



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH
Office of Health Disparities

Translation Toolkit

This toolkit is intended to serve as guidance for state and local health department personnel involved in developing and translating non-English language materials.

Final draft, 09/17/2013



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INTRODUCTION

Overview

Nearly one in six Utah residents over age five speaks a language other than English at home (14.9%, Census 2011). Of these, 36% speak English “less than very well.” The development and dissemination of accurate, accessible health information is crucial to the success of Utah’s public health initiatives, campaigns, and programs. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is committed to making departmental services and resources accessible to all members of the public, and this Translation Toolkit (with accompanying *Translation Manual*) provides best practice guidance and resources to assist all UDOH and local health department (LDH) facilities and programs in providing written translation for non-English languages that are most likely to be encountered within the service area population.

Most Common Non-English Languages Spoken in Utah¹

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Spanish | 6. Vietnamese |
| 2. Pacific Islander (Samoan, Tongan, etc.) | 7. French |
| 3. Chinese | 8. Portuguese |
| 4. Native Tribal (Navajo/Diné, Ute, etc.) | 9. African (Somali, Dinka, etc.) |
| 5. German | 10. Korean |

Objectives

The following recommendations are intended to guide UDOH/LDH personnel through step-by-step procedures to ensure accurate, effective translations into non-English languages.

The *Toolkit* (and accompanying *Manual*) will help you:

- Anticipate and plan for translations that your program may need;
- Obtain optimal translation services through UDOH/LHD contracts;
- Reduce translational errors and potential miscommunications;
- Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate health materials;
- Assess the quality of translated documents prior to publication.

¹¹ US Census Bureau, 2011 ACS 1-year Estimates, “Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over.” Refer to *Translation Manual* pages 4 -5 for further information.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Definitions

Translation is the written conversion of *text* from one language to another.

Interpretation is the verbal conversion of *spoken word* from one language to another.

Contract translation providers are contracted by agencies to provide translation services.

Community-based translation is any translation service (including proofreading and independent review of translated materials) provided by community members who are not employed by a contract translation provider or UDOH/LDH.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act² prohibits all federally-funded programs from discriminating on the grounds of race, color, national origin, and limited English proficiency.

*Standards*³

It is strongly recommended that the translated materials be held to the following standards:

1. *Clarity, readability*: Material should be written at the appropriate health literacy level of the intended audience; original English text should be as clear and unambiguous as possible.
2. *Accuracy*: Translated text should contain the same meaning and content of the original English; avoid grammar mistakes and errors in punctuation, diacritics/accents, etc.
3. *Appropriateness*: Text should be inoffensive, culturally appropriate for the intended audience; illustrations, diagrams, and visuals should be relevant to the intended audience.

² Refer to *Translation Manual*, page 3 for further information.

³ Refer to *Translation Manual*, pages 7 -8 for further information.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURES

The following guidelines are recommended best practices which would ideally be applied to every UDOH/LDH translation project. These recommendations provide an effective framework which can be adapted and modified by any facility or program as needed.

*Preparing to Translate a Document*⁴

1. It is highly recommended that departmental facilities or programs identify a designated employee to oversee and coordinate translation-related matters within their respective facility or program; this task/role should ideally be included in the designated employee's Individual Performance Plan.
2. Anticipate and allocate time and funding for translation during program planning stages.
3. Proofread and finalize text in English before initiating translation into non-English language.
4. Identify a contract translation company to provide translation services.

*Translating a Document*⁵

1. Obtain and review itemized quote from contract translation company(ies).
2. Provide clear, specific instructions regarding the project and the intent of the messaging.
3. Document all requests and negotiated details in writing (save all correspondence/emails).
4. Provide translation company with list of relevant acronyms and any technical terms.

*Editing and Evaluating*⁶

1. Draft should be reviewed by at least one native speaker of the non-English language.
2. Instruct reviewers to use the *Quality Assessment Checklist* to proofread the draft.
3. Document the names of all translators and reviewers (if possible) for future reference.
4. Ensure that the finalized, edited draft is independently reviewed for accuracy, completion, and correct formatting before printing or publishing online.

⁴ Refer to *Translation Manual*, pages 9 – 10 for further information.

⁵ Refer to *Translation Manual*, pages 10 -11 for further information.

⁶ Refer to *Translation Manual*, pages 11 – 12 for further information.

Translation Checklist

Employees can use this checklist as a guide for developing translated documents.⁷

Prior to Translation:

- 1. Determine your target audience's language(s), health literacy level, etc.
- 2. Verify that your *finalized* document (in English) is clear, accurate, and appropriate.

Contracting a Translator:

- 1. Identify a suitable translation provider and request detailed, itemized quotes and anticipated timelines for translation and independent review.
- 2. Provide the translation provider with a list of relevant acronyms and definitions of technical terms.
- 3. Document all correspondence with translation provider, including the names or ID numbers of all translators and independent reviewers (if possible) for future reference.

Quality Assurance and Finalization:

- 1. Maintain open communication with translation provider to clearly communicate your expectations and requests throughout the translation and initial revision process.
- 2. Upon receiving completed translation, verify that applicable font files are included.⁸
- 3. Submit (A) the original English text, (B) the translated draft, and (C) the *Quality Assessment Form* to an independent reviewer for evaluation.
- 4. Make sure the final copy includes a citation of the title and translated language in English so that it can be identified by other employees.
- 5. Once typeset and formatted,⁹ maintain a backup copy of all materials, design elements, and foreign language fonts.

⁷ Refer to *Translation Manual*, page 9 for further instructions.

⁸ Note that some fonts and non-standard formats may warrant additional charges/pricing, refer to *Translation Manual*, page 12.

⁹ Refer to *Translation Manual*, page 11 for information on document finalization.

Quality Assessment



Employee should complete the upper portion of this page prior to submitting this form with English and translated drafts to the independent reviewer for proofreading and comment.¹⁰

Date: _____ Document Title: _____

UDOH Program: _____

Translation Provider: _____ Language: _____

Please check the appropriate box as you evaluate the attached document:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Integrity: The translated text and the English text convey the same message/tone to the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Accuracy: The translated text is an accurate, correct translation from the English text.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Neutrality: The translated text can be easily understood by its intended audience regardless of age, region, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Grammar: The translated text is free of grammatical/punctuation errors, missing accents, diacritics, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Appropriateness: The translated text and visual elements are appropriate and inoffensive to the intended audience.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

How do you rate this translation overall?

Excellent Good Average Below Average Unacceptable

Comments: _____

Reviewer's Name _____ **Signature:** _____

¹⁰ Refer to *Translation Manual*, page 11 for further instructions.