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The following step-by-step description is guidance for DPH staff involved with translating materials. OMH is responsible for ensuring quality for the Center for Community Health's translated materials. All Center translation projects/materials must be undertaken in consultation with the OMH. Please contact Jordan Coriza at 624-6063 **prior to final approval of the English document** to ensure that materials are translation ready.

In Massachusetts almost one in five individuals five years and older speaks a language other than English at home (18.2%, Census 2000). Of these, forty one per cent (41%) speak English less than very well. To ensure accessibility to public health messages by the population with limited English proficiency, the Department of Public Health translates program materials into multiple languages. The following document provides program managers guidance on translating materials. It builds on translation guidance developed by the former Office of Refugee and Immigrant Health.

The field of translation has changed since the last revision of the ORIH Translation Guidance. Where once the best practice was to do a "back-to-English" translation, today promising practices emphasize a conceptual translation to ensure that messages are culturally and linguistically appropriate. This document, developed by the Office of Multicultural Health (OMH), incorporates these new approaches. Although internet-based translation services are available, OMH does not recommend their use for public health documents in general and for Department of Public Health documents specifically.

# Translation Guidelines for Written Materials

The Office of Multicultural Health (OMH) coordinates the translation of written materials department wide. If your program is in the process of developing health education materials or has developed materials that need to be translated, please read the following guidelines.

The focus of OMH's translation guidelines is specific to health-related documents. The process can be divided into three broad steps. They are:

1. **Preparing materials.** The source text is evaluated for readability, clarity and cultural appropriateness. A translator is chosen.
2. **Translation.** The initial translation is performed.
3. **Revision/Editing.** The translation is given to a second translator for revision and then it is field tested with the target audience. In the past, the department's efforts to ensure quality translation included a 'back-to-English' translation. However, experience suggests that back translation is ineffective.

OMH has developed five distinct documents to assist you through the translation process:

1. **Translation Guidelines** provide guidance on how to translate a DPH document.
2. **Translation Request Worksheet** is to be completed before contracting with a translator. Once completed, this document provides you with the necessary information for talking with the translator about your project.
3. **Translation Checklist** ensures that all the steps of the translation are completed.
4. **Translation Quality Assurance Form** is for reviewers to use when providing feedback on the quality of the document. It is a useful tool when having to negotiate discrepancies with the translator. OMH keeps performance record of its contracted vendors.
5. **In-house Translation Review** provides guidance for peers reviewing translations as well as for staff requesting the reviews. Forward this one-page document to the reviewer along with the translation, the English original, and the OMH Translation Quality Assurance Form. OMH has glossaries of terms in Spanish and Portuguese commonly used by DPH programs. When appropriate, refer reviewers to OMH's glossaries, which can be found at: [www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm)

**For questions or technical assistance, contact the Office of Multicultural Health at (617) 624-6063**

## **Office of Multicultural Health Guidance**

OMH can assist you throughout the translation process to:

- Include language in your Scope of Services to assure translation cost is incorporated in your project
- Ensure correct reading level, appropriate cultural content, and translatability of the English document
- Identify appropriate languages for translating your document
- Develop a translation budget
- Identify a competent and high quality translator from the state wide vendor list

### **General Recommendations**

- **OMH recommends that translation costs be included when planning or developing health education materials.** If you are working with a media agency for the creation of your materials, OMH will help you develop an appropriate scope of services that includes translation.
- OMH recommends that a conceptual translation be used for health education materials, as opposed to a word-for-word translation. This method allows the translator to select from a variety of ways to express the message to the target audience. The use of a non-literal methodology conveys the intended message in a more culturally relevant way than the use of literal or a word-for-word translation.
- Use two translators – one for the initial translation and the second to review and edit the translation, checking for accuracy, tone, and appropriateness. The translators ought to be from different sources, either translation agencies or independent translators. **Utilize the services of paid professional translators only.**
- Whenever possible and appropriate, you should have your English materials field-tested prior to getting them translated. Translated materials, too, should be tested. A simple way of doing this is by working with community providers, community residents, and/or DPH staff. They can review your documents and provide valuable input. Utilize OMH's in-house translation review guidelines when working with peer reviewers. OMH can help you plan this process.

### **Steps in the Translation Process**

#### **1. Prior to the assignment of work to a translator:**

- **Materials Review:** Program staff should carefully review the document to be translated to ensure:
  - Appropriate reading level for the target population;
  - The language is simple and clear;
  - Messages and illustrations are culturally appropriate;
  - Document is appropriately formatted for accessibility, as recommended by the Office of Health and Disability. For more information contact Pialee Roy at 617-624-5978 or [Pialee.Roy@state.ma.us](mailto:Pialee.Roy@state.ma.us)
  - Document prints clearly in black and white if it will be posted on the internet for public download;
  - Available space for the translated text (text may increase or decrease based upon the target language for translation).
  - The document to be translated has been finalized.
- **Contracting with a translator/agency:** OMH maintains a list of individual translators and translation agencies from which program staff should select. This is the list of vendors under OSD contract PRF01, Foreign Language Written Translation & Oral Interpretation Services. A complete list of languages and maximum rates can be found on <http://www.comm-pass.com/>. OMH maintains a performance history of the vendors it recommends/uses and therefore is able to identify vendors whose products meet OMH and OSD

quality standards. Paid translators are responsible and therefore liable for their work. If you use unpaid peer translators and a translation problem arises in the future, no one can be held accountable for those problems. Therefore, it is important that translations be performed by an individual or through an agency under this vendor list.

- **Budget & Timeline:** OMH can help you determine an appropriate budget for the translation project. Current state approved contract rates may vary, but are anywhere between \$0.18 and \$0.40 per translated word depending on the target language. Similar rates are charged to review/edit. Additional costs for graphic design and formatting may be charged. Program staff should request a detailed itemized estimate in writing from the translator/agency including turnaround time, per word price, formatting, editing, and project management fees **prior** to contracting with a translator. Program staff should develop a realistic timetable for the completion of a translation, including time for review and revisions.

**Please note: to ensure a quality translation, you should have it proofread/edited by a second translator**

- **When working with a translation agency, ensure that editing by a second translator is provided and that this cost is included in the price estimate.**
- **When working with an independent translator, be mindful that the cost for a second translator/editor needs to be included in the budget. To reiterate, the second translator reviews and/or edits the translation checking for accuracy, tone, and appropriateness.**

## 2. At the time of assignment of work to a translator:

- **Selecting Translators:** Once you've chosen a translator/agency, program staff should discuss with the translators: the purpose of the material, the appropriate reading level of the target population, key health messages, and terminology specific to the message. The translator needs to be encouraged to ask questions, for the quality of the translation is dependent upon the translator's understanding of the English document. If English materials were created by a media company, a contact person from the company and a phone number need to be identified for the translator to contact should he/she have any questions about the English document.

## 3. After receiving the initial translation:

- a. The second translator will check style, grammar, accuracy, and comprehension of the messages. The second translator will also review the literacy level of the translation.
- b. If discrepancies occur between the first translation and the revisions done by the second translator/agency, please contact OMH. To maintain consistency from one translation to another, OMH has a glossary of terms commonly used in Spanish and Portuguese by DPH programs. You can find this glossary at: [www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm)
- c. The finalized copy of the translated document must list the language, in English, in which it is written, so that the translation can be identified easily.
- d. Always make back up copies of all translations. Ask your translator/translation agency to burn the final translation on a CD. When your material goes to the printer, you will usually need to provide image files as separate files as well as the foreign fonts used in the translation separately. If your materials will be posted on DPH's website, you will be asked for alternative formats to all documents. For instance, if your final document is a PDF, you will have to provide a Word document that mimics the PDF.

**For questions or technical assistance, contact the Office of Multicultural Health at (617) 624-6063.**

# OMH Translation Request Worksheet

## Contact and Fiscal Information:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Date:                            | 6. Document Title:   |
| 2. Program/Division Name:           | 7. Deadline:   |
| 3. Bureau:                          | 8. Languages to translate into:  |
| 4. Contact Person:                  | 9. Have funds been identified for this project?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No. |
| 5. Phone number and e-mail Address: |  |

10. In addition to translation, will you need any of the following?

- Graphic Design
- Formatting
- Printing
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. What format will be used to deliver the message?

- Brochure
- Fact Sheet
- Poster
- Radio/TV ad
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Audience:

12. Who are your primary and secondary audiences? Please identify the following: gender, age group, ethnicity, race, country of origin, literacy level, etc.

13. What is the critical message you are trying to convey? Please list at least three main points you're trying to make?

14. Have these materials been pre-tested with the target audience?  Yes     No

15. Which cities/regions are your materials going to be used in?

16. What is the context in which you materials will be presented to the audience?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face (health care professionals to patient, peers, family members) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mass media (radio, television, magazines, direct mail, billboards, newspapers)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group delivery (worksite or classroom)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Community (libraries, employers, schools, malls, health fairs, local government agencies) |

# Translation Checklist

## **Preparing to do translations:**

1.  Contact the **Office of Multicultural Health (OMH) at (617) 624-6063** for technical assistance and to obtain a list of qualified translators/agencies. OMH is responsible for ensuring quality for the Center for Community Health's translated materials. All Center translation projects/materials must be undertaken in consultation with the OMH.

## **Steps in the translation process:**

1.  Determine your target audience, language, ethnicity, reading level, and other factors.
2.  Determine what materials need to be translated.
3.  Develop a list of key health messages your document will convey.
4.  Work with individuals from the identified language/ethnic group(s) to ensure materials are appropriate.
5.  Choose potential translators from the state wide vendor list under contract PRF01.
6.  Complete Translation Request Worksheet.
7.  Obtain an itemized estimate in writing from the translator/agency to establish per word cost, turnaround time and project management fees, and to document any special instructions prior to assigning the project to the translator.
8.  Develop a budget and time-line for translation completion.
9.  Make arrangements to ensure your translation will be proofread/edited by a second translator, either by requesting this service from the translation agency when obtaining a cost estimate, or if working with an individual translator, by selecting a second translator to perform proofreading/editing services.
10.  Review key messages and technical terms with the translator and go over translation process.
11.  Obtain translation and field-test it with community providers, community residents, and/or DPH staff. When performing peer reviews, forward the In-house Translation Review and Quality Assurance Form to the reviewer, along with the translation and the English originals.
12.  Negotiate any changes or discrepancies, if needed, by utilizing OMH's glossaries at [www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm) or by contacting OMH.
13.  Make sure your translation lists the language, in English, into which it is translated, thus allowing staff to identify the appropriate language for distribution.
14.  Have typeset copy proofread by your translator before the document is printed.
15.  Make a back-up copy on a CD with your final translation, any image files, and fonts used – especially non-roman fonts. Make sure you have alternative formats for all documents that will be posted on your website.
16.  Before posting any document on your website, make sure all hidden data are corrected. For more information on how to remove hidden data, go to: <http://healthnet.dph.state.ma.us/eohhs/hiddendata/hiddendata.htm>

# OMH Translation Quality Assurance

Date:

Translation Title:

Language:

Document saved in:

Agency/translator's name:

Edited/proofread by:

**Do you strongly agree, agree, are not sure, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements. Please check off the appropriate box for each.**

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<u>Loyalty:</u> 1. I read both the translated and English texts and I understand the same message from both documents.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<u>Accuracy:</u> 2. I read the translated text and I get more information or different information than reading the English text.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<u>Register:</u> 3. I find the language in the translated text more difficult to read/understand than the English.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<u>False cognates:</u> 4. I read the translated text and think I would not understand it as well if I didn't know English.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<u>Appropriateness for culture/audience:</u> 5. The translated message sounds offensive or inappropriate to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<u>Grammar and Style:</u> 6. The translated text has grammatical mistakes, punctuation errors and format problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

How would you rate this translation overall?

Excellent       Good       Average       Below Average       Unacceptable

Recommendations/Comments:

# In-House Translation Review

Employees reviewing translations and those requesting internal reviews should follow these guidelines to ensure quality and to record translation vendor performance.

Please forward the translated documents to your internal reviewer, a copy of the English originals, these guidelines, and the OMH Translation Quality Assurance Form.

- **Peer reviewers should focus on two areas: errors and context barriers.** The reviewer's task is to correct mistakes and to point out contextual barriers by offering constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement. Reviewers should not concentrate on style. Ask yourself: Is this really an issue or is it a matter of taste?
- **Peer reviewers should be native speakers.** Please consider regional differences of the language. For example, Spanish varies greatly among countries and regions. Before deciding that a word or expression is incorrect, double check to make sure that word is in fact incorrect and not a word that sounds foreign only because you are not accustomed to using it. Remember that our US audience comprises a variety of speakers from different countries and regions. Therefore, we must make a conscious effort at including those variations in our translations.
- **Observe language level.** Most materials are written in a low reading level (below 8<sup>th</sup> grade). Make sure the translation maintains the same tone and reading level as the original, as long as this is not inappropriate or offensive for your audience. Look for words and phrases that our US immigrant population may not understand because of literacy issues.
- **Use the track changes and commenting tool to annotate your changes.** Click on the "tools" menu and choose "track changes". If your computer doesn't have the capacity for certain alphabets and characters, contact OMH for assistance. If you are reviewing PDF documents, Adobe complete has commenting tools. If you do not have the full version of Adobe, print out the documents and hand mark them. Most translators/translation agencies accept hand written comments as long as they are legible.
- **Maintain consistency.** OMH keeps a glossary of terms in Spanish and Portuguese commonly used by DPH programs. Visit: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm>. OMH has dictionaries and reference materials for other languages.
- If you have many concerns or extensive comments, write them down and contact the translator/translation agency to discuss them further.

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