

# LANGUAGE

How to Develop a Language Access Program





# Hello & Welcome

In the United States, it is estimated that around 61 million people use another language other than English in their day to day lives. Many services are not prepared to assist anyone who speaks English as a second language at home beyond the big two of Spanish and English. As more and more diverse cultures enter the country, the gap in communications needs to be filled to provide the information that these groups of people need in their lives.

This e-book will show you how to develop a language access program for your school, local government, or organization.

## Take a Survey

Most [major metropolitan areas](#) with at least 120 foreign languages are being spoken at home. To assist anyone of these households, you need to know how much of a specific language is in your school district, city limits or service area. LEP (Limited English Person) prefers to be addressed in their primary language rather than use a language they are still trying to understand.

Sending out a survey to the populous in your area is the first step in being able to provide the assistance they need. Making a survey that is easy to use, that has been written in the [15 most popular languages](#) for your state, and has a return envelope are vital. Lowering the barriers to entry to get this survey completed is paramount.

Once you know who you are serving and what their language needs are you can begin to gather the resources you need to address this data.

## Develop a Task Force

Identify the key stakeholders in your organization to design, implement, and support language access. It is important to involve key members early on in your organization to ensure success. Far too often, language support is never addressed in a proactive manner and increases stress, liability risk, and can be costly. By taking the time to involve a task force from the start, you can implement a plan that is effective and adopted by all.

## Identify the Resources You Have Available

You have the data from your survey, it's chalk full of great information, but now you need to act on it. Turning this data into usable information will require you to have someone be able to translate it. There are a variety of ways to do this, but the following three are the usual avenue of approach:

1. Look at your staff and see if there are any bilingual employees.
2. What local community resources can you access? Check out non-profit operations or cultural groups that serve the language that is in the majority for your area.
3. Find a professional language company that can quickly and effortlessly get you moving forward (We nominate ourselves, of course)





## What are Your Priorities and Setting?

Taking the data, having someone look it over who speaks the language, now you need to figure out what is the best way serve this audience. During this step, you need to look at the goals you are trying to accomplish for your local government, your business or your students. Through this lens, you can begin to see how you can make language options available to the public. Here are some quick thoughts to get you started:

If you're a local government

- Which forms need translation? Which are the most popular?
- Is your website able to be read in multiple languages?
- Do you have translators available for the most popular languages in your area?

## How to Develop a Language Access Program

If you're a business or organization

- Is your business advertising in the language that is prominent in your area?
- Are people coming into a store or are you only online? Is either environment able to be used by LEPs?
- Do you have any salespeople on staff who speak the area's most popular languages?

If you're a school

- Is your phone system accessible in different languages?
- Do you have teachers or staff who can talk to LEP parents?
- Are handouts available for LEP parents?
- Is your website able to be read in the most common languages in your district?

The priorities you need to accomplish should be utilized in the setting in which your work is taking place. They should be integrated into the location, so when anyone walks into the building or logs on to your website feels comfortable and can find what they're looking for without having to wander or walk away and not receive the service or support they need.



# Understand the Risks and Rewards of Providing Language Access

When taking on the task of providing language access, you will undoubtedly run into problems. These can range from translation issues to something a bit more complicated like being compliant with the law. Making sure you are conforming to the local municipal codes for the field in which you are working is vital. Case in point, California [passed a law](#) about this very topic in regards toward the healthcare field. Knowing what is required by law will help you make the right choices and waste as little time as possible because ignoring compliance can lead to fines or even [lawsuits](#).

The incentive for implementing a language access plan is two-fold: reduce the liability risk by being compliant with the law and increase satisfaction with your limited English speaking consumers. A few of these rewards include:

- Getting into a new market you never knew existed.
- Increased positive experiences from your constituents visiting public buildings.
- Letting a parent feel like they are involved in their child's learning.

There will be bumps along the way, but know that your hard work is worth it. Just remember, you should consult with a professional in getting language services up and running.

## Call In the Professionals

There are usually two routes when it comes to a project like this:

- Set to work and learn on the fly
- Work with a professional

We know what it takes to get language support like this up and running. Our 27 years of experience and support of 200 languages are available to anyone who is asking for help.

Call us for any fire drills you might have or litigious problems that have popped up. We can help from day one or even having to jump in half-way through a project. Setting up language access can be very stressful, so trust us to be able to help you out when you're in a pinch.

We can integrate our translation and interpreting services into your program in a way that is proactive and looks ahead for anything you might have missed.

Our mission is to empower our clients to communicate across linguistic and cultural barriers and enrich the communities we serve. We believe there is no substitute for accurate and culturally relevant language support.

Have translation or interpreting needs? Want to learn more about your language support options? Contact our team for assistance: Office: 949-733-2446 Email: [staff@languagenetworkusa.com](mailto:staff@languagenetworkusa.com)



# Executive Summary

## Take a Survey

Find out what languages are being used in your area so you can get the proper resources together and not waste time or money on unnecessary features.

## Identify the Resources You Have Available

Look within your organization to see if anyone can speak the languages you have in your immediate area. If you don't have anyone, reach out to a professional service who can help.

## What Are Your Priorities and Setting?

Knowing what you're working with, keep in mind what you're trying to achieve be it increase in sales or a more inclusion in your community. Additionally, think about what is the primary point of access people are going to have to your organization. Are the buildings displaying the various languages in your area? Is your website able to be read in anything else but English?

## Understand the Risks and Rewards of Providing Language Access

Setting anything like this up takes time, and mistakes can be made. Know the local, state, and federal laws in regards to language access in your field of work to help avoid any legal problems you might run into along the way.

## Call In the Professionals

Language Network has been in this field for over 27 years and has access to over 200 language professionals. We know how to do this work and get your organization up and running with minimal issues. Contact us today at 949-733-2446 or email us at [staff@languagenetworkusa.com](mailto:staff@languagenetworkusa.com) and let's get started!

Contact Us