



Technical Assistance
for Local Planning
HOUSING

Regional Housing Technical Assistance: Engaging Limited-English-Speaking Communities on Local Housing Plans

Communicating in multiple languages is essential to inclusive public participation in the diverse Bay Area. Cities and counties may access special funds through ABAG's Regional Housing Technical Assistance Program to augment local translations budgets via their county collaboratives. Coordinators can assist in submitting requests. Below are some tips for ensuring your entire community can participate in housing element updates.



Checklist: Best Practices for Languages Translations

- ✓ Keep it simple! Ensure that your English language is clear. Avoid technical terms, acronyms and jargon. Alert translators of complex terms or concepts.
- ✓ Train staff to be alert to and anticipate the needs of Limited-English Proficient participants at meetings and workshops. Prioritize hiring staff fluent in languages other than English and who reflect the population make up of your community.
- ✓ Plan ahead to be inclusive. Translations take time. Be sure to include this important step in your production schedule for public engagement.
- ✓ Review U.S. Census or American Community Survey data to determine significant groups within your community who speak English less than very well, and translate vital documents and web content that your entire community should know/learn about accordingly (for more technical documents, consider translating the overview or executive summary). Be ready to translate any materials upon request.
- ✓ Rather than conducting one community meeting in multiple languages (which can be confusing and distracting), conduct several meetings entirely in alternative languages (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin), and have interpreters there to translate back into English for staff or elected officials.
- ✓ Partner with community- or faith-based groups to engage non-English speakers.
- ✓ Consider audio- or video-recording personal interviews with non-English speakers at your events, then translate the recording to include into your record of comments.

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- ✓ If possible, translate news releases and outreach materials for non-English communication networks, such as radio, television, newspapers and social media. Some networks might translate a simple notice for you, so be sure to send your meeting notices to them even if you are not able to get them translated in advance.
- ✓ When conducting surveys or focus groups, offer the information in other languages. Make an effort to recruit and include non-English speakers by asking community groups and local media to share; or distribute paper copies of the survey at community events or locations where the community members you are trying to reach already gather, such as community grocery stores or in-language religious services.
- ✓ Contract with one or more translations firms (including American Sign Language interpreters for the hearing-impaired, or readers for the visually impaired) to attend meetings or translate written materials on short notice. Ask staff who are native speakers in non-English languages, if available, to review translators' work for accuracy.
- ✓ Include information on meeting notices on how to request translation assistance, including the need to request it ahead of time; be sure to include specifics, such as how many days ahead, where to direct requests via email, phone, web, etc. (sample wording follows).

English

Do you need an interpreter or any other assistance in order to participate? Please call us at (insert telephone number here). We require three days' notice in order to provide reasonable accommodation.

Chinese (Traditional)

為了便於參加，您需要口譯員或其他任何協助嗎？請致電 xxx-xxx-xxxx。聯絡我們。我們需要提前3天通知才能提供合理的輔助服務。

Filipino

Kailangan mo ba ng interpreter o anumang iba pang tulong upang lumahok? Mangyaring tumawag sa amin sa xxx-xxx-xxxx Kailangan namin ng tatlong araw na abiso upang magkaloob ng sapat na mga bagay na kailangan.

Spanish

¿Necesitas un intérprete o cualquier otra asistencia para participar? Comunícate al xxx-xxx-xxxx. Necesitamos aviso con tres días de anticipación para proporcionar asistencia razonable.

Vietnamese

Bạn có cần thông dịch viên hoặc bất cứ trợ giúp nào khác để tham gia hay không? Vui lòng gọi cho chúng tôi ở số xxx-xxx-xxxx. Chúng tôi đòi hỏi phải được thông báo trước ba ngày để cung cấp các thu xếp hợp lý.

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