On beyond translation
Designing for language access

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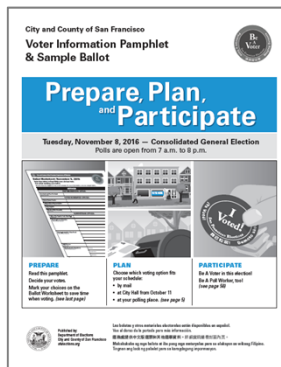
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What we learned about designing voter guides

- **Signal** the languages available

- Decide on a **layout**

- Be **consistent**

- Use **visual indicators**

- Use **plain language**

- **Mark-up** the content

There's a bigger picture

Designing for language access is a process

Start with a glossary

G

- **general:** 全體的
- **general assembly:** 大會
- **general election:** 普選/大選
- **general election review:** 大選回顧
- **general municipal election:** 市級大選
- **general primary:** 普通初選
- **general provisions:** 一般條款
- **general registrar:** 登記主任
- **gerrymandering:** 不公正地劃分選區
- **governing board:** 管理委員會
- **governing body:** 主管團體
- **governing member:** 管理會員
- **government:** 政府
- **governor:** 州長
- **Green Independent:** 綠色獨立

The California Voter's Choice Act

Ley de Elección del Votante de California

La Ley de Opción del Votante de California

La Ley de Votación Flexible

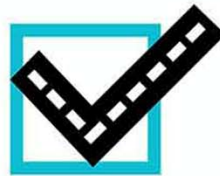La Ley de Opciones para los Votantes de California

Make connections in the community

Credit: Center for Civic Design usability tests with help from the Orange County elections, and Common Cause, CA

Election information beyond the elections office

New online driver's license application

Kiosks at DMV offices, or on your own device

Available in 10 languages

English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Thai, Tagalog

Español 中文 한국어 Tiếng Việt हिन्दी 日本語 ខ្មែរ ภาษาไทย

Getting the translations right is hard

Even official translations can

Be inaccurate
In one case flipping the meaning of a question

Sound harsh
Translated using the most official tone

Get cultural references wrong
Miss ambiguous meanings using cognates

Solving translation usability puzzles

"Are you a citizen?"

¿Es ciudadano de los Estados Unidos?

○ Sí

○ No

○ Prefiero no contestar

"Do you have citizenship?"

¿Tiene ciudadanía estadounidense?

○ Sí

○ No

○ Prefiero no contestar

Which documents show I have U.S. Citizenship? ⊖

The most common documents are:

- U.S. Birth Certificate
- U.S. Passport
- Certificate of Citizenship
- Naturalization Certificate

Language access is a process

Glossary of terms

Reviewed and consistent

Usability testing from the beginning

With bilinguals and low-English proficiency

With engaged and new voters

Involve community groups

For advice and as intermediaries

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Language Access Project

civicdesign.org/projects/language/

Field Guides To Ensuring Voter Intent

civicdesign.org/fieldguides/

Center for Civic Design

Field Guides
To Ensuring Voter Intent

Writing
instructions
voters
understand