



Donor FAQs

Q. What is Project Steno?

A. Project Steno is laser-focused on one goal: Get students into court reporting school and graduate them in a timely manner into the field.

Step 1 – Getting the right students into court reporting school

Step 2 – Sending those promising students to the right court reporting programs

Step 3 – Reducing the cost of court reporting tuition for students

Step 4 – Monitoring Project Steno students for adequate progress

Q. How is Project Steno different from previous initiatives to attract people to court reporting?

A. Our plan addresses the three principal barriers to attracting students: people don't know about our field; the lack of schools in one's area; and the cost of schooling. We plan to create a professionally produced video telling our story, describing the opportunity, so young people know about us. We will invite prospective students to meet our requirements in order to determine students most likely to succeed. Students who meet our requirements will be offered tuition assistance.

Q. Why does Project Steno believe its plan will be effective?

A. Initially, we will connect NCRA's A-to-Z Program "graduates" and as many students as possible from the numerous closed court reporting programs with a dynamic court reporting/captioning program. We add to that the requirement that every student utilize approved training tools such as Realtime Coach for structured and measurable practice outside of class. Each individual student receives coaching on their individual impediments to speed-building identified through their practice and testing. We will provide tuition assistance paid directly to the training program on behalf of Project Steno students from inception to completion. Each Project Steno student will be monitored by a member of the Project Steno team. We ensure that money and time are not wasted due to lack of focused practice through our ongoing interaction with each program.

Q. Isn't it too late for this kind of project?

A. Actually, this is a great time to be promoting court reporting. Students with degrees are struggling to find employment and are faced with thousands of dollars of student loan debt. The expansion of captioning and CART, coupled with the increasing need for

freelance and official reporters, has led to a nationwide demand for our skills. Project Steno is uniquely positioned to get students into training and then out to meet that growing demand!

The message we have for prospective students is the right message at the right time: a white-collar, six-figure-income career for men and women, without the need of a four-year college degree and the attendant student debt that entails. We will be opening the eyes of young men and women (and their parents) to the startling opportunity that exists for them in our time-honored profession. No glass ceiling! One pay scale, for both men and women! We'll have eager students jumping at the chance to be a court reporter, to do good, to have variety and portability of career. And once that ball is rolling, the word will spread, the students will come, young reporters will graduate into the field – and the tide will begin to turn! It's an exciting prospect for all of us, and we need your buy-in to make it reality.

[Watch video about Project Steno.](#)

Q. Are contributions to Project Steno tax deductible?

A. Yes! Project Steno is the trademark of Project to Advance Stenographic Reporting, Inc., a Delaware non-profit corporation in the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status.

Q. How does the A-to-Z Program fit into your plan? Isn't A-to-Z doing essentially what you want to do?

A. The A-to-Z Program has taken off like wildfire due to the grassroots efforts of volunteer reporters across the U.S., and we want to build on its success. Young folks "graduate" from an A-to-Z Program eager to enroll in school. Then what? That's where Project Steno comes in.

Upon completion of an application and the required accompanying documentation, we connect them with a dynamic court reporting/captioning program, and – this is a big deal – we will subsidize their tuition and continue to monitor their progress to ensure they receive the learning tools and the coaching they need to succeed. In other words, Project Steno will make it easy for a student to assess their options in schools, show them what it'll cost, offer a tuition subsidy, and let them know we'll continue to monitor their progress in school – because we want them to succeed and graduate into the field.

Q. What are the fundraising goals of Project Steno?

A. Our goal is to provide tuition assistance to 200 students in our first year, 2018. What will that cost? The short answer is \$500,000. To make that happen, we need your financial support. The future of our profession depends on it!

Q. Have you asked NCRA to provide financial support for Project Steno?

A. Yes. The Project Steno team made a lengthy presentation to the NCRA board. After much discussion, including numerous emails and phone conferences with NCRA over a two-month period, President Christine Willette wrote us an email that said, among other

things, "Due to our fiduciary and fiscal responsibilities to NCRA, the Board feels we do not have the ability to participate at the level requested."

Q. What will Project Steno spend its money on?

A. Our principal expense will be tuition assistance to students. Startup costs are considerable, including legal costs involved with setting up our 501(c)(3) and hiring an administrator to run the day-to-day operations of receiving, compiling and verifying student applications, communicating with the students, the schools and training programs, Realtime Coach and monitoring the interaction between students/programs/RTC. Eventually, we'd like to hire a professional studio to create a marketing video.

Q. Who is being paid in connection with Project Steno?

A. Our lawyer; The Varallo Group LLC as the project administrator; the schools/training programs; Realtime Coach. There may also be expenses related to marketing to supplement the grassroots efforts of the A-to-Z Programs and increase the number of potential students. The four founders have contributed substantial money to Project Steno (see the Support Us page). The Varallo Group LLC has not been paid anything at this point, but will receive compensation in the future to be the project administrator.

Q. What kind of marketing plan do you have?

A. We will leverage the success of the A-to-Z Program to create a pipeline of students. We will use marketing tools we develop to create awareness of Project Steno. We will encourage state associations, freelance court reporting firms and captioning firms, and all interested freelance/official reporters and captioners to use our tools. We will use social media, our website and meetings and conferences with firm owners, captioners, freelance reporters and groups of official reporters to increase awareness of the availability of tuition assistance to potential students they know and desire to support.

Our future plans include creating a professional quality video about our profession, which will be posted on our website – and offered free to any reporter or agency who wants to post it on their website! We will encourage state associations to use our video and word of mouth to create awareness of Project Steno. We will broadcast all of this to high schools, civic groups, and the military.

Q. Where will you recruit students?

Our initial funds and efforts will be spent on A-to-Z graduates. We will encourage and cooperate with reporters who are running A-to-Z Programs to make sure their "graduates" know about the tuition assistance Project Steno offers. Next, we will contact students from closed schools and, potentially, students transferring from schools who are currently in teach-out mode and are no longer enrolling new students (a group that continues to increase in number). We will also cooperate with NCRA and all willing court reporting schools/programs, reporters and captioners to contact former court reporting students

who dropped out for one reason or another to let them know what Project Steno can offer them and then to assess their potential for further training.

When it's completed, we will disseminate our video as widely as possible, generating word-of-mouth inquiries from folks who've just learned who we are and what we have to offer. Likewise, social media attention will direct interested men and women to Project Steno to have their questions answered.

Q. Does Project Steno plan to make attending court reporting school tuition-free?

A. No. But we can let students know how much tuition assistance we can offer them. In some cases, our tuition assistance will be very substantial relative to their total cost to attend school.

Q. Will you pay students to go to school?

A. No. We will pay the school/program directly, on an ongoing basis. Also, we will monitor their progress on a monthly basis to ensure continued tuition support. The students will be required to meet milestones to continue to receive the promised tuition assistance, i.e., 140 wpm by end of first year, 225 wpm by end of year two.

Q. What bricks-and-mortar schools and/or online programs will be eligible to participate in Project Steno?

A. Any school whose program meets our goals and is geared to graduate students in two years will be welcome to participate. We require students to reach 140 wpm by end of year one. We require programs to use training tools such as Realtime Coach and provide individual coaching based on each student's specific needs.

Q. Doesn't NCRA already have approved schools? Why not just use them?

A. NCRA does have a list of approved schools – but not all those schools promote our primary requirement, i.e., a program geared to graduate students in two years. We are happy to work with any approved school that supports our goals.

Q. How many students do you plan to enroll? How many graduates per year?

The goal is to enroll 200 students in 2018, our first full year of operation, and graduate 50 percent of them after two years. (If we had 200 students enrolled, each receiving \$2,500/year in tuition assistance, that would be \$500,000 in program costs.) In year two, 2019, our goal is to enroll 500 students.

Q. Are students who are already enrolled in a program eligible for tuition assistance from Project Steno?

A. Yes, for students in schools that have closed enrollments and are "teaching out" their current students.

Q. Are there state regulatory issues regarding online schools? How will you know that schools you are working with are operating within the law?

A. Each state has requirements for schools, both bricks-and-mortar schools and online

schools, to operate. It is the legal obligation of each school to comply with state (and federal) requirements.

Basics

- Court Reporting Careers
- Court Reporting Profiles
- Getting Started

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