Pet Support Services
Offering Pet Support Materials in Multiple Languages

Important Considerations for Offering Services in Multiple Languages

- Does your organization have staff or volunteers who are directly from the community you are serving, know the community well, and speak the most commonly spoken language(s) in your community?
- How can your organization focus on hiring future staff who speak the language(s) that are present in your community and are willing to serve as translators?
- Who within your team of volunteers speaks the language(s) that are present in your community and is willing to serve as a translator?

Why Translate Materials Into Other Languages?

It is crucial to identify the different languages spoken in your community and provide services for these families. Many community members learn about service providers by word of mouth and if your organization is not providing resources and service information in other commonly spoken languages, you are missing a huge population within your own backyard. Having inclusive, multi-language resources allows even more support for the entire community.

Translating a service flyer or temporary foster agreement into another language is not always easy, especially when considering the different variations of one language category. For example, not all Spanish-speaking communities use the same vernacular. The Spanish spoken by Cuban-Americans in South Florida is different from the Spanish spoken by Mexican-Americans in Southern California! There are variations in the use of certain words as well as idiomatic expressions, so it's important to ensure service descriptions reflect accordingly. This may require evaluating multiple translation program options, inclusive of having a person from that specific community, to achieve the desired result.

Where to Begin

Option 1

There are many different free translating websites available online, such as [Google Translate](#) and [Microsoft Translator](#). With each, you can easily type in what you are trying to translate and it will provide you with a translation.

However, these translations aren't always 100% accurate. So once you have used the internet to translate, it is best practice to have the translation reviewed by at least 2-3 different staff members, volunteers, or community members from different backgrounds and lived experiences (i.e. educational backgrounds and socio-economic statuses) who speak the language. You want to make sure the translation is fully accessible to anyone in your community who may need it. By having others review the translation, this process can help ensure that the message is clear, regardless of a person's education or economic background.

Option 2
Check out this [list of organizations and platforms that offer translations for nonprofits](). Some of these organizations offer their services for free with services provided by actual translators. However, as with any open platform, the quality of service can vary widely, so make sure to still have a native speaker review the translated materials before sharing publicly.

Here are some examples of translated materials from English to Spanish created by HASS collaborators:

- [Dallas Animal Services Housing Resources in English and Spanish]()
- [San Diego Humane Society Mobile Clinic Flyer in English and Spanish]()
- [Denver Animal Protection Displacement/Eviction Relief Program (Temp Boarding) in English and Spanish]()
- [Denver Animal Protection Displacement/Eviction Relief Program (Pet Supplies/Services) in English and Spanish]()
- [Pima Animal Care Center bag insert for food distribution in English and Spanish]()

If your website software does not provide an option for viewers to experience your website in another language, check out this step-by-step alternative on [How to Turn Translation On or Off in Chrome]().

Additional Considerations

ESL
When translating materials, consider integrating additional accessibility options such as the [English to ASL (American Sign Language) Translation Standards]() and adding audio and subtitled variations of materials for public use.

Screen Readers
Another level of accessibility to consider is for those that utilize screen readers. Ensure your digital materials such as [website](), [email](), and [social media]() are screen reader friendly. Examples

of basic best practices include providing alternative text/visual descriptions, ensuring information is available as text and not just in images, and being mindful of the contrast ratio of colors.

Track Your Progress
Consider utilizing a [tracking sheet](#) to record which documents need translation, who is responsible, and goal completion dates to help you determine the resources needed to complete translations across the organization. To gain buy-in for additional resources, consider watching this [how-to presentation](#) for translation ideas and best practices *(including [this language map application](#) and [this PowerPoint accessibility guide](#))*.