

**Language Assistance Plan**  
by & for the counties of Washington State

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## Preface

The Language Assistance Plan is a living document for counties and jurisdictions to use as a guide to develop a minority language program.

“The Washington Secretary of State’s Language Assistance Plan is a thorough primer on compliance with Section 203 and the other minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Plan provides states, counties, and municipalities with helpful, well-reasoned, easy to understand recommendations for compliance with federal language assistance election mandates. Indeed, jurisdictions that develop plans, procedures, and policies as suggested by The Language Assistance Plan could be much less likely to face enforcement actions from the U.S. Department of Justice or lawsuits from individuals alleging language-based voting discrimination. During my former career as a U.S. Department of Justice Senior Attorney with national enforcement responsibility for the Voting Rights Act, any jurisdictions that had adopted The Washington Secretary of State’s Language Assistance Plan would have likely found themselves free from direct DOJ election supervision of their minority language compliance” (Bruce Adelson, Federal Compliance Consultant).

This plan is a compilation of information and experiences from Yakima, Franklin, Adams and King counties and the Office of the Secretary of State; input from new counties potentially covered under Section 203; the Minority Language Summit in July 2011; advice from consultant Bruce Adelson; Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act; best practices in graphic design, journal articles, and reports.

The purpose of this plan is to define compliance of minority language requirements for Washington State in order for jurisdictions to successfully comply with the Voting Rights Act.

The plan is divided into 3 parts:

**Part 1: Know:** presents the necessary background information needed to understand Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act and the intentions of the law. This section also highlights the importance of knowing your community as the basis of a successful plan.

**Part 2: Plan:** offers recommendations for how to prepare and what can be done before starting to implement a minority language program, since taking part in a minority language program means revising a number of elections materials to be bilingual or creating new materials in a language not your own.

**Part 3: Implement:** outlines the main components of a minority language program, which are design, translation, and outreach.

The plan has been designed to be read from start to finish or in sections, depending on your needs. This document will evolve over time and through experience. If you have suggestions, comments, changes, or would like to add anything to the plan, contact Minority Language Coordinator Cristina Labra at [cristina.labra@sos.wa.gov](mailto:cristina.labra@sos.wa.gov) or (360) 902-4175.

## Part 1: Know

### Know the Voting Rights Act

#### Background information

The Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 was enacted to break down barriers to voting and end widespread discrimination at the polls. In 1965 Puerto Ricans educated in Spanish were the first group protected under the VRA. Ten years later, Section 203 was enacted, requiring voting materials to be translated into American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Native and Spanish languages, in order for minority language citizens to effectively participate in the electoral process.

The VRA was recently reauthorized in 2006, to ensure the participation of limited-English proficient (LEP) citizens in the electoral process without discrimination (Tucker, 2009).

The Census Bureau has the responsibility to determine which states and political subdivisions must comply with the minority language requirements. These have been subject to change every 10 years as a result of the Census. After 2010, the Census Bureau will use data collected from the American Community Survey (ACS) to evaluate and make VRA language determinations every 5 years.

#### Determination of covered area under the Voting Rights Act

Elections that must comply with the VRA are federal, state and local elections, as well as elections of special districts (for example, school and water districts).

To be covered under the VRA, a jurisdiction must meet the following conditions:

1. Five percent or 10,000 citizens of voting-age who are members of a single-language minority and speak English less than “well” or the illiteracy rate of the citizens of that minority language group is higher than the national average; or
2. More than 5 percent of American Indian or Alaskan Native voting-age citizens who reside within an American Indian Reservation are members of a single-language minority and speak English less than “well” or the illiteracy rate of the citizens of that minority language is higher than the national average. Any political subdivision which contains all or any part of that Indian reservation is covered by the minority language provision.

**In plain language:** To be a covered jurisdiction under the VRA, your minority language community must consist of 5 percent or 10,000 voting age citizens who speak English less than well, or, have a illiteracy rate higher than the national average.

## Total population of the county

### Total population of minority group(s)

Based on questions 5 and 6 of the American Community Survey:  
"Is person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?", and "What is Person 1's race?"

### Those of voting age

Based on question 2 :  
"What is Person 1's age and date of birth?"

### Those who are citizens

Based on question 8:  
"Is Person 1 a citizen of the United States?"

### Those with limited English proficiency

Based on question 13c:  
"How well does this person speak English?"

### Those with less than a 5th grade education

Based on question 11:  
"What is the highest degree or level of school this person has completed?"

➔ If the number that results from these steps totals at least **5 percent** of your county's total population, or at least **10,000 people**, your county will be covered under the VRA.

The determination process illustrated in 7 steps

## How to comply with the Voting Rights Act

The state and political subdivisions must take all reasonable steps to achieve compliance and the requirements apply to all stages of the electoral process.

The materials and assistance should be provided in a way that allows members of a minority language group to be effectively informed of, and participate in, voting activities.

Whenever a jurisdiction provides materials to voters in English (registration forms, voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials and information related to the voting process), it must also provide them in the minority language.

Materials provided by mail must be provided in the minority language to all registered voters or by effectively developing a targeting system.

Public notices and announcements of elections materials should be handled in a manner that provides members of the applicable minority language group effective opportunity to be informed about electoral activities.

Registration must be conducted in a manner that ensures members of the minority language group can have an effective opportunity to register.

A covered jurisdiction must take the appropriate steps to publicize the availability of the materials and assistance in the minority language. Example: displaying information at voter registration offices and voting services centers, making announcements on television, radio, newspapers, and direct contact with organizations within the minority language population.

The materials and assistance in the minority language must be clear, complete and accurate to the minority language group.

Ballots should be provided in English and in the minority language.

Announcements, publicity and assistance can be given in oral form to the extent needed, either if the minority language groups cannot read in English or in the minority language, or if their language is unwritten.

The most important compliance requirement is working in conjunction with the community. The next section explains in detail how to accomplish these requirements.

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### References

Civil Rights Division. About Language Minority Voting Rights.

Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec\\_203/activ\\_203.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/activ_203.php)

Tucker, James (December, 2009). The Battle Over Bilingual Ballots.

Language Minorities and Political Access Under the Voting Rights Act. Ashgate, USA

U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Voting Section.

The Attorney General Language Minority

## Know your community

Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act provides broad guidelines for how to comply with the VRA. The law is open to interpretation because each jurisdiction must create a minority language plan tailored to their unique community. Section 203 starts from the basis of “each community is different” and therefore each jurisdiction must identify the particular needs and best channels of communication with their minority language community.

### Community profile and stakeholder analysis of the minority language community

Section 203 §55.14 (c) states “It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to determine what actions by it are required for compliance with the requirements of section 4(f) 4 and Section 203 (c) and to carry out these actions.”

Jurisdictions are responsible for identifying how to comply with the law using the method that will best suit the minority language population of a specific community. “The best informed sources of information are people who are in the minority community and those who work with it regularly.” (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division)

You must know your community, and you can do this by creating a community profile. A community profile is fundamental because it will guide all decisions made regarding your minority language program. Section 203 §55.16 insists “A jurisdiction is more likely to achieve compliance with these requirements if it has worked with the cooperation of and to the satisfaction of organizations representing members of the applicable language minority group.”

Creating an in-depth community profile will help you develop important steps of your minority language plan; for example, what minority language method of compliance will best suit your county (see page 12); what will be the target language you will need to translate (see page 37); where will you conduct outreach events (see section 43), etc. Don’t assume this information!

**Step 1:** Review Census and American Community Survey demographic information:

- demographic changes of the past ten years
- educational attainment of minority language community and general population
- languages spoken at home
- country of origin or foreign-born
- illiteracy rate
- high concentrations of minority language communities in certain geographical areas.

**Step 2:** Identify partnerships and networks:

- government
- social service organizations (DSHS)
- schools
- English Language Learners (ELL) programs and teachers
- community colleges and universities (diversity or multicultural centers, student clubs, specific programs and classes, ELL programs)
- translator services
- licensing departments

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- libraries
- minority commissioners
- education service districts (ESDs)
- military bases
- transportation services
- elected officials
- nonprofit and community organizations
- citizenship preparation
- chambers of commerce
- language banks
- senior centers
- religious groups (churches)
- fraternal organizations
- veterans groups
- churches
- newspapers
- online publications
- radio stations
- TV stations
- private sector (business)
- supermarkets
- large employers within your community
- identify community leaders of the organizations, businesses and government agencies of the minority language community.

Once you have compiled your community profile, you are ready to form an Advisory Board.

### **Create an Advisory Board of community leaders**

Creating an Advisory Board is not expressly required in section 203, however staying connected with the minority language community is required. “Effective bilingual election programs cannot be static but instead must evolve with the changing realities of the local language minority communities” (Tucker, 2006, p. 222).

There are many different ways you can set up an Advisory Board. You can choose a method or combination of methods that best meets your needs.

If you think an Advisory Board will be beneficial to your county, here are some recommendations for how to establish one:

**Step 1:** Determine how your Advisory Board will be established:

- multiple boards determined by language
- a single board with multiple languages
- combine your minority language Advisory Board with your Disability Advisory Committee

**Step 2:** Determine how many members you need:

- identify participants
- identify key members and/or organizations from a wide range of sectors (organizations, government, schools, local businesses, etc).

**Step 3:** Determine the purpose of your Advisory Board:

- feedback on elections
- identify outreach events
- assist with outreach events
- help with translations
- comments on translations
- help review translations
- assist with hiring bilingual staff
- educating the community about the requirements
- help publicizing the availability of minority language documents
- ensure they understand you operate under financial and legal constraints (manage expectations).

**Step 4:** Create bylaws:

- board structure flat or hierarchical
- time commitment
- meet once a quarter or meet twice a year and provide quarterly newsletters to Advisory Board
- identify staff that will be communicating with the Advisory Board.

Your community will guide your minority language program. Listen to your Advisory Board and communicate with them as much as possible, since it will determine the effectiveness of your minority language program and the level of compliance your county can achieve.

Here is an example of a quarterly newsletter sent by Yakima County to their Advisory Board and community members:

<p><b>Yakima County Auditor's Office Elections Division Bilingual Program</b></p> <p>Auditoría del condado de Yakima División electoral Programa bilingüe</p> <p>February 2011 febrero 2011</p>	 <p>Yakima County Elections 1-800-533-0569 www.yakimacounty.us/vote</p>
<p><b>Welcome!</b> In an effort to provide you with information regarding upcoming elections, election results and voter outreach events I would like to welcome you to the first edition of the Bilingual Program's quarterly e-newsletter. Previously this information was shared at quarterly meetings. My goal is to provide you with the same information in this e-newsletter.</p> <p><b>¡Bienvenidos!</b> En un esfuerzo para ofrecerle información sobre las próximas elecciones, los resultados electorales y eventos comunitarios para los votantes me gustaría darle la bienvenida a la primera edición del boletín electrónico trimestral del programa bilingüe. En el pasado, esta información ha sido compartida en las juntas trimestrales. Mi objetivo es proporcionarle la misma información en este boletín electrónico.</p> <hr/> <p><b>2011 February Special Election</b> What's on the ballot? <a href="#">Read the sample ballot &gt;</a>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* City of Yakima - accept or reject an amendment to the City Charter</li> <li>* East Valley, Selah and Wapato School Districts - bonds. <a href="#">Learn more about what is needed to pass a bond.</a></li> <li>* <a href="#">One page summary about the Election</a></li> </ul> </p> <p>If you live in one of these areas, ballots started going out in the mail January 19, 2011. If you did not receive a ballot, please contact us.</p> <p><b>Elección especial febrero del 2011</b> ¿Cuáles asuntos están en la boleta? <a href="#">Lea la boleta de muestra &gt;&gt;</a>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ciudad de Yakima - aceptar or rechazar una enmienda al estatuto de la ciudad</li> <li>* Distritos escolares de East Valley, Selah y Wapato - bonos. <a href="#">Aprenda más sobre qué se necesita para aprobar un bono.</a></li> <li>* <a href="#">Resumen electoral</a></li> </ul> </p> <p>Si vive en una de estas áreas, las boletas se empezaron a mandar por correo el 19 de enero, 2011. Si no recibió su boleta, comuníquese con nosotros.</p> <hr/> <p><b>2011 Election Calendar</b> <a href="#">Learn more about important dates and deadlines</a></p> <p><b>Calendario electoral 2011</b> <a href="#">Aprenda más acerca de las fechas y plazos importantes</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>2010 Voter Turnout by Surname</b> Statistics for the Primary and General Elections of 2010 are <a href="#">now available on our website</a>.</p> <p><b>Número de votantes por apellido 2010</b> Estadísticas para las elecciones primaria y general del 2010 <a href="#">están disponibles en nuestro sitio web</a>.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Outreach Events</b> We are scheduled to be at the following events for Jan - March 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Homeless Network Event: Jan. 27</li> <li>* Naturalization Ceremonies: Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 15</li> <li>* Latino Legislative Day: March 4</li> </ul>	

Yakima County Newsletter

## References

Civil Rights Division. About Language Minority Voting Rights.

Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec\\_203/activ\\_203.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/activ_203.php)

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Tucker, James (2006). Enfranchising Language Minority Citizens:

The Bilingual Election Provision of the Voting Rights Act. *Journal of Legislation and Public Policy*, 10 (1), 195–260.

## Methods of compliance

As emphasized by Section 203, it is essential to know your minority language community in order to choose the most appropriate method of compliance. Your plan should be specific to your community.

Jurisdictions can choose from several methods of compliance depending on the demographic characteristics of the community as well as costs of implementation. As stated in Section 203 §55.16 “a jurisdiction may, where alternative methods of compliance are available, use less costly methods if they are equivalent to more costly methods in their effectiveness.” “Effectiveness is defined by the assistance available to ensure that language minority voters can participate in the elections process.” (Tucker, 2009, p 254)

## Bilingual

Bilingual elections consist of providing all services (written and oral) to all voters of the county in the source and target language. The county provides bilingual materials to the entirety of the jurisdiction. This method of compliance is implemented by Adams, Franklin and Yakima counties.

Your county may choose to use this method, if:

- your county only has to provide assistance in one minority language;
- your county has a large minority language population;
- the minority language population is not concentrated in one geographical area; and/or
- it is the most cost-effective method of compliance for your county.

If these statements represent your county, here is how your county can get started in providing bilingual elections.

### Educate, educate and educate

Inform your community (county wide) they will begin receiving bilingual elections materials.

You do not want to catch anyone by surprise, especially during an important election.

Explain the federal requirements to your community and why these requirements are in place.

Educate your staff and commissioners on the requirements. They will have to explain why voters are receiving bilingual materials. Have continuous training for your staff.

### Develop a strategy: timelines, budgets and more

Create a checklist with all the documents you will need to translate. By law you must translate all voting materials provided to voters, including website information.

Determine where you will need to provide language assistance during normal business hours and during an election. For example: front counter, voting centers and official public meetings.

Once you have determined the workload, you will need to decide if you will hire bilingual staff, contract with a translation and interpretation service, or share staff with other counties. The decision can be made based on what is most cost-effective. For example, Yakima County has two bilingual staff members because it is a large county and it is most cost-effective to have the work done in-house. On the other hand, Adams County hires a translator service and has an employee from the courts assist them with interpretations.

Determine what your budget will be. Include costs for printing, translation and interpretation. Begin communicating these budget needs to your county commissioners sooner rather than later.

Create a timeline of the tasks you will need to accomplish before the next election. Make sure in your timeline you consider printing, translations, review of translations and redesign time.

Every method of compliance has its pros and cons. It will be up to you, your staff, your commissioners or council members, and your community to decide what method will be the most cost-effective and suitable for your community.

#### **Pros of bilingual**

- no need to manage a list of minority language voters
- possibility of integrating a large number of minority language voters into the electoral process
- less room for mistakes
- easier to manage
- save cost in outreach
- take advantage of economies of scale

#### **Cons of bilingual**

- difficult to quantify the use of minority language materials and services
- could offend voters who do not want to receive bilingual materials
- higher overall cost for producing bilingual materials
- more time-consuming to design and produce bilingual materials

### **Targeting**

Targeting consists of providing translated elections materials to a segment of the population. Section 203 §55.17 explains targeting as “a system in which the minority language materials or assistance required by the Act are provided to fewer than all persons or registered voters. It is the view of the Attorney General that a targeting system will normally fulfill the Act’s minority language requirements if it is designed and implemented in such a way that language minority group members who need minority language materials and assistance receive them”. Targeting specifically answers the question of how to distribute translated materials to your county’s minority language population.

Your county may choose to target, if:

- you must provide assistance in more than one language;
- your county has a small minority language population
- the minority language population is highly concentrated in one geographical area;
- the minority language population is dispersed throughout the county; and/or
- it is the most cost-effective method of compliance for your county.

If these statements represent your county, you may choose to target. There are several types of targeting systems.

For example, King County provides information in Chinese to voters who choose to receive information in that language. This is referred to as an opt-in targeting system.

Here are some of the targeting systems used:

**Geographical:** Materials will be distributed to households and voters in areas with a high concentration of one minority language community.

The distribution of translated elections materials is not countywide.

**Opt-in:** Materials will be sent to minority language voters who have opted-in to receive elections materials in a particular language.

The distribution is countywide. A subscription list of these voters will be maintained by the county.

**Combination of opt-in and Geographical:** Materials will be sent to households and voters in certain areas and to voters who choose to receive elections materials in a particular language.

After reviewing the method of targeting and choosing which method best meets your county's needs, here is how your county can get started providing translated elections information.

### **Educate, educate, and educate**

Since your county will be targeting, you will need to conduct extensive outreach to determine where your minority language population is concentrated, inform voters they have the option of requesting elections materials in another language, and to begin building your opt-in list.

Explain the federal requirements to your community and why these requirements are in place.

Educate your staff and commissioners on the requirements. They will have to explain why voters are receiving certain information in a language other than English. Have continuous training for staff.

### **Develop a strategy: timelines, budgets and more**

Create a checklist with all the documents you will need to translate. By law you must translate all voting materials provided to voters, including website information (more information on translation see page 37).

Create a checklist of all the documents you will need to add and display a message informing minority language voters how to access and request materials in a language other than English.

Compile a list of outreach events you can conduct to increase voter participation among minority language communities.

Determine where you will need to provide language assistance during normal business hours and during an election. For example: front counter, voting centers and official public meetings.

Once you have determined the workload, you will need to decide if you will hire bilingual staff, contract with a translation and interpretation service, or share staff with other counties. The decision can be made based on what is most cost-effective.

Create a timeline of the tasks you will need to accomplish before the next election. Make sure in your timeline you consider printing, translations, review of translations and redesign time.

Every method of compliance has its pros and cons. It will be up to you, your staff, your commissioners or councilmembers, and your community to decide what method will be the most cost-effective and suitable for your community.

**Pros of targeting**

- sending translated voting materials only to voters who request them
- won't overwhelm voters who do not want to receive bilingual materials
- save overall cost in production and distribution of materials

**Cons of targeting**

- extensive outreach
- more room for error
- more costly per minority language voter requesting assistance
- harder to prove to DOJ that you are doing enough to comply with the law

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**References**

Civil Rights Division. About Language Minority Voting Rights.

Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec\\_203/activ\\_203.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/activ_203.php)

Civil Rights Division. Minority Language Citizens, Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec\\_203/203\\_brochure.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/203_brochure.php)

## Part 2: Plan

### Before, during, and after an election

#### Before an election cycle

- Get to know your minority language community. Ask them questions and listen to them. Identify their needs.
- Identify partnerships and networks within the minority language community that you can tap into.
- Identify contributors, whether hired from outside your office or assigned to staff within. There should be someone in charge of editing for simple language, information design, voter advocacy, translation, and cultural relevance. An Advisory Board, policy advisor, and a project manager should also be in place.
- Create a work plan that includes deadlines and establish roles inside the office. Determine who must sign off on improvements at each phase.
- Create a checklist of all the documents you produce for voters.
- Educate all stakeholders on the minority language requirements.
- If you are a county who has an opt-in list, make sure you are in constant communication with minority language voters to ensure:
  - Subscriber's information to the opt-in list is up-to-day.
  - You are subscribing voters who are limited English proficient.
- Create a log to record your outreach efforts for the year.

#### During an election cycle

- Edit English-language content for print and web projects for easier translation and voter understanding. (See part 2, section 5 for more on plain language writing)
- Translate content into minority language.
- Proof translations.
- Review translated content in each minority language for cultural relevancy.
- Provide designer with content for all materials and/or utilize templates available through the AIGA website.
- Plan and schedule outreach events in your county.
- Use media to broadcast important elections information.

#### After an election cycle

- Review and evaluate what worked well and what could use continued improvements for the next election.
- Update glossary.
- Update Library of documents.
- Review your log to ensure you have recorded all your outreach efforts conducted for the year.

## Plain language

### Definition of plain language

Plain language refers to concise and clearly written text free of elections jargon that can easily confuse the public.

Plain language is an important part of the minority language process because the content written in English will determine the quality of the translations. Writing in plain language will save you money and time.

**Before:** When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the rut or hole created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

**After:** If you make a hole while freeing a stuck vehicle, you must fill the hole before you drive away.

### Steps to rewrite

Form a committee in your office to review and rewrite a document's content before thinking about the visual look of the piece and before sending it to a translator. Following are three simple steps to guide the process of text analyses and revision.

**Step 1:** Identify your audience:

Remember that the average voter isn't familiar with elections jargon. Write in a professional but informal voice. Use words that the public can easily understand to avoid confusion.

**Step 2:** Structure your writing:

Study the content of your document. The revision process can include editing information if it's no longer relevant or rearranging the order of information to provide more clarity. Thinking of your document as a story and how the unfolding of your message will best communicate with your audience can help you make decisions regarding information hierarchy.

**Step 3:** Avoid redundancies:

There is a natural tendency to repeat things to imply emphasis. Elections can be a confusing and overwhelming process to those not in the business. Keeping your text short and concise will help you communicate clearly. Repeating text will add bulk to your document, weighing it down with more information your audience will have to process. Be blunt and straight to the point.

For more information on plain language writing, see the resources listed in the reference section of this document.

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### References

U.S. Election Assistance Commission & AIGA Design for Democracy, *Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections*, 2007, p13, Retrieved from <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>

Use of Language in Ballot Instructions (NISTIR 7556) National Institute of Standards & Technology May 2009 <http://ballotusability.blogspot.com/2009/11/top-10-guidelines-for-creating-plain.html>

Center for Plain Language

<http://centerforplainlanguage.org/about-plain-language/guidelines-for-creating-plain-language-materials/>

## Part 3: Implement

### The role of design

The success of elections materials with the intent to communicate complex ideas to voters depends heavily on effective information design. Effective design is defined as design that is usable, clear, concise and accurate. These attributes are important in any language and even more so when working with more than one language. Utilizing basic principals from the field of information design can help simplify your bilingual and single-language elections materials and thus clarify the election process for voters and elections staff alike.

### Background information

Design for Democracy is a strategic initiative started in 1998 with the goal of increasing civic participation by making elections-related experiences clear, understandable, and trustworthy.

A graphic designer is placed in the Washington State Elections Division to assist with the redesign and/or creation of new materials.

The information that follows is based on research. A pilot study was conducted in collaboration with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that used “professionally designed voter information materials and optical scan ballots in two Nebraska counties on Election Day, November 7, 2006. The goal was to gauge overall design success with voters and for elections officials to collaborate with design professionals within an actual production cycle with all its variables, time lines, and participants” (EAC, 2007, p.194). The report entitled ‘Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections’ is the outcome of this study. The report discusses in-depth design recommendations for bilingual and single-language ballots and elections materials and was used to create this section of the Language Assistance Plan. You can find the full report along with templates on the AIGA website: [www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/](http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/).

Contact the Washington State Design Fellow with questions, comments, and requests:  
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### Ballot design

#### Bilingual optical scan ballot (EAC, 2007, p107 – 130)

If choosing the bilingual method of compliance, research recommends using no more than two languages per ballot (EAC, 2007, p107).

With the increase of information inherent in bilingual ballots, concerns regarding ballot length or number of pages will arise. Though some compromises may need to be made, there is research for which to base a set of best practices to maximize space and keep costs down.

Following are a set of basic guidelines. Detailed design specifications and templates can be found at: <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.

**Text use and size (EAC, 2007, p216)**

Use upper and lower-case sans serif type, set at a minimum of 12 points for all ballot content voters will read. Given the choice between adequate type size (12 points) and fewer pages, ballots with 12 point type and more pages were found to be more usable than those with fewer pages and smaller type. Ballot legibility and ease of comprehension for voters are more important than printing costs.

Use a bold weight sans serif type for English text. The Univers type family is a common, readable, and consistent font choice for ballots and all other elections materials. If Univers is not available in your office, Arial is a good alternative.

Use a lightweight font for the second language on your ballot. Typefaces that are not based on the Latin alphabet should be selected on the basis of simplicity, compatibility with the Universe (or Arial) type family, and for cultural appropriateness. (In the samples seen in this document LeHeiPro was used for Chinese.)

**Consider ballot design in parts and holistically**

Optical scan ballots are made of four basic parts:

- A. Election information (jurisdictions, election type and date)
- B. Instructions
- C. Navigation
- D. Questions, including contests, retentions, and measures.

Working with each part individually then bringing the parts together to form the whole will help segment the ballot and make the design process less overwhelming.

Design specifications for each of the four parts of a bilingual optical scan ballot can be found in the EAC report, section 3, pages 108 - 122. <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.

The parts that do not contain variable data pertaining to an election can be found ready made for Hart and ES&S ballots in the Library of Documents housed on the SOS website.

Be careful to select the correct illustrations for your ballot type. Illustrative diagrams that accurately reflect the ballot type and equipment further clarify instructions and processes.

Illustrations, and navigation images are available in both color, and black and white. While printing in more than one color often makes end costs higher, this is not always the case for ballots. Check with your ballot print vendor about the possibility of additional cost for printing your ballot in two colors (in this case black and cyan).

If working with a ballot designer, provide them with the specifications found in the EAC report. <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.

**A** Election information

**B** Instructions

**C** Navigation

**D** Questions, including contests, retentions, and measures.

EAC, 2007 report on Effective Election Design

- A. Election information
- B. Instructions
- C. Navigation
- D. Questions, including contests, retentions, and measures.

**Republican Official Ballot, Primary Election, May 9, 2006**

A	B	C
Coffax County	Nebraska Primary	Schuyler 1
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS:</b></p> <p>1. TO VOTE YOU MUST COMPLETELY BLACKEN THE OVAL (●).</p> <p>2. Use only the marking device provided.</p> <p>3. For a WRITE-IN, write in the name on the line provided and blacken the oval completely.</p> <p>4. DO NOT CROSS OUT OR ERASE.</p> <p>If you spoil your ballot, exchange the ballot for a new one.</p> <p>5. AFTER VOTING, insert your ballot in the ballot sleeve. DO NOT FOLD THE BALLOT</p>		
<p><b>STATE TICKET</b></p>		
<p><b>FOR AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS</b> Para Auditor de Cuentas Publicas Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Mike Foley</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>		<p><b>FOR COUNTY SHERIFF</b> Para Funcionario jefe de ley del condado VOTE FOR ONE</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Pat Eller</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>
<p><b>FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL</b> Para Procurador General Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jon Bruning</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>		<p><b>FOR COUNTY ATTORNEY</b> Para Abogado del Condado Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Robert Westadt</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>
<p><b>FOR STATE TREASURER</b> Para Tesorero del Estado Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Shane Osborn</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Ron Ross</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>		<p><b>FOR COUNTY SURVEYOR</b> Para Agrimensor del Condado Vote for One/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Marvin L. Svoboda</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>
<p><b>FOR REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS DISTRICT ONE</b> Candidatura del Congreso Vote for One/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jeff Fortenberry</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>		<p><b>FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER 3RD DISTRICT</b> Comisionado de Condado Distrito Tres Vote for ONE/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jerry Heard</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>
<p><b>FOR GOVERNOR</b> Papeleta del Estado Vote for One/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Dave Nabity</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Dave Heineman</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Tom Osborne</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>		<p><b>FOR CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT</b> Para Escribano forense del tribunal del distrito Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>
<p><b>FOR SECRETARY OF STATE</b> Para Secretario del Estado Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> John A. Gale</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>		<p><b>FOR COUNTY ASSESSOR</b> Para Asesor del Condado Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>
<p><b>NONPARTISAN TICKET</b></p> <p><b>For Member of State Board of Regents District Three</b> El Comité de Educacion del Estado Distrito Tres Vote for one/por uno</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Chuck Hassebrook</p> <p><input type="radio"/> _____</p>		
<p><b>VOTE BOTH SIDES</b></p>		
A	B	C
Typ:01 Seq:0001 Spl:01	Republican Party	01 01

7.4.2.0 / 012503-14 © Election Systems & Software, Inc. 1981, 2002

Initials \_\_\_\_\_

## Official Ballot for General Election

### Colfax County, Nebraska - Tuesday, November 07, 2006

1 of 6

A Colfax County	B State of Nebraska	C Schuyler 1
-----------------	---------------------	--------------

11

21

40

41

42

43

51

**La Votación Oficial Para la Elección General**  
El Condado de Colfax, Nebraska - Martes, 07 Noviembre, 2006

**Voting Instructions**  
Instrucciones Para Votar

**Fill in the oval to the left of the name of your choice. Vote for one candidate in each contest unless otherwise indicated.**

Rellene el óvalo a la izquierda del nombre de su selección. Vote por un candidato en cada contienda a menos que se le indique lo contrario.



**You must blacken the oval completely. Use only the marker found in the voting booth.**

Deberá rellenar el óvalo completamente. Utilice solamente el marcador ubicado en la caseta de votación.

**You may write in a candidate by placing that name on the blank line and filling in the oval to the left.**

Para votar por un candidato que no aparece en la boleta, escriba el nombre de la persona en la línea designada y rellene el óvalo correspondiente.



**After voting, insert your ballot in the ballot sleeve. Do not fold the ballot.**

Después de votar, coloque su boleta en la funda protectora. No doble la boleta.

**Do not cross out or erase. If you make a mistake or a stray mark, ask for a new ballot from the poll workers.**

No tache ni borre. Si comete un error o hace alguna otra marca por equivocación, pídale a uno de los oficiales electorales una boleta nueva.

**Start Voting Here**  
Empiece a Votar Aquí

**For United States Senator**  
Candidatura del Senado  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Pete Ricketts** Republican

**Ben Nelson** Democrat

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**For Representative in Congress District 1**  
Candidatura del Congreso  
Distrito Uno  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Jeff Fortenberry** Republican

**Maxine B. Moul** Democrat

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**For Governor**  
Para Gobernador  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Dave Heineman** Governor Republican

**Rick Sheehy** Lieutenant Governor

**David Hahn** Governor Democrat

**Steve Loschen** Lieutenant Governor

**For State Treasurer**  
Para Tesorero del Estado  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Shane Osborn** Republican

**John H. Gathings** Nebraska

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**For Auditor of Public Accounts**  
Para Auditor de Cuentas Publicas  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Mike Foley** Republican

**Kate Witek** Democrat

**Kelly Renee Rosberg** Nebraska

**Steve Larrick** Green

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**For Attorney General**  
Para Procurador General  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Jon Bruning** Republican

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**For County Clerk**  
Para Secretaría del Condado  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Sharon K. Bohaboj** Democrat

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**For Secretary of State**  
Para Secretario del Estado  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**John A. Gale** Republican

**Jay C. Stoddard** Democrat

**Doug Paterson** Green

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**For Clerk of the District Court**  
Para Escribano forense del tribunal del distrito  
Vote for ONE / por UNO

**Dori L. Kroeger** Democrat

write-in / escribe-en:  
.....

**Continue Voting Next Side**  
Continue Votando al Otro Lado



A Typ:01 Seq:0001 Spl:01
B
C 01 01

7.4.2.0 / 012503-14 © Election Systems & Software, Inc. 1981, 2002

After applying some best practices / EAC, 2007 report on Effective Election Design

## Single-language optical scan ballot [EAC, 2007, p79 – 106]

If choosing a targeting approach, the following are a set of basic guidelines to consider when designing a single-language ballot. The same guidelines apply to every single-language ballot no matter what the language. Detailed design specifications and templates can be found at:

<http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.

### Text use and size (EAC, 2007, p.216)

Use upper- and lowercase sans serif type, set at a minimum of 12 points for all ballot content voters will read. Given the choice between adequate type size (12 points) and fewer pages, ballots with 12-point type and more pages were found to be more usable than those with fewer pages and smaller type. Ballot legibility and ease of comprehension for voters are more important than printing costs.

Use a sans serif type for English. The Univers type family is a common, readable, and consistent font choice for ballots and all other elections materials. If Univers is not available in your office Arial is a good alternative.

Non-Western typefaces should be selected on the basis of simplicity, compatibility with the Universe (or Arial) type family, and for cultural appropriateness. (In the samples seen in this document LeHeiPro was used for Chinese.)

### Consider ballot design in parts and holistically

Optical scan ballots are made of four basic parts:

- A. Election information (jurisdictions, election type, and date)
- B. Instructions
- C. Navigation
- D. Questions, including contests, retentions, and measures.

Working with each part individually then bringing the parts together to form the whole will help segment the ballot to make the design process less overwhelming.

Design specifications for each of the four parts of a single-language optical scan ballot can be found in the EAC report, section 3, pages 80 -94. <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.

The parts that do not contain variable data pertaining to an election can be found ready made for Hart and ES&S ballots in the Library of Documents housed on the SOS website.

Be careful to select the correct illustrations for your ballot type. Illustrative diagrams that accurately reflect the ballot type and equipment further clarify instructions and processes.

Illustrations, and navigation images are available in both color, and black and white. While printing in more than one color often makes end costs higher, this is not always the case for ballots. Check with your ballot print vendor about the possibility of additional cost for printing your ballot in two colors (in this case black and cyan).

If working with a ballot designer, provide them with the specifications found in the EAC report. <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.



**Official Ballot for General Election  
Springfield County, Nebraska  
Tuesday, November 07, 2006**

A

Instructions

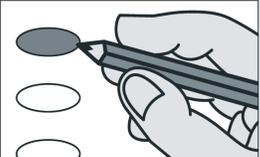
**Optional write-in**

**or write-in:**



To add a candidate, fill in the oval to the left of "or write-in" and print the name clearly on the dotted line.

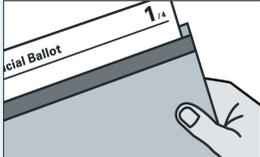
**Making selections**



Fill in the oval to the left of the name of your choice. You must blacken the oval completely, and do not make any marks outside of the oval. You do not have to vote in every race.

**!**  
Do not cross out or erase, or your vote may not count. If you make a mistake or a stray mark, ask for a new ballot from the poll workers.

**Turning in the ballot**



Insert the completed ballot into the ballot sleeve. Hand in the ballot to be counted.

**!**  
Do not fold the ballot.

1 / 5

C

**Continue voting next side** 

**Continue voting next page** 

**Thank you for voting!  
Please turn in your finished ballot**

U.S. Senator

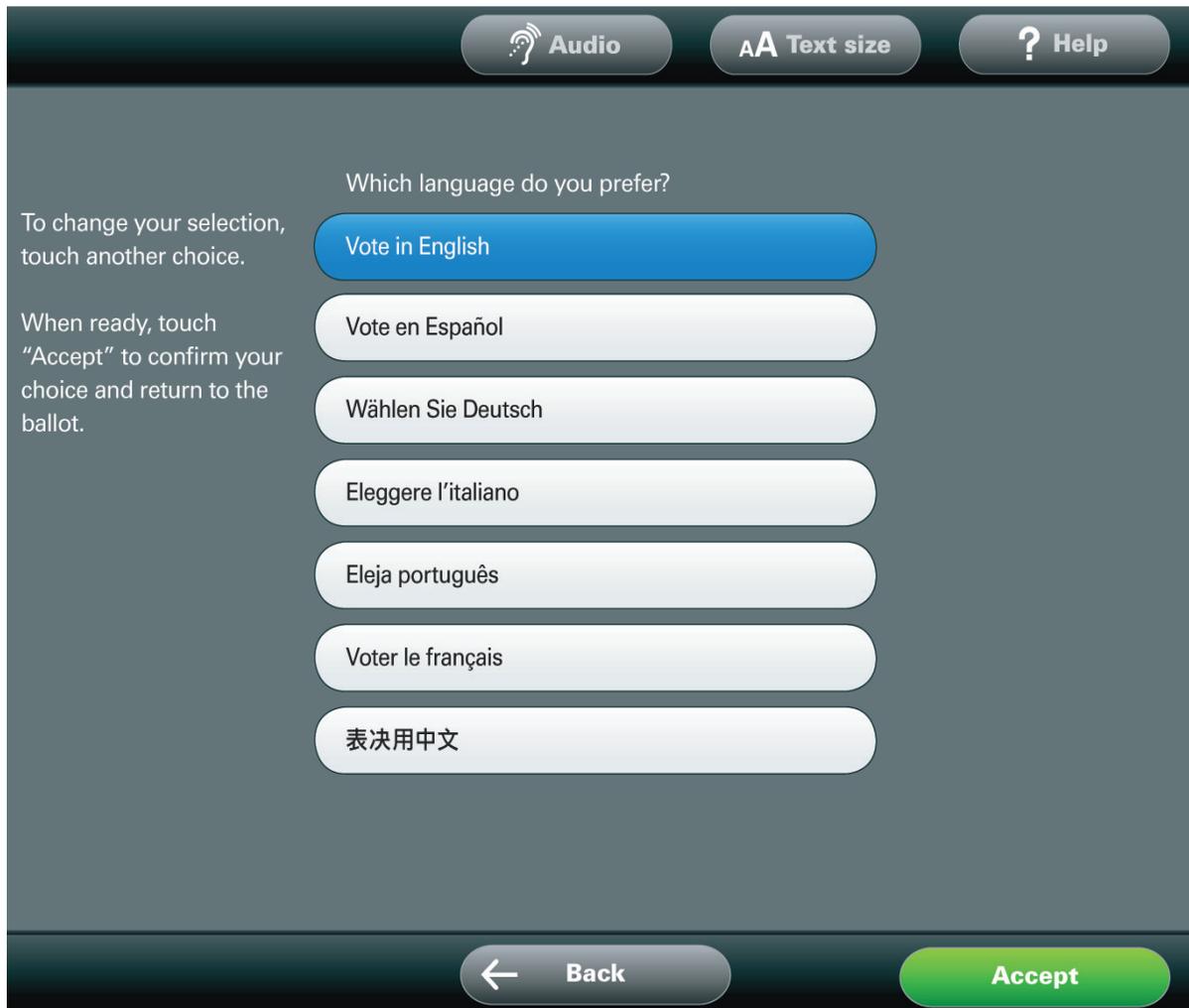
Vote for 1

- Dennis Weiford**  
Blue
- Lloyd Garriss**  
Yellow
- Sylvia Wentworth-Farthington**  
Purple
- John Hewetson**  
Orange

- A. Elections information
- B. Instructions
- C. Navigation
- D. Questions, including contests, retentions, and measures.

### DRE Units [EAC, 2007, p131 – 192]

A full facing DRE machine will show the ballot in it's entirety at once and on one screen, while the rolling machine will guide the voter through a series of pages, displaying the ballot in pieces rather than all at once. Either machine will need to include the languages required in your county. A full facing machine will take on a bilingual display, while a rolling machine will have a language selection option and perform as a single-language display system.



### Text use and size

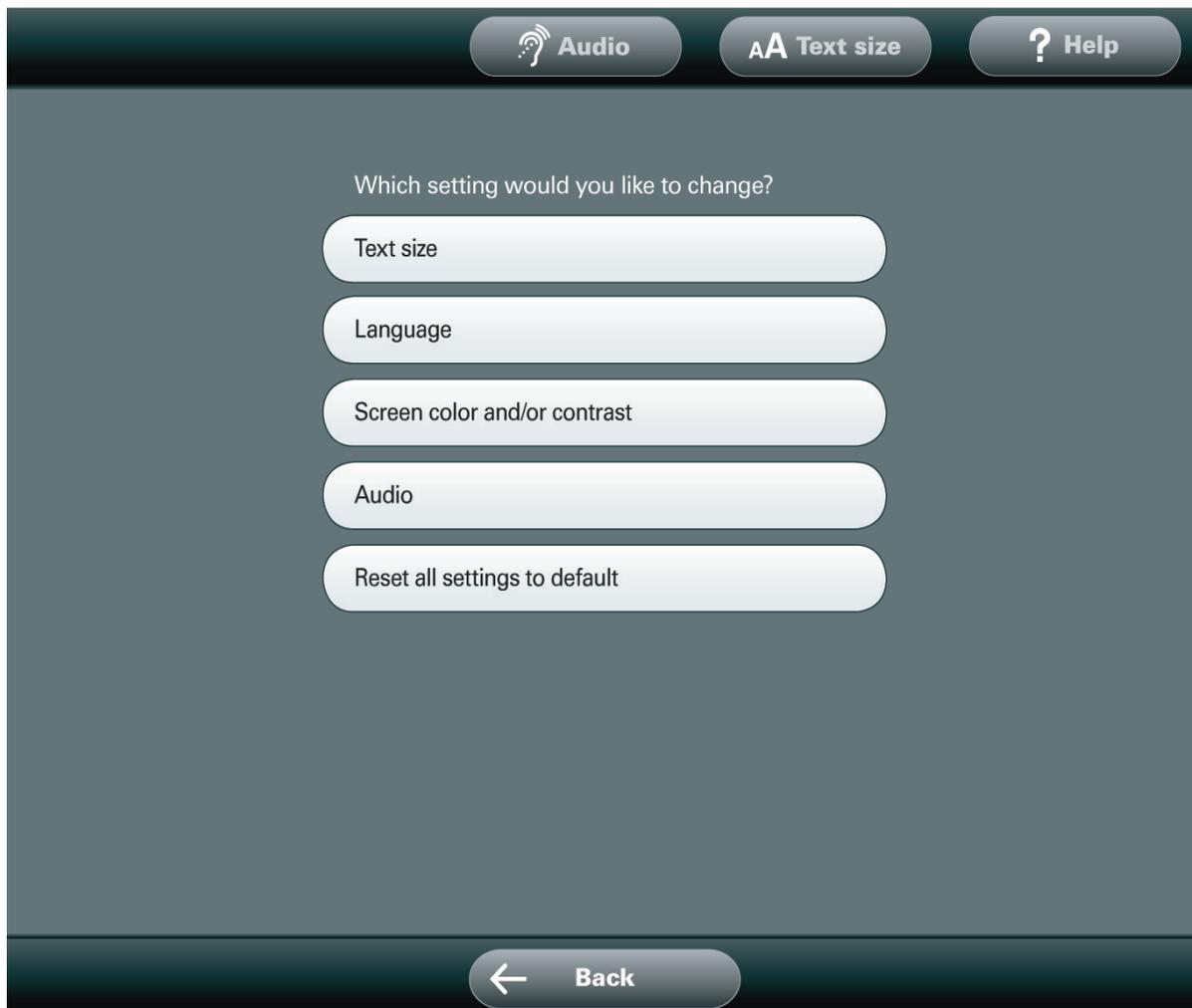
Detailed typographic guidelines are outlined in the design specifications for full facing machines in the EAC report, section 4, pages 138 – 151. <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.

For rolling machines, use upper- and lowercase sans serif type, set at a minimum of 25 points (about 32 pixels), for all ballot content voters will read. Given a choice between adequate type size and reducing the need to scroll lengthy measures, ballots with larger type were found to be more usable, even if voters needed to scroll.

Avoid setting text in a centered alignment. Centered text is difficult and more time consuming to read.

Avoid setting text in all CAPITAL LETTERS. Using all caps minimizes the shape of letter forms making them less recognizable and more difficult and time consuming to read and comprehend.

Minimize the number of fonts used. Too many fonts will result in a messy and confusing ballot. (EAC pg.158)



### Consider ballot design in parts and holistically

Similar to optical scan ballots, DREs are made of four basic parts.

- A. Election information (jurisdictions, election type, and date)
- B. Instructions
- C. Navigation
- D. Questions, including contests, retentions, and measures.

Working with each part individually then bringing the parts together to form the whole will help segment the ballot to make the design process less overwhelming.

Design specifications for each of the four parts of full facing and rolling DRE units can be found in the EAC report, section 4, pages 136 - 192. <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>.

**A** National contests

**B** You have 1 choice left

**D** To vote, touch a pair of names. A check mark will appear to confirm your selection.

To change your vote, touch another pair of names.

**C**

**President and Vice-President of the United States**

Joseph Baarchi and Joseph Hallaren	Blue
Adam Cramer and Greg Vuocolo	Yellow
Daniel Court and Amy Blumhardt	Purple
Alvin Boone and James Lian	Orange
Austin Hildebrand and James Garritty	Pink
Martin Patterson and Clay Lariviere	Gold
Elizabeth Harp and Antoine Jefferson	Gray
Marzena Pazgier and Welton Phelps	Aqua
Touch here to submit another pair of names	

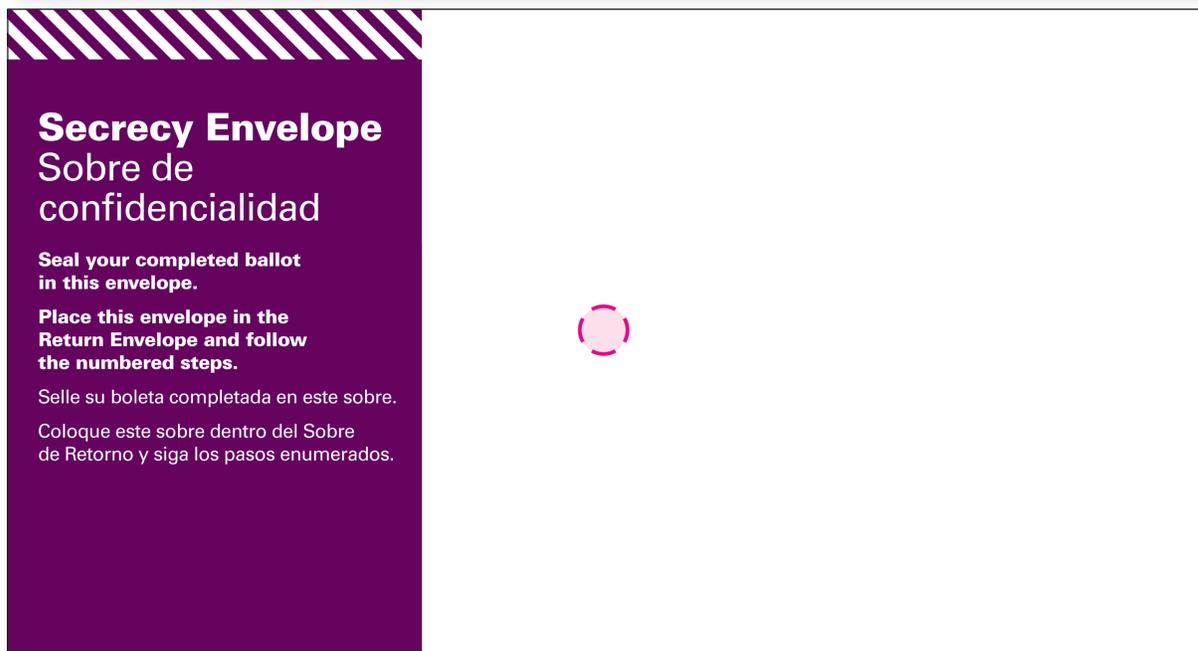
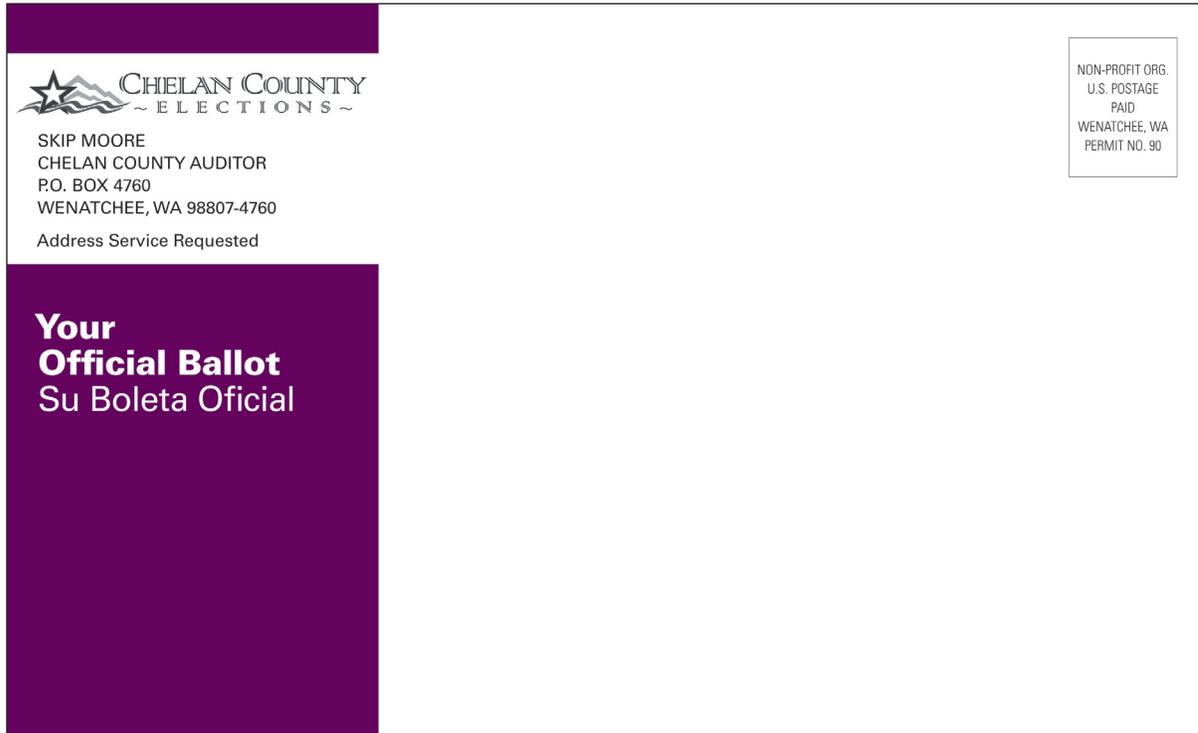
Review your choices   ← Back   1 of 26   Skip →

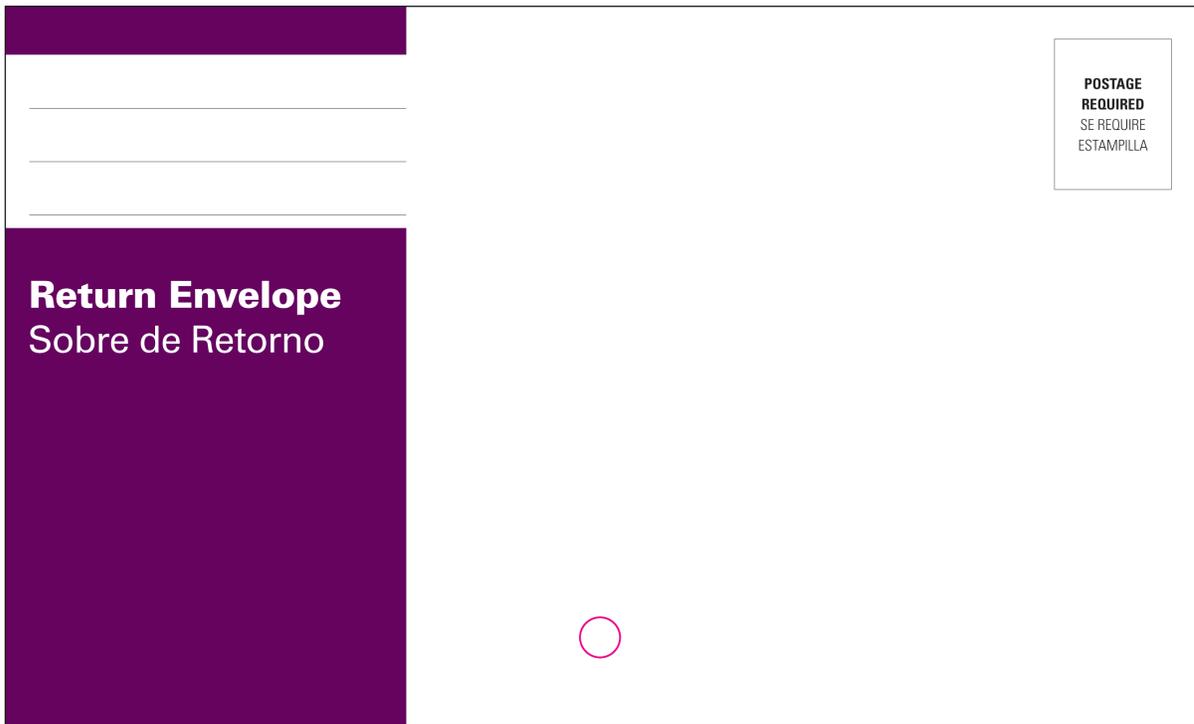


## Envelope design

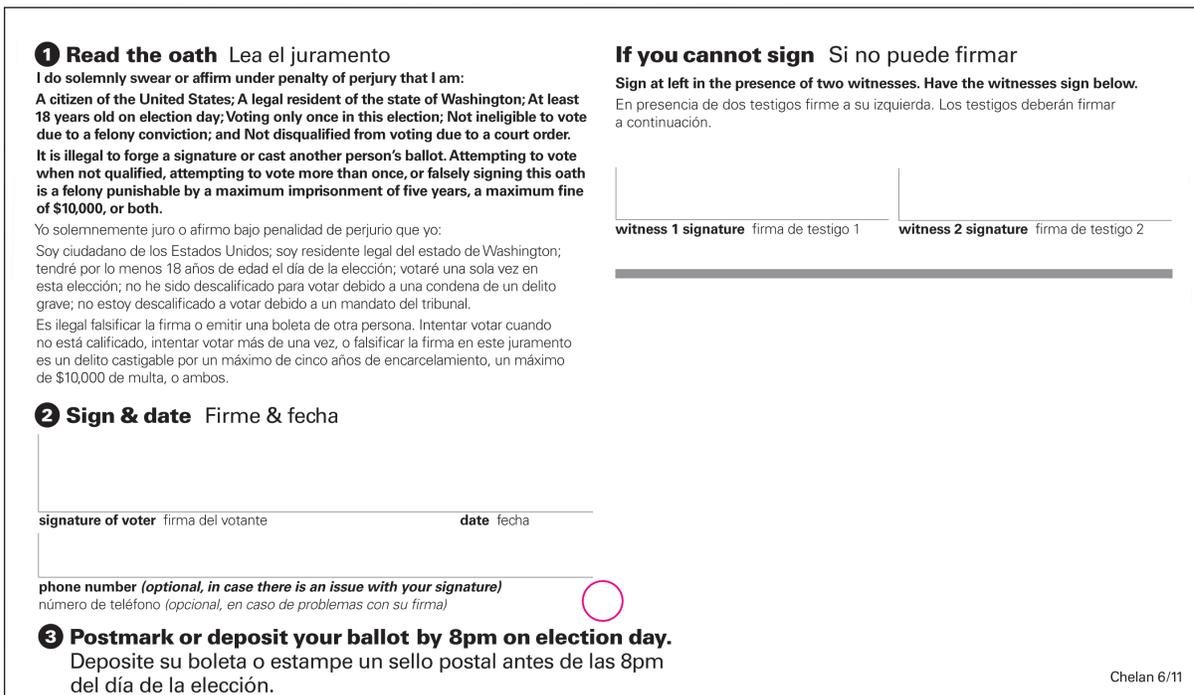
### Bilingual envelopes

If following the bilingual method of compliance, your county will need only one set of bilingual envelopes.





Front

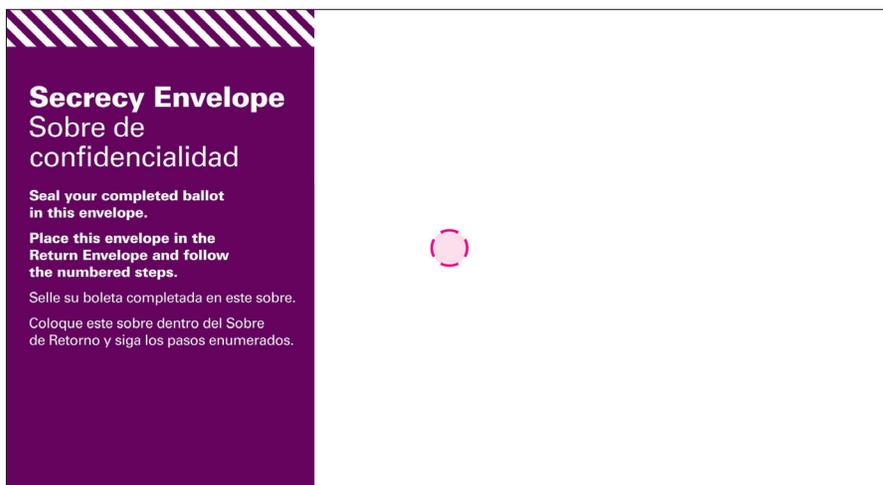
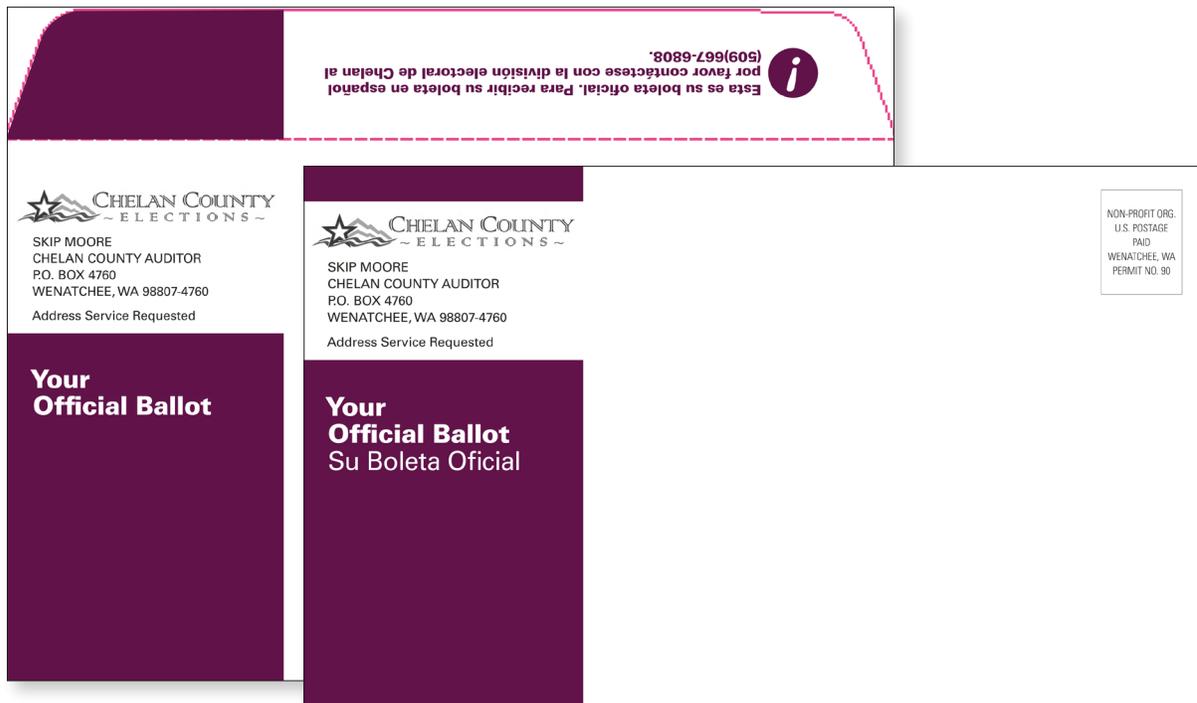


Back

### Targeting envelopes

If following the targeting method of compliance, your county will need two outer and return envelopes, and one secrecy envelope. Using a bilingual secrecy envelope is recommended to protect voter identity. The English outer envelope should include a message providing translated directions for how to receive materials in a minority language.

Native InDesign files for the envelopes seen in this document can be found in the Library of Documents. SOS is happy to assist you in the design process. Please contact the Elections Division Design Fellow at sarah.higgins@sos.wa.gov, or (360) 725-5773.



## Return Envelope

POSTAGE  
REQUIRED

**1 Read the oath**  
 I do solemnly swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that I am:  
 A citizen of the United States; A legal resident of the state of Washington;  
 At least 18 years old on election day; Voting only once in this election;  
 Not ineligible to vote due to a felony conviction; and Not disqualified from voting due to a court order.  
 It is illegal to forge a signature or cast another person's ballot.  
 Attempting to vote when not qualified, attempting to vote more than once, or falsely signing this oath is a felony punishable by a maximum imprisonment of five years, a maximum fine of \$10,000, or both.

**2 Sign & date**

\_\_\_\_\_

signature of voter above

\_\_\_\_\_

date above

\_\_\_\_\_

phone number above (optional, in case there is an issue with your signature)

**3 Postmark or deposit your ballot by 8pm on election day.**

**If you cannot sign**  
 Try to sign or mark in the "signature of voter" area in the presence of two witnesses. The two witnesses should then sign below.

\_\_\_\_\_

witness 1 signature above

\_\_\_\_\_

witness 2 signature above

English return envelope, front & back

## Sobre de Retorno

SE REQUIERE  
ESTAMPILLA

**1 Lea el juramento**  
 Yo solemnemente juro o afirmo bajo penalidad de perjurio que yo:  
 Soy ciudadano de los Estados Unidos; soy residente legal del estado de Washington; tendré por lo menos 18 años de edad el día de la elección; votaré una sola vez en esta elección; no he sido descalificado para votar debido a una condena de un delito grave; no estoy descalificado a votar debido a un mandato del tribunal.  
 Es ilegal falsificar la firma o emitir una boleta de otra persona. Intentar votar cuando no está calificado, intentar votar más de una vez, o falsificar la firma en este juramento es un delito castigable por un máximo de cinco años de encarcelamiento, un máximo de \$10,000 de multa, o ambos.

**2 Firme & fecha**

\_\_\_\_\_

firma del votante

\_\_\_\_\_

date fecha

\_\_\_\_\_

número de teléfono (opcional, en caso de problemas con su firma)

**3 Deposite su boleta o estampe un sello postal antes de las 8pm del día de la elección.**

**Si no puede firmar**  
 En presencia de dos testigos firme a su izquierda. Los testigos deberán firmar a continuación.

\_\_\_\_\_

firma de testigo 1

\_\_\_\_\_

firma de testigo 2

Spanish return envelope, front & back

---

## References

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## Translations and interpretation

Translation refers to written communication and interpretation refers to spoken communication. Translation and interpretation are fundamental pieces for compliance of a minority language program.

Section 203 names certain elections materials that need to be translated. It is not always easy to identify the materials that need to be translated for voters to fully participate in the elections process. With interpretation services, counties are not sure how to identify compliance and what alternatives can be used if a staff translator is unavailable.

This section will help counties determine what materials to translate, how to develop a translation procedure to ensure quality translations, and how to provide interpretation service over-the-phone and/or in-person.

### Identify the target language

Before translating any documents or hiring an interpreter (staff or vendor) you will need to determine what variation of the language you will use.

Section 203 requires your county to tailor your program to the minority language community. While DOJ will determine the language for which your jurisdiction is covered for, you must identify the variation of the language(s) to communicate appropriately with your community. For example Spanish in Mexico can be slightly different from Spanish spoken in Puerto Rico, in the same way English in the United States can vary from English spoken in Scotland.

Here are some examples you should take into consideration regarding the difference in languages:

Spanish: In Washington State the vast majority of the Spanish-speaking community has emigrated from Mexico or is of Mexican descent. Therefore, counties covered for Spanish should verify their target language to be Mexican Spanish.

Chinese: In China the two main languages are Mandarin and Cantonese. The written language is the same but in the 1950's the traditional Chinese characters were simplified. Therefore, counties covered for Chinese must determine what language to translate, and if they will use simplified or traditional characters.

### Determine what materials will be translated

Jurisdictions under section 203 are required to provide elections materials of "any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process including ballots... [It] should apply to all stages of the electoral process, from voter registration through activities related to conducting elections, including issuance of notifications, announcements, or other informational materials concerning the opportunity to register, the deadline for voter registration, the time, places and subject matters of elections, and the absentee voting process" (Section 203 §55.15).

The law requires jurisdictions to translate anything that is for voters, which includes printed materials and web content. No matter if your county has chosen to run bilingual elections or decided to target, you will still need to translate the following information:

**Printed materials that need to be translated:**

- voter registration form
- voters' pamphlet
- voter registration card
- signature letter
- confirmation letter
- ballot
- ballot instructions
- ballot envelopes
- sample ballots
- provisional ballots
- legal notices
- drop boxes
- signage related to voting and elections
- written PSA's
- office titles

**Website content that needs to be translated:**

- voter registration information
- MyVote
- replacement ballot instructions
- ballot instructions
- voters' guide
  - o cover
  - o informational pages
  - o candidate statements and information
  - o initiatives and referenda
- election deadlines
- calendar
- accessible voting locations
- drop box locations
- contact information
- legal notices
- mental competency information
- voters with disabilities information
- felon information
- military voting information
- audio content
- if you have links to other websites that are not translated, create and translate a pop-up that indicates they are exiting the county website, the information is not translated, and if they require more information they can contact your county.

The following materials are not required to be translated by the letter of the law because the end user is not the “voter” and don’t have to do with the act of voting, since translating those materials you don’t increase or diminish the ability of the voter to fully participate in the elections process. However, if your community asks for any of the following materials to be translated you may want to consider translating them or discussing it with your advisory group or community directly.

**Printed materials that are less likely to need translation:**

- candidate filing form
- candidate information handbook
- election results
- auditor rules and regulations
- list of county officials
- measure filling information
- informational brochures not related to elections or voting
- posters not related to elections or voting

**Website content that does not need to be translated:**

- information for candidates and campaigns
- the initiative and referenda process
- information for media and researchers
- information for elections administrators

If your county produces other materials not included in the list, make sure to contact your community, advisory group, or other counties covered by Section 203 to determine if you need to translate them.

## Create translation policies

It takes a lot of steps to translate, print and distribute elections materials. It is important to have translation policies in place to ensure that your county is complying with Section 203. §55.19(b)

“It is essential that material provided in the language minority group be clear, complete and accurate.”

Here are some recommendations of topics to include in the policies:

**Plan for translations:** Normally the documents are not created by the person who will be translating the materials. All elections staff, or anyone else creating materials for voters, needs to build in the necessary time for translations, since translated materials need to be clear, complete and accurate, and be available shortly after the English version.

**Determining what needs to be translated:** First, identify what is posted online or printed that needs translation according to the law.

**Modifications:** If something has to be changed in the English version, notify your translator of the changes so they can change the translated version. Make sure communication guidelines are in place so any changes and updates are reflected in the minority language.

**Delay between the release of the English version and translated version:** If you post or print a document in English that has not yet been translated, be sure to include a translated note letting voters know where and how they can access the information or when the information will be made available in the minority language.

**Develop proofing procedures:** All of your translated materials should be reviewed by someone besides the person or vendor doing the translations. This step helps ensure you are producing quality translations understood by your minority language community. It is recommended that the reviewer be someone from your minority language community. This person can be someone from your Advisory Board or a volunteer. Section 203 §55.19(b) states “In examining whether the jurisdiction has achieved compliance with the requirements, the Attorney General will consider whether the jurisdiction has consulted with the members of the applicable language minority group with respect to the translation of materials.”

### Create interpretation policies

Depending on the size and needs of your community you will need to determine if you will hire a bilingual staff member or if you will contract with an interpretation vendor for in-person or over-the-phone services.

For interpretation services, the expectation is that your county will provide the same quality of services an English-speaking voter will receive. None-the-less, how can you achieve that level of compliance if you only have one person on staff that can speak the minority language, you contract out interpretative services, or you provide assistance in more than one language (not including English). The following recommendations can assist you and your staff in drafting and implementing alternative methods of compliance for in-person and over-the-phone services, and still be able to accomplish the VRA requirements.

**In-person services:** Display elections materials in the applicable minority language(s) at voting centers and your county elections department.

If you contract with interpretative service, display the number voters can call for assistance at your front desk.

If bilingual staff is out of the office, contact bilingual elections staff from another county or from OSOS.

If no one can help the voter at that moment, have a form in the minority language for voters to fill out with their contact information or questions, and include a message saying someone will get back to them as soon as possible.

Display frequently asked questions in the office.

**Over-the-phone services:** For hotline calls, the first option for callers should be dial 1 for English and 2 for the minority language. If they dial 2 for minority language, they should be directed to the bilingual staff or a message should play letting them know what the following step will be.

If you are using an interpretation services, normally you will need to arrange a conference call with

the voter, staff answering the questions, and interpreter. But in order to set up the conference call your staff should either learn how to say a few key phrases in the minority language or again you can play a message in the minority language.

Play a message requesting voters leave their contact information, letting them know someone will contact them as soon as possible.

Play a message directing voters to use the translated sections of your website.

## Documenting decisions

It is important for your county to document decisions about policies you make regarding what to translate/not to translate and the type of interpretation services you will be providing. Since the minority language program has to reflect the needs of your minority language community, you should keep a record of where the information is coming from and the type of information you are using as the basis of your decisions. This is an important step to highlight the effectiveness of your program.

Here are some suggestions about the types of information you will need to record:

- Recommendations your community members have given you.
- Recommendations your Advisory Board has given you.
- Demographic information characteristic of your county.
- List of materials you produce in English that is specifically for voters.
- Keep of Log of why decisions are made.

## Create a glossary and library of translated documents

It is recommended that whenever doing translations or interpretation, you create and keep a glossary of specific vocabulary. The main purpose of the glossary is to establish consistency in all the different political jurisdictions of the state and from one election to another in order to avoid language issues.

A glossary has certain benefits:

- Creates consistency throughout the counties and the state, election-to-election and year-to-year.
- Elections administrators will have the confidence that the translation of key terminology has been translated and interpreted by bilingual elections staff proficient in English and Spanish.
- Translators not trained in elections will be able to translate elections terminology accurately.
- To some extent, elections administrators will be able to review the work done by contract translators.
- It will help avoid voter confusion. For example, if neighboring counties are translating key words differently, or if a voter moves from one county to another.
- Media overlaps counties and if we rely on media to educate voters, inconsistencies across county lines can become an issue.
- Counties and the OSOS can easily share translated materials, help review materials, and work together to solve tough translation questions, making the process more efficient and effective.

Overall, elections glossaries will help counties present and communicate elections information in a minority language accurately and clearly. The results will be better informed voters casting

an educated ballot, as well as enfranchising more voters in our communities.

It is recommended to have only one glossary per language used statewide to be consistent and avoid confusion. Each glossary should be developed collaboratively between the counties and the OSOS.

### **Materials for Voters with Disabilities**

There is an overlap between Section 203 and ADA requirements. Therefore, your county will need to provide elections materials translated in a format accessible to voters with disabilities. It is not necessary to have multiple formats; your county can choose to utilize the format most widely used by voters with disabilities. For example, provide audio files or text mode on your website, or large print.

Since the demand will be very minimal, it is recommend maintaining a list of voters with disabilities requesting information translated.

The following information should be translated:

**AVU:** Ballots in AVUs must be translated in the minority language

**Signs:** Signs displayed in voting centers like accessible routs, parking or give special instructions should also be translated. If the signs are part of the building and do not relate to voting then the signs don't have to be translated to comply with Section 203.

For more information for voters with disabilities visit [www.vote.wa.gov](http://www.vote.wa.gov).

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#### References

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division Civil Rights Division. Minority Language Citizens, Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec\\_203/203\\_brochure.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/203_brochure.php)

## Outreach

A strong outreach program is pivotal in complying with minority language requirements. Section 203 §55.18(e) states “The Attorney General will consider whether a covered jurisdiction has taken the appropriate steps to publicize the availability of materials and assistance in the minority language. Such steps may include the display of appropriate notices, in the minority language, at voter registration offices, polling places, etc., the making of announcements over minority language radio or television stations, the publication of notices in the minority language newspaper, and direct contact with language minority group organizations.”

### Develop an outreach plan and goals

At this point you have already done a large part of the work required for outreach since you already know your community. The steps to follow should help develop a plan or strategy to effectively communicate elections information with your minority language community.

The DOJ will expect your county to do more for the minority language community than for English voters (Bruce Adelson), since historically they have been disenfranchised from the political process due to language barriers. Your outreach program should be a “systematic attempt to provide services beyond conventional limits” (<http://onlinedictionary.datasegment.com/word/outreach>).

In order to create an effective outreach plan, you can start by brainstorming answers to some of these questions:

Who is my audience?

What is the purpose or goal of the outreach plan?

What resources does your county have?

What resources does your community have?

What does your county want to accomplish?

How are you going to measure and evaluate your outreach program?

What is the strategy you will use?

**Steps in creating an outreach plan:** Once you brainstorm some ideas, you can use the step-by-step guide to create an outreach plan.

**Step 1:** define goals and objectives

**Step 2:** identify your target or audience

**Step 3:** create a message directed to your audience designed to achieve your objectives

**Step 4:** distribute your message

Here is a list of places, networks and resources that can help you with your outreach efforts, since the advertisement of the materials must be conducted through the mediums most likely to reach the minority language communities. Outreach should be conducted in coordination with language minority citizens and organizations that are familiar with the local language minority communities (Tucker 2006, 218–219).

- government
- social service organizations (DSHS)
- schools
- English Language Learners (ELL) program and teachers
- community colleges and universities (diversity or multicultural centers, student clubs, specific program and classes, ELL programs)
- translator services
- licensing department
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- libraries
- minority commissioners
- education service districts (ESDs)
- military bases
- transportation services
- elected officials
- nonprofit and community organization:
- citizenship preparation
- chambers of commerce
- language banks
- senior centers
- religious groups (churches)
- fraternal organizations
- veterans groups
- churches
- newspapers
- online publications
- radio stations
- TV stations
- private sector (business):
- supermarkets
- large employers of your community
- identify community leaders of the organizations, business and government agencies of the minority language community
- events and plans
- college job fair
- farmers markets
- citizenship day ceremonies
- festivals
- sporting events
- county fairs
- parades
- plan educational summits
- teacher parent meetings

- school events
- voter registration drives
- work and plan events with other counties

One important consideration; if you are a county targeting and maintaining an opt-in list of voters, you will need make more concentrated outreach efforts since voters will need to communicate with you directly to request information in another language.

## Keep records

The impact and the effectiveness of an outreach program can be hard to evaluate and measure because there are too many factors to consider. A good way to evaluate an outreach program is through record keeping and outputs, since Section 203 §55.21 states “The Attorney General’s implementation of the Act’s provision concerning language minority groups would be facilitated if each jurisdiction would maintain such records and data as will document its action under those provisions.”

You can keep a log that includes:

- date
- event/location
- organizers
- contact information
- purpose/ related objectives
- activity
- number of attendee

If you are a county with an opt-in list, add:

- Number of voters requesting elections materials in a language other than English.

Here is an example of a outreach tracking log Franklin County uses to track their outreach events. To access this Word document go to the Library of Documents at [www.vote.wa.gov](http://www.vote.wa.gov).

Bilingual Outreach Events 2011 Franklin County					
Date	Event/Location	Organizers/ Contact Info	Related Objective	Activity	Person Attending

Franklin County Outreach Records

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## Outreach design

Print ready PDF files of bilingual signage can be found on the AIGA website. You can print these files in your office or share them with a professional printer if special sizes or paper stocks are desired.

Download files here: <http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy-eac-reports/>

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## References

AIGA's Design for Democracy Website (<http://www.aiga.org/design-for-democracy>).

Civil Rights Division. Minority Language Citizens, Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec\\_203/203\\_brochure.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/203_brochure.php)

Online Dictionary. Retrieved from <http://onlinedictionary.datasegment.com/word/outreach>

## Collaborate

The main emphasis of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act is the minority language community, and to develop a plan tailored to their needs. While we recognize the differences in elections systems across counties, there is room to share ideas and resources.

Complying with a minority language program can seem like a demanding and daunting task. We are adding unknown steps to our processes and doing it in a language not our own. However, we can alleviate some of the pressures with collaboration.

Collaboration makes our minority language programs more efficient and accurate. It saves money and most importantly it provides reassurance that we are complying with Section 203. Our state needs to collaborate with minority language communities but we also need to collaborate with each other.

Here are a few examples of why we should work together:

**Cost:** It cost \$0.22 cents to translate one word in Spanish and up to \$0.42 cents for other languages. If we can share translated materials, it will save money and time.

**Efficiency:** There is no need to translate the same document multiple times. Common materials, such as envelopes, the declaration, inserts like the Notice of Election, or the letters you send to veterans, can be shared among counties.

**Accuracy:** By sharing documents and vocabulary, our translations will be consistent throughout the counties and the state.

**Compliance:** You can be assured translations are accurate and understood by the community.

Here are a few examples of ways we can collaborate:

**Creating and using one glossary:** The DOJ highly suggests creating an elections glossary, but instead of each county having its own, we could use one per language in order to avoid translating key elections words in different ways.

**Library of documents:** Post translated documents online, share templates, design formats, new ideas, etc.

**Keep records of procedures:** The law says the implementation of minority language requirements are facilitated if counties maintain records and data that document actions (Section 203 §55.21).

**User group:** Form a user group with staff members of different counties and SOS, to revisit and revise language plans, glossaries, documents, use of technology, implementation, outreach, etc.

