

# **Community Assistantship Program**

## **Report on Assessment of Needs for Interpretive/ Translation Services**

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# **Report on Assessment of Needs for Interpretive/ Translation Services**

Conducted on behalf of  
Project FINE

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CAP Report 021

**CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION**

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
University of Minnesota  
330 Humphrey Center**

Refugee and immigrant populations in the Winona County are growing both in number and diversity. Today, Minnesota has the largest Hmong, Latino, Somali and Liberian communities in the US. This increased cultural diversity has fostered necessity and importance of interaction in a multi-cultural environment. On December 2000 a research on implementing more efficient operation of the Winona County Interpreter Network has been conducted.

### **Definition of goal**

- **Assess** of perceived needs for interpretative/translation services in Winona County
- **Identify** efficient strategies to operate the Interpreter Network

### **Method**

Questionnaires were developed and mailed to public organizations, local businesses, banks, schools, administrative and court institutions in Winona County on December 2000.

### **Summary of Results**

The Winona County Interpreter Network sent questionnaires to 59 businesses and public agencies- 23 surveys were returned at this time of submitting this report. Additional survey results will be evaluated when received. The result of this sample indicated approximately 87.5% of the responding organizations communicated with **non-English speakers**.

The results indicate that 65.6% of the respondents communicate with non-English speakers by using **interpreter/translator services**. Drawn from the 53.1% of responses, both oral **interpretation** and **translation** of written materials are the most popular services among the businesses in Winona.

The survey research demonstrated that the Winona businesses encountered the following problems, while accessing interpreters. 40.6% of the respondents pointed to **unavailability** of the interpreters to meet their schedule or needs. Approximately 31.3% of the businesses were concerned about **lack** of trained interpreters. **Cost** of

interpreter/translator services was not acceptable for 28.1% of the businesses. Problem with **availability** of interpreters on **short notice** was pointed out by 37.5% of the respondents from the survey. In spite of these problems, 84.4% of the Winona County businesses are **planning to use** interpretation/translation services for their needs in the future. The survey research demonstrated that interpretation for **Hmong, Spanish, Vietnamese, Bosnian, Chinese, and Arabic** languages are in demand in the **workplaces**.

For a purpose of small marketing research, a question about possible new services of the Interpreter Network was included to the survey. 40.6% of the respondents indicated a need for interpretation/translation for **legal materials**, 37.5% for **business/agency brochures and manuals**, 28.1% for **financial materials**, 12.5% for **advertising**. Some businesses specified that they would like to have **medical records, education materials, safety rules, application and enrollment documents** translated. 25.0 % of respondents would use **cultural diversity training** for employees.

The respondents were very kind to give additional comments about interpretation/translation services of the Winona County Interpreter Network. Some of them expressed their interest in developing the interpreter network in the **region**. There were also comments calling on **enhancement** of accessibility of the Winona County Interpreter Network regarding scheduling and cost. One respondent expressed a concern about interpreters/translators being able to maintain confidentiality.

### **Recommendation**

Considering results of the survey, it is recommended:

- **Continue to create** a flexible work schedule of the Winona County Interpreter Network to meet needs of a client (on short notice and emergency calls).
- **Enhance** a professional quality of interpreter/translation services
- **Work on implementing** new interpreter/translator services, including cultural diversity training, and the translation of legal, financial, commercial documents
- **Deepen relationships** within the greater Winona community through media (articles about a current activity of the project, cultural values and beliefs of neighbor immigrant

populations, interviews on different topics) and advertising of the interpreter/translation services

- **Maintain** fundraising and grant proposals

## SURVEY ABOUT INTERPRETER / TRANSLATOR SERVICES

Please circle the number or letter that corresponds to the answer closest to your opinion, or write in the information requested. All individual responses will be kept confidential.

- Q1. Does your organization serve customers who have limited English-speaking ability?
1. Yes
  2. No (PLEASE SKIP TO Q3)
- Q2. What is the most common method used in your organization to communicate with non-English speakers? (Circle one.)
1. Interpreter/translator
  2. Bilingual staff
  3. Written materials
  4. Gestures
  5. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q3. Has your organization ever used the services of interpreters/translators to communicate with customers with limited English-speaking ability?
1. Yes
  2. No (PLEASE SKIP TO Q9)
- Q4. Which of the following has your organization used in the past? (Circle all that apply.)
- a. Oral interpretation
  - b. Translation of written materials
  - c. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q5. How does your organization access interpreter/translator services? (Circle all that apply.)
- a. From a list of interpreters maintained by your organization
  - b. By word of mouth
  - c. Through an organization that provides interpretation/translation services
  - d. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q6. Do you pay the people who provide interpretation/translation services for your customers?
1. Yes
  2. No
- Q7. Do you use interpreters who have received training to be interpreters/translators?
1. Yes
  2. No

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Q8. When using interpreters, have any of the following been a problem? (*Circle all that apply.*)

- a. Availability of the interpreter to meet your schedule or needs
- b. Cost
- c. Lack of availability of trained interpreters
- d. Needing interpreters on short notice (e.g., in emergency situations)
- e. Other (*Specify*) \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Have not had any problems accessing interpreters

Q9. Do you think your organization will need interpretation/translation services in the future?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (**PLEASE SKIP TO Q12**)

Q10. For which languages does your organization need interpretation services? (*Circle all that apply.*)

- a. Spanish
- b. Hmong
- c. Chinese
- d. Vietnamese
- e. Arabic
- f. Bosnian
- g. Other (*Specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

Q11. For which of the following will your organization need translation services? (*Circle all that apply.*)

- a. Legal materials
- b. Financial materials
- c. Advertising materials
- d. Technical/engineering materials
- e. Brochures or manuals
- f. Software
- g. Editing or proofreading of written materials
- h. Human resources needs (staff orientation, worksmens computers)
- j. Cultural diversity training
- k. Other (*Specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

Q12. What comments do you have about interpretation/translation services?

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If we need further information or have questions, it would be helpful if we could contact you. To help us with this, please fill in the information below. *(Please be assured that the information you provide in the survey will be kept confidential.)*

Name of your organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your fax number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for your help.**

*Please return your completed survey in the envelope provided to:*

Project FINE  
62 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Suite 66  
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