



Language Justice Definitions + Best Practices for Organizations

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Definitions:

Interpretation: The oral process of rendering a spoken message from one language to another.

Consecutive Interpretation: The speaker speaks a few sentences and then pauses to allow the interpreter to repeat them in the other language.

- Takes double the amount of time
- Preferable when it's important to hear tone and see body language

Simultaneous Interpretation: The interpreter interprets the speaker's message at the same time as the speaker is talking.

- Special audio transmitter equipment or video meeting software like Zoom Enterprise is required
- The interpreters need advanced listening-talking simultaneity skills.

Translation: The process of rendering a written document from one language to another.

Recommended Language Justice Best Practices:

Communication Type	Just Getting Started	Actively Practicing	Model Language Justice Champion
Internal	Use AI interpretation	In house translation if	Multi-language Staff

Correspondence	only when communicating with someone who speaks another language and you do not have an internal translator on staff.	available or use AI with disclaimer.	or contractor writes or translates emails in English & Spanish
Community-Facing Documents and Communication	Official Documents (contracts, job descriptions, etc) need	Official Documents (contracts, job descriptions, etc) or communications that require accuracy need to be translated by a professional Use of AI translation programs is less ideal, but can be used for items where accuracy is not critical	All community facing documents and communications are translated by internal translator or contractor.
Zoom Meetings	Provide interpretation in which a known population of non dominant language speaking participants will be present.	Provide interpretation at most meetings, a sign up or request form can be used.	Provide interpretation at all meetings.
Presentations	Offering one slidedeck in the dominant language with a separate slidedeck that can be shared in the other language. In this instance, and if you are using simultaneous interpretation, be sure to read the slides	Interpretation of all materials available side-by-side on each slide Alternate order of language placement	Presentations have interpretation in non dominant languages and slides are translated. Separate slide decks for multiple languages
In Person Meetings	Interpretation when a known other language speaker is in the room*	Interpretation at all meetings for the largest non dominant language(s).	Simultaneous interpretation at all meetings.

			All materials are available
Social Media	Social media is translated for specific events for aimed language audiences	Social Media posts are made in dominant and non dominant languages for region	Posts are created by native speakers or cultural and language competent person for each non dominant language (this can be outsourced)
Newsletters	Announcements for community events and opportunities are translated in non dominant languages.	Entire Newsletter is translated for the largest non dominant language(s).	Newsletter is translated for all stakeholder non dominant languages

For Leaders of Organizations

- Develop a glossary of common terms used in your organization and across your industry.
 - Helps participants acknowledge and respect different vocabularies, even within the same language
 - Helps translators negotiate differences and agree to a certain translation of terms
 - Discussion of concepts offers a chance for education
- Consider hiring a contractor or staff member for regular translation/interpretation
 - Use online translation tools only if human services are unavailable

Online Translation Tools

- Only use when human translation is not an option
- Don't use for legal documents, policies, guides, marketing materials, or anything widely distributed
- [DeepL](#) is the most accurate we've found
- Always make it clear that translation software was used, apologize in advance for misunderstandings

When in a Meeting With Interpretation:

1. Speak at a moderate pace, not too fast or too slow
2. Speak in a clear loud voice so you can be heard
3. Speak directly to participants, no need to look at interpreters
4. One person talks at a time
5. For bilingual folks: switch languages as much as you like, but not within the same sentence.

In-person meetings with headphones:

Equipment Tips:

- Use an open room where participants can be in close proximity
- Seat interpreter near speaker
- Check battery and function of equipment before start of meeting, sit close to the interpreter for best reception
- Switch out equipment that's not working
- Use hand signals to communicate if speaker is talking too quickly or quietly

Headphone Etiquette:

- While you're talking, pull your earphones off or turn down volume
- If the language of conversation is switching, turn volume down while headphones aren't needed. This prevents scrambling for headphones when language switches again.
- Turn off equipment during breaks and end-of-meeting to save batteries.

*Much of this content has been borrowed or modified from Communities Creating Healthy Environments Language Justice Toolkit, from other online resources, and language justice community group meetings.

La Plata Food Equity Coalition: <https://www.goodfoodcollective.org/lpfec>