

Language Access Services

Overview of Legislative Workgroup and Progress

Updated April 2021

Starting Goal

- **To ensure meaningful access to the legislative process for limited English proficiency Oregonians**

Background

Previous work on language access services

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee
- Legislative Administration
- Legislative Equity Office
- Others

November 2020 legislative workgroup

Considered Previous Recommendations

Proposed Service	Workgroup Feedback	Recommendation
Option A. Language Link telephonic interpretation for testimony or meetings	Not an ideal standalone option; outside companies lack understanding of Oregon/legislative issues; tech issues such as dropped calls	Less preferred
Option B. Google Translate for written documents	Least ideal option; requires internal review for cultural relevance and linguistic accuracy	Least preferred
Option C. Employment of Language Interpreter/Translator within the legislative branch	Best short-term option, if: Familiar with Oregon/legislative context Spanish language is prioritized Must include language access for other LEP communities with high language access needs	Most preferred
Option D. Contract with interpretation/translation agency or individual(s) to provide services as-requested	Has been an option in the past but requires a coordinator. Outside contractors have not typically brought legislative context and knowledge. Contractors have not always been responsive to short legislative timeframes.	Moderately preferred

Updated Goals

- **To ensure meaningful access to the legislative process for limited English proficiency Oregonians**
- To provide a single point of contact for language access services
- To prioritize the following language access services:
 - Oral interpretation for testifying in committees
 - Oral interpretation for answering constituent queries
 - Oral interpretation for meetings with legislators
 - Written translation for website materials, including meeting agendas, information about bills, and instructions for how to engage with the process
 - Signage for wayfinding at the Capitol

Language Access Coordinator

Legislative Branch employee

Single point of contact for language access services

Coordinate hired and/or contracted services to provide starting language services

Coordinate with Visitor Services to dovetail with ADA work

Develop proposal for long-term (or next iteration) of language services

Spanish Language Interpreter

Legislative Branch employee

Provide Spanish language interpretation

Work with Language Access Coordinator to orient/train additional contracted services to accommodate high volume and/or other language services

Coordinate with Visitor Services to dovetail with ADA work

Work with Language Access Coordinator to develop long-term plan



Key Questions for Implementation

- Who is “eligible” and for what services?
 - Which language(s)
 - Written translation: testimony, agenda
 - Oral translation: testimony in a hearing, other
- How does the process work?
- How do we communicate opportunity and guidelines to Oregonians and to the legislative branch?

ASL Interpretation and Closed Captioning

Related, but not the same

Current practice:

- ASL Interpretation upon request
- Computer-generated closed captioning

In the meantime...

- Language Access Coordinator arriving soon, will dig into language access services and develop a comprehensive plan
- Finalist interviews for Spanish Language Interpreter coming up
- Work to synthesize options for improving access for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing Oregonians

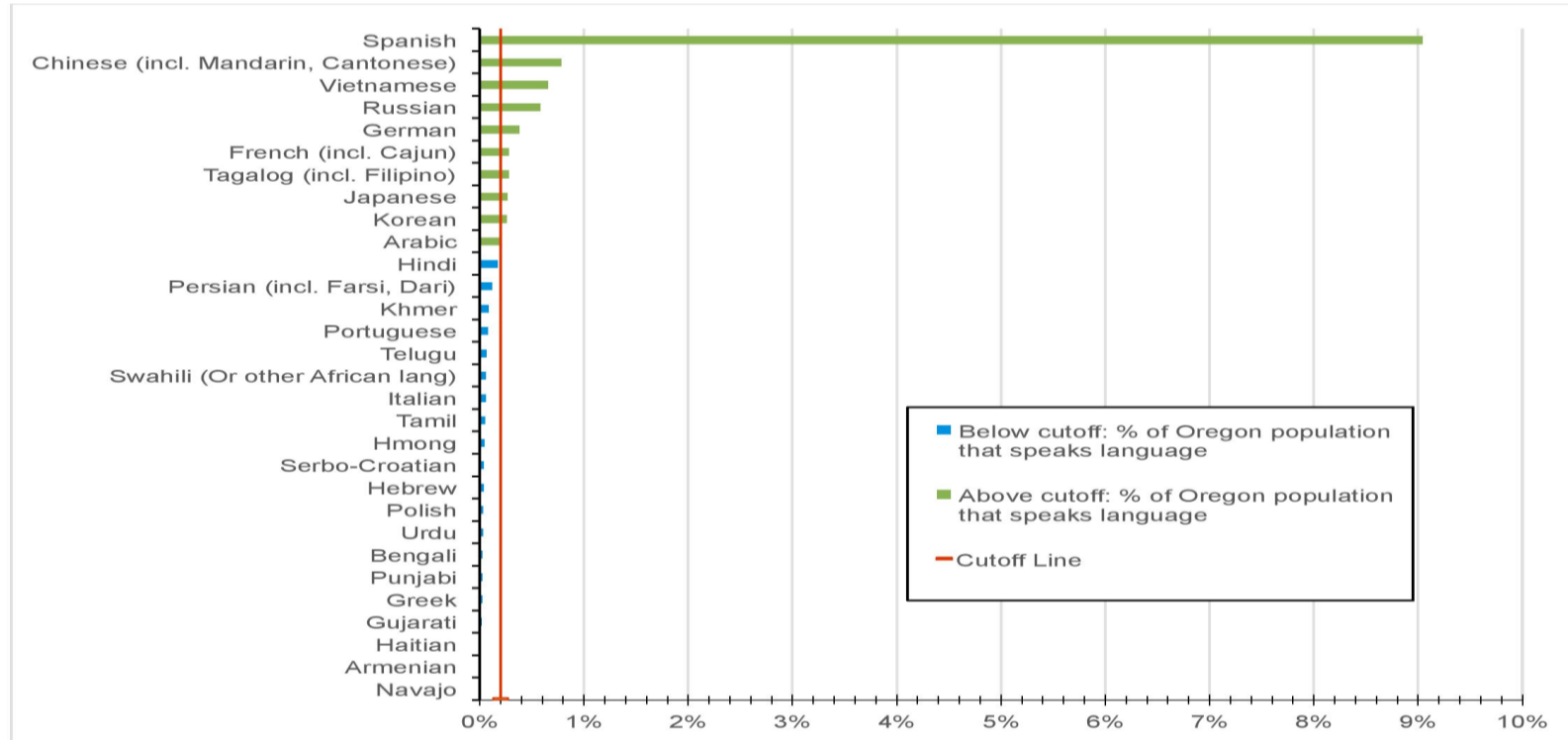
While we wait:

- Contracting with a third party for oral interpretation of testimony in committee hearings
- Utilizing language skills of existing staff for limited written document translation
- Working on tutorial video with ASL interpretation

Oregon Language Statistics

S.M.A.R.T. | Senate Bill 698 | House Bill 2801

Languages spoken in Oregon by percent of population based on ACS 5-year Estimates (2013-2017)¹



- 1 in 17 Oregonians (222,428 people) have limited English proficiency (LEP). LEP persons are 2x more likely to experience preventable medication errors than fluent English speakers².
- S.M.A.R.T. Bill proposes that translated labels be available in languages spoken by more than 0.2% of the state population (i.e. >7,587 people).
- Languages included (10): Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, German, French, Tagalog, Japanese, Korean, and Arabic.
- ~192,000 LEP individuals would be affected by this bill.

¹ US Census Bureau. (2017). B16001 – Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over for the 5-Year Data Estimates [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov>

² Harris LM, Dreyer B, Mendelson A, Bailey SC, Sanders LM, Wolf MS, ... Yin HS. (2017). Liquid medication dosing errors by Hispanic parents: Role of health literacy and English proficiency. *Academic Pediatrics*, 17(4), 403–410. doi:10.1016/j.acap.2016.10.001

Thank you!

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