

RAW TRANSCRIPT

HAMILTON
TRANSLATIONS, LANGUAGE TAGLINES AND STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING
FREQUENTLY USED LANGUAGES
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>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: So it's 1:00. I'm just sending a few reminders.

>> INTERPRETER: If you will give me another moment, I will try to help my team get in.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: All right. Let me see my screen here. We're waiting on some of the panelists, but we still have time to get them in.

If John or Jesus, who are my colleagues, can you see if you can send an email to Guadalupe, perhaps. We can wait a few more minutes.

>> CRAIG MARKVA: I'm not in a rush. I don't have anything for another 30 minutes. We're good.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Let's start. It's two minutes after 1:00.

First of all, thank you, everybody, for joining us today. We're very excited to have the first session of the forum for 2024.

My name is Montserrat Serra. I work at DMAS as the civil rights coordinator. DMAS is the state agency. Our full name is Department of Medical Assistance Services.

Today, we'll be sharing about Translations, Language Taglines and Strategies for Identifying Frequently Used Languages.

For those that don't know me or how I started with this initiative, just a few words to say that I started with the agency back in 2019 when DMAS had a need to hire a new position. It's something new that was not in agency, which was the civil rights coordinator position. I've been with the agency working with the efforts of disability access to make sure that members of the Medicaid

program, applicants to the Medicaid program, that they're able to access information. Mainly those that have disabilities or they are limited proficient.

The reason why we're here today is because part of the initiative was to develop for the agency, DMAS, a language and disability access plan.

When we put together the plan, which is publicly shared on the DMAS website, we found some future initiatives. One of them was a forum, or a way to engage with stakeholders in other organizations to work together to kind of like find solutions to problems and common language to disability access barriers.

That's how this initiative started, and we completed last year, in 2023, two forums already. For 2024, today, you are attending the very first one.

And our goal is just, as a team, all of us, that we can collaborate together so that we can find and talk and discuss and find solutions to the common language and disability access barrier that our clients/members find when trying to access our programs.

But let me move on to the logistics.

Here is a little bit about what is going to happen today. Let's make sure that everyone is aware that we have two American Sign Language interpreters. So those who need interpretation services, they can pin the interpreter. If you have difficulties, let us know, but the interpreter is being pinned, so it should be accessible by everyone.

We also have closed captioning available as well as CART services. CART services are being provided by Hamilton Relay, and there is a live captioner that is transcribing the events.

One of my colleagues, Jesus, will be posting the link. So those who want to follow with live transcription can access that.

Again, I forgot to mention, but this is a good opportunity.

Thank you very much to my team members, Jesus Perez and John Stanwix. Thank you very much for being here today.

We also have the chat that is available to everyone, if during the presentation you have any questions that are related to the content, please put it in the chat.

While I'm doing this presentation, I will also encourage everyone -- as we have a large, diverse audience -- to put your name in the chat and the organization you represent or who you represent. I think this is going to be very helpful for all of us to know how diverse of a group we are and how we are all working together to make the language and disability access efforts easier for everyone.

An important item, if you experience any technical difficulties, there is an email that you can send any questions, which is the civil rights coordinator at DMAS.Virginia.gov.

I want to take you on a very quick summary of what's going to happen today. Usually, our forums are a two-hour event. They are

formatted or have the same sections. We try to be consistent with that. We found that this is very helpful. We start with an opening keynote. Today, we have Mr. Markva, who will be kicking off the event.

Then we'll have a brief presentation that's going to be about translation, tag lines, and implementation. That's going to be completed by me today.

And the most important or what I find a very engaging section on the forum is the panel discussion today.

Today, we'll have three speakers that will present some very important information and very exciting information about translations and how they implement those for their agencies.

At the very end, if you want to hold all of your questions, Jesus is helping me collect the questions. Then, at the very end of the event, we will address those that we have time to address. If there are any questions that we are not able to address because of time, we will post it later.

At the very end, we'll have the closing. I also forgot to mention that this event is being recorded. So please note that this has been recorded. The recording is going to be loaded at a later time, once we have completed all the materials.

All right.

So let me introduce you to Craig Markva, Legislative Liaison. He's our opening keynote speaker. It is an honor for me to have him. When I first thought about inviting him over for a speaker, I thought he would be fun and engaging, and he's going to inspire us. I know how he has so much information that he can share with us, that it's going to make us feel like our work is worth statewide.

Craig Markva joined the administration and eventually became director. In 1999, Craig began working at the Department of Medical Assistance Services. He served in various capacities, working into the DMAS management team until secretary asked him to join the HHR team in the

Craig is going to give us a speech.

Craig, the floor is yours.

>> CRAIG MARKVA: Thank you so much, Montserrat Serra.

All the advances were pretty much science fiction back in 2019, when you look at it. It was all very aspirational. It's nice to see that we've actually taken a giant leap forward.

I felt like I was coming full circle.

As Montserrat noted, she was hired as the first civil rights coordinator. She joined Sarah and John, who are also on today, who are quite familiar with the demands and requirements focused on timely response to member and constituent inquiries as well as appeals and eligibility questions.

We were not aware of all that needed to be addressed.

We realized that Medicaid was at the center of health care and

civil rights.

We recognize that our commitment to ensuring the meaning of the phrase no wrong door was more than just words.

Maybe the person couldn't see or hear the person at the door or even access the building or our shiny new website.

We had to modify a system that had been around for more than 50 years.

I started at the agency in '99. Since then, many changes, updates, upgrades to the program and updates to DMAS have been made. Many exchanges improve the experience, but we could never deliver all of these services by ourselves. We had significant partnerships with agencies at the state and local levels. We recognized no one agency can deliver health care services to 2 million people on their own.

After beginning my new job in the office of the secretary of HR, I was told that once the 2022 session was over, I needed to research the progress of HR agency.

Crossing the finish line together is going to focus on assessing and ensuring all agencies had a plan to address these needs.

Our colleague, Terri Morgan, was a huge help in providing us with valuable advice and insight on how to get a project this size off the ground and build something that would address the various populations that we all serve.

We eventually entered into an agreement with VCU partnership for persons with disabilities. We kicked off the access project to demonstrate that the Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to ensuring language access and reasonable accommodations.

(Reading)

>> CRAIG MARKVA: By mid-March, all HHR agencies had completed a landscape assessment that provided us with an appraisal of each agency's ability to deliver meaningful access and opportunities that need further development.

We began a deep dive, including meeting with agency leadership as well as visiting local agency sites across the Commonwealth. We also included interviews with people with disabilities and limited English proficiencies.

These lived experience interviews with people who access services included SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, child support, early intervention, et cetera.

They spoke with people on the frontlines, local agency staff who serve people, who thoughtfully engage with the team and stakeholder groups that support and advocate on behalf of individuals with limited English proficiency and disabilities.

The team also spoke with 20 Virginians who either need accommodations themselves or whose loved ones needed accommodations to navigate the services.

We had a local leader that shared their perspective on ASL

interpreters. They have taken steps to ensure that trauma-informed contracts are prepared to adequately translate.

(No discernible speaker)

>> CRAIG MARKVA: We were lucky most people struggle, have no idea what to do or where to go. Having someone speak or language is the only reason we were able to get services.

These two experiences may be the exception, but the goal is for them to be the standard.

Accommodations being available provided consistently no matter who you are or where you live in Virginia. We're currently in phase three of the project, working with the agency for short and long-term.

I have to mention the F word, finding.

We don't want to suffer state or federal consequences which would result in punitive actions. Our collaborative efforts will yield good fruit, and we will succeed in this endeavor. I will tell you now that this will be one of the projects that live on. I can think of a lot of projects I worked on at DMAS over the years that five or 10 years later were changed, and we made other adjustments, but I can tell you right now that this effort will have a lasting effect and impact five to 10 to 20 years down the road.

So I know today's presentation and sharing between panelists will help all the organizations today improve their programs.

So thank you for your commitment as public services -- excuse me -- public servants to the goal of providing access for all Virginians regardless of their native language or disability.

Thank you. I hope you enjoy today.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Thank you so much for those words.

As I said, you are an inspiration. I believe you have been in your position, your current position, what? A couple of years now?

>> CRAIG MARKVA: Two and a half. Coming up on two and a half years.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: And the work you have already completed statewide with all the state agencies under your umbrella, it's amazing.

I don't know if everybody is familiar, was the HHR agencies have been working together with the secretary's office on the language and disability access. That priority has been placed on all these agencies, and everyone is collaborating together to make it happen.

It couldn't have been done without Craig.

So I appreciate it.

>> CRAIG MARKVA: Thank you. That's very kind of you. And I haven't done this all by myself.

The people I named, Montserrat, John, and Sarah and Terri helped pull me across the finish line in a lot of ways. Now a lot of other agencies have been coming onboard, and it gives me great hope for us completing this task. It's not going to happen overnight, but,

again, it's been really good.

>> INTERPRETER: I'm so sorry to interrupt.

Apparently my team interpreter is here. Her name is Amanda Horton. Currently her camera is blocked. So she's not able to take her turn, and it is time for her to take her turn.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Yeah. Jesus or John, are you able to see her on the list of attendees and bring her -- let me see -- and then I have Zowee. Also Zowee would have to be brought in as a presenter.

>> INTERPRETER: She's listed as "Interpreter-Amanda."

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Let me know if you're not able to because I should be able to bring her in.

After the inspiring words of Craig, we're going to move on to our presentation.

The reason why we're putting together this, there's so much work that is being done in language and disability access. Most of us, including myself, we were brought into this initiative without having much knowledge on how we can implement all these programs and services.

One of the reasons why I'm having this presentation is we can all learn from each other. There's so much work we're doing today. It's so helpful when we hear stories about how others are implementing all these efforts.

Today, my presentation is going to be about translation, tag lines, and implementation.

Just a quick overview of what we'll be presenting today. It's the language and disability access services requirements. That's what is going to apply to our agency. Each agency might have different requirements, in regards to language and disability access.

We will also provide information on the DMAS approach to language access, how some of the data we have collected, we can see the increasing trend of non-English languages. I'm sure some of your agencies have started experiencing that trend.

We will present how we have created system-generated notices for the Virginia Medicaid program in non-English languages.

We'll also walk you through the process with ad hoc translations at DMAS and the behind-the-scenes translation implementation that we have completed for the Virginia Medicaid program.

We'll also show you some examples on our REACH materials

We'll talk about tag lines. If you're not familiar, hopefully, after this present, you will know what those are. If you're familiar, you might have a little bit more information that you might not necessarily be aware.

Yeah, we will discuss what tag lines are and what are the purpose and examples and how the tag lines can be implemented.

So let's move on to the requirements.

Right here we have the legal framework in providing language

and disability access services, and understanding these laws is very important to ensure that services are not only affected but also compliant with federal regulations.

Again, please note that today, I'm just giving a general overview of the authority, it's the setting that Virginia Medicaid operates and that each of your organizations might have different release.

We suggest that you consult with your counsel for specific advice that may apply.

This is the framework.

As you're aware, Title VI of the civil right Act of 1964 was the fundamental law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, and programs and activities.

Situations are covered where failure to provide access to individuals who are not proficient in English can be seen as a form of discrimination based on national origin.

That's why this law is the mainframe that we operate on, as far as non-discrimination when we facilitate our programs or services.

Another important law is the executive order 13.166. This is to enforce Title VI. This addresses language access. It mandates that all recipients of federal funding must take reasonable steps to provide access to populations with limited English proficiency. This ensures this one is excluded from any important communication and there's no language barriers for them to access important information.

Moving on to disability access now, with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires the state and local governments to provide appropriate auxiliary aides and services to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities.

This is a very important piece of our approach to disability access as it emphasizes the need for adapting communication to meet diverse needs.

Section 157 of the Affordable Care Act builds on the previous regulations by specifically requiring entities to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs or activities by individuals.

If you're curious, there's more details on the outline and obligation to provide language assistance services such as interpreters and translated materials.

I put together this comparable chart on the left. It's from 2020 to the most recent data we have, which is 2023.

And then to the right, I put a chart are you can see the increase of languages, non-English languages within the Virginia state. I found that these two comparables were very important.

As you may see -- and if you're not able to see the data very close, for example, for the Virginia Medicaid language count, we can see that in 2020, we had over 95,845 members of the Virginia Medicaid

program that spoke other languages other than English.

In 2023, we have 148,023 individuals that reported that they speak a different language than English.

So it's a pretty significant increase. Very similarly, we can see the trend in the Virginia languages that are spoken.

In 2020, there were 1,311,000 individuals who spoke other languages. In 2022, 1,355,000 approximately individuals that spoke other languages.

The reason why I wanted to showcase this data is just because I wanted to illustrate that there is a need, not only with the Virginia Medicaid program but in general for the state of Virginia.

There's a need to assess opportunities to provide language access as the population continues to increase.

We continue to meet, and we continue to put efforts to address barriers that these individuals might encounter when they're trying to access programs and services.

The next slide that I put together with some interesting data is based on the language counts. This one is broken down on the specific languages that are most frequently used in the Virginia Medicaid program.

You will be able or I can read to you some of the numbers

The Spanish speakers are the most frequent population besides the non-English. We have over 112,000 individuals in the Virginia Medicaid program whose preferred language is Spanish.

The next most frequently used language among Virginia Medicaid is Arabic. Over 5,000 individuals.

And then the Vietnamese language is spoken among Virginia Medicaid members for a total of close to 4,000 members.

When we were assessing the language landscape with the Virginia Medicaid program, that was an initiative that started happening before I even came into the agency.

It was determined that it was a priority that we wanted to communicate with these individuals in their own language, in particular for information that is very vital to access our services.

Those communications are, for example, eligibility notices where they are being informed if they qualify for the Virginia Medicaid program or if they need to provide us with additional information.

So the agency, DMAS, made an effort to ensure that those communications for those individuals that are among the five most frequently used languages, we were able to receive those notifications in their own language.

Again, those are very vital communications that members receive, and if they don't understand or they don't know how to access that information, it might represent that they might not receive coverage that they might be qualifying for.

So it was, again, something that the agency put great effort

on. It's been an ongoing process because these notifications get updated constantly, and we can continue to update those notices in those languages.

In the future, our plan is to offer more notices in additional languages.

Stay tuned for when that's going to happen.

For right now, a significant amount of our Medicaid population is able to access those notices in their own language.

Let me bring you into how we complete translation work. As I mentioned before, our unit is composed by Jesus Perez. He is our civil rights coordinator specialist, but he is also very fluent in Spanish.

Any in-house translations that we handle for our agency, most of them -- or pretty much all of them -- are completed by Jesus.

I wanted to illustrate to all of you what the process is we follow when we have a request in-house to translate materials.

And these materials for our agency might represent, for example, flyers about eligibility limits for Medicaid or brochures about our new coverage that Virginia Medicaid is offering.

Or it can represent a lot. Jesus works a lot -- we work a lot with appeals, and a lot of the final decisions that we send to members, they are requested in Spanish. So we do a lot of that work as well.

So how it all starts is, first of all, we receive translation requests, and that comes into our mailbox or to an email.

Our translator will complete that translation in Spanish. Once the translation is complete, it goes to quality assurance. In this particular case, I overview the translation just to make sure there's accuracy and no issues or concerns, that it also follows the glossary that we have for the general terminology that we use at DMAS. We try to stay consistent with the terminology.

Once that is being reviewed, then it is sent to formatting. So if this is something that had, for example, images or something like that, then it's sent back to the person who puts it all together and runs their magic to make it all look pretty.

Eventually, once that's put together, we do another quality assurance to make sure all the information lays out correctly. And then it's sent for publication and distribution.

So this is how we handle translations at DMAS for Spanish.

So what happens for other languages?

Well, for other languages, we were at an outside vendor. This information is pretty similar.

Most of the translations that we work can be in any language that we're asked. We received the same. We have trained our DMAS staff to submit those requests or requests mailbox or senders to us. They send us the original version of the flyer or the notice or the letter in English.

Then we work with our outside vendor and request a quote.

So we send them the material that needs to be translated. We give them the information about the language that needs to be translated. Then we receive a quote that. Quote is then reviewed by our unit. Once that quote is a go and approved, then it's sent to the vendor so that they can proceed with the translation.

Once that translation is complete that, vendor submits that translation to us, and we provide it to the person or the segment that has requested it.

So this is how it flows.

Usually, we're pretty quick at handling Spanish translations. That's why we would love to have someone in-house. It's also the most frequently used language. We like to have that flexibility. For outside vendor, it may take additional time. It's important that when you work with an outside vendor, that they give you a realistic timeline to complete a translation so you're prepared to have it ready for the person who requests it, even if it's a member or a client or it's for your own DMAS.

So I thought this would be very interesting for you all to share. Later, we'll have a panel discussion. We're looking more to hear about other agencies and how they handle the language translation process.

Let me move on to another secret that we want to share with you all today about how DMAS handles translations. I just wanted to bring you over behind the scenes of translation work that we had recently completed.

This was for a Medicaid renewal for a specific service.

To the left side of this slide, that's how we receive the notice. This is a screenshot of a notice that we received that was in English, and our team told us we need these notices to be translated in additional languages.

What we usually do is break down the information that is in English. We break it down in different lines. So when we send it over to have it translated, then we can just ask the linguist to play the translation of a particular sentence or a particular piece of information on this column, under Spanish. And then we put another column where it's Arabic, Amharic, Urdu, or whatever language we need it translated into so that way the linguist can put that translation into the appropriate line.

The reason why we break down like this -- and this might be helpful for some of you that work with translations -- is because sometimes some of our notices are sent to programmers because those are notices that need to be sent to different members. So there's some content that is in the notice that it's applicable just for that member.

So the programmers, they run their magic, and they put the information where it's supposed to go so that when the member information populates, it populates correctly.

So this is the reason why we break it down like that. I thought that maybe you will find this interesting on how we perform the behind-the-scenes translations here at DMAS.

Let me show you an example of one of our translation jobs. Those that might have difficulties on seeing what we're presenting today with this slide. I wanted to mention that we have different translations of a flyer that we have recently worked with.

We have the English version, and then we have the Spanish version, the Arabic and Vietnamese, Urdu, among others.

The outreach team at DMAS asked us to complete the flyer in different languages. So they sent us what you can find on the English site, and then we just outsource the other languages and the other languages were provided back with the translation. Amharic and Urdu are also included.

We work with a graphic designer here at DMAS to make sure all of the information, when it was translated, that that was flowing correctly. When we work with graphic designers, we make sure these are accessible. Once they're uploaded, some of them are uploaded to the DMAS side or the cover Virginia side, we make sure these flyers are accessible to screen readers or a graphic designer has knowledge, as well, on how to make sure these flyers have the accessibility standard.

So this is a very colorful example. I thought it might help you understand what is all involved with the translation and how many pieces literally have to happen. It's not only the translation, but it's also putting together the graphics and making sure that, also, the translation is accessible to screen readers and then publishing it in the DMAS website or the Virginia website.

This flyer, for example, is currently being housed there.

Let's move on to the second part of these conversations, which is going to be about language tag lines. If we were in person, I would be curious to ask -- or if you are in the chat and you want to respond, I'm curious to find out how many of you are familiar with language tag lines. It is kind of like technical work. Basically, let me move on. Sorry. Just need to navigate.

Basically, language tag lines -- and I put here a sample of one. Can you confirm, Jesus, that you are seeing slide number 13. I saw something popping up. I want to make sure everyone --

>> JESUS PEREZ: Yes, can I see it.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Okay. I wanted to make sure everyone is following on the same slide I'm on.

So language tag lines are brief and clear statements that are included in written communications and they indicate the availability of language services in multiple languages and alternative formats such as large print or Braille, et cetera.

The language tagline that we have included in the slide says that you have the right to get this letter for free in your language,

in large print, or in another way that is best for you.

This is the sentence that we translate into the 15 most commonly used languages in Virginia.

So anyone that is not able to access the information, they know where they need to call if they need to have this information translated or they need someone to explain to them in their own language what this information is about.

So the primary purpose of this tagline is to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. They notify users not only that the services exist but also that they are readily accessible. And by informing the recipients of their options for language services, they ensure people have equal access to information and services.

This is, in a nutshell, pretty much what language taglines is. With our Medicaid notices, we make sure we include all these taglines as an appendix to any communication we send to members. So any eligibility notices that are sent to them, any appeals communications, we include these appendix. So if someone is not able to access that information, they can request to have it in their language.

Also, if someone needs information in a different format, let's say large print or Braille or any form that is best for them, they know that they can call us, and they can request to have that information in which ever format works best for them.

If we would not include this information, most likely people would not be aware of this service that is free for them, and it's a great way to make the public aware of that service to them.

All right. So where do these taglines come from? You may be wondering; right? We did not make it up. When I started working here at DMAS four years ago, it was the first time that I heard about taglines. The reason and how I heard about them, it was because it was part of a requirement and a regulation. I thought it would be interesting just to showcase a little bit what is behind the requirements on language taglines.

I started putting a list of some of these requirements in the health care setting that required these taglines.

For example, under the Affordable Care Act, that's where I believe it all started, where the requirement was placed that health care organizations, they were required to include these taglines in the top 15 languages in their own state, just to ensure non-discrimination and enhanced accessibility.

Then there is also another CFR, the 42CFR. That one mandates managed care organizations, health insurance, et cetera, if they work under the Medicaid program or under any federally funded program, to also provide taglines in the prevalent languages to aid understanding of critical health information for individuals.

There's another regulation. 42CFR435.905 that says that states must provide Medicaid communications with taglines in

prevalent non-English languages.

Also, another regulation which ensures the chief related information, which is a Medicaid program as well. It requires to include also the taglines in the prevalent, non-English languages to maintain accessibility.

So you can see here where this whole concept of taglines came in. It's important to know that under the Affordable Care Act, in section 157, there was, first, a requirement to have the taglines, and then, eventually, in 2020, there was a final notice where it reduced the need to include language tagline requirements but then, eventually, and very recently, in May 2024, there was a final rule to the Affordable Care Act, Section 157, where it reincorporates, again, the mandate of the inclusion of language taglines.

So, if you think that's something that you can implement for your organization or for your communications, require or not require, language taglines are very helpful.

I think they make a difference so that individuals have to know that they have a right to access their information in their language, and they know where or how they can get that service.

So you might be wondering where else language taglines can be implemented. As I mentioned before, we implement them in all of our written communications that are vital to our members, and that would include the notices, but they're also implemented in the website. So if you go to the websites, you can scroll to the bottom and find the most relevant information, and you can find how to access the information in different languages, and then you can access the language taglines where it informs the public how they can obtain language services or how they can obtain disability access services.

Another place where we provide taglines and maybe if it's not a long document, if it's even a small marketing material, sometimes we also put small notices. For example, Se hablo Espanol.

We can include a tagline in Arabic or whatever is the most frequently used language in that service area. They can reach out to contact for different services.

These are examples of where language taglines may be used.

So we are at the very end of the presentation. Before we move on to our panel discussion -- again, I'm looking for a word.

I wanted to just finalize for some of the key takeaways that I have presented today.

First, we presented the importance to compliant, to legal mandates and how it is the laws and part of the regulations, but not only because it is the law and regulation that we provide these services, but we also do it to protect the rights of individuals and ensure fair access to service for everyone, including limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities.

I wanted to understand how it goes beyond legal compliance and how it's all about accessibility and inclusivity.

When I study my graduate degree, which is communications, I found that this is so relevant because when you study communications, you want to make sure what you communicate makes it to the other line. Right?

So this is how important it is that just because we communicate information, if we don't ensure that people can access that information, it just doesn't have any usage. Right? So this is why it's so important that we ensure that there's language access and disability access because, otherwise, what's the point of communicating something if it doesn't make it to the other line?

Lastly, another key takeaway is the public awareness and how important it is that individuals and the public knows how it's the right to have their information that they can access and how important it is and that through effective communication strategies, including the use of language taglines in all of our communications, we can inform and educate the community about these resources, just to ensure that more people take advantage of them.

So this is the end of my presentation. As I mentioned before, if you have any questions related to the content today, please feel free to put them in the chat. My colleague Jesus is collecting those questions. We'll take time at tend to address those.

Keep them coming. If you have any questions, please feel free to put them in the chat.

We're going to move on to the next session, the panel discussion. Let me take a quick look and see if we have everybody here.

Yes. Thank you.

Thank you, Zowee.

Thank you, Guadalupe.

Thank you, Ana, for being here today.

Let me do the formal introduction to the panelists who will be having a discussion with me today about how their own agencies approach language taglines and strategies for identifying frequently used languages s.

Today, we have Guadalupe Lucero, Language Access Specialist, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

We also have Zowee Aquino, Policy and Communications Team Lead, Hamkae Center.

And, lastly, we have Ana Trigueros-Merritt, Translation & Interpretation Manager, Virginia Department of Health.

Thank you, everyone, here for being here today.

For those not familiar with panel discussions, we'll present five questions to the panelists. We're going to ask them to respond with how they feel they can share information with us that can be relevant and how they can give us ideas so that we can implement in our own agencies and even for the public so they know and are aware of how the agencies work with language.

(Please stand by)

>> Starting with Guadalupe. How are you?

>> GUADALUPE LUCERO: I'm good. How are you. Thank you so much.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Thank you for being here.

>> GUADALUPE LUCERO: Hello, everyone. Mike Montserrat said, I serve as a language access specialist for the office of behavioral Health Wellness. My office does prevention services. We have gambling prevention, adverse childhood experiences, suicide prevention. We are the prevention office.

I am a subject-matter expert throughout the agency and also within the community service board. So providing any kind of training, any kind of translation assistance funding assistance, anything around language services. If anyone needs guidance, they can come to me, and we help them with that, specific to our 40 service boards, which I see many are on here today. I'm so glad you can make it to this panel.

How did I get here?

So I actually was -- my whole career around language started at VCU, around SPETI program. That helped me want to help the LEP populations in Virginia.

I went on to work at VDH as a COVID admin specialist. At the beginning of COVID, the pandemic, in which we did a lot of translations for instructions on whether you tested positive or negative for COVID. A lot of interpreting, providing results to our community members

After that, I went on to work at VDH, at the office of epidemiology, alongside Ana. We both served as in-house language translators for the Office of Epidemiology. It's been a great time. I'm very happy to be here.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: If you want to go next, Zowee?

>> ZOWEE AQUINO: Sure. Hi. I am Zowee Aquino. Yes, I am at Hamkae Center. I'm the policy and communications team lead. Our mission at Hamkae Center is to organize Asian Americans towards social, economic, and racial justice in Virginia.

As Montserrat noted in her presentation, many of the top 10 and top five languages in Virginia, after Spanish, are Asian languages.

So we really came into this role because of the community members and service recipients we work with. I'm excited to be working with Virginia state agencies to help our community members access the resources that they need to live their life. Thank you for inviting me here. I'm excited to speak to you all and hear from you all.

Thank you so much.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Thank you.

Ana, tell us a little bit more about you.

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: Hello, everybody. Thank you for having me. I'm super excited to share what we are doing at VDH.

My name is Ana Trigueros-Merritt, Translation & Interpretation Manager, Virginia Department of Health. Our promote and protect the health and well-being of all people living in Virginia, regardless of the language they speak.

I landed in VDH in 2020, first as a COVID-19 investigator, bilingual. Then I became the first in-house translator at the Department of Epidemiology.

Then Guadalupe joined us. And then I became the language interpretation manager for the agency.

This is part of VDH to make sure their resources are ready for the community and all our members, regardless of the language they speak.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Thank you, Ana.

Very interesting how I see a common trend among all of us, right, that we have some skills with the language, and then eventually from what I feel was a priority for the agency, we got moved on to other roles that, in the past, didn't exist. They're roles that involve making sure for all languages, not only the languages that we're skilled with, to make sure that there's translation availability and others individuals can access other languages besides the languages that we are skilled with.

Very interesting background.

Thank you for sharing. Thank you for having here ed to. I think it's going to be a great discussion

The second question that I have that you can hopefully give us insight so we can learn more is what strategies have you found most effective in identifying frequently used languages within your area of service.

For example, the data collected is for most frequently used languages. We ask if people would like to have communications in another language. That is something that has helped us identify the most frequently used languages, and then how we were able to share the data before.

But I'm curious, Guadalupe, do you follow any particular strategy to understand which are the most frequently used languages in your organization?

>> GUADALUPE LUCERO: Yes. In my office, we work with the 40 community service boards. We ask people to fill out some kind of request. As of right now, we have a database of what has been requested so far. A good amount have requested translations before. So we have that data.

Now, on the facility side, as well, I know that they have a process when receiving calls or when interacting with people as to what languages are available.

So I can usually ask our DEI officer, and they would know what the top-10 languages are for this year, based on the data they have collected as well.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Excellent, and probably even if it is to run an Excel spreadsheet with all this information, it just might be helpful for anybody.

How about Zowee? What strategies does your agency use to identify frequently used languages?

>> ZOWEE AQUINO: Yes. We're a community-based organization, and we're a 501(c)(3) organization.

Typically, we'll partner with other services organizations like us or our county and state agencies, mostly because the Asian American community is incredibly diverse. There's over 100 languages, even just in one section of our community, one geography alone. We, as an organization, cannot possibly identify each individual person's needs. So it's best -- and we shouldn't be. Like, there should be other people that are working on this to cover such a wide area.

And we want to make sure that we acknowledge their work.

So we'll typically do outreach to other organizations, and then, also, our county and state agencies to see -- internally, we'll audit our recipients as well as our advocate base and see what languages are coming to us so we can figure out if there's any languages that we're missing or any languages that don't match our geography.

So our office in Northern Virginia, let's say, if we're seeing primarily just Korean and Vietnamese, why are we not seeing Urdu or Arabic. Is there something we're missing? We need to figure out what our community looks like so we can support each other. Those are ways we've done this. And we've also taken community member feedback. If we do outreach and find people are interested in what we're doing but would need the language service.

Or, in reverse, if we see there's a large predominant community, we can provide -- we can try to provide the language itself and see if that is encouraging for community members.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Thank you. Thank you, Zowee, for reminding all of us that it's important to understand all the languages of your community so you can prepare. Right?

So if you have a most frequently used language, then perhaps you need to target your marketing materials for that population and translate those materials for that particular language.

But I'm sure that Ana has a lot to share about how they track the language and how the landscape of language is just completely different at the local level.

Right, Ana?

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: Yes, that is correct.

VDH is composed by the central office in Richmond, but, at the same time, we have 35 local health districts that serve a very, very diverse population. And the needs of our population varies tremendously from the eastern shore to the (indiscernible) districts, for example.

We use our language assistance services.

We track the services --

(Audio is cutting in and out)

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: We also offer --

(No discernible speaker)

(Please stand by)

(Captioner rejoining the meeting)

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Thank you, Ana, for sharing this information. It's very, very helpful to understand the different landscape for all of the different areas in Virginia. I appreciate all the knowledge you're bringing to the discussion.

Let's move on to the next question.

We have discussed language taglines as a method to make the public aware of our readily -- sorry. I always have a hard time with this word -- language services.

I'm curious to learn if your agency uses the strategy of using taglines or if you have any other way to inform the public of available language services and, also, available alternative methods of communication.

Let's start with Guadalupe. If you can share information about how your agency handles that information to the public?

>> GUADALUPE LUCERO: So, currently, our agency doesn't have a language access plan. So it's not specifically in a plan about how the access these services.

But we have a tagline. If people come to me for translations, I'm able to let them know we have assistance and I'm constantly sending out reminders and announcements.

It's all just based on a language access structure that we still need.

At the moment, there is not anything concrete about how to inform the public of it. It's more of through the Grapevine people here that these things are available. But we are working on trying to get a better structured plan and make sure that this is readily available and accessible to the public.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Yes. And I'm sure you get a lot of work by communicating to your partners that you provide language services.

Thank you for sharing that.

Ana, how does VDH make the public aware of language services?

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: As I said before, our language access --

(Audio is cutting in and out)

(Audio is poor)

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: -- a very consistent tagline. However, one of the first things we've done is provide all of our centers with the "I speak" posters and flyers for the staff.

The posters will show, as you get into our facility, I speak this language. You have the option of -- I believe there's 60 languages in these posters and flyers.

Sometimes our clients do not speak any English. So they point to the language in the flyer. They can then get the information and the help they need through calling the language line or a video remote interpretation, whatever the case is.

It shows clearly that it's no cost to our client. VDH will provide the service for free.

Also, it's important to know that these taglines vary depending on the communication.

It's a website, it's one way. If it's a flyer, if it's a message on your phone, you know, all these things, we have to accommodate these taglines to the type of communication.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Very important point.

Zowee, how does your organization make the public aware of language services?

>> ZOWEE AQUINO: For us, we will typically advertise the services ourselves. So we'll do on-the-ground outreach, hotspot outreach. We'll let anyone in our community know that Hamkae Center can provide X amount of languages or can provide translation or interpretation services.

For example, we also provided through our materials that are translated. So that in and of itself is kind of informing and advertising that those language resources exist.

So, for example, we do non-partisan voter outreach to let people know when elections are coming up and where they can vote

We have the information and link it to websites and there's four or five different languages.

When we have the in-person services events, we'll do our best to have the flyers available in those languages that we can provide at the event.

Otherwise, we will also, like I said, we worked with those other community organizations and local and state agencies. Often, we will kind of send information through their listservs so it's an additional resource.

So if the state or local agencies face a language they can't support, they can come to us.

If we're doing a large Medicaid sign-up clinic, which we've done, we can send out information to a -- say it's a Spanish-speaking organization, we can send it and work together to sign up people together and cover the larger population together.

So those are the biggest ones.

We also do ethnic media ads.

In Northern Virginia, the Korean language newspapers are popular for Korean households.

In addition, there are language-specifically social media in different Asian cultures.

There's Kakao talk. It's an app and forum for Korean language. And then there's at chat for Chinese-specific language. It's a way

to let people know that there's those resources available.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: You have a long list of strategies. I hope that everyone finds it helpful. I can see the common denominator.

I can see good ideas and learning about the population and how do they access information so that you can inform in that media.

These are amazing strategies. I hope this is helpful for the audience to pick different ways on making the public aware of language services.

Let's move on to question number four, and we have a few more. We hope that this information that you find it helpful.

This one is going to be very interesting.

I shared before how at DMAS, we handle translation requests. I'm just curious for each of you. Can you share any insights into what are the steps involved when you complete translation work at your agency. I would be curious to know from the request of the submission to the final product. How do you handle those translations? How do you ensure translation accuracy, which is very important in the process.

If you can, share some of the usual languages that you translate into. That has been shared before.

But let's start with Guadalupe. Do you want to share some insights on how a translation request would be handled by your agency?

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: When I came into this position, one of the things was to create a structured system for requesting translations. We'll get to requesting interpreters, but we started with translations.

The first thing I did was create a survey monkey. Microsoft Forms or Google Docs is a way the get the data in one place and centralize it. That was the main step at first. I created one survey for staff and then one staff for community service boards and their partners as well because we do extend the funding to their partners.

What they do is have a link, which have I shared.

If someone emails me, and they're looking to get a translation done, then I also send them the link and they can request it.

Where they put their language, how many words, any kind of translation they have for the vendors.

I make sure to be the middle person. I will take the request, create a quote with our translation vendor. Once the quote is approved, it would come back to me. And since we would be using my funds, I would go through getting the funds approved and once that's done, I go back to the vendor and give them the green light to get started on the project. Once the project is completed or if they have any questions for the clients, any questions, specific lingo, I will serve as the middle person and communicate back with the community service board or any of the staff. We'll work together.

Once it's completed, I will send it over. That's the complete process. It can be a little daunting.

What I did was I also created a step-by-step process. It's kind of like a one-pager that explains what each step looks like.

So we have those readily available as well.

How do we ensure translation accuracy.

For a lot of translations, depending on the language, we are also able to contract reviewers.

So, for example, if someone requests an Urdu translation, and they would like to have it reviewed, then I will refer them to a reviewer who will then go through it and make sure that it is accurate.

For Spanish, I have tended to do it myself because I do speak Spanish, so I have tended to do it myself or other people on their staff who are also interpreters have gone through it.

But to ensure the accuracy, more than likely, there is a reviewer behind it as well, someone who is trained in translation or someone who is fluent enough to know the lingo. They know all the regionalisms.

Languages we usually translate to right now, very popular, Spanish. We've had a lot of Arabic, a lot of Pasto, Dari, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, a lot of languages that are not just Spanish. We keep seeing more and more languages pop up. I think I just saw a Haitian-Creole pop up. I had not done that before. We decided to forward it to the 40 community service boards. I have not decided what the process is for the facilities or if we would have a language access person statewide, if that process would change. But, for now, it's a process that's available to anybody within the system.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: When I first talked to you and you mentioned Google Forms, I thought that was a brilliant idea. You know, for our program, we have an email, but having a form where you can eventually export that information automatically, that saves a lot of time. I thought that was brilliant. Hopefully, we may get your idea some day and implement it at DMAS. I thought it was pretty neat.

Ana, tell us about VDH. How do you guys handle translations.

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: We have in-house translators. Me and Jose Jimenez.

We have created a form for us to understand what is needed. We like to know who is the audience. The number of words. And any information that's important for us to understand where these documents are going to go.

Doing this with the form is wonderful because you can keep all this data.

(Audio is cutting in and out)

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: If we get the document, we put our notes on it. We know when it's due and when it's returned to the

customers.

As well, we have created a workflow for the process.

(Audio is cutting in and out)

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: This is what I had when I first started. I thought it was important for the staff to understand the process. You need three more people.

(Audio is cutting in and out)

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: The linguist and the project work together. We review each other's work. We follow translation, editing, and proofreading.

(Audio is cutting in and out)

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: One of the things I noticed when we needed this job, there was not a centralized place --

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: I'm sorry, Ana. I'm reading some comments on the chat. It looks like your audio is going in and out. It might be connection. Maybe if you turn off your camera, can we try that to see if the audio flows better while you're presenting.

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: My apologies. Can you hear me better now?

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Let's try it.

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: So we have the language access hub, and it's a location where the staff can find instructions and pricing on the different vendors that can provide the different language services, translation being one of them.

And they will have comparing prices, instructions on how to upload the portal. We recommend that you get several quotes when the project is important and large because you will be very surprised what the final price is. When you have a big project, please ask several of your vendors. It's free. Get a quote. You can see that you can save a lot of money, obviously, with good quality.

So that's what we do in terms of the process.

For the quality --

(Audio is cutting in and out)

(No discernible speaker)

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: If we have marketing campaigns, back to school, vaccinations, et cetera, we'll review it. Audio, radio, social media, all those we can review in-house.

We can gather feedback from our clients.

Each language, as you know, is going to vary, depending on the state.

I hope I answered all of your questions.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Yes. Definitely. It was very illustrative, especially when we share.

I experienced some drops in the audio. I don't know if there's anything you can do to get a better connection while I ask Zowee. I'm not sure if you have a processing place or if you have

translations. Tell us a little bit more about how you're agency -- I don't know if you handle those translations directly.

>> ZOWEE AQUINO: Yes. So I definitely do handle our translation requests directly. I will also note that this is strictly written translation. Our interpretation is a completely different system. Typically, our staff who are bilingual -- yes, please let me know if at any point my audio starts getting difficult. I live out near a rural area. That can happen sometimes.

At our organization, it's community-based. And our capacity, like any nonprofit organization, it can vary.

Typically, with interpretation, our bilingual staff can take care of that based if you have their programs and based on what roles they have in their program.

For translation, our organization tries to reach different languages, so we have a completely separate system for translation.

As much as possible, we don't have our bilingual staff do the translation requests unless it is that specific bilingual staff's language for their own program or project.

Otherwise, we will typically do external translation.

For that process, what we do is pretty similar to Guadalupe where my staff will send a Google Form request to me about the translation they want done. They will send me the document and the languages they want.

We have a list of community translators that work with us. Some of them are volunteer. Some of them we pay ourselves. My teammates have personally gone through and vetted the quality of the translations. We have also gone through and vetted the quality of the translations.

For our civic engagement work, it's nonpartisan which requires specific legal wording to make sure we're not endorsing any particular candidate or party.

For our health work, we make sure that our information is compliant or at least consistent with, let's say, Virginia Department of Health. So we'll need translators who are able to do that and community reviewers who are able to understand that context.

So once my staff sends the request, I will typically go to the translator roster and figure out, okay, who is available to take on this request? What is the timeliness? How much of the legal jargon needs to be reviewed? We'll work with everyone based on either word count or the number of words that is in English since different languages require different grammar and different spelling.

For instance, Urdu, we cannot do based off per letter. It has to be per word in English so that the translation can come through properly.

So once we select the translator and select the timeline and send out the translation request, we'll typically, depending on the project, have the reviewer review. Or if we've worked with a

translator for a long time and they've had good experience and we've had reliable experience with them for a specific program, we typically trust the quality of their work.

In addition, community members, we've had instances where community members will give us feedback on the translation so if something is not good or it's confusing, we'll pretty much hear about it immediately. That doesn't happen as much as it did when we first started, but we've definitely come up with a more reliable system.

And then for languages that we don't have translators for currently, we will typically seek out --

(Audio interference)

>> ZOWEE AQUINO: -- we will typically send out the information from the agency since -- especially with the amount of misinformation and disinformation out there, a lot of community members will typically look at the state agencies for resources because that's the most reliable place they can think of.

That's why it's really important for us to know there is information available because there will also be more likely to trust us or have us explain what everything means if they know this is coming from a reliable source.

So that's another challenge and issue that we've run into with our translation accuracy.

It's a way that Virginia state agencies do really help community organizations in Virginia.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: And the use of community members, it's so great to hear that you're able to utilize them because there may also be languages that are more limited.

Having community members work with you guys and volunteer their time, it's great. So I'm glad to hear that strategy you guys are using to get collaboration from the community members.

This is great.

So we're hitting the last two questions for the panel discussion.

As always, when we work on the project, we can have some learning lessons.

So I will be curious to learn from all of you what challenges or barriers your agency has faced in providing translation services and how you've overcome them. Let's start with Guadalupe.

>> GUADALUPE LUCERO: As I mentioned before, one of the biggest barriers right now is we don't have a language access plan. So we don't have something centralized. Or for everyone to find a bit more direction as to what the instructions are surrounding language services in general.

But we are slowly working on it. Currently, we are conducting a needs assessment through my office within the community service boards. What we're trying to figure out is a baseline of where we're at surrounding language services.

What has been working for them. What has not been working. What systems are in place, if there are in at the moment.

The hope is to take the data from this needs assessment and the leverage it and get a perspective of what is going on with the people in the community service boards, the staff, the clients, the people coming to receive services at each community service board.

So our goal is you can use that data to eventually create a language access plan that will be used agency-wide.

So that is where we're at right now amongst other things like creating these small structures for translation, and, hopefully, interpretation are some of the ways to try to overcome these barriers.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Listening to what's out there to get better, we need that feedback to implement better projects.

Thank you. Thank you for sharing that information.

Zowee, any challenges you have particularly run into regarding how you overcame challenges?

>> ZOWEE AQUINO: Especially since we work with Virginia state agencies, sometimes the challenges, or barriers, are just knowing the limitations of the state agencies.

I will be a little bit generous and say I have worked within a Virginia state agency and a local agency as well. So I am a little more empathetic, and I have a better understanding than the rest of my staff and community stakeholders and organizations to what the reality is about working or providing these services for the whole state.

And so sometimes it's just knowing what those limitations are and the places where community organizations can be supportive.

For instance, my organization may not be able to provide quality translations for Virginia state agencies, but we can provide outreach or, in this case, my organization does do legislative advocacy. So I know that's also something Virginia state agency employees not allowed to do as state agency employees, but if there are issues such as funding issues or programmatic support or capacity that are things that the state can do but we'll need to move legislators on it. Community members, they just don't know what that's like on that side.

If they know, okay, we are missing this data or we need a commission to help us collect this data or approve this data collection, then that's something that community members are like, oh, I didn't know that is something that the Virginia state agencies would need. Maybe we can help.

Or, on the other side of it, you know, it's also knowing -- we did a lot of investigating on Title VI and what the actual standards are for language access in Virginia.

So kind of having that information and sharing it out are the ways that we kind of overcame this or tried to figure out -- you know, it's not just on the Virginia state agencies to be providing everything they can if they don't have the resources or the support

to do it from the state or even from the General Assembly or from the Governor. Those are things the communities like to know and things they can help with when they actually know that information.

I think on our internal agency, I think the biggest challenge is just that there are so many languages in the Asian community, and so sometimes it's providing spoken interpretation. Sometimes it's providing high-quality translations and being able to do that within our capacity.

We hate to limit our ability to provide those languages. It's hard to prioritize, especially when the question is: Are people coming because the language is not available? Do they not need this language because someone else is providing this for us?

So a lot is about understanding where our role is. Some of it is trial and error, but some of it is just working together with partners like you.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Yeah. Perfect. Thank you, very interesting point.

Ana, let's try your audio, if it flows a little better. I was curious to see if you have any challenges or barriers that you have run into at your organization and how you have overcome them.

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: Sure. Please let me know if my audio is better right now.

So there were two important challenges for us. The first one was finding directions on thousand request translation services. There was not a place in the agency where our staff could go. We solved that by creating the language access app where you have that information.

And the second problem, the big problem, was depending on someone else language service contract. In this case, it's the Department of General Services.

This has been a very difficult time for us because this contract is not mandatory and certainly recommended because it helps streamline the procurement process. But the contract was approved November 1st, 2023, and it was not being implemented until March of 2024.

We were at a moment where our ability to provide language service was maybe compromised, and we didn't want to relay on waiting for them to tell us that we can use their contracts.

So, to solve that situation, we ask permission to use Propio (phonetic) as our sole-source provider, which was pretty much our biggest vendor for language services.

While this was getting approved by DGS, we find out about this other competitive contract between the city of Virginia Beach and the Language Group. A competitive contract means it's a contract that has already been agreed upon in these parts, but it has the cooperative verbiage which means any agency in the state could use the services already agreed.

But to do so, again, we have to go through DGS and explain why we need to access that contract.

Well, after several steps, we finally got approved.

At the same time, it would finalize.

Altogether, we have a contract with 12 vendors. I think they're beneficial for our agency to have all these options.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Yes. Vendor contracts are always a challenge for a state agency. So I'm glad that this somehow got resolved, and now we have plenty of options with contracts that we can use.

We are towards the end of the panel discussion. Let's see if we can leave a few minutes for questions. I'm just curious, closing words, each of you, if you can dedicate a 30-second comment on what will be your advice to an agency that doesn't currently have a process in place to handle translation. What will be your wise advice to them?

>> GUADALUPE LUCERO: In 30 seconds? (Laughter). Create a centralized hub. Centralize it. Having a centralized hub will make it easier for requests. Data, it's there. Evidence, it's there. Everything you need, as long as you have it centralized, it's going to be your best bet, a system where it's easily accessible and you can easily come back to it. That would be the biggest thing.

It's definitely been a lifesaver for us.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Great advice.

Zowee, what about you? What would be your advice for those trying to start a process?

>> ZOWEE AQUINO: I would say start where you can. Data is a huge one, even if your agency doesn't have a specific dataset that you can use from your services, you still have people that you're working with. I know that some federal grants mandate that you collect demographic information. That can still be a place to start, even if it's not the complete place. It gives you a baseline. So establishing that baseline for your information can be a really strong foundation for anything you implement, whether it's about your translation process or if it's about expanding your language needs and so on.

But having that baseline of information will be critical, not just for you but other state agencies and other agencies like me.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Ana, what would be your advice?

>> ANA TRIGUEROS-MERRITT: Just simplifying everything said. Simplify the needs, the documents with the volume, the need, the language.

Train the staff. It's important for them to understand what translation means.

Monitor and evaluate how we're going to get input from the stakeholders and the clients.

Identify the resources. Is it going to be in-house or through

outsourced services.

Lastly, prioritize the materials that need to be translated. Frequently used, emergency documents, and so on.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Yeah. The priority. You have to start somewhere. I wish we could do everything we could, but we have, as you all explained, limited resources, limited people, limited budget. So the priority tip is super important. I agree with that one.

Well, thank you, all. This has been very interesting. I have learned a lot of new things. I wish I could start implementing right away for the agency. I hope others have also learned.

Let's see if there's any questions. Jesus has been keeping track of possible questions that may be addressed to the panelists or the presentation.

Jesus, is there any questions? Maybe one? Because we're running to the last five minutes.

>> JESUS: We received comments related to the Medicaid program, but they were not related to the topics discussed today. So I will send you those topics to discuss later.

There's only one question for you, from Karla Francis Jones. This person wanted to know if the graphic of the increasing trend of non-English languages included ASL. That was the question.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: So the graphic of the increasing trend for Virginia Medicaid?

>> JESUS: Yes. It was the slide number eight, I think so.

>> MONTSERRAT SERRA: Yes. So for the Virginia Medicaid language counts, we do include American Sign Language as one of the languages. So that would be included as the non-English language.

So the answer is yes, it would include American Sign Language as well.

Thank you for pointing that one. Very important. It's very important to track the use of American Sign Language to see how we can provide language services for American Sign Language interpretation.

Well, the questions you have received, Jesus, make sure I get them. If they're not to today's topic, we'll be happy to address those. I also wanted to thank everyone who registered to the event who has given us ideas on thoughts and what future conversations we could have. That's been very helpful. It's been very helpful to learn from each of you and what work you do for disability access and what are your priorities and what you're trying to learn more about the whole language services provided.

Thank you to my team

Thank you to the panelists for your time and dedication.

Thank you to the keynote speaker, Craig Markva, for taking the time out of your busy schedule. It is an honor to have you all today here.

I would like to end that it is evidence from our conversations that language and disability access services are very critical components that work across state agencies and across organizations in our community.

I hope all of this wealth of information has helped every one of you somehow, somewhere, and that new strategies can be implemented so individuals with limited English proficiency and people with disabilities are very equipped to access the programs and services.

It's a very interesting conversation. If you have any questions, please let us know. We have the civil rights coordinator email account. We'll be in touch soon in the next couple of weeks with all the materials that have been presented today, including the recording.

We'll be sharing that information soon.

Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure to be here today, and I appreciate everybody's participation. Thank you.

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