

Considerations for Hosting Multilingual Meetings

Begin with Shared Planning

- Outreach in the languages that are in your community.
- Translate all meeting materials: agendas, PowerPoint presentations, polls and handouts.
- Send materials to interpreters in advance. Alert Interpreters and translators to difficult words or concepts. This is particularly important when working with community partners who are volunteering translation services.
- Design Meetings / Process with Language Specific Break-out Groups – This allows conversation to flow more easily without having to wait for a translation. It has been seen that when reporting back, people representing less-dominant cultures speak more forthrightly than they would have in mixed groups and linguistic groups with less power feel more confident. This breaks down power differentials and makes for more inclusive outcomes.

Hosting a Multilingual Meeting

Open the meeting with a slide on screen instructions about how to select preferred language. The slide should be translated into every language spoken in the meeting to inform participants which languages will be available and how to listen to them.

When Speaking or Presenting during a Multilingual Meeting:

- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace. When a speaker reads a presentation quickly, word for word with no intonation or feeling, it is easy to lose important details in the translation.
- Take time to emphasize the important points. Brevity is essential when more than one language is involved because each statement needs to be repeated in each language.
- Require people take turns speaking and avoid talking over one another. Interpreters cannot interpret more than one person at a time.