BEST PRACTICES FOR TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

TRANSLATORS

NAETISL
National Association of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages
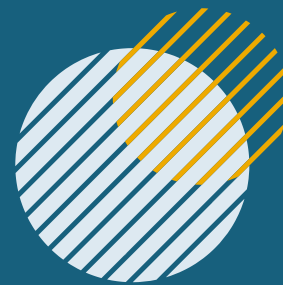
PLAN

- Verify that the English document is the **final version.**
- **Check** for grammar, idioms, and unclear language. **Clarify** with the owner of the document.
- Make sure the document is received in an **editable format**.
- If the document includes **metaphors, idioms,** or **jargon,** clarify with the owner before starting.
- If there are **illegible** or **blurry** sections of text in the document, ask for clarification before starting the process.

EXPLAIN

- Explain that an accurate translation requires **time** and **research.** Rush jobs are subject to inadequacies.
- Be clear about your **deadline** and **request more time** if needed.
- Explain to the owner of the document that translations will potentially **take up more space** than the English versions.

TRANSLATE

- Make sure to know the **intended audience** for the translation.
- **Read** and **understand** the entire body of the text before you start the translation process.
- Check that information **flows clearly** and that all text and images are included.
- Make sure you are aware of **previous translations** about the **same topic.** Discuss terms and ensure consistency within the same **school district.**
- Convey messages and **avoid** word-for-word translations.
- Match the **design** and **format** as best as possible.
- Check for **typographical errors.**

AFTERWARDS

- Allow for adequate time to have the translation **reviewed** by a **proofreader** and for you to review their **feedback**.
- If a **glossary** is not available, **create one** after the fact to help you or other translators with documents in the future.
- Build your **translation team** to translate, edit and proofread documents. Involve multilingual families in the process!
- Collaborate and **network** with other translators.

BEST PRACTICES FOR TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

SCHOOL LEADERS AND EDUCATORS

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LANGUAGE

- Use **plain text,** avoid jargon and technical terms, and always keep it as **simple** as possible while being mindful of the **nuances of language.**
- Avoid using metaphors, jokes, or colloquialisms that will **not translate well**.
- Imagine how the English content reads in **another language** or **culture.** Are there any idioms, jargon, and **complex** terms that can be eliminated or redefined?
- Highlight words that you **do not want translated** such as names of local organizations, programs, and other proper nouns. Federal agencies and programs, and names of community-based organizations that serve immigrant communities may already have **approved translated names.**

INFORMATION

- Keep the information **simple** and **concise**.
- Utilize **infographics** and **images** to help tell the story of what you are trying to convey.
- Incorporate **storytelling** when possible. Some communities can relate to stories or anecdotes when making decisions or asking for help.
- If possible, incorporate short and engaging **video** and **audio** messages.
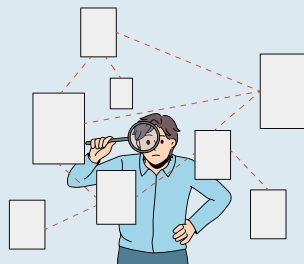
GRAPHICS AND FORMAT

- Translators can work more efficiently with **editable documents** in formats such as Word.
- Keep in mind that the more **graphics, images, tables** or **designs** you have on your document, the longer the translation process will take.
- Remember that most languages tend to **use more words** to explain concepts than English. A translated document will usually be longer than the English version.
- Make sure graphics or photos are **culturally appropriate.** Ask for **community input** on the images to be used.

REVIEW AND SEND

- Give **clear directions** and **reasonable deadlines** to the translator.
- Send the translator the **final version** of your document with no edits, track changes or notes.
- Develop relationships with community organizations or family groups that can **review translations** done for your school.
- Send the **finalized** and **formatted** translated documents and the **original** English-language document to a **reviewer**.
- Inform the translator of **edits/changes** needed as recommended by reviewers.

Your **Language Access Plan** should include information about reaching:

low-literacy families

families who speak a language that **does not have a written format.**

To protect accuracy and completeness, **rush translations** are **not recommended.**

Interpreters **may not be proficient** at translating documents.

Machine translation and online widgets should only be used in combination with a **human proofreader** to ensure accuracy.