

Education of Members

What is really important is that members have the right language to talk about Occupational Title Protection (OTP) with the public. The following paragraph really helps put OTP in perspective for members:

“Occupational Title Protection is in place in BC to protect the public that we work with from fraudulent activity. OTP sets the standard for the public to be in receipt of service by someone who has been trained, linguistically and ethically. If there is someone practicing in the province, and calling themselves by one of the protected titles, but they are NOT a member of WAVLI/AVLIC, then the public does not have the same assurance of training and recourse in case of malpractice. Our goal is to maintain the reputation that WAVLI currently holds and to improve on it with exceptional service to the public.” (Jessica Siegers)

The following table outlines some of the main areas of discussion among members:

Situation...	Member’s initial thought...	The OTP reality...
Person working as an interpreter who is not a member of WAVLI	WAVLI has the authority to order them to stop working as an interpreter.	<p>WAVLI does not have this authority. OTP means non-members of WAVLI can’t mislead the public - by using one of our titles – if they choose to interpreter they can. If they insist on using a protected title though, WAVLI can take legal action.</p> <p>The power WAVLI has comes with educating the public about OTP and what it means - guarantees a level of skill and knowledge</p>
Persons working for businesses that have job descriptions using one of our protected titles	Businesses must hire only WAVLI members.	<p>Businesses can hire whom they wish. Though if using our title the expectation is they have WAVLI membership as a requirement for employment.</p> <p>The power WAVLI has comes with educating the businesses</p>

		how to find a qualified interpreter - OTP makes it easy for them to separate those who have the qualifications from those who do not.
None of the applicants (post-secondary institution, or school district) have WAVLI membership status –this frequently happens when work standards/ conditions are below par.	The expectation is the businesses (including school districts) can't hire anyone who is not a WAVLI member, and therefore is forced to revamp their position to become more desirable.	There may be applicants (NON members of WAVLI) who present with similar abilities, willing to accept the work standards/conditions as is – a business has the right to hire the best applicant. The power WAVLI has comes with ensuring the public knows about OTP – consumers will know what to request to ensure the business contracts qualified service providers.

What OTP provides WAVLI members are protected titles – a tangible – we can promote, so the public can distinguish the real McCoy from proclaimed McCoy. The bottom line:

- **Protected titles/initials** are owned by the members - our skills and education are recognized by the province
- As owners we can use **protected titles/initials** to promote a specialized skill set – recognized by the province
- As owners, through WAVLI Membership status, **protected titles/initials** provide consumers assurance of a level of qualification

Administrative Requirements

With ownership, comes responsibility. For WAVLI to take action on any complaints related to malpractice, and the unauthorized use of titles/initials the following documents had to be revised to fall in line with the OTP standards:

- WAVLI Complaints and Discipline Policies and Procedures
- WAVLI Occupational Title Protection Policies and Procedures

This did require the assistance of our lawyer who put together the drafts of both docs. The

committee’s job was to review the documents to ensure the legalese met with the reality of practice for interpreters and for the volunteers that run WAVLI. Once edited and formatted the documents were ready for ratification. These documents are now available on the WAVLI website.

There were numerous other administrative items that required attending: updating the website, revising promotional materials, working with AVLIC to ensure their understanding of decision making and it’s relationship to OTP, etc. This work continues on a day-to-day basis.

Education of the Public

OTP was granted in July of 2011. At that point, the major push was reaching an understanding of what OTP meant in practice – educating members – and beginning a process of letting the public know.

The initial promotions (July 2011 – fall of 2012 approx) included:

Council of Service Providers (CSP)	CSP meet several times a year. It is comprised of several different agencies/associations/organizations that provide services to d/Deaf and hard of hearing persons (i.e. Wellbeing Program, Deaf Access Office, Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Family Network for Deaf Children, Medical Interpreting Services, Community Interpreting Services, Family Network for Deaf Children, etc.). WAVLI has representation at this meeting and was able to promote OTP officially to main stakeholders of interpreting services
Interpreter Education Programs (IEP)	Letter was forwarded to all IEPS across Canada to let them know what OTP in BC means for their graduates – assuring the programs their graduates would meet the criteria for attaining WAVLI Membership and thus qualify to use protected titles with the province of BC
Post-secondary Communication Access Services	Letter was sent via PCAS to Post-secondary institution disability services coordinators in charge of contracting interpreting services to alert them of the OTP and what it means for them

The completion of the previously mentioned documents meant we had policies and procedures to begin a more aggressive promotion of OTP (Fall 2012 – present and on-going). The largest initiative to date being the K-12 System:

Initial formal announcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2013 - Letter of introduction sent (mail and email) to all special education contacts around the province including the Ministry – 101 contacts total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6 letters returned to sender and 10 emails returned undeliverable – majority received ○ PLUSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ - Received a response from the Ministry almost immediately. While the tone was somewhat resistant, the response for the most part confirmed what we already stated. Speedy reply was incredibly optimistic – indicating we were indeed heard. ▪ Increased contact from resource teachers wanting assistance with appropriate wording for postings
Follow-up announcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2013 - Follow-up email letter sent to the same group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12 emails returned undeliverable, suggesting majority received
CAEDHH-BC Annual Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 25, 2013 - Representation at the CAEDHH-BC annual conference in Kelowna – networking and promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set up table circulated brochures ○ Established connections with district persons who may have received above communications and offered support
Job postings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School districts used to advertising with WAVLI have been open to changes in their advertising to meet OTP requirements – their objective is to fill the position, so there is a willingness to comply. • SUCCESS STORY – at the recent CAEDHH-BC Conference connected with one of the more remote districts who was seeking WAVLI’s help with filling a posting – they had successfully contracted a qualified candidate and were very pleased with the services

I would say in general there has been more a willingness to comply with OTP by HR departments – my sense is HR departments understand OTP and are open to direction. At least one district is checking regularly for WAVLI Membership status because they do use protected titles in the job descriptions.

Promotion to Parents

Family Community Services Immersion July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of a panel of service providers – allowed for an explanation of how OTP benefits parents and school districts – easier to find the qualifications you need – WAVLI Membership says it all • Opportunity to talk to parents directly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set up display – promoted qualifications of WAVLI
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	<p>Members and OTP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participated on a panel of service providers (panel included representation from Western Institute for Deaf and Hared pf Hearing, Provincial Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Well Being Program, Transition Program, BC Deaf Sports, etc.) – promoted WAVLI OTP as a means for districts to attain qualified interpreting services for their children.
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BC is lucky enough to have the Family Network for Deaf Children. OTP is an easy way for Parents to advocate for services for their children. If the individual they hire is a member of WAVLI they are assured of knowledge and skill.

Work still to do

Public service announcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of a short concise video to explaining OTP that can be broadcast - local TV, You Tube, etc.
Promotional Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have an ‘it-will-do’ brochure till we can get something better – need to coordinate more with PR committee to develop promotional materials.
Separate School Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of similar notifications about OTP as distributed to the public school system.
Post-secondary reconnection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward promotional materials as a follow up to the initial contact – members are reporting some instances of non-members of WAVLI working in these settings.

Back lash – if you could call it that?

There have been some comments that one might refer to as back lash. These are a few of the comments some of us have heard:

Comments heard...	WAVLI - Response
"WAVLI is being Elitist"	<p>WAVLI is an organization of professionals who have specific training. This specialized training is viewed by the province as necessary to provide a specific service thus WAVLI was granted Title Protection.</p> <p>However, with or without OTP, WAVLI is still an</p>

	organization of professionals providing a specialized service to the public. With or without OTP, WAVLI may still qualify as an elite group.
"where is the option to apply [for membership to WAVLI] based on prior experience and related education"	Before OTP WAVLI/AVLIC changed their bylaws so specific training was needed to attain membership status. However, Douglas College (BC IEP) does have a Prior Learning Assessment process. This will allow for an assessment of prior learning toward credits for a person to attaining the appropriate credential.
"WAVLI and Douglas College are biased against CODAs"	WAVLI has many CODA members. Douglas College has graduated many CODAs and currently has CODAs in their program.
"why should I need to go to school to continue doing what I do every day"	WAVLI has no authority to force someone to re-enter education. However, the place of employment does have the authority to change job requirements (adding WAVLI Membership status for example).
"ASL is my first language, why do I need to go back to school?"	IEP generally requires a first and second language prior to entering the program. The focus of IEP is to teach interpreting skills between the two languages.
"I can't afford the costs or time associated with going back to school"	Definitely a reality for many. WAVLI however, does not provide funding for education – it is a professional association for registered sign language interpreters.
"Those who work in the "system" and have seniority and know their jobs well and are now being told to get an education."	<p>Again, WAVLI does not have the authority to enforce additional education. The employer however does have this authority. Title protection protects the public, and if a public system is providing a service to the public they may indeed want to ensure the service providers are qualified.</p> <p>The states may be leading the way here. Washington state (I believe – would need to confirm) has a requirement for interpreters within education to attain a degree. Those within the system were provided an appropriate time frame to attain the required credentials – while they continue working for the system.</p>

Comments that we are receiving really are not related to Occupational Title Protection; however, the effect of OTP is being felt in the community. Word is beginning to get out there. While OTP does not provide WAVLI control over the work, users of interpreting services are beginning to understand they have the right to ask for qualified interpreters.

The biggest benefit OTP offers our profession is an avenue to promote the profession of interpreting without being viewed as padding our own pockets. OTP finally acknowledges the education and skill needed to be an interpreter. That recognition is proof for the hiring public.

WAVLI Professional Standards