

Best Practices Outline

Suggestions for Frontline Centers to create a Welcoming Environment

1) What to have at the **Front Door**:

- Websites (first point for information): use human translations instead of mechanical translations
- Welcome sign should be in multiple languages: also show office hours.
- Language Access poster placed visually at the entrance (with different languages). Make it clear to the client that all interpretation services are free (the poster that says you have the right to be served in your own language).
- Identify largest language groups in area and serve accordingly.
- Use multilingual bus ads to advertise services.

2) What to have at the **Front Desk**:

- Make language line directory visible at front desk.
- “I speak” cards should be at the front counter in all 6 languages (Spanish, French, Amharic, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese).
- Brochures/fliers/ forms should be printed in multiple languages and located near the front desk.
- All new and updated printed materials should be available simultaneously in major languages.
- “Best Practices” Manual should be kept at the front desk. This manual should outline for front desk staff how to interact and serve LEP clients. The manual should also include bilingual staff directory and instructions for the language line.
- All signs should be accessible to LEPs. Example: no smoking sign should be in the universal circle with a diagonal line instead of a written “no smoking” in English.
- Have a directory of professionally trained interpreters for the major languages your site services.
- Have a trained front desk staff member present to aid LEPs in acquiring an interpreter quickly and efficiently.

3) Suggestions for successful **Interactions** with LEP/NEP clients:

- Have trained, bilingual staff to interact with LEPs (as many bilingual staff members as possible).
- Intensive cultural sensitivity training for ALL staff members. This training should include how to be aware of cultural differences in speaking with LEP clients.
- Have an interpreter present for the entire interaction from hello to goodbye. Also, staff should instruct interpreters to be conduit of information and not speak for the clients. Staff and client should face each other and talk to one another and not to the interpreter. Interpreters should stand off to the side.
- Children should not be used on interpreters. If a client brings his/her own interpreter, then that interpreter should be over the age of 18.

4) Other helpful **Tips and Ideas:**

- Do face-to-face bilingual surveys on your site's performance. Talk to your client pool about what difficulties they faced at your site.
- Office of Civil Rights/Transportation uses a metro visual translator which contains most commonly used phrases and has picture signals LEP customers can point at.
- Karen from Montgomery County suggested: community interpreter training, Lunch & Learn meetings and special pay for multilingual employees.
- Angie Carrera from Fairfax County suggested: purchasing ear translators like the United Nations use. Also ensuring all translations are premium and not standard. Having a team of translators to check translated materials.