

Sarah Moore

*IWR New Horizons Detail
July – Oct 2023*

*Planner, EJ Coordinator
Albuquerque District*

The State of Translation Resources within USACE

There is a current unmet need for translation and interpretation services across USACE CW. The language assistance needs are expected to grow in the future. To successfully execute USACE's CW missions, the agency must meet the need for translation and interpretation across the agency.



OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

- ❖ Definitions
- ❖ Why We are Here
- ❖ What is the Language Assistance Need Across USACE?
 - ❖ A Review of Census Data
- ❖ Survey
 - ❖ Who Took This Survey?
 - ❖ Why Have People **Not** Requested Language Assistance in the Past?
 - ❖ What Have People Needed Language Assistance With?
 - ❖ Leaning On Our Coworkers to Meet Language Assistance
 - ❖ Is There a Future Need?
- ❖ What Are Other Federal Agencies Doing?
- ❖ What Can USACE Do?
- ❖ Resources

DEFINITIONS

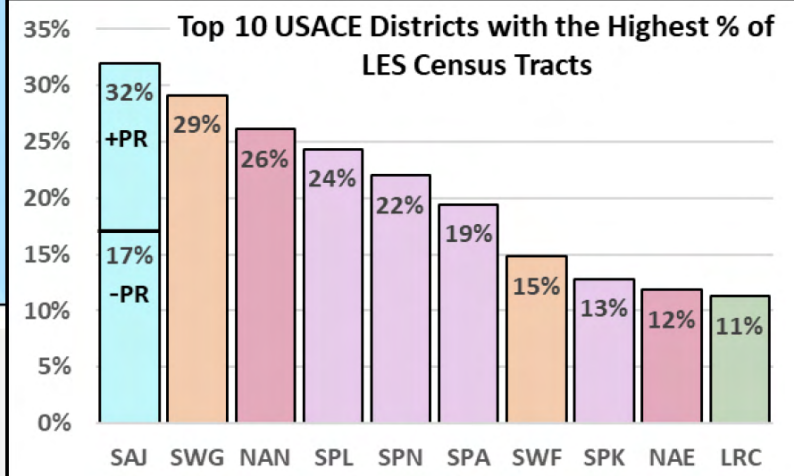
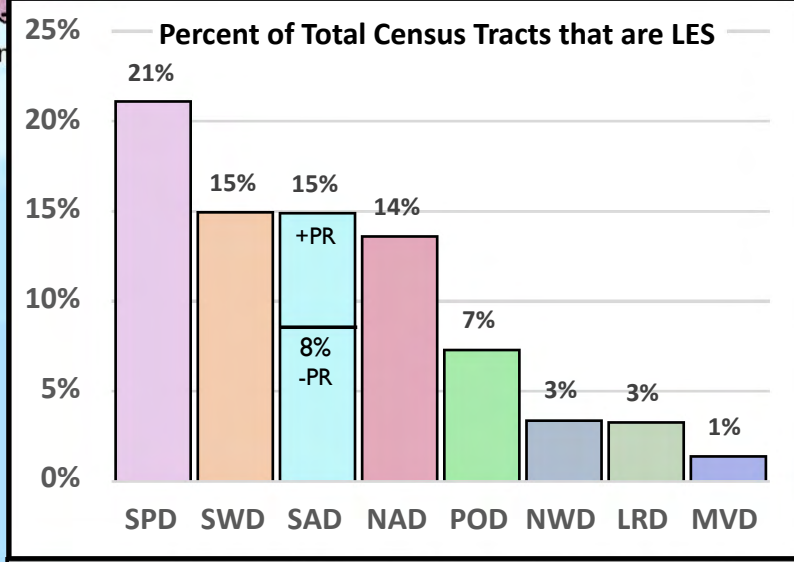
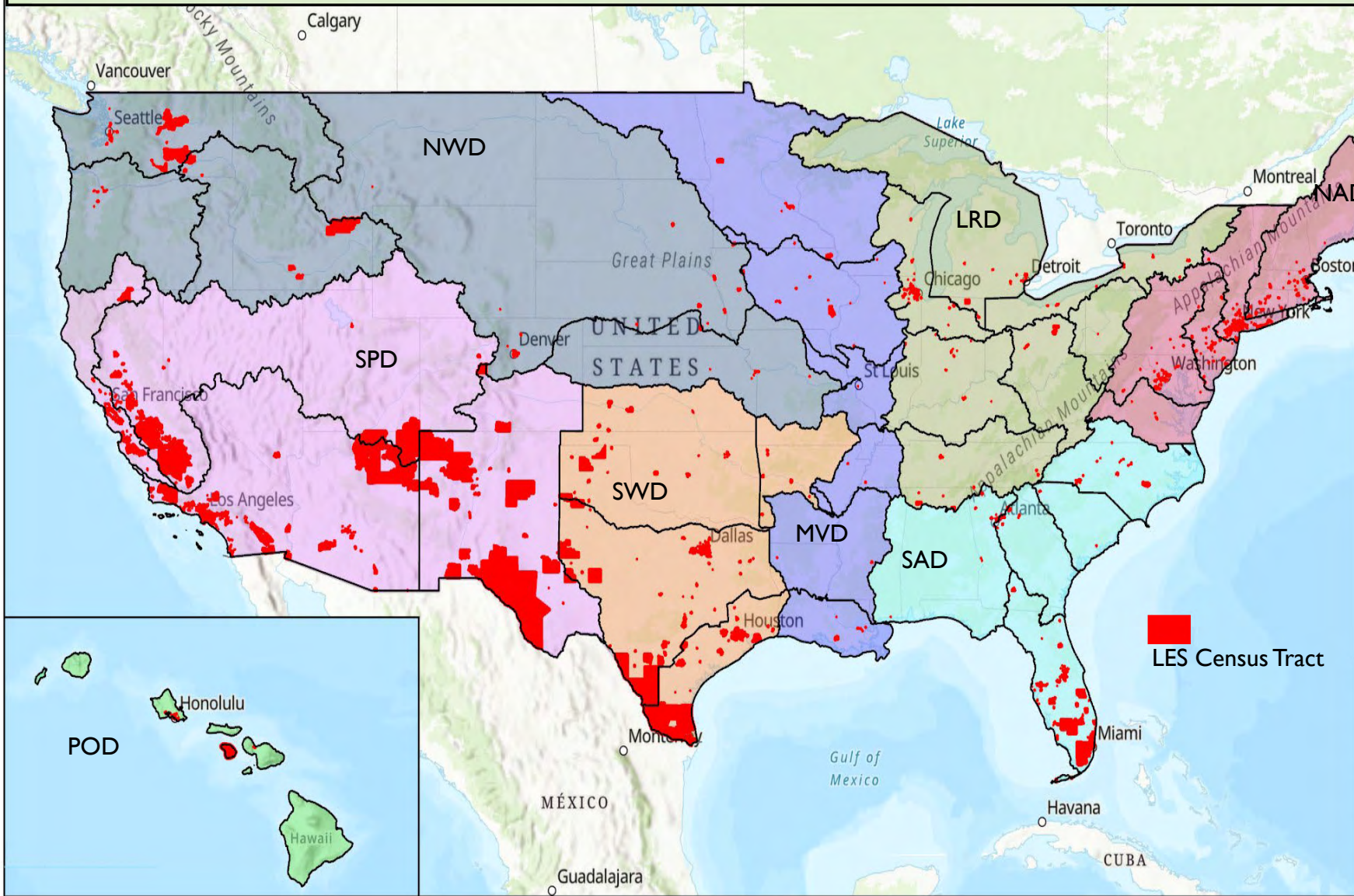
AI -----	Artificial Intelligence
AOR -----	Area of Responsibility
ASL -----	American Sign Language
CEJST -----	Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
CEQ -----	Council on Environmental Quality
EJ -----	Environmental Justice
Interpretation -----	Spoken Language Assistance
Justice40 -----	Initiative to confront and address decades of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities.
LES -----	Limited English-Speaking
Linguistically Isolated	U.S. Census Bureau term for limited English-speaking households which are defined as <i>No one over age 14 in the home speaks English ‘well’ or ‘very well’</i>
PDT -----	Project Development Team
Translation -----	Written Language Assistance

WHY?

- USACE has a directive to communicate clearly with the public during our Civil Works process, and at our project sites.
- A large part of communication is understanding the language.
- In the wake of Justice40, more district PDTs are becoming aware of the communities within their AOR that are considered limited-English speaking (LES, also known as Linguistically Isolated).
- The demographics are changing for those that recreate at our project sites

Limited English Speaking (LES) Communities Across USACE Districts


What is the Language Assistance Need?




NOTE: Alaska has one census tract designated as LES
 NOTE: SAD & SAJ are shown with (+PR) and without (-PR) Puerto Rico included
 NOTE: Census tracts are shown to align with the CEQ's Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool

SURVEY

- ❖ Administered 3 August 2023 and 18 August 2023 using Microsoft Forms
- ❖ 10 – 20 Questions depending on how respondents answered
- ❖ Purpose
 1. Understand the need for language translation and interpretation across USACE.
 2. Understand how the need for language translation and interpretation has or has not been met in the past.
 3. Understand how USACE team members feel about offering translation and interpretation assistance to accomplish USACE's missions.
- ❖ Anonymous
- ❖ Three opportunities at the end of the survey to provide comments
- ❖ **418** Responses!

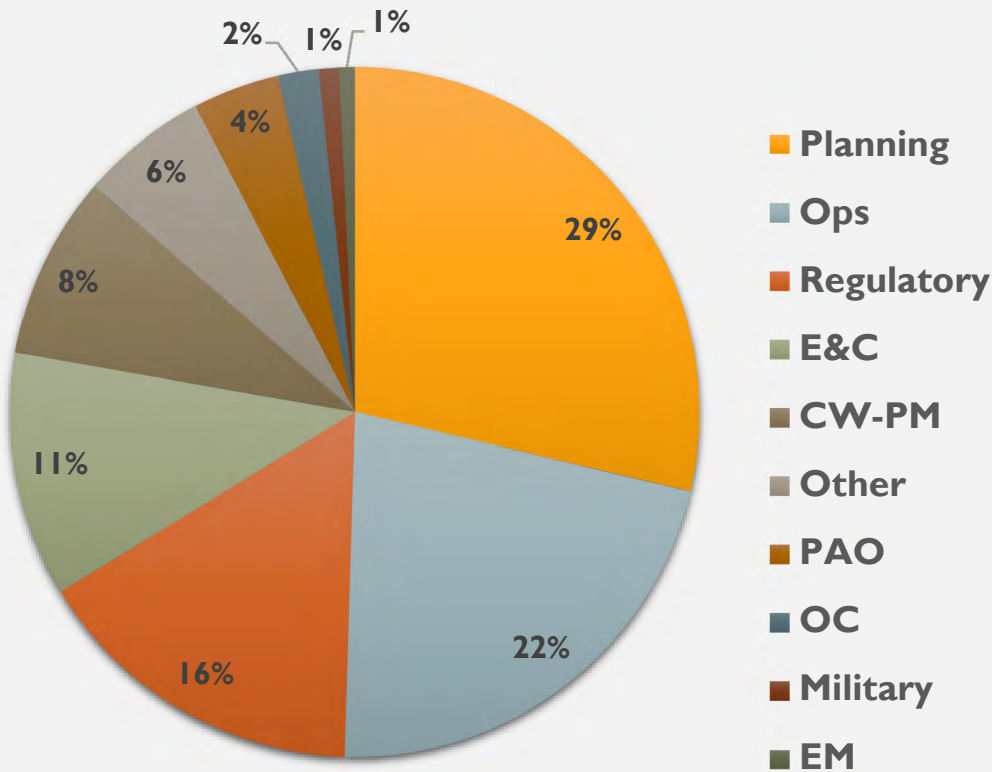


I recently provided translation support for a property owner who lives near a FUDS. She received communication in English from USACE and she did not understand what the flyer said.



At my current project, sometimes 60% or more of the recreation visitors have a language barrier. It is a weekly issue that a language barrier limits visitors assistance.

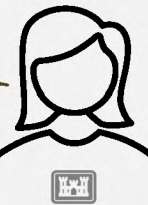
WHO TOOK THIS SURVEY?



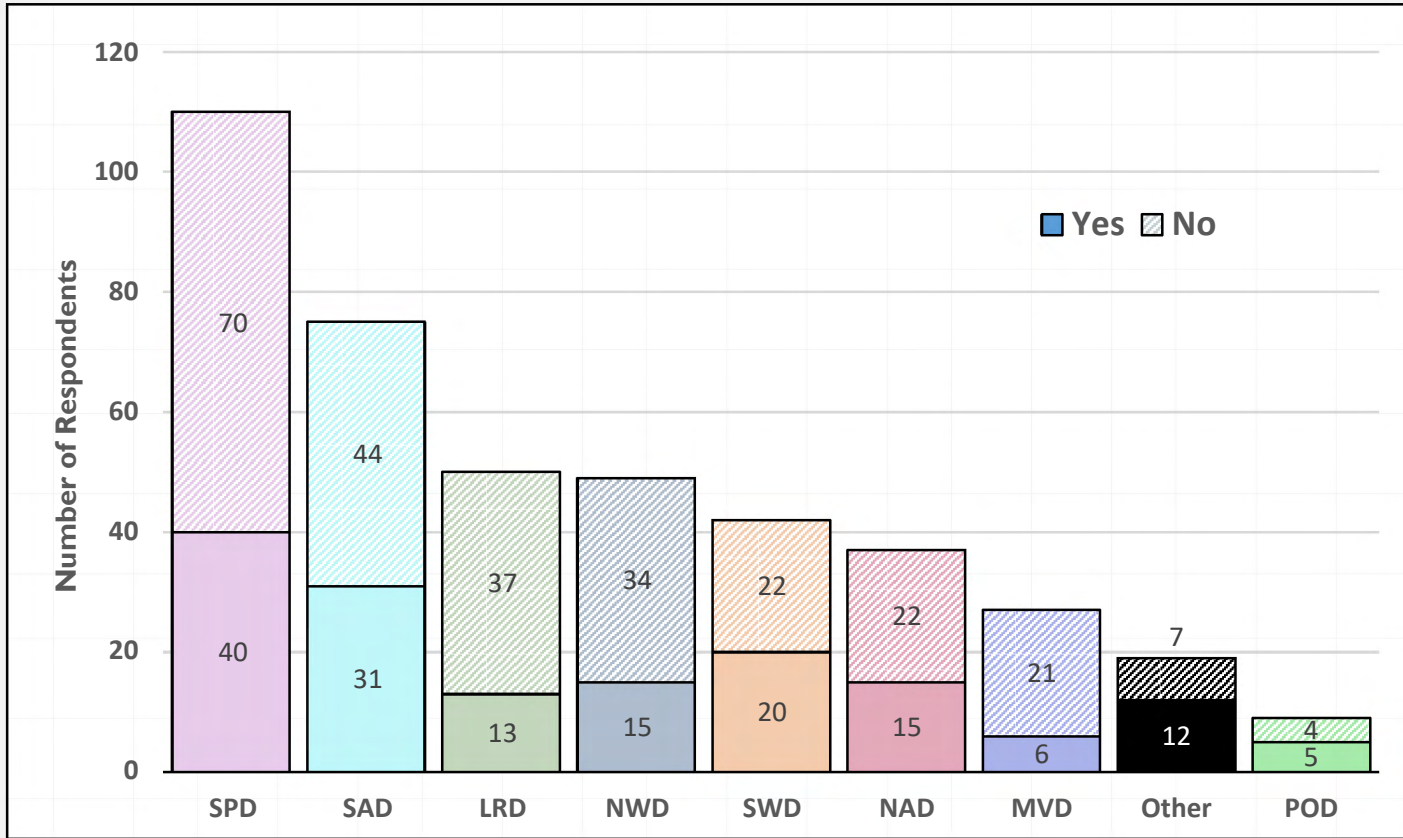
An employee filed a claim for property damage. The Office of Counsel had to interview the employee who did not speak fluent English and was difficult to understand. His supervisor assisted in translating for the interview and helping the employee to complete pertinent documents.



I am a Park Ranger at a small lake located in a rural area, yet not far from a metropolitan area. Our clientele has changed drastically in the last 6 years. The majority of our weekend visitors are now Spanish-speaking. No one at my location speaks Spanish. I was advised to use Google Translate, however from a safety/tactical standpoint, when dealing with the public it is unwise to be focused on your phone... Currently, I am unable to communicate with our visitors.



WHO TOOK THIS SURVEY?



Responses to Survey Question 5 (n=418): While working for USACE, have you ever requested translation and/or interpretation assistance to communicate with a limited English-speaking community?

YES = 38% of Respondents
NO = 62% of Respondents

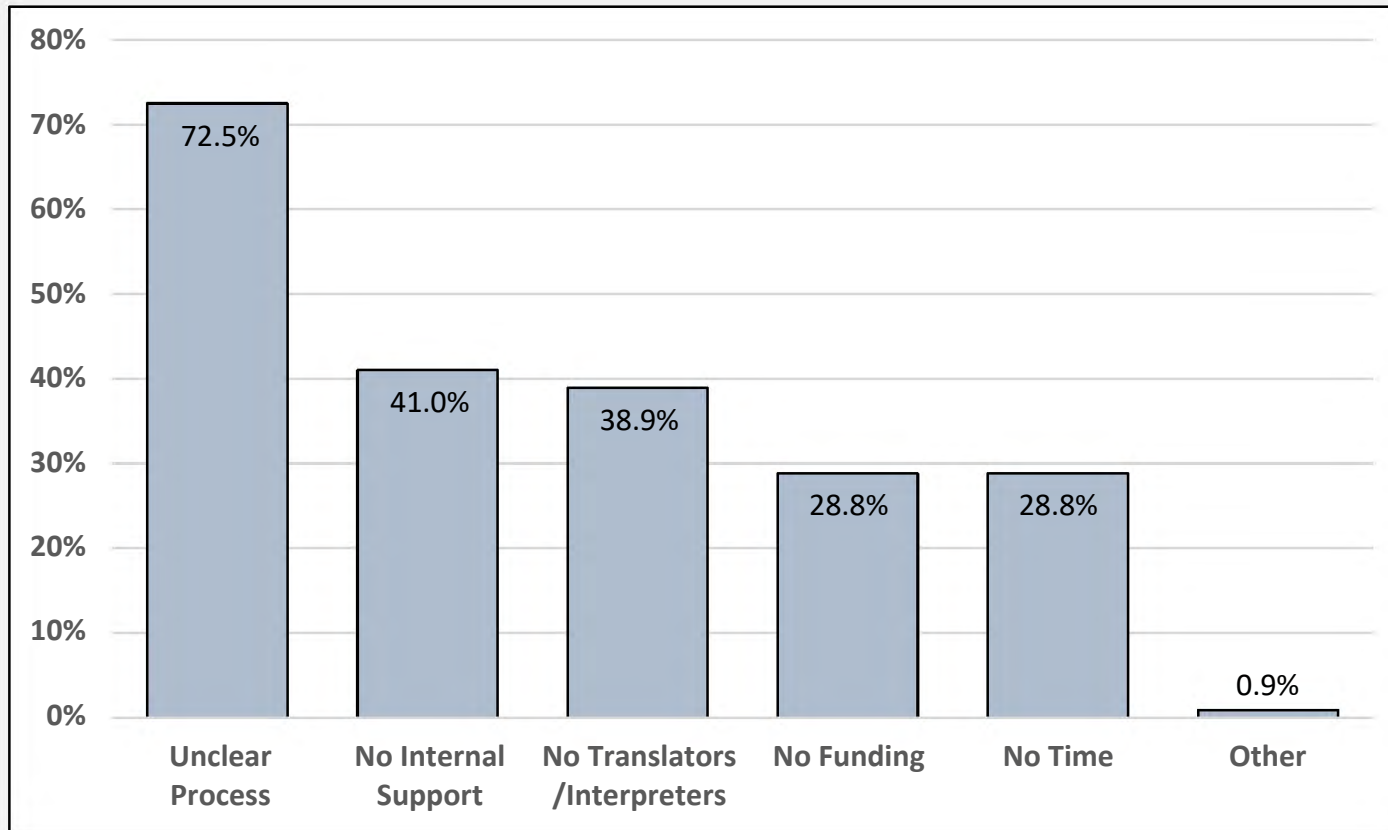
- ❖ All USACE Divisions are represented in the results (n=399).
- ❖ Other (n=19) category includes respondents from:
 - Headquarters (HQ),
 - IWR (including the Hydrologic Engineering Center, or HEC),
 - Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), and
 - Huntsville Center (HNC).

I have had no experiences using language support. I didn't even know it existed until this survey.

Asked a co-worker who is fully bilingual to explain situation in detail to the applicant.

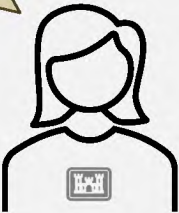


WHY DID YOU **NOT** REQUEST LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE?



Responses to Survey Question 12 (n=233)- *If a project could have benefited from translation/interpretation in the past, why was it not included?*

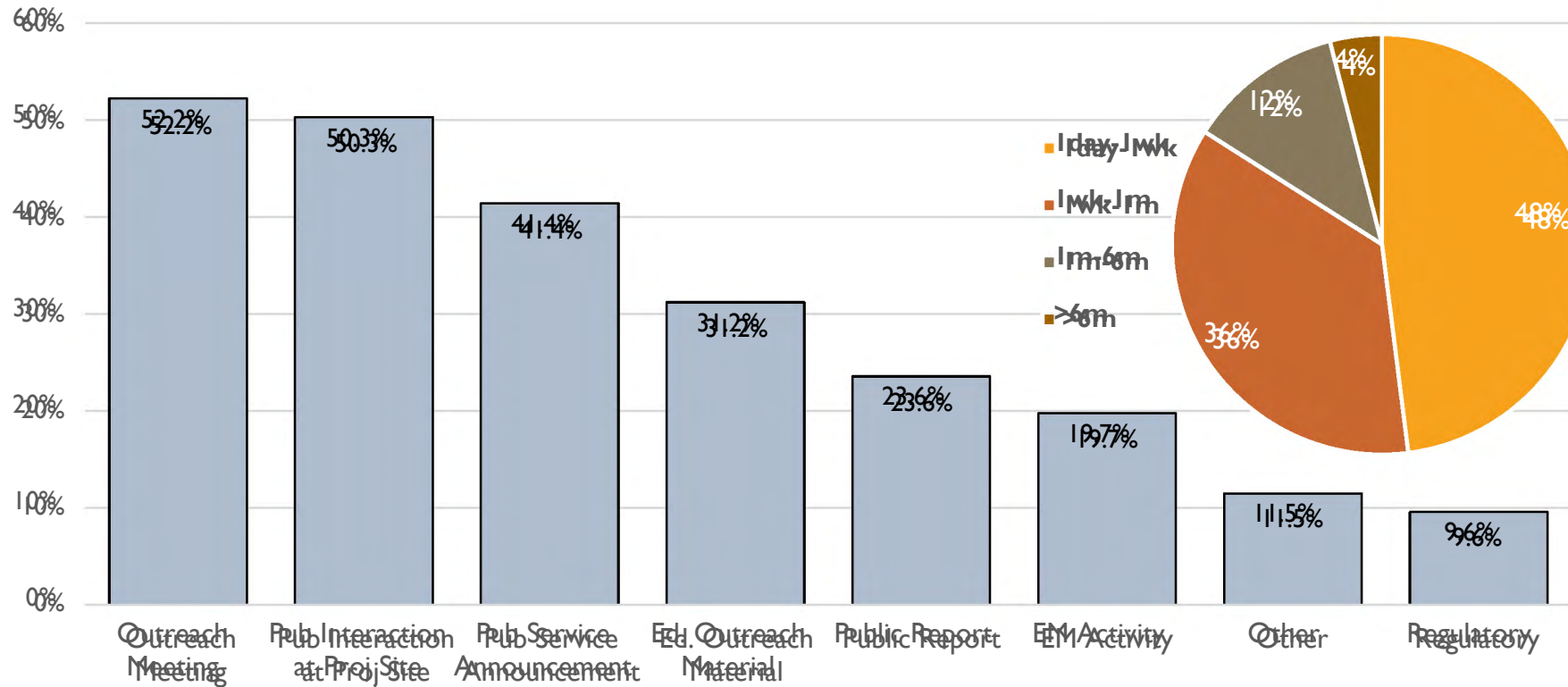
Was blown off at one level. Was told that if a site needs such services, we should have hired only bilingual staff.



I've struggled to identify available translation services even when specifically requested for a specific project because the pathway hasn't been clear, and because of concerns as to the accuracy of the translation of technical terminology (scientific, engineering, legal).



WHY DID YOU REQUEST LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE?



We sometimes receive requests to translate Public Notices into Spanish and have occasionally published Public Notices in Spanish. We have also received requests from other Corps Districts to provide staff support for translation assistance.

Responses to Survey Question 6 (n=157) - Which of the following activities have you needed translation and/or interpretation services? (Bar chart)

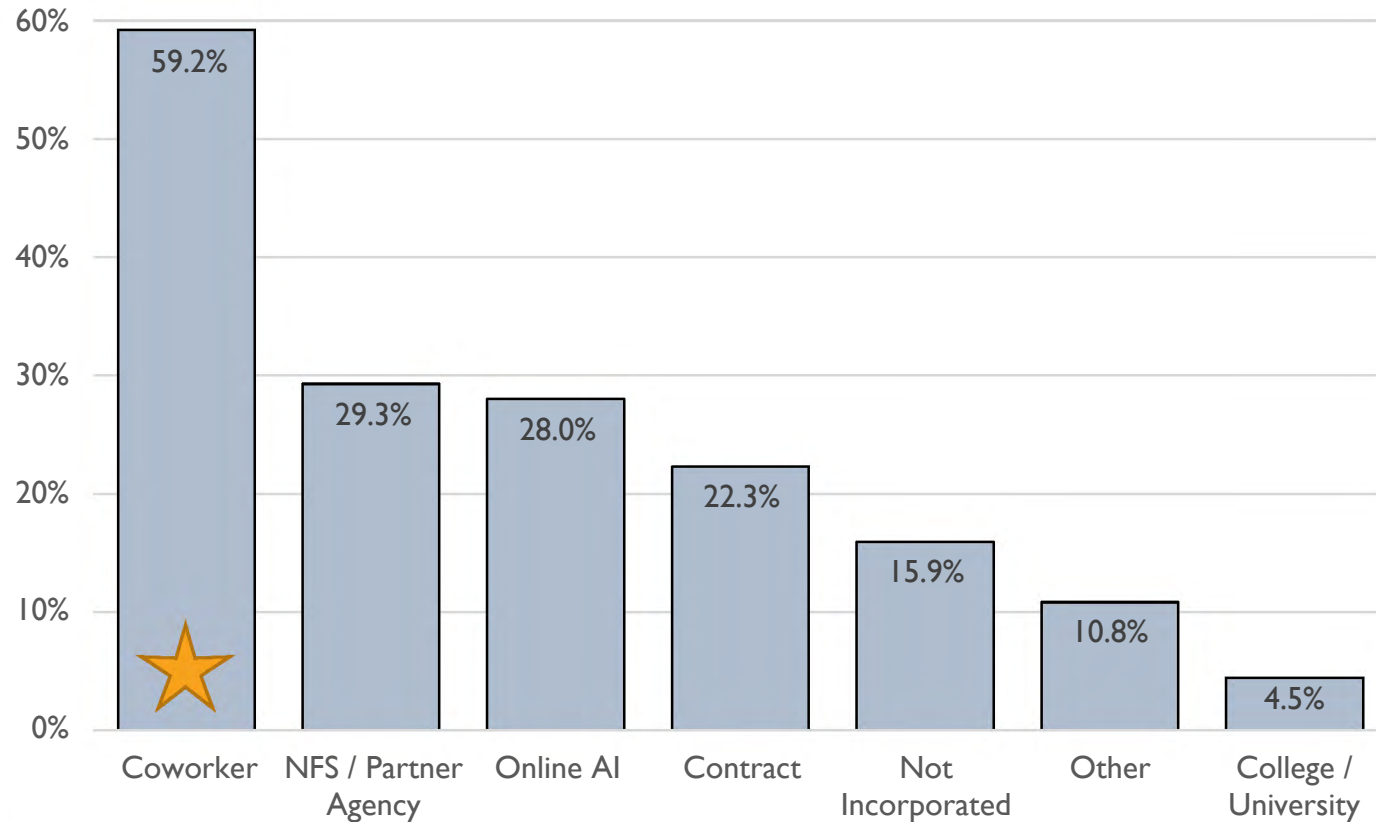
Responses Survey Question 7 (n=139) - When you needed translation and/or interpretation assistance, how long did you give the translator/interpreter to complete the work? (Pie chart).



Have only needed a translator during drownings, have someone that can be contacted at all hours to translate.



HOW DID YOU GET LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE?



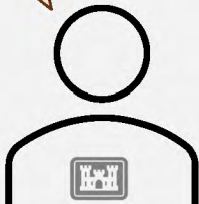
Responses to Survey Question 8 (n=153), When you needed translation and/or interpretation assistance, how did you get that assistance?

Support is limited, we depend on coworkers that speak the language and can accommodate our request additional to their duties.

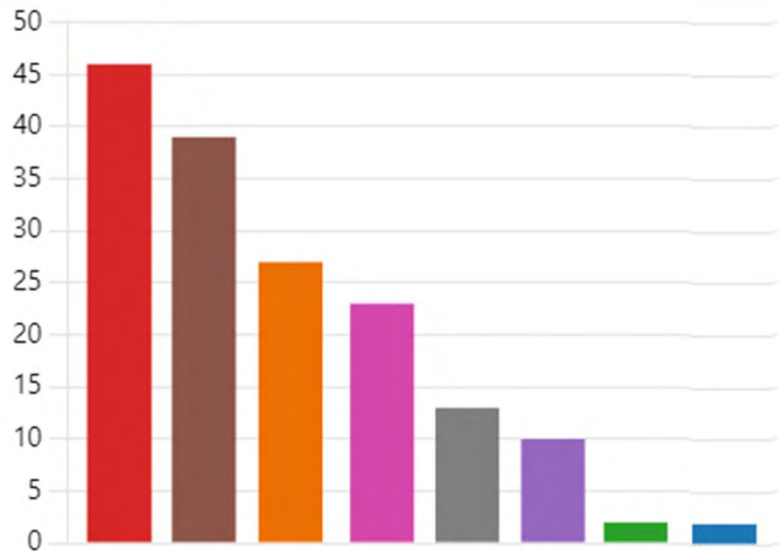


As a park ranger, it would be useful to have resources/tools (other than Google translate) to translate signage, interpretive programming, rule and regulations, etc., to better serve the large number of Eastern European and Spanish-speaking populations that visit our project.

I have had many applicants where English skills were very low; they had to bring children/family members to attempt to translate.



HOW DO USACE EMPLOYEES **FEEL** ABOUT PROVIDING LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE?

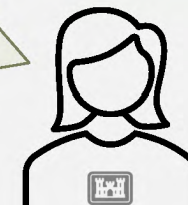


- I am happy to help translate/interpret to further USACE's missions.
- I wish there was more support for translating/interpreting technical language at USACE
- Providing language assistance is not a part of my job description but I feel like I must.
- I am concerned that I may translate/interpret something incorrectly.
- I would prefer for translation/interpretation work to be a part of my job description at USACE.
- I feel like I am the only person at USACE that cares about my language's representation.
- I feel overwhelmed with work when asked to translate/interpret for USACE.
- Providing language assistance is not a part of my job description and therefore I don't.

Responses to Survey Question 16, Please choose the top three statements below that resonate with you the most about providing language assistance to USACE.

I am the translator at my Lake project, and it is very frustrating and upsetting that I do not get compensated for my skill that no one here has.

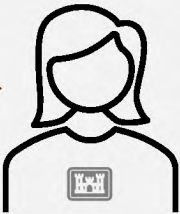
...[I] provide [translated and interpreted] instructions, directions, or clarifications to laborers and local customers



BEST PRACTICES WHEN ASKING A COWORKER FOR LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

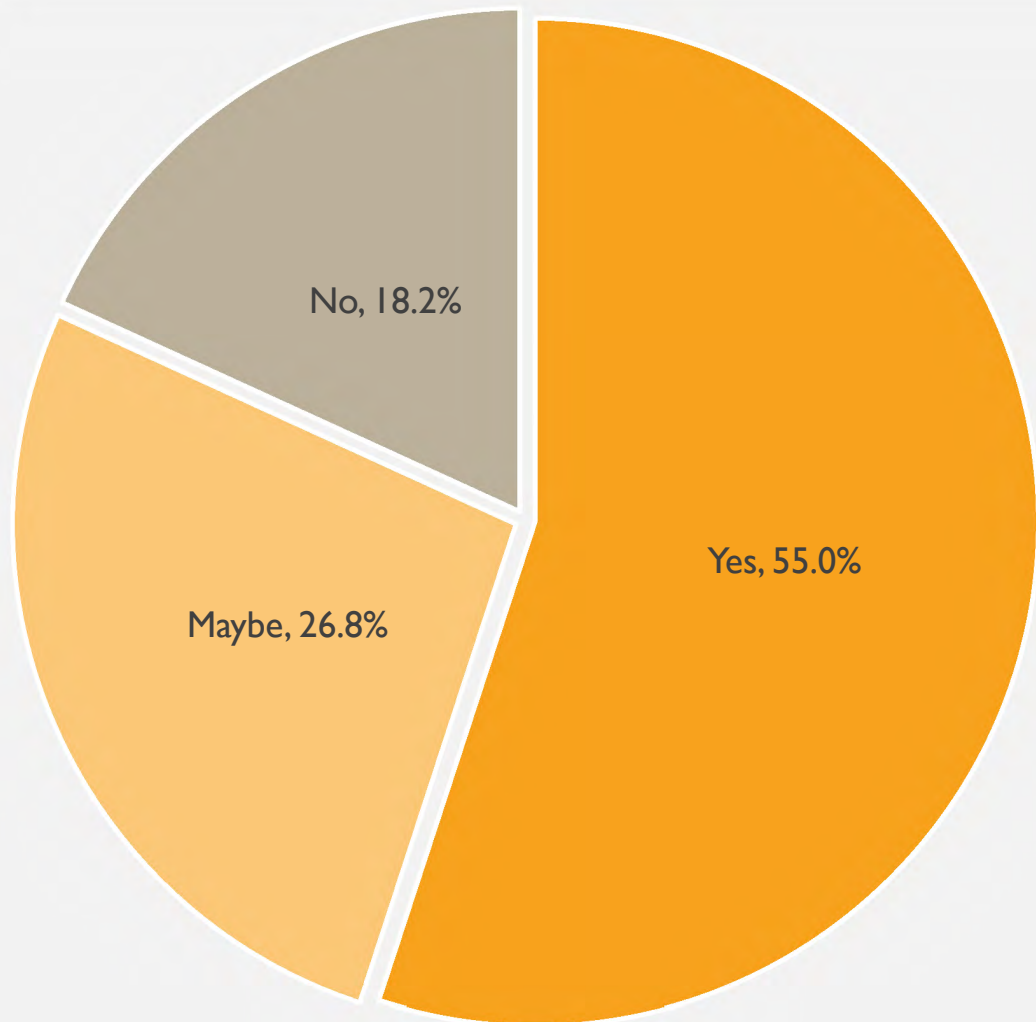
- \$\$ Have funding \$\$
- Give reasonable timelines
- Reach out to their supervisor
- Credit Translators / Interpreters
- Use AI first and hand that over to your translator

It's been tough. Even though we can do them, we don't necessarily have the time. Especially the large reports.



I was asked to interpret a document to a COL that was transferring to Italy, I was afraid I would misinterpret based on dialect. It worked out fine but still nerve-shaking coming from that level of leadership!

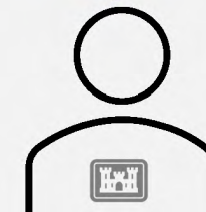
WILL YOU NEED LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE?



Where do you fall on this wheel? Place a dot in the space that corresponds with your answer to the question – *Will You Need Language Assistance in the Future?*

Language support helps build relationships with traditionally underserved and marginalized communities and tribes. By offering to translate our documents into additional languages, USACE can help preserve languages for future generations.

I'm relatively new to USACE, so I have not provided or requested support. However, given the diversity of communities we serve in our district, I expect to provide or request support in the future.



Response to Survey Question 10 (n=418), *While working for USACE, so you think you will need language translation or interpretation services in the future?*

RESOURCES WHEN YOU NEED LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

- Non-Federal Sponsors
- State and Federal Agencies
- Check in with these Groups
 - Public Affairs Office
 - Tribal Liaison
 - The Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise
 - Public Involvement Specialist
 - Environmental Justice Coordinator

Write in the chat if you have experience using one of the groups listed to get language support!

I have had the need, but I am unsure how or where to request support.



TIJUANA RIVER BASIN

- Spanish and English
- Binational (USA and Mexico) and Bilingual TableTop Exercise
- Bilingual meetings and slides
- Tagged on to the CA Partners Original Language Assistance Contract for Interpreters
 - Contract expired halfway through the effort ☹️
- Ended up using USACE Team Members for Translation and Interpretation Effort



State of California Silver Jackets Team
Equipo de las Chaquetas Plateadas del estado de California

Tijuana River Watershed Bi-National Dam Safety Tabletop Exercise (TTX)

Ejercicio binacional de simulación de seguridad de represas en la cuenca del río Tijuana (TTX, por sus siglas en inglés)

8 Nov 2022



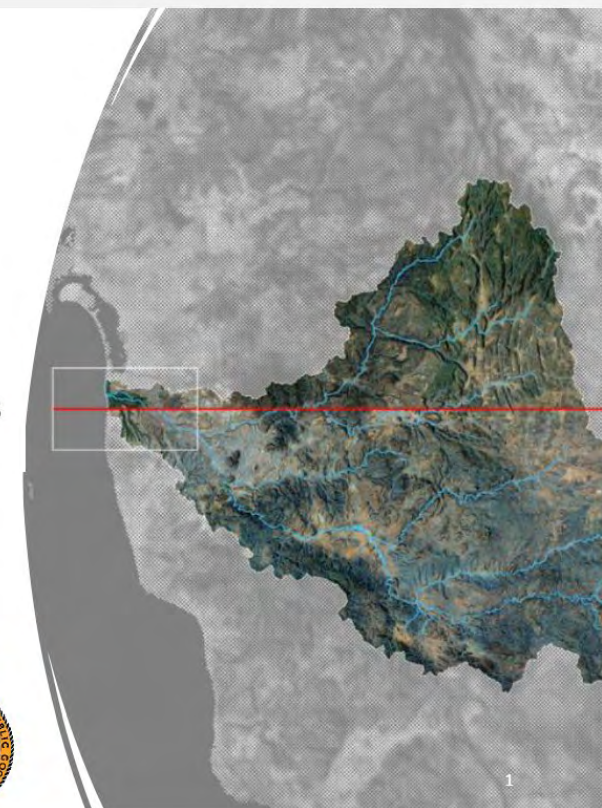
The City of
SAN DIEGO



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



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Agenda

I. Welcome

- Agenda Overview
- How to Use Zoom

II. Introductions

- Introduce yourself in the Chat
- Opening Remarks
- Icebreaker Activity

III. Exercise Overview

- Purpose
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Guidelines
- Background

IV. Exercise Scenarios 1-3

Agenda

I. Bienvenida

- Resumen de la agenda
- Cómo usar Zoom

II. Presentaciones

- Preséntate en el Chat
- Palabras de apertura
- Actividad rompehielos

III. Sobre el Proyecto TTX

- Propósito
- Funciones y responsabilidades
- Pautas
- Antecedentes

IV. Escenarios 1-3

EL PASO, NM

- Spanish and English
- Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study
- Public Outreach Meeting Effort
- Bilingual Material & Interpreters Available
- USACE Team Members Provided Translation and Interpretation



FLOOD CONTROL CHALLENGES IN THE EL PASO, CENTRAL AREA DESAFÍOS DE CONTROL DE INUNDACIONES EN EL ÁREA CENTRAL DE EL PASO

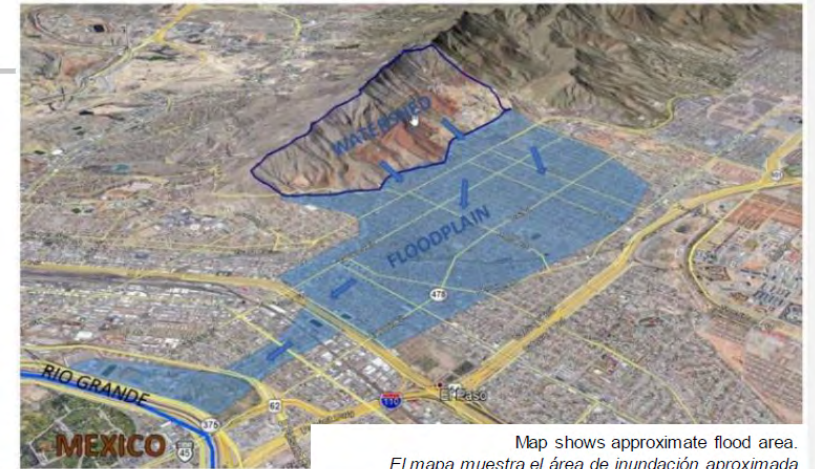


During monsoon season, thunderstorms over the Franklin Mountains sometimes cause flooding and debris flows that affect residents, businesses and even the military base facilities in the Central area of El Paso.

Durante la temporada del monzón, las tormentas eléctricas sobre las montañas Franklin a veces provocan inundaciones y flujos de escombros que afectan a los residentes, los negocios e incluso las instalaciones de la base militar en el área central de El Paso.

A large, comprehensive study is necessary to accomplish El Paso Water's mission of protecting human life and property from the damage severe storms can bring.

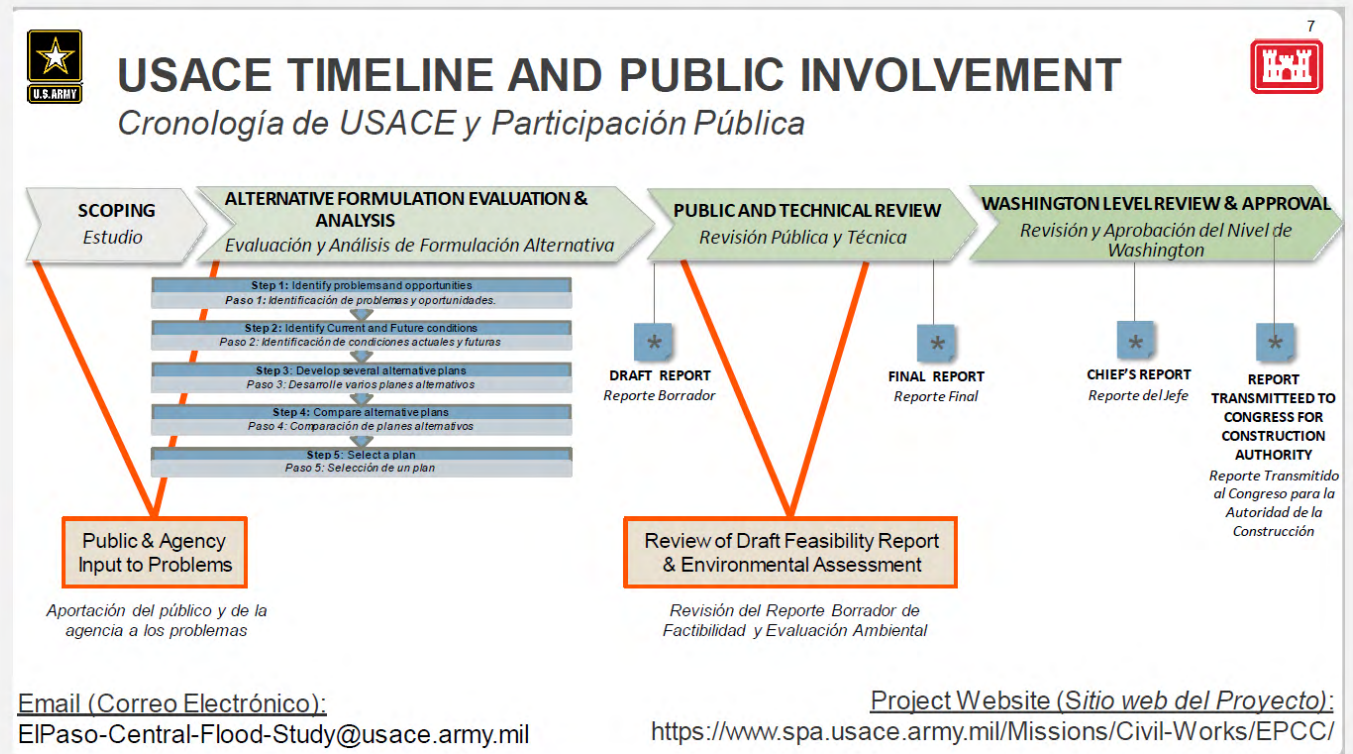
Se necesita un estudio amplio y completo para cumplir la misión de El Paso Water para proteger la vida humana y la propiedad del daño que pueden causar las tormentas severas.



Map shows approximate flood area.
El mapa muestra el área de inundación aproximada

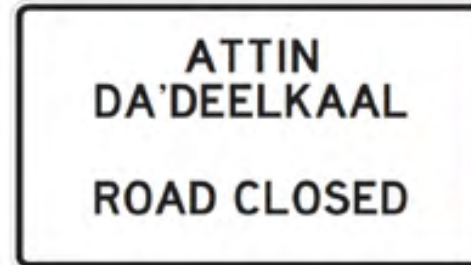
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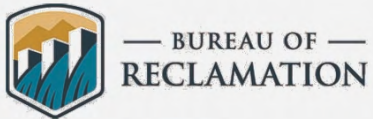


NAVAJO NATION

- Diné Bizaad and English
- Silver Jackets Project
- Flood Risk Messaging Across the Navajo Nation through Radio Ads and Road Signs
- Navajo Nation Member completed Diné Bizaad Translations
- Navajo Nation Member completed English radio PSA



HOW ARE OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES MEETING THIS NEED?

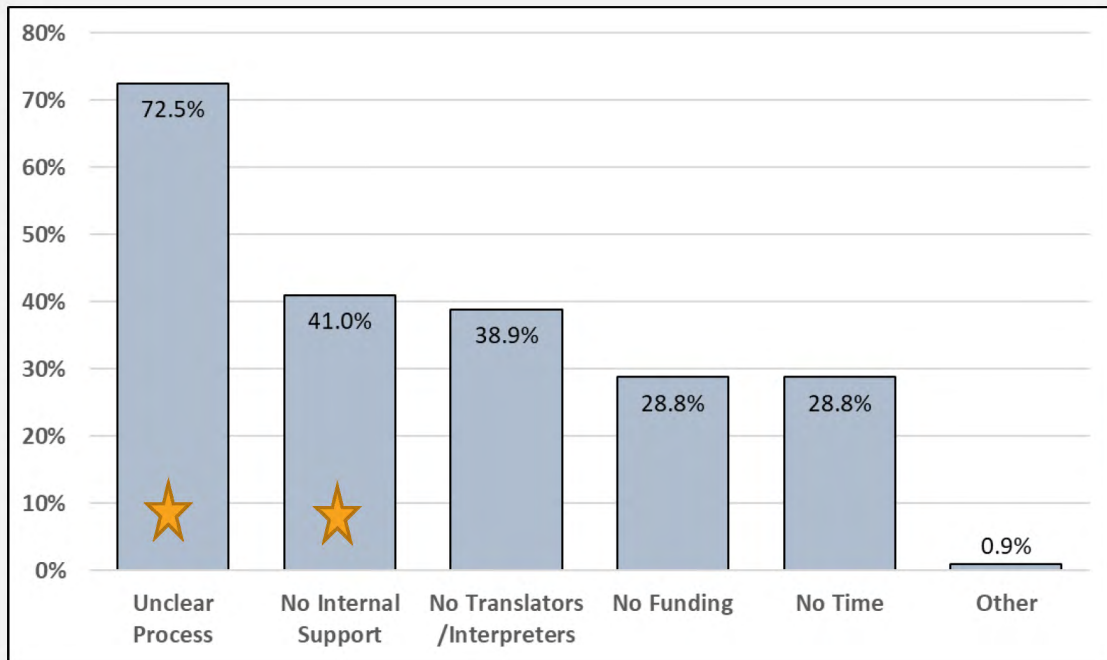


Summary Table: 8 Federal agencies interviewed July – August 2023

Federal Agency	24-7 Availability	Agency Wide Contract Held at HQ	Ad-hoc/Project-specific Contracts	Internal Language Support Team (Spanish Only)
Bureau of Reclamation, Binational Program			YES	
Environmental Protection Agency		YES		YES
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Only during disasters	YES	YES	YES
John S. McCain III National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution			YES	
National Weather Service		YES for AI Translation Effort		YES
Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Carolina	YES (through Dept. of Ag)	YES (through Dept. of Ag)		YES
USACE National Water Safety Program				YES
U.S. Department of Agriculture	YES	YES		

WHAT CAN USACE DO?

1. Establish a tiger team of HQ, Division, and District level personnel to identify the best path forward for **meeting the language assistance need at USACE.** (*Established May 2024*)
2. **Leadership demonstrates support** for investment in translation and interpretation.
3. Share **best practices** on how and when to request language assistance.



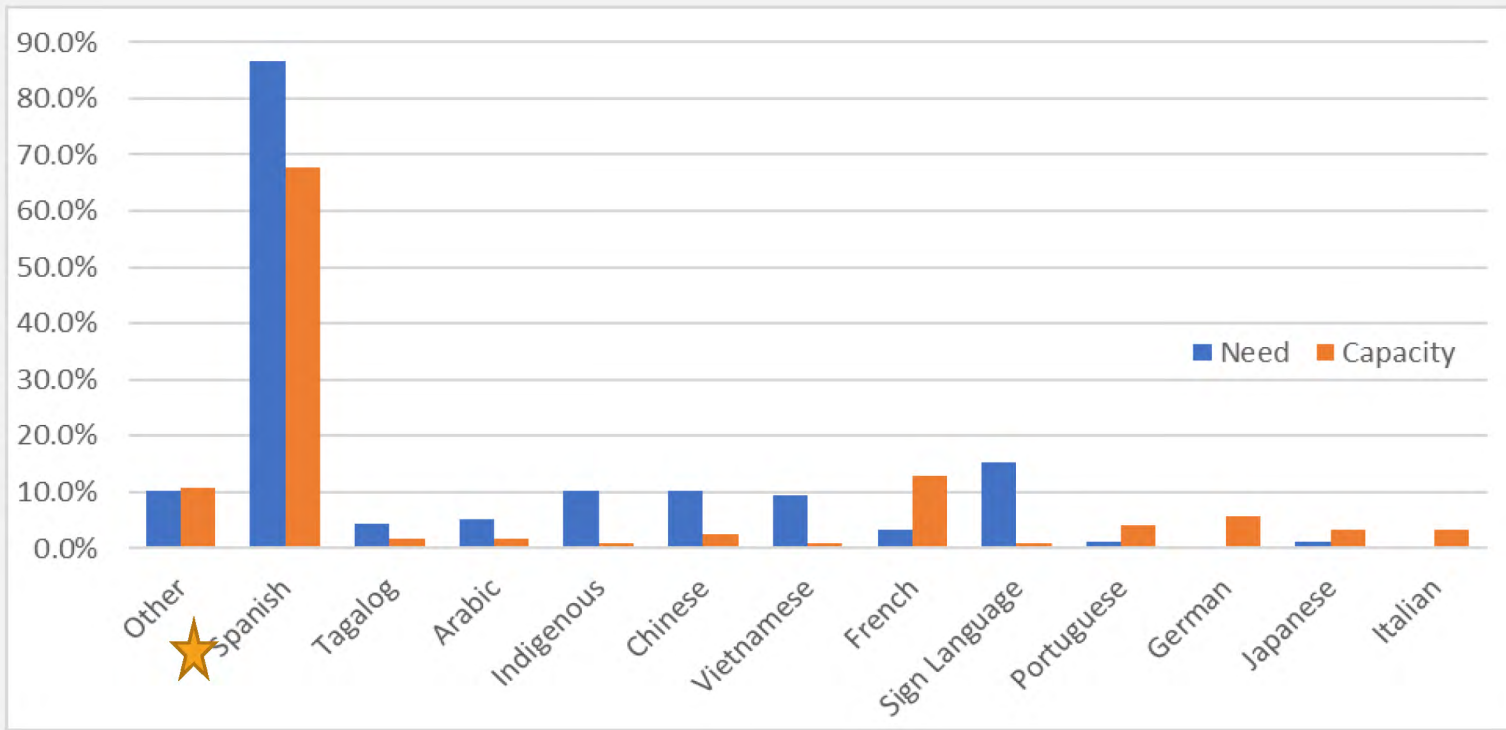
Not usually needed as children interpret for parents [&] personally I feel that English is the main language in US and immigrants should learn to speak it

It is a waste of time and money to provide translation services for government programs. If someone needs USACE to help them, then they should have to request and communicate in English only.



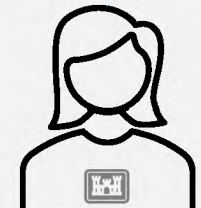
WHAT CAN USACE DO?

4. **Form a USACE Spanish Language Support Group.**
5. **Enable contract support** for Civil Works Projects & Programs (construction, public scoping meetings, feasibility reports, etc.).
6. **Provide access to live translation services** for Operations (NRM/Rangers) and Regulatory.



Responses to the Survey Question 9 (n=155) *What languages have you needed assistance with in the past?* (Need) and the Survey Question 17 (n=121) *What languages are you competent in?* (Capacity)

Requesting support was extremely difficult...there is never enough time, money or priority in the project to go about securing language support. This is doing a HUGE disservice to the public we serve.



OTHER LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

- <https://www.weather.gov/translate/>
 - Please share with your NRM/Rangers!
 - NWS Translates Weather Statements and Forecasts.
- <https://www.icold-cigb.org/GB/dictionary/dictionary.asp>
 - The International Commission On Large Dams
 - Fantastic dictionary for technical language translation into multiple languages!
- <https://www.gsaibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/sinDetails.do?scheduleNumber=MAS&specialItemNumber=541930&executeQuery=YES>
 - This is the GSA site for over 150 language translation and interpretation contractors.
 - Includes contractors with security clearance, 508 compliance, brail, and ASL!
- <https://www.fbi.gov/about/leadership-and-structure/intelligence/national-virtual-translation-center>
 - This is the FBI translation center.
 - Provides timely, accurate, and cost-effective translations for the U.S. Intelligence Community and other federal agencies.
- <https://nlscorps.org/>
 - The National Language Corps (DoD Program).
 - Put in a request that includes dates and language need.

QUESTIONS?

Sarah Moore

IWR New Horizons Detail, July – Oct 2023

Planner, EJ Coordinator, Albuquerque District