

# Monroe County Language Access Coalition Deaf Monroe County Language Access Coalition

July 27, 2022

Diana Pryntz, Executive Director  
Deaf Refugee Advocacy Inc  
POB 10335  
Rochester, NY 14610

Dear Ms. Pryntz:

Monroe County Language Access Coalition (MCLAC) is pleased to provide this letter of support in support of Deaf Refugee Advocacy (DRA)'s response to the Monroe County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Opportunities RFP. Since its formation, DRA has offered essential on-going community support for extremely at-risk citizens within the Monroe County area: deaf refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers (RIAs).

DRA's project, if funded through the ARPA Funding Opportunity, will have a significant impact on reducing barriers faced by deaf, deafblind and hard-of-hearing RIAs that were made evident and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These systemic barriers, which include but are not limited to language, cultural, and accessibility, can be overcome through DRA's efforts to provide programming on language and cultural competency, health, safety, and employment to individuals and their families. As a result of these sign language-centric services, deaf RIAs' skills, support networks, and sense of belonging will increase, engaging them as equitable and contributing members of the Monroe County community.

Full funding of DRA's ARPA submission will significantly meet the needs of a population that has been historically underserved, due to their unique intersectionalities of people who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers. MCLAC believes in the importance of DRA's work and the ultimate impact it aims to achieve. By addressing these inequities, DRA's transformational approach will ultimately benefit deaf RIAs, their families, and the community members, employers, and service providers they engage with, strengthening Monroe County for all.

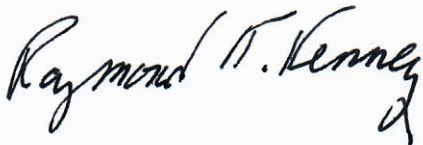
I am one of the co-chairs of MCLAC and have served as the chair of Deaf MCLAC for the past year. Deaf MCLAC has worked collaboratively with DRA, bringing information about the various situations Deaf RIAs face to the general

meetings of MCLAC. I have appreciated all the times you have helped heightened members' awareness of the difficulties Deaf people may be facing in each of their venues. DRA has done a tremendous amount of work with the RIA population and we value the information shared with us about barriers which still exist.

My own experience with DRA volunteers has been in court where I work as a court interpreter for Deaf RIAs. It has been a significant asset to have you or other volunteers accompany clients in court. You have helped my work as I try to make information accessible in Sign Language, especially when clients are still learning American Sign Language.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond T. Kenney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a stylized "K".

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