

## County of San Diego: 2022 CSAC Challenge Awards Executive Summary

**TITLE:** Translation, Language and Culture Connection Work Group

**OVERVIEW:** The Translation, Language and Culture Connection (TLCC) work group developed strategies and tools to create culturally responsive communications for multilingual and diverse communities.

**CHALLENGE:** The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for daily document translation into multiple languages to be accessible and meet the needs of San Diego's diverse population. San Diego County is home to 3.3 million individuals, including many immigrant and refugee communities. Residents speak multiple languages including Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Filipino, Korean, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. In 2016, nearly 500,000 San Diego residents reported speaking a language other than English at home and reported speaking English "less than very well." The County of San Diego requires all departments to provide language access services. Translation practices include working with contracted vendors and assistance from multilingual County staff, especially when there is a quick turnaround time. As the frequency and urgency increased during the pandemic, so did the need to convene County staff to share best practices, troubleshoot challenges, share tools, and streamline support.

**SOLUTION:** The County TLCC work group launched in July 2020, comprised of County employees with expertise in linguistic translation, communications, cultural sensitivity, health equity and community engagement. The goal is to support efforts to create culturally sensitive, accurately translated, and trauma-informed communications for multilingual and diverse San Diego communities. The TLCC work group meetings center around sharing updates related to language policy and equitable strategies, strategizing when challenges are present and sharing best practices and tools.

**INNOVATION:** The TLCC work group is innovative in that it convenes individuals representing departments across the enterprise from all four County business groups including safety, land use, finance, and health and social services. The common thread across all departments is the desire to enhance language equity, community engagement and access across all operations. The work group is constantly evolving, initially focused on translation, the interest has expanded to include language accessibility, trauma-informed terminology, and culturally responsive images in all our communications. On Oct. 5, 2021, the Board of Supervisors requested the development of an equitable, culturally responsive, inclusive, and trauma-informed communication strategy for

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the creation and distribution of county documents and communications. The County Communications Office and the Office of Equity and Racial Justice convened a work group to develop the strategy in partnership with TLCC in which feedback was solicited on challenges, opportunities, and recommendations to improve communication efforts which were presented for inclusion in the County-wide strategy.

**RESULTS:** The TLCC work group with 48 members across all four County business groups, led by the Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, has developed a virtual library and communications space where TLCC members post requests for support, recommendations, and links to training webinars. The virtual library provides helpful links to reputable sites with tools to produce accurately translated, culturally responsive, accessible, and trauma-informed communication materials. There is guidance on how to request translation services from County-approved vendors, and a glossary of commonly used English and Spanish terms describing everything from County department names to phrases commonly used during public health and natural disaster emergencies. TLCC has hosted guest speakers and trainings such as the CDC Internal Translation Process and created a checklist to review translated materials prior to dissemination; created culturally- responsive COVID materials for Arabic and Filipino-speaking communities; and provided Public Health Services Health Literacy guidance. The TLCC work group has also helped inform county-wide strategy, has elevated awareness around best practices, and has received multiple requests to provide feedback on various projects. The work group is seen as a resource for all County departments to provide guidance, tools, and support.

**REPLICABILITY:** The TLCC work group improved internal practices to advance equity and can be replicated in any jurisdiction serving diverse communities with a need for multilingual, accurately translated, culturally responsive, accessible, and trauma-informed communication materials. The TLCC work group requires no additional funding and is an example of employee collaboration and departmental cross-threading.

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