

## Interpreters in the Special Education Field: Building Cultural Bridges

In partnership with the Indiana Department of Education, IN\*SOURCE is launching a new training program, *Interpreters in the Special Education Field: Building Cultural Bridges*.

The purpose of this program is to provide training to individuals serving as interpreters in the special education field. This program introduces interpreters to the special education process, the vocabulary specific to this field, and assists schools in assessing an individual's language skills.

IN\*SOURCE's vision is to work with schools and their bilingual personnel to assure that non-English-speaking parents and the school can work together to make the informed educational decisions for their students.

English-speaking parents new to the realm of special education have commented that learning the special education terminology is like learning a new language. Also, many interpreters struggle in their role because special education terms are not a part of their vocabulary in either language. A lot of information can fall through the cracks if an interpreter cannot deliver an accurate interpretation, leaving the parents unable to make informed decisions or to fully participate in decision-making for their student.

The most recent federal guidance on serving families with limited English proficiency sheds some light on recent ED/DOJ findings and guidance pertaining to serving non-English-speaking families. The January 7, 2015 Dear Colleague letter reads: *"School districts should ensure that interpreters and translators have knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts to be used in the communication at issue. In addition, school districts should ensure that interpreters and translators are trained on the role of an interpreter and translator, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need to maintain confidentiality."*

For more information about the program or to request the training, please contact Jane Fuentes, Interpreter Training Coordinator at [jfuentes@insource.org](mailto:jfuentes@insource.org) or call (574) 234-7101 or (800) 332-4433.