



# Evaluation Plan: Translation & Outreach to LES Communities

King County Department of Elections

投票!

vote!

bỏ phiếu!

ivota!

투표하세요!

## Introduction

In February of 2016, the King County Council approved additional funding for King County Elections to carry out the new mandates created by Ordinance 18086, which required translation of all voting materials in Spanish and Korean and voter outreach to limited-English speaking communities. As part of the supplemental appropriation, County Council also passed Proviso P3, which required the Department of Elections to submit a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of translation and limited-English proficiency outreach efforts. Specifically, the plan was required to include:

- The number of ballots received in each language for each Primary and General Election in the last five years, up to and including the 2016 Presidential Primary;
- The number of households with registered voters that received voting materials in each language for each Primary and General Election in the last five years, up to and including the 2016 Presidential Primary;
- The number of and value of grants or contracts awarded to nonprofit organizations to expand outreach efforts in limited English proficiency communities and the performance measures that organizations receiving these awards will utilize to evaluate the effectiveness of their outreach efforts;
- The number of ambassadors recruited to support limited English proficiency communities and the performance measures the Department of Elections will utilize to evaluate the effectiveness of the ambassador program; and,
- Explore cost control strategies, including but not limited to collaboration with other County agencies and the community in providing translation services.

As a result of the funding appropriated by the County Council, King County Elections is already well underway with a pilot program to partner with community-based organizations to do voter outreach. This report provides the historical data requested above, details the community outreach work done to-date, sets anticipated targets for the remainder of the year, and addresses opportunities to more efficiently provide translation services across the County going forward.

## Historical Voter Data by Language

The data below shows the number of voters who have opted to receive their ballot in a language other than English, as well as the number of ballots returned by language. A voter can identify which of the available languages they would prefer to receive their materials in at

the time they register. They can also change their language preference at any time by contacting King County Elections by phone, email, paper or online.

**Number of ballots returned, by language (2011-2016)**

Language	2011		2012		2013	
	Primary	General	Primary	General	Primary	General
Chinese	526	691	637	1,623	602	766
English	339,036	566,539	439,541	984,899	345,671	560,837
Vietnamese	N/A*	N/A	216	793	342	396

Language	2014		2015		2016
	Primary	General	Primary	General	Presidential Primary
Chinese	560	869	507	731	712
English	350,920	642,535	294,242	472,977	404,928
Vietnamese	325	482	297	426	479

\*Vietnamese was added as a King County language requirement after the 2010 census in accordance with the Federal Voting Rights Act, so data is only available from 2012 forward.

For eligible languages – currently Chinese, English and Vietnamese (Spanish and Korean starting this November) – voters receive all of their voting-related materials in that language. This includes their ballot, voters’ pamphlet<sup>1</sup>, voting instructions, their voter registration card, signature challenge letters, and any other correspondence with King County Elections. The Elections website is also translated into these languages and elections specialists fluent in each language are on-hand to assist customers by phone or in-person.

**Voters receiving translated materials, by language (2011-2016)**

Language	2011		2012		2013	
	Primary	General	Primary	General	Primary	General
Chinese	1,958	1,958	2,041	2,262	2,264	2,253
English	1,040,575	1,048,751	1,094,686	1,175,399	1,183,051	1,171,749
Vietnamese	N/A	N/A	505	929	966	962

<sup>1</sup> Because it is most cost-effective, an English Voters’ Pamphlet is mailed to every household in the County (as opposed to individual voters receiving their own copy). Voters who have selected a language other than English are also mailed their own individual voters’ pamphlet in their preferred language.

Language	2014		2015		2016
	Primary	General	Primary	General	Presidential Primary
Chinese	2,192	2,193	2,234	2,293	2,420
English	1,168,167	1,178,566	1,180,570	1,190,413	1,230,170
Vietnamese	872	881	941	984	1,117

King County Elections will be employing a variety of strategies to increase awareness that language options are available. The table below illustrates some of those strategies and the accompanying timeline for roll-out.

KCE Language Preference Update: Outreach Strategies and Timeline						
Strategies		June	July	August	Sept	Oct
<b>1</b>	<b>Mailed Voter Registration Card</b> All new voter registration card mailings will include information about how to change your language preference.	Ongoing				
<b>2</b>	<b>Language Preference Postcards</b> Community partners and stakeholders have received prepaid language preference postcards for distribution to community members. These will also be distributed to customer service counters throughout King County.	Ongoing				
<b>3</b>	<b>Contact Lists from Partners</b> Community partners will provide King County Elections contact lists for individuals they have reached who would like to receive their materials in a different language.	Ongoing				
<b>4</b>	<b>Web Form Online</b> Voters will be able to go online and fill-out a simple form to change their language preference.	Ongoing				
<b>5</b>	<b>Targeted Voter Registration Card Mailing</b> Elections will do a targeted mailing of voter registration cards with a prepaid language preference postcard included.	late Aug - Sept				
<b>6</b>	<b>Targeted Ethnic Media Advertising</b> After the Primary Election, ethnic media ads will let voters know that they can receive their materials in new languages.	mid-Aug thru mid-Oct				

## **Voter Outreach Partnership with Community Based Organizations**

Two phases of funding have been available through Elections' pilot program for community-based voter outreach.

1. A first phase of funding was awarded through a competitive process to community-based organizations for providing voter outreach specifically to Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Korean-speaking communities (all of whom are able to receive their ballot materials in their preferred language).
2. A second phase of funding will be awarded through a competitive process to community-based organizations focused on populations other than the four identified in Phase 1, such as East African, Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and European communities.

King County Elections has also secured an outstanding partner for this work in the Seattle Foundation and, as a result, has been able to provide larger grants to a larger number of community-based organizations.

The first phase of funding awards is complete and six community-based organizations received \$25,000 each (\$15,000 from King County and \$10,000 as an upfront grant from the Seattle Foundation) to implement their proposed voter outreach field plans. Applications for the second phase of funding are due by July 11, 2016.

### Phase I Awardees

Awardees from the first phase of funding are listed below in addition to their targets.

- **Asian Counseling and Referral Services /AAPI Democracy Initiative** plans to reach at least 16,920 community members in King County, with an emphasis in East and South King County; and Southeast Seattle through the "AAPI Voter Engagement Project" .
- **International Community Health Services** plans to reach 1,130 – 2,160 community members in King County, with an emphasis in NewHolly, Chinatown/International District, Bellevue and Shoreline through their "Bridging Civic Engagement and Community Health through Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Outreach" project.
- **Interlm Community Development Association** plans to reach 880 – 1,310 community members in King County, with an emphasis in Chinatown/International District, Beacon Hill and Rainier Valley through their "Increasing Access to Voter Education and Registration for API Immigrants and Refugees" project.

- **Korean American Coalition** plans to reach 1,915 – 3,810 community members in King County through their “2016 Voter Engagement – KAC” project.
- **Latino Community Fund of Washington State, Southpark Information and Access Resource Center (SPIARC) & Colectiva Legal Del Pueblo**, plan to reach 2,500 – 4,400 community members in King County, with an emphasis in South Park, White Center, Burien, Tukwila, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Auburn, Renton, Beacon Hill, Rainier Valley, through the “Latino Equity Network Voter Engagement” project.
- **White Center Community Development Association, and the Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees and Communities of Color**, plan to reach 2,000 – 2,500 community members in King County, with an emphasis in White Center, through the “White Center VOTES!” project.

### Performance Measures and Targets

Representatives from each organization will meet on a monthly basis to discuss what is going well, what could be improved, and what other support they might require from King County Elections. Organizations will also be required to track common metrics in order to produce a comprehensive set of pilot results and outcomes. These include:

- Number of community members reached
- Number of events held
- Number of new voters registered
- Number of voters who select to receive their ballot in a different language

Additionally, King County Elections will be looking at outcome measures including the number of voters registered by language, voter turnout by language preference, and the estimated percent of eligible voters who “speak English less than very well” as defined by the US Census who are receiving their ballot in a language other than English.

### **Ambassador Program**

Also, this year King County Elections plans to launch an Ambassador Program that will compensate individual community liaisons for providing information and connectivity to their respective communities, as well as advising King County Elections on barriers or specific issues they are facing. The Ambassador program will focus on communities who are not represented by organizations funded in either the Phase 1 or Phase 2 described above. Recruitment will begin as soon as Phase II funding has been awarded.

## **Cost Containment Strategies**

There are many organizations across King County government working on how to provide translation services as effectively and efficiently as possible. One of the key goals of the draft Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is that there be improved collaboration amongst departments and more language-related tools and resources available for staff to provide services to the limited-English speaking community. Elections will continue to work with the Office of Equity and Social Justice and other departments and agencies on how to provide these services more efficiently.

In the meantime, as their capacity allows, Elections has made language services staff available to other departments to assist with specific translation needs.

## **Conclusion**

Providing inclusive, easily accessible elections is an ongoing process and top priority for the department. The partnerships and activities outlined in this report will serve as the foundation from which new barriers and challenges will certainly be identified. However, with data, strong two-way engagement with the community and lessons learned from 2016 pilot projects, King County Elections is well positioned to meet these challenges and systematically remove barriers to voting for all communities in King County.