogs and behind me there's plants, photos and other decorative items. Let's starting to get to know Olga who you met briefly at the top of our presentation.

>> OLGA TRUJILLO: This is Olga. Thanks, Nancy. I am Olga Trujillo. I'm the director of leadership development, visibility and collective healing at Activating Change. I am a Latinx non-binary person with olive complex with very, very short gray hair. Yes? Sorry. With very, very short gray hair. I am wearing black, round wire-rimmed glasses. I'm wearing a white turtle neck with a gray and white sweater. And I am coming to you from my home office. Behind me is a green carpet and colorful rig on top. The wall behind me is white. There's a bifold door and I have bird drawings hung up on the wall.

>> NANCY SMITH: This is Nancy. Thank you, Olga. Next up, let's meet Gregorio.

>> GREGORIO MATA: Hi, everyone. Good afternoon. My name is Gregorio Mata. And I am a program analyst here at Activating Change. I will give you a visual description. I am in front of a beige wall and I have a chest of drawers on my left-hand side side. I'm wearing a black long sleeve button up. I'm a Latinx and I have a dark beard.

>> NANCY SMITH: This is Nancy. Thank you, Gregorio. Kaitlin.

>> KAITLIN KALL: Hello, everyone. My name is Kaitlin Kall. My pronouns are she/her. I am a white woman with chin-length brown hair. Today I am wearing a maroon colored turtle neck. And I am sitting at my home office in California. I have beige walls in my office with three black and white photos framed behind me. And several lamps. And a house plant. And I work as a Senior Program Associate on the Activating Change team.

>> NANCY SMITH: This is Nancy. Thank you, Kaitlin. In part one of our webinar series, we shared data that documents the disability disparities that exist at every point in the criminal legal system. For example, while people with disabilities comprise 20% of our communities, they make up 40% of who is incarcerated in our jails. We also shared examples of how the system fails to account for disability and language access. As a result, and Deaf people are more likely to experience harsher penalties -- harsher penalties. In part two, we continued to explore the impacts of these forms of oppression and how they contribute to and intersect with the criminalization of disability and Deaf communities and we used a powerful and engaging discussion with three leaders from Black and brown disability and Deaf communities. If you have not watched part one or part two yet, I highly encourage you to do so. Links to the recordings are being dropped in the chat box and you could also find them on our website at [Activating Change.org](https://activatingchange.org). In part three of our webinar series, we are focusing on what you can do. The practical next steps you can take to better account for people with disabilities and Deaf people in your work. Because half of incarcerated people have a disability, we cannot end local mass incarceration or the racial disparities endemic in our system without centering this community in our reform efforts. We are grateful that you joined us today because all of us have a responsibility to make sure that the innovations and reforms being put into place to reverse mass incarceration are being designed and implemented in ways that people with disabilities and Deaf people can equally benefit from. In today's webinar, we are focusing on the concrete practical steps you can take. We are going to give you some ideas about how you can get started. We will be discussing the importance of integrating a disability and language

access into your equity framework. We will provide examples of the types of disability organizations and organizations that serve Deaf communities that might be in your community and how they can be a resource to you in your work. We will share more about how you can identify and remove access barriers in your programs and how you can take steps to increase the accessibility of the work you do. And finally, we will share how we can support you in this work. We will have time at the end of the presentation to answer your questions. If a question comes to you during the presentation, you can type it into the Q&A pod at that point. We will also do a call for questions towards the end of the presentation. And now I'm going to turn things over to my colleague, Kaitlin, who is going to get us and you started.

>> KAITLIN KALL: Hi. This is Kaitlin speaking. So, in this section, I'm going to talk through four steps that you can take whether you work in government or you do not, to think about where to get started with integrating disability and language equity into the systems in which you work and interact with. Next slide. Okay. So, legal systems are multi-faceted and they complicated. Who is impacted by the legal system is influenced by so many factors, including state and federal legislation and the practices of other agencies that make up your local system. So, to get started, reflect on what is within your realm of control. This slide has an image of a large shopping Mall -- malls, comprised of many different stores. You may have heard the metaphor that criminal systems are like malls. In a mall, each store has its own hiring practices, return policies, management structure and so forth. If you work in the show store, you can't control the quality of popcorn in the movie theater even though you are in the same building or system. So, for those of us who work in and criminal the criminal legal system, I know it is easy to feel discouraged and focus on what we cannot control. But, individual agencies, government and non-government, do have autonomy over many of their practices. Such as eligibility criteria, responses to non-compliance, their staffing and agency culture and so forth. Are you or others in your organization allowed to create or edit written documents for clients, for example? Can you organization training for staff? Are you empowered to adjust your intake procedures or hiring practice? Really start to take notice of what is within your realm of control. Next slide, please. So, in order to identify where and how to start disability and language equity work, take some time to learn about what is happening for people with disabilities and Deaf people in your community. We know that local government and service providers have many obstacles in collecting and analyzing data. It is incomplete, inaccurate or just not useful. If you wait until you have perfect data, you will probably never get started. So, think broadly about sources of information for better understanding disability and Deaf communities in your areas and in your legal system. Of course, you can look to criminal legal agencies such as courts and jails. They may have some data. You can consider public health and behavioral health departments. There's census data which does include some community specific disability information. And think about if there was another county athlete that would have collected and analyzed data about disability for a recent initiative such as, like, a public transportation project or a new affordable housing structure. We also encourage you to have informal conversations with colleagues in your office and in other agencies about their experiences working with people with disabilities and Deaf people. You can ask them what have they been seeing, do they already is there policies and procedures in place about

providing accommodations? Maybe they have gone to a really great training and have information to share with you. Also talk to the service providers that you partner with. And then think about pre-existing bodies and collaboratives that are already meeting and you could ask to view listening sessions or send surveys to their members. This could include a re-entry council, a public health initiative. If your community has a criminal justice coordinating council. And also think about local non-profit alliances. Those who work on criminal legal issues and those who work on other related issues. Perhaps there's a task force working on ending homelessness in your area or a local alliance dedicated to advancing racial justice in your county. Can you go back, Allison, actually? Please. Thank you. Okay. So, those are suggestions to get a baseline understanding of disability in your community. If this is a topic that is new to you, this should not be a long phase. And I cannot emphasize this enough. I have been working with local systems for a long time and one thing I have learned the hard way is that people who do not share your mission and who do not want to see you succeed will point to lack of data as a stall tactic. But if you take this in earnest, this is the send you on a long and time consuming mission. And then if and when you return with the numbers they ask for, they will probably just come up with another excuse to thwart your efforts. We don't always have good racial data about who is in jail, for instance. But we know that there are vast disparities in every single system and we can't let incomplete data mitigate the urgency of solving these issues and I think the same goes for disability. Okay. Next slide. So, we can envision a country in which the entire criminal legal system is lean, nimble, rooted in human dignity and treats all people, including those with disabilities, and those who are Deaf, equitably. But this work must start somewhere. So, to think about where to get started, consider both feasibility and impact. On this grid, which is on this slide, feasibility runs horizontally left to right. And impact runs vertically up and down. In terms of assessing feasibility, this relates to what is within your realm of control. The mall metaphor. How feasible is it to make positive change on this policy, in this agency, in this section of the system? You could consider resources needed, potential buy-in or lack of from leadership, and timeline required to make change. And then there's impact. Will starting here make a difference? You can ask will start here make a positive change for a lot of people or perhaps will it make a big difference to some people? And I think yes to either would be high impact. In assessing impact draws upon what you have learned in the fact-finding phase that I spoke about on the previous slide. A starting place that is both highly feasible and highly impactful, this is the green quadrant, this should be prioritized. Something that would be really hard to do and won't make such of an impact, this is the red zone. These requested should be scrapped at least for now. If an idea or initiative is one but not the other, I think it could be considered and you could ask if there's a way of kind of booting it into the green zone. Maybe the problem can be approached by -- from a different angle or maybe you could invite a new player to the table to help you troubleshoot. I want to suggest that this is an exercise that you can use in a meeting, either in-person or virtually. Using something like Google Jamboard. You would take one idea at a time and give people post-it notes or stickers, pose the idea and have people place their stickers on the grid about where they think this initiative would fall. If you see a lot of stickers in the green zone, that is a great sign. Sounds like a win. If the notes are scattered all over the

place, some green, some yellow, use this as a conversation starter. Start to unpack with people around your table. It is possible that someone has a unique piece of information that others don't have. Such as a problematic elected official has decided not to run for office again and thus this idea is actually more feasible. You might end up with a group of ideas and initiatives scattered across green and yellow zones. I recommend having at least one idea in the highly feasible area. Having an a quick win can establish minimum tumble and proof of concept. I also believe it could be worth trying something hard to do but would make a big difference in a lot of lives. As your work begins, you may find unexpected opportunities or challenges that impact your work. None of us have a crystal ball. This phase and this exercise is really about making our best guesses alongside our teams and our partners and taking their ideas into consideration. Next slide. Okay. Systems based change requires tenacity, collaboration and time. And it almost always requires a team, whether this team is within one agency or across agencies. Which is why you will hear me and my colleagues today talk more about partnerships and teamwork. To build and facilitate a team, however, you will need a champion or maybe multiple. This is someone who cares about this topic, who can invite the right people to the table, who has the energy to persevere through challenges and to keep the work moving forward. A champion does not need to be in the highest level of leadership. But having access to leadership is tremendously helpful. Someone in the highest level of leadership could be a champion, but they really need to think about their capacity. If they do not have time to schedule meetings, send agendas and so forth, they will need to delegate to others. And in terms of proximity to leadership, I don't want to overlook the power of community and community organizing. Often team most directly impacted by systems have very limited access to the people who control these systems. They can be champions, too. But they may need the partnership of allies to be able to access those who set policy. So, if you have that type of access, think about if you can serve as that ally to help cultivate community-based champions. At this point, I am going to ask my colleague, Olga, to share some thoughts with us about integrating disability and language equity into frameworks.

>> OLGA TRUJILLO: This is Olga. Thank you, Kaitlin. What does it mean when we talk about integrating disability and language into your equity framework? Let's explore that. Next slide, please. Let's start with disability and language equity. Disability and language equity recognizes that disability and language rights are inseparable from human rights. That the disability rights movement is as critical as the movements for racial, economic and gender equity. And that people with disabilities must be at the forefront of any successful fight for justice. Our nation is undergoing a public reckoning and every aspect of our institutions are under scrutiny. None more so than the criminal legal system. Racism and anti-Blackness has deep roots in all our society structures as we consider how they have shaped the lives of people in our society, we must also consider people with disabilities and Deaf people. Our first two webinars, as Nancy mentioned, covered how overrepresented Black and brown people with disabilities and Deaf people are in every aspect of our criminal legal system, including prisons and jails. Next slide, please. Disability and language equity recognize that oppressions are inextricably linked. That racial equity, economic and gender equity are linked to the fight to end ableism. Disability and language equity recognizes that people with

disabilities have intersecting identities and that we have to work from an intersectional analysis that includes disability and Deafness. Take me, for example. I am a Latinx, non-binary person with a psychiatric disability. Or let's go back to the second webinar where we heard from Max who was on our panelist during that last webinar. He's a Black man with autism and he stated that during that webinar, he doesn't feel that when people are fighting for racial equity that he's included in that work because it doesn't incorporate his autism. I don't feel when people are fighting around racial equity that I am included because it's not incorporating my psychiatric disability. And we heard from BL and when I talked with him to prep for our webinar, he said to me that it's really hard to understand the unique needs of Black Deaf people unless you focus on them. So, we need a movement where intersecting identities are accounted for. Where we work together to end ableism and racism. And we believe that collaborations are the key. That as we work together, we can dismantle ableism, racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia and transphobia. Next slide, please. So, to do that -- I know it sounds like a really big goal. To end all these oppressions. But we can do it. And to do it, you do need to incorporate disability and language equity. So, think about who's at the table. Think about does your analysis of the programming incorporate disability and language equity. Does your design solutions incorporate it. And then as you're moving through, ask yourself who benefits from the actions that you're taking and who is left out. We know that just saying the word "disability" or to talk about accessibility for Deaf people can be uncomfortable. But we want you to incorporate it into your analysis. We need to include disability communities and Deaf communities in our systems change efforts and in our criminal legal reform efforts in particular. Remember our first webinar where our colleague, Liam, laid out for us the harm that happens when police handcuff Deaf people. You are cutting off their ability to communicate. We need to actively name and define the many barriers that Deaf people and people with disabilities, especially Black and brown Deaf people and Black and brown people with disabilities that they face. We can leverage the strength and momentum of our collective work for equity. Coming together to address all of this is what will make the difference. And so, as you move forward, we want you to consider how does this affect Black, Indigenous, People of Color and BIPOC Deaf people. Focus on the intersecting identities. These are the people overrepresented in every stage of our criminal legal system. Next slide, please. So, what are some steps that you can take? Some basic things that you can do. Incorporate disability and language equity into your equity framework. And if you don't have an equity framework, this is your opportunity to create one and to include disability and language into it. Make a commitment to incorporating disability and language access into your framework and document that commitment. You can do that through a joint statement or a proclamation. Incorporate disability and language access into your analysis so that it is in your data collection and in your research. And everything that you do. Next slide, please. Other steps that you can take are bringing people together to the table. And that when you do that, you identify people that live at the intersections. Meaningful and meaningfully. I'm going to stress that again. Meaningfully involve them in participation. What is meaningful involvement? Be willing to look at everything that you're doing. Bring them in early. Re-examine what you're doing and how you're doing it. Bring as many people living at the intersections as you have from systems and mainstream programs. This is really important.

What a lot of people do when they start bringing people to the table is they bring one person to the table and that one person is supposed to represent the views of the communities that they live in. And that doesn't work. That is actually tokenizing and it can be harmful. It will give you the impression that you're doing something different but it actually isn't. And then compensate people for their time and expertise. Next slide, please. So, let's play this out. If you have a disability and language equity framework, this is how you would be thinking about your work. You would ask yourself, let's say you are working on establishing a bail fund. With a disability and language equity approach, you would ask, how do we make the application process for bail relief accessible to the widest audience possible? Including for people with disabilities in jail. But remember, it's not just defendants interacting with this program. Loved ones seeking bail relief for a defendant in jail may also be Deaf or disabled. Do our bail disruptors and service providers have training and resources they need to effectively communicate with Deaf people and people with disabilities? Do our eligibility criteria inadvertently disadvantage people with disabilities and Deaf people? This is really important. If your bail fund has a policy that only people with jobs are more likely to have their bonds paid, it becomes a problem for disability equity. I don't know if you remember in the second panel, in the second webinar we had panelists that talked about the profound employment inequities faced by people with disabilities and Deaf people. Doing this would privilege people with employment over those who are not employed or who underemployed and it will deepen those disparities. Are spaces for criminal processes and support services fully accessible to people with physical disabilities? Is criminal information and accommodation -- communication available in sign language and plain language? How will this initiative impact disability and Deaf communities at large? If you are partnering with a substance abuse client with needs, is that space accessible? Can they support clients with disabilities? These are the kinds of questions you would ask yourself as you are moving through your initiative. Let's go to the next slide. What is going to help you to do this? Building partnerships with disability and Deaf communities is what is going to help you do this. Next slide, please. There are certain ways that you can partner with disability and Deaf organizations. They can serve on committees and workgroups. They can provide input and feedback into what you are thinking and people-first language. They can assist with conducting access reviews, which my colleague, Nancy, will talk about in a little bit. They can provide staff training or you can create a learning community where they learn about what you're doing and you learn about what they're doing. You can connect programs to resources that can help meet accommodation requests. You can connect you to people with disabilities and Deaf people with the lived experience with the criminal legal system. Next slide, please. So, common disability organizations are -- these are just a few organizations just to give you an idea of what's around that you might want to start with in terms of engaging organizations. Centers for independent living are designed and operated individuals with disabilities. And they work to support community living and independence for people with disabilities across the nation. And that's based on the belief that all people can live with dignity, make their own choices and participate fully in society. And those are independent living centers. There's also self-advocacy groups and people-first groups. These groups of people with disabilities primarily, people with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities,

learning disabilities and/or people with other disabilities. And they speak for themselves and work to improve the lives of their members. There are more than about 1,200 local self-advocacy groups around the country. The Arc is another organization you could reach out to. The Arc has chapters across the country that works to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the support and services they need to be fully engaged in their communities. There are 600 chapters around the country and provide a wide variety of services, supports and advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. That's a great organization to try to connect with. Then we have community health centers. Those are consumer directed healthcare organizations. They are not for profit. You might be particular with them in your area. It provides access to comprehensive primary and preventive medical, dental and mental health care. Community health centers have a unique mission ensuring access for underserved, unserved and uninsured patients. Community health centers are usually a great place to going to engage community members. There's also club house. Clubhouses is organized to support people living be mental illness. A club house provides a restorative environment for people whose lives have been severely disrupted because of their mental illness and who need the support of others who are in recovery. Club houses are powerful demonstration of the fact that people with mental illness can and do lead normal productive lives. And then another example, Lighthouse for the Blind. Lighthouse for the Blind is a private, not for profit organization that provides employment support, training opportunity for people who are blind, deaf-blind and blind with other disabilities. They work from the perspective that each person should be able to be provided what they need for success and it focuses primary on work places. These are just a few organizations with chapters around the country that you could reach out to and start trying to involve in your work. I would like to have our colleague, Gregorio, give us some examples of Deaf organizations that you could engage in your work as well. Gregorio.

>> GREGORIO MATA: Absolutely. Thank you so much, Olga, for that explanation about partnering organizations. For this section, I will focus on common Deaf organizations. So, first of all, there are the state level and hard of hearing commissions. And offices are in each state and they will be able to assist Deaf and hard of hearing people in a wide variety of areas. And there are a lot of organizations that are in your state that will be able to help. For example, they may be able to help with education, communication and I encourage you to look at that. So, either people have access to opportunity and services offered by them. And they have a broad range of expertise that really enhances the well-being of deaf and hard of hearing folks. The next type of organization are local chapters of the RID or registry or interpreters for the Deaf. That is an organization of interpreters. Those who work between sign language and spoken language. And they really partner with members of the community and develop national standards for quality of sign language interpreters and translators. They also do provide ongoing services for professional development for interpreters. And they also have a local chapter that provides support to members of each state. Bridges for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, that should be a local non-profit that serves deaf and hard of hearing folks. And they focus typically on education, outreach, case management, interpreting services to individuals and families living with hearing loss. And they serve the Midwest, middle and west Tennessee,

northern Alabama, southern Kentucky. Another organization is Council De Manos. And it provides assistance and supports to Latinx, Deaf, deaf-blind, Deaf disabled, hard of hearing. And they are striving to increase awareness involving communities about the importance of participating in social justice movements. Another organization is the National Deaf Black Advocates. NDBA is the leading advocacy organization for deaf and hard of hearing Black people in the United States. They have been advocating for equal access for hard of hearing Black folks for more than three decades. They offer programs such as advocacy Black Deaf senior citizen, Black Deaf history, college and youth Black Deaf Women Development Foundation, scholarships and publications. And they are also open to forming partnerships with other organizations and corporations to ensure that different services, information and other privileges are available for Black deaf and hard of hearing individuals. HEARD is another organization and it is a cross disability abolitionist group and it is dedicated to eliminating ableism, racism, capitalism and other forms of oppression and violence. HEARD aims to increase the collective capacity to understand, identify and challenge oppression through peer support, grassroots advocacy, community organizing and mutual aid. Resources available include Deaf in prison, police violence, legal acts information, telecommunications access for Deaf detainees or prisoners and newsletters. They also provide regular newsletters they distribute. And this last organization is the National Association of the Deaf or NAD. And the NAD is one of the nation's leading civil rights organizations for and by people who are deaf and hard of hearing. They provide a broad range of advocacy areas, including a lifetime and impacting future generation of Deaf people. Improving the lives of millions of Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing through early intervention, education, employment, healthcare, technology. And as part of those advocacy efforts, they also engage in coalition as well as those representing cross disability organizations. And together, those groups are able to amplify their efforts and ensure the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals are considered in legislative and policy initiatives. And they also provide a platform for sharing resources, information and best practices. So, next we have different affiliates here listed for the National Association of the Deaf. In this PowerPoint, it includes different links where you could access the difference organizations. We will be sharing that with you so you can have access to the organizations in your area. And I would like to pass this back to my colleague, Olga.

>> OLGA TRUJILLO: Awesome. Thank you. So, as you do this work, you want to take into consideration how you're doing it. For example, when you start asking people to join your workgroups, you want to make sure that where you're meeting will be accessible. So, is it physical location of your meeting easy to get to? Can someone in a wheelchair access the meeting room? Is the meeting space accessible in other ways? And you should be ready to provide sign language interpretation. And one thing to note is that it's not just American Sign Language that people use. And you may need to find out what it is that the organization or the person who is involved in your group, what kind of sign language interpretation will they need. Next slide, please. Other things to consider is that providing information in plain language, so, some of the stuff that you have that you might have handing out in a meeting or that you are evaluating, having that placed in plain language and also providing it ahead of time before the

meeting to give people a chance to review it and become familiar with it would be much more helpful. And then also to compensate partners for their time and expertise. And then I have a few caveats for you to think about as you do this work of engaging partners in the disability field and in language equity. So, a lot of disability organizations center whiteness. So, you want to keep that in mind so that you can ask for -- look for and ask for organizations that might have more of a racial equity lens. And if not -- race equity lens. And if not, to provide a learning capacity for them to -- and you to learn from each other. Also a lot of disability service organizations might not know the criminal legal system very well or know very much about criminal legal reform. And some might not agree with it. So, it is an important thing to check out before you bring people into your work. And then some organizations have a paternalistic approach to people with disabilities. And that's an important thing to consider as well. That's why a lot of organizations that I gave you to think about including and that Gregorio provided are organizations that by and for people with disabilities. And Deaf people. So, just some things to consider as you engage with people with disabilities and Deaf people and organizations as you provide language and disability equity lens. At this point, I would like to turn it back over to my colleague, Nancy.

>> NANCY SMITH: This is Nancy. Thank you, Olga. Olga mentioned conducting an accessibility review. And I want to spend just a couple of minutes talking about how you can use access reviews to identify and remove barriers in your programs. This is an important action that you can take that can really make a difference for people with disabilities and Deaf people. Conducting an access review really does just that. It helps you identify the barriers that exist in your programs. And in particular, those that prevent people from fully participating in your programs. And having this information allows you to develop a plan to remove those barriers over time. And having a plan in place really signals your commitment to disability Deaf communities in your area. Access reviews help you, as I mentioned, identify different types of barriers, depending on the review tool that you use. You can identify physical barriers. So, Olga talked about the importance as you are inviting people with disabilities and Deaf people to participate in your work, making sure that your spaces are physical and accessible. You could use an access review tool to understand those access barriers that might exist and to remove them. For example, doing an access review might help you identify that there are only stairs leading to the courthouse entrance. Or you might identify that your bathrooms don't have grab bars that are necessary for someone who uses a wheelchair to use them. Access reviews also help you identify communication barriers. So, you might identify that a program is only accessible by phone, which creates barriers for many people. You might also identify that the way in which a program shares really important information isn't accessible. Maybe it is in small font. Maybe it's pretty dense content and the content is pretty hard to understand. An access review also can be used to identify policies that create barriers. And it can also help identify attitudes or perceptions held by staff that can create barriers for people with disabilities and Deaf people as well. There are a lot of review tools that exist. So, you do not need to create a review tool. A lot of the review tools have a number of things in common in terms of how they measure accessibility. Most review tools are going to measure accessibility based on the Americans with Disabilities Act. So, the Americans with Disabilities Act or the ADA

establishes some objective baseline standards for physical accessibility in particular. And there are actually something called the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines or ADAAG for short. And that has the physical requirements for your space from everything to parking lots, entrances to bathrooms to living quarters. The aspects of accessibility that are tied to the Americans with Disabilities Act tend to be more objective. So, as you're doing a review and you're looking at these aspects of access, you're often answering yes/no questions. Do we have X number of parking spaces? Is the entrance accessible by a ramp? And sometimes you're also doing measurements. So, are doorways a certain width that allow people who use wheelchairs to move through them? The ADA, though, doesn't provide comprehensive guidelines. Barriers can still exist even if you are compliant with the ADA. We tend to think of the Americans with Disabilities Act as the floor. It is sort of the minimum in which you need to meet. And for everything beyond the ADA, a lot of review tools will incorporate human-centered or universal design design. These are broader sort of aspects that look at people's full -- a person's sort of full experience or full participation within a program. And these questions as you are doing a review tend to be a lot more open-ended. They account for a much broader context. Again, they are aimed at supporting really maximum participation. Not just sort of getting in the door, so to speak, which is what the ADA tends to focus on. Next slide, please. As you're thinking about doing an accessibility review, one of your first steps is to identify where it makes sense to conduct an accessibility review. And I really encourage you to go back to the framework that Kaitlin offered at the beginning of the webinar and consider feasible and impact. So, identify a program or location that is feasible for you to assess and also feasible for you to make changes to that will have the high impact on the experiences of people with disabilities and Deaf people who utilize that program. Another important part of conducting a review is selecting a review tool. As I mentioned, there are lots of review tools out there. Including review tools that are specifically designed for courthouses. There are review tools for jails and prisons as an example. If you are interested in conducting a review, please reach out to us. We can definitely help you find the right review tool. And we can also help you sort of structure the review process. Typically, conducting a review is a group process. So, we pull together people who understand the program, also people who understand the lived experience of disability and accessibility. As Olga mentioned, doing a review tool is a great place to engage and invite the participation of people with lived experience and also organizations that serve people with disabilities and Deaf people in your work. And as you're conducting a review, in most cases you are typically physically moving through a space or going through a process from start to finish. Kind of mirroring the experience of people participating in that program or in that process. And you're asking yourself questions along the way. You're taking measurements. You're making note of the barriers that you identify along the way. Next slide, please. And the information that you gather, as I mentioned, is used really to identify the barriers and to help you create a plan to remove them. And you'll likely identify a lot of easy fixes that can be done, you know, some immediately. Some in a matter of months. And also some fixes that don't cost any money. We've done quite a number of access reviews across the country. And I know one of the fears by doing an access review, you may uncover a lot of barriers that either can't be fixed or that

you don't have the money to solve. But what we find is that oftentimes with some creativity and in particular, with the lived experiences of people with disabilities and Deaf people, you can find a number of solutions that will make a really big impact that don't have a high cost to them. And I think some of the things that you may identify could take a couple of years to fix. And what's most important is that you have a plan and you have a commitment to remove barriers. And that you have strategies in place to navigate barriers until you remove them. So, again, doing an access review is another really concrete action step. It can make a really big impact on the lives of people who engage with your programs and systems. And this is another area where we could help you build out what a process will look like. And you can build on what you learn in this process to enhance the accessibility of your programs and of your systems. And I think with that, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to my colleague, Kaitlin, who is going to talk a little bit more about how you can proactively integrate disability and language access into your programming.

>> KAITLIN KALL: This is Kaitlin speaking. Thank you, Nancy. Let's go to the next slide. Okay. So, using a universal design approach to program people-first language and reform. Taking a universal design approach assumes the widest array of people will be participating or engaged in your process, in your program. This approach adds elements that supports everyone in being able to understand and communicate. And in this way, accommodations are not requested, but they are really built in. They are baked in to how you do business. And this approach also reduces the need for individual accommodations. To me, this is sort of the north star of access. Making sure that policies and procedures and physical infrastructure work for the widest array of people. Universal design benefits all of us. Those with disabilities and those without. Power assisted doors, for instance, can be necessary for people with physical disabilities. They also help out a parent pushing a stroller. If your community is opening a new office, launching a new initiative or creating a new partnership with community providers, I think you have a unique opportunity to build a universal design from the start. Constructing a new building so that everyone will use the same entrance rather than having a separate side entrance for people who use wheelchairs is an example of universal design in action. Criminal legal systems are so complex. And it's very common that people going through these systems don't understand what is happening to them or why. I have had the opportunity to conduct focus groups with people in jails and I found that so many of them did not know why they are there. They could not say what was happening in their cases. They did not know when their next court date is. So, adapting principles in universal design will help all involved, including defendants, their families and victims as well. Next slide. So, to me, a universal design directly aligns with principles of procedural justice. This concept also called procedural fairness in the legal system has been around since the 1980s. Scholars have found that experiences in procedural justice actually have more influence over someone's perception of the system than the legal outcome to their case. So, put another way, studies show that people care more about if they were treated fairly than if they received the legal outcome that they wanted. And research has found that people who find systems fair are more likely to comply with legal orders and the law going forward. Examples of procedural justice include when a judge speaks directly to a defendant about their case rather than about them as if they weren't in the

room. Having large print signage to help people navigate courthouses. And when system actors use plain language to explain how decisions are being made. When you think about these principles, having your voice fully heard, being treated with dignity and respect, understanding what is happening around you, it is not difficult to imagine how people with disabilities and Deaf people are routinely denied procedural justice within our current system. Next slide. Okay. So, here are some examples of universal design in practice. And remember that these would be made available to everyone involved in the legal system. It is not a case-by-case basis thing. Examples include having large print materials. Multi-lingual explainer videos. Maps and signage to help people navigate different buildings and agencies and having them available in-person and online. To me, I think having these online is a really important piece of accessibility. This helps people plan out their day. Think about how to access these spaces and will help them arrive on time. And again, I think this helps everyone. Remember that we have a system that will put people back in jail just for being late to a court date or probation appointment. And then citations. This slide has an example of an impossible to read traffic ticket. It is kind of on a light yellow paper. And crucial detail is scribbled in cursive, in pencil in a light gray. Some places have redesigned their citations so they have large font. They use plain language and they provide really clear instructions. So, someone knows how to resolve their citation. Think about court date reminders. Do these exist in your community? If they do are they accessible to everyone? A robocall in English only is not universally accessible. Next slide. So, before I move into talking about individualized accommodations, at this point I want to quickly revisit some material we presented in part one of this series. It is important to remember several things. That disabilities can be visible or invisible. You cannot tell if or which disabilities a person has just by their physical appearance. They can be acquired or congenital. Someone may have acquired a disability or an accommodation need since you last interacted with them. Disabilities can be temporary, reoccurring or chronic. So, again, just because someone didn't have an accommodation request the last time doesn't mean they don't have one this time. And disabilities can be multiple. An individual can have multiple disabilities. For me, this relates to invisible disabilities. You might notice a client is using a cane as a mobility aid. She might also have low vision, which again you could not tell just by her physical appearance. Next slide. So, even with principles of universal design in place, disability accommodation needs are individual. And as I just discussed, they are fluid. They can change over time. So, you'll need to be able to respond to specific accommodation requests. For instance, if you work in a pretrial services office, you might not full-time staff fluent in American Sign Language. So, you will need procedures for identifying when a client needs an ASL interpreter. And then you will need to know how to quickly secure the service. Individual accommodations are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. They allow a person to fully participate in and benefit from the institution. And they require several things. They can require someone to disclose their need and/or their disability. They require trust and quality communication so that people feel comfortable to make a request. And they require an understanding of the process or program so a person can make an informed request. When I think about this, it's so important to explain to a client what they can expect in the future. For instance, if someone is on probation and it's possible

that they will be stepped down from in-person to virtual check-ins, this should be explained well in advance so you can work together to think about future accommodation meetings. Next slide. So, remembering that knowing a diagnosis or disability doesn't mean you know what a person needs. Knowing that someone has epilepsy doesn't give you information information to know if or which accommodations they would need to participate in a town hall meeting. We encourage you to adapt the mindset of screening for accommodations, not disability. And in order to do that, here are some sample questions that you can draw upon. Is there anything I can do to make it easier for you to participate in this process? Are there any additional supports you need to fill out paperwork? We have some written materials about our rules. I can read these out loud if it would be helpful. And then, do you need any additional accommodations to participate? I think it is great to ask directly if someone needs additional accommodations. But they might not know what that word means or the options available to them. So, what we did here, keep your questions open-ended and pose them in several different ways. Remember that disabilities can be invisible. They can be acquired and they can be episodic. It is so important to routinely check in with clients and to set the tone that they are always welcome to ask for accommodations. Not just doing an intake process, for example. We have a toolkit and a video series that provides further guidance for agencies and service providers to ask about accommodation requests and we will make sure to distribute it with our materials today so you could have that on hand. Gregorio, could you join us at this point to share some considerations for sign language interpretation?

>> GREGORIO MATA: Thank you so much, Kaitlin. So, I'm going to talk a little bit about deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the criminal legal system. And they face unique challenges and barriers in accessing service and communicating with legal representatives as well as participating in court proceedings. With that being said, accessing services for deaf and hard of hearing people, you may -- they may get a letter from the court and not understand what the letter says. Some Deaf people have limited English proficiency. If they go to the court in-person, they may not be able to receive adequate legal advice. So, for example, if the time comes for the Deaf people to show up, these are steps or considerations to think about. For example, if the person is -- will they be in jail or will they be using a public defender? Will they be using interpreters? Things of that nature. If they must understand the details of their case when they show up to court. But if there's not an interpreter present, that poses a problem. It is important to make sure the prosecutor and any other people who are involved in the proceedings inform the court that an interpreter is necessary and that needs to be arranged before the Deaf person's case can be heard. And I do want to say that courts are required under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title IX of the civil rights act to provide language access for any proceedings in the criminal legal system. They are responsible for providing access to justice for all members, including the members of the Deaf community. Courts should definitely provide in-person interpreters and they should also make sure that those interpreters are able to communicate according to the linguistic diversity of the individual defendant. I do want to mention that sign language are diverse, distinct and different. There are different sign languages. Sign language is not universal. There is also, for example, protactile sign language, American Sign Language, Black sign language, Mexican sign

language just to name a few. When interpreters are there in court proceedings, they have to make sure they are providing the correct information that is being shared. And making sure that the Deaf defendant is able to be involved and understand the proceedings of the court and their individual case. I highly recommend if someone is considering to hire an interpreter for court to make sure that the interpreter has national certification or RID certification. There are also state level certifications as well. For example, the BEI. And there are also specialized certifications such as legal certifications for interpreters. Now, for example, there are in some cases where other varieties of interpreting may be used such as video remote or video relay services. Where in-person interpreter may not be possible. Those are other options. VRI allows the defendant to communicate through an interpreter via video. And VRS allows the person to communicate over the phone. So, sometimes corporations provide that. I highly recommend that is not the first option you choose. It could be used pretty much as a last resort where in-person interpreters are not available or unless the Deaf individual requests that type of service. Lastly, a certified Deaf interpreter is a Deaf person who works as an interpreter. They have the lived experience of being a Deaf person. And hearing American Sign Language interpreters typically work along a certified Deaf interpreter to facilitate communication in the language most easily understood for the Deaf and hard of hearing person. When there's a Deaf child it is most effective and the best practice. With that, I would like to turn it back over to my colleague Kaitlin.

>> KAITLIN KALL: Thanks, Gregorio. This is Kaitlin speaking. So, lastly, if you are again to ask about accommodations, ask about accommodation needs, you really do need to be prepared to provide these accommodations. Some steps include budgeting for accommodations that require cost. You could build up resources and ability to meet these requests through partnerships. Olga and Gregorio gave some great examples earlier. Train staff on available accommodation services and how to utilize these services. Think through who will first greet clients in your office. Build in requests for accommodations for intake procedures. But reinforce new or didn't accommodations can be provided as needed. Have multiple formats and means of communication already established. And build in time to ask about and secure individual accommodations. Plan ahead. This last item is especially pertinent for large group and community events. For this webinar series, for instance, we plan out at least a month ahead to make sure we have Spanish interpreter, ASL interpreters and captioners booked. In advanced we make sure our PowerPoint materials are as accessible as possible. And this allows us to close registration just a few days before the event because we have already covered so many of our bases. We think about this as kind of a universal design approach. If we had not done this advanced people-first language, we would need a lot more time to be prepared to meet many more individual accommodation requests. So, if you are people-first language a community forum, for instance, to share about a new race equity initiative in your county, if you don't plan for in advanced accessibility such as making sure spaces are physically accessible and hiring ASL interpreters, you are going to need -- interpreters, you are going to need to announce to give attendees enough time to request accommodations but also time for you to fulfill these. I think this is an option but it is better to plan ahead to share publically about which accommodations you plan to offer. And of course, give people the

option to request additional accommodations as needed. Next slide, please. So, we are at the wrap-up portion already. And to wrap us up, I want to knowledge that the criminal legal system as well as so many aspects of our society have a long way to go in terms of disability equity. And yet, the message that we want to leave you with is that making spaces and processes broadly accessible should be the starting point. This is the floor. Not the ceiling. Every year over 10 million people, a number equivalent to every person who lives in Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago and Philadelphia are arrested and put into jail. And once there, they face a confusing and opaque system with a patchwork of different policies and mandates that disrupt their lives, their family's lives. Failing to comply with a single rule, no matter what the extenuating circumstances, even if they did not understand the rule, can put someone immediately back in jail. Even when no new crime has been committed. And I know that mass incarceration is a term can -- as a term can sound esoteric but it is made up of people. I think about this day a lot. Once I was observing in court and a judge had issued an arrest warrant for a man who had not shown up that day for his court date. And just as court had ended, people were packing up, leaving courtroom, the public defender asked for permission to speak to the judge. And she shared that her client had just texted. He wasn't in court because he was in the hospital. There were really horrible forest fires in the area that day. His asthma was aggravated and he had to receive medical care. That text came in the nick of time and the judge revoked his warrant. When I think about that, I think about how a defendant's humanness almost put him back in jail. And about the humanness of the judge who made an exception which legally he did not have to do. As people are -- cars break down, we forget appointments, we relapse, we get sick and need to reschedule, we take the wrong elevator or the elevator is broken and we have no other access options. We get scared. Our work schedules change. Our babysitters cancel. So, if today at any point of this presentation or maybe all throughout the presentation you thought to yourself, but this is just not how the criminal legal system works, know I agree with you. Integrating principles of disability equity in full would really mean a whole new ethos for the criminal legal system. It would mean that we meet people where they're at. That we are flexible and accommodating. That we strive for understanding. And that we set people up for success. Creating this system that is fair, transparent, equitable and human-centered involves all of us. Advancing disability equity requires we all change how we have been doing business. Next slide, please. So, on the topic of doing business, as we wrap up, wanted to flag a few ways in which Activating Change can support your work. We are working on establishing a disability referral network. This will include disability and Deaf organizations that are interested in partnering with criminal legal reform and racial justice movements and initiatives. We can -- we will also offer assistance in forming these partnerships. We can offer support in making events, meeting and spaces accessible. As well as offering training and technical assistance tailored towards your agency and your work. Again, this is the end of a three-part series. When we were creating this series, we designed it intended for people who worked in the Safety and Justice Challenge initiative. And we know that we have had a diverse audience, including people who work in this initiative and those who don't. But know that this offer is really available to all of you. And my name, email and phone number are on the slide and we encourage you to reach out. We are going

to have a few minutes for questions. But before we do, we would like to -- we are going to share a link with you to our evaluation survey. We would really appreciate if you could spend just a few minutes to fill this out. We really value your feedback. This is Kaitlin speaking. As you are pulling up that link, feel free to drop any questions or comments in the question and answer pod. Allison, could you go to the next slide, please. That's great. And I will invite my colleagues to come back on camera. This is Kaitlin speaking. I do see we have several questions. And I wanted to direct this first one to Nancy because it is about access reviews. And the question is, are we aware of any funding sources for smaller programs to tap into efforts to address barriers uncovered during the access review process?

>> NANCY SMITH: This is Nancy. Thank you for this question. It is a common question. Unfortunately, I am not aware of any nationwide funding source. But I have worked with a number of smaller programs who have had the best luck in approaching their local community foundations for funding to address any barriers that come up in an access review. And so, I would encourage looking at local community foundations. And then also, again, just to quell any anxieties that anyone may be feeling, there are quite a number of solutions that you could put in place that do not have a cost to them.

>> KAITLIN KALL: Thanks, Nancy. Okay. We also received a question I believe general about etiquette and offering assistance and serving a person with a disability. The example on this question included helping someone maneuver who has a physical disability. But I think we could think about this broadly. We have a few more minutes and no other questions. I was wondering if maybe each of you would be willing to give some quick thoughts on how to approach that, taking a pretty cross disability lens. Olga, could I ask you, do you have any thoughts that come to your mind?

>> OLGA TRUJILLO: This is Olga. Thanks, Kaitlin. The first thing I think about is -- I think about Renee who is a wheelchair user who was in our second webinar. And how Renee is really used getting around really easily. Like knows how to do it and everything. And sometimes, though, people come up to her and try to help without her having asked for help and how frustrating that is for her. So, I would say if you are concerned that someone is having difficulty and you want to check in with them to see if you could help, that would be the appropriate way to do it. To ask is there anything you could do to help. But most people are used to kind of getting around and also are pretty good at letting you know when they need help. So.

>> KAITLIN KALL: Thanks, Olga. Gregorio or Nancy, do either of you want to expand upon that? Okay. This is Kaitlin. I am seeing no, head shakes. I'm going to read a comment that someone sent to us. In my state, the state forensic mental health system is in crisis. At the same time that organizations like mine are seeking increased access to council and accommodation for these patients and civil commitment and it is really hard right now. And a further thought. The feeling that community needs do not want these individuals reentering these communities. Yeah. I appreciate you raising that and sharing that with us. And what I am thinking of is a multi-fold bias and discrimination against people with disabilities and people who have been institutionalized and people who have conviction history or who have been incarcerated. So, we are about at time. I don't believe I am seeing anymore questions. So, we

are going to wrap up here. Before we do, I am posting two things in the chat box. One is a link to our survey again. And the other is a visual representation of the human toll of people in jails. We talked a bit about that today. It is such a large number that it really can be hard to comprehend. So, it's an invitation if you would like to spend some time with that electronic art piece and visual, I invite you to do so. All right, everybody. Thank you so much. We are so glad that you've joined us. And we look forward to being in touch. Take care everybody.
[Event concluded]