



SOP: Project REAL ELL Access – Planning & Projections

Ensuring Project REAL is serving ALL Nevadans via various translation Projects.

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Overview & Goals

As of the most recent U.S. Census, nearly 30% of Nevada speaks languages other than English in their homes. Project REAL must reach these families – they deserve our resources, and may benefit from them even more than some of our clients with English as their primary language.

Our ultimate goal is to have all of our resources available in all languages spoken in Nevada, as that would be best for our state’s residents. As a more attainable point of success though, we would like to begin by having our resources available – at the least – to people that primarily communicate in the top 10 most-spoken languages in our Nevada. Ideally, these translations will be completed within 10 years, or by July 1, 2033.

Background

January 2015 - November 2023

In 2015, Project REAL printed a run of 5,000 Spanish-language copies of our now-retired Play By the Rules resource. As of May 15, 2023 we *were* eight years into that print-run and still had 3,000 copies. At the same time, we know that there is a demand for our material in other languages – it just doesn’t happen ‘at scale’.

Observation 1: In April 2020, we were notified that CREEL printing would be shutting down operations. They had been housing our publications – distributing them as needed – for over a decade. This meant we had to take several years’ worth of inventory into our office. At the same time, we didn’t know how long we’d be quarantining. We took this problem, and turned it into an opportunity, getting nearly 6,000 copies of Play By the Rules to Spread The Word Nevada. This allowed the guides to go into homes where stir-crazy students might be tempted to get into trouble. Unfortunately, of the 3,800 copies of our Spanish Language guides, we were only able to connect about 300 with local partners to do the same thing with them.

Observation 2: On December 10, 2022 our Senior Director Mike Kamer received a call at 8pm from a young woman who identified herself as Angel. Angel – a high school senior at Bonanza HS in Las Vegas - had been given a copy of Independence & You by our friends at Project 150. She begged us for a Spanish language copy of the guide for a foster-sister she was living with. Unfortunately, we were unable to provide one. While we were able to give her a link to the digital-only Spanish translation of a digest-version of the guide, there is an obvious inequity with that solution (50 Spanish pages Vs 190 English pages being just one aspect of it).

Observation 3: When delivering our Dating Violence Prevention Presentation, there is always at least one period where we are ‘warned’ that there will be a grouping of students not paying attention, and that they are ELL students, so they’re not being rude. In June 2023, we created our first ‘read along’ manuscript to tackle this issue, but it was translated with DEEPL and requires further review & testing.

Observation 4: In September 2023, we informed friends at United Way of Southern Nevada that we were going to throw out the remaining copies to make space. They were able to help place 2,400 copies with partner organizations throughout the valley. Still, that was an emergency solution, and part of what continues to inform our Language Plan we began developing in April 2020. The need was there, just not the timeliness and scale for a print run that maximized economics-of-scale values.

Using the past lesson of our initial 5,000 Spanish Copy print run not having a high-enough volume of in-class value to justify a significant print run, we created a 3-phase Language Access Plan in June 2020, during the COVID-19 shutdowns. The three observations above continue to color that plan.

December 2023 – November 2024

In December 2023, Project REAL was notified that it was being awarded a Language Access Grant from United Way of Southern Nevada. Based on an earlier version of this document, the grant request empowered Project REAL to translate the three biggest printed resources (RULES, CHOICES, and ADULTING, as well as it’s website into Spanish and Simplified Chinese – the two languages which have the greatest need in Southern Nevada (we were going to pursue Tagalog, but were dissuaded by numerous Pilipino Nevadans who clarified that the majority of them arrive in the state already fluent in English). Over 11 months, we used contracted labor to translate the materials and to prepare them for full publication / implementation.

ORIGINAL Plans for Execution:

Regarding language access, we already have a digest version of one of our publications available in Spanish – the aforementioned Independence & You - Digest Edition.

Currently, we use AI translation tools when we have free time available to create access to our resources for non-English-speaking and ELL residents of Nevada. Given our limited resources and nearly non-existent free-time, this is an extremely slow moving process. Frankly speaking, it's not enough.

Now, we have a path forward we've developed that we're confident will meet the needs of an oft-evolving population in Nevada.

Phase 1 (COMPLETE): Create other-than-English copies of our materials, and release them digitally. Each digital release will be accompanied by 'request a copy' reservation-pages, where people can request free printed copies of our materials in certain languages. This includes website-toggles that can switch the majority of our website into other languages.

While Google already has tools that can auto-translate paged, those tools produce inequitable results and outcomes. The translations are automatic, not artful. It makes users feel like second-class citizens, afterthoughts, or even ignored. Why then, would they want to spend hours reading our books if we cannot invest in connecting with them clearly & effectively? The website should in-fact be our top priority.

Phase 2: Create printed flyers promoting those materials, in the languages they're available - these are to be single-language flyers specific to each community, not the multi-lingual materials included with utility bills. These will be given to nonprofits throughout Nevada based on the populations they serve.

Phase 3: Each time a publication hits a 2,500 copy reservation threshold, we'll initiate a 3,000 copy print-run. Remainders will be made available to community partners and schools with ELL programming.

ORIGINAL Funding / Plans (*Void as of Q4 2023*):

Unfortunately for now, we need to rely on past practices:

- 1) Low cost translators who are contacted when we have unspent grant funds we can allocate without a lot of headaches (i.e., if we achieve major cost savings on a print-project at the end of a JAG cycle), and
- 2) Using AI tools like DEEPL to draft our materials in other languages. This essentially is as bad as the auto-translate with Google tools, however it has proven itself to be 'smarter', and we can create 'apology disclaimers' acknowledging our deficiency and desire to do better with the populations being addressed in their primary languages.

According to numerous leaders of other nonprofits in Southern Nevada, United Way of Southern Nevada is creating some kind of Language Station or Language Hub – a project that will help nonprofits reach more Nevadans by helping us translate our materials. If the information we've received is correct, they will have in-house translators that can be assigned to assist various nonprofits at no cost to those organizations. None of this has been confirmed by United Way as of March 2023, however one staff member has let out team know that 'something along those lines' is on the way. That person failed to provide any kind of timeline or other details, but it *is* something we can look towards.

The 2023-2024 United Way Language Access Grant

In FY 2023.Q2 Project REAL was notified of a United Way of Southern Nevada Language Access Grant award.

The grant was for \$25,000 and covered translations for all of Project REAL's written materials into Spanish and Simplified Chinese.

In the grant, we proposed Tagalog based on outdated plans from the organization's previous Executive Director. Following an encounter at a development event in December 2023 and feedback from United Way during an initial Language Access Grant session, we have shifted our second language pick to Simplified Chinese (based on statewide surveys of community needs and requests for translation services reported on by UWSN, and collected by policy wonks within the State of Nevada's statewide- government).

Project REAL unfortunately faced greater-than-anticipated challenges during the course of this project, due to outside forces and events beyond the leadership team's control (relating to past administrations, and various complications their decisions resulted in – see the '*Kovach Matter*' document in our Board of Director files for more info). This prevented us from initiating the outreach materials production and distribution aspects of our plans for the grant.

Still, with the grant reaching it's conclusion in November 2024, we were able to get our website, Choices guides, Rules guides, and Adulting guides all translated into Spanish and Cantonese, and project all of those resources being print-ready and digitally available by January 2025.

Ongoing Needs and Next Steps

With the materials infrastructure now fully developed, our next steps are about connecting the work the UW LAP grant produced with the community that needs it.

When funding becomes available, our plan will be to print Spanish and Cantonese outreach materials (flyers informing the community about the free digital resources that are available in their languages), and distribute them among community gathering points (churches, community centers, and a few large-volume / high-traffic businesses frequented by the targeted language access participants).

We will also work with the local chambers and small business to print 7,000 copies of just one of the publications - the Teen Law Guide - in Spanish and simplified Chinese (if an additional \$25,000 is available specific to that project).

Also, if additional county funding becomes available at the last minute – in a situation where they need us to spend it down within 40 hours through one of our other projects (as has been the case for several years now in late June), we will commit those funds to printing an equal amount of Spanish and Chinese language digital-access-kits for our Adulting 101 guides. For reference, we spent \$4,000 printing 15,000 English copies.

Our goal moving forward is at least 1,000 contacts per language per year, as we work to build a sustainable audience for our programming among Southern Nevada's ELL communities.