The Colorado Health Foundation™



Strengthening Connections: Our Commitment to Thoughtful Engagement with Spanish-Speaking Communities

Language justice is about more than words—it's about equity, access and empowerment. At The Colorado Health Foundation, we believe that when communities have the tools and support to share their voices, everyone benefits. We want to be part of creating a Colorado where all people, regardless of the language they speak, can thrive.

Since 2019, CHF has been on a journey to deepen our engagement with Spanish-speaking communities across the state. For us, this isn't just about translating words—it's about building meaningful, lasting relationships that affirm the rights of individuals to self-expression and participation. It's about – as our wonderful partners at Community Language Cooperative (CLC) often say – helping people express themselves in the language of their heart.

As the fastest-growing population in Colorado, Spanish speakers bring a wealth of culture, perspective, and strength to our state. Reaching these communities effectively isn't just a responsibility—it's an opportunity to ensure inclusivity and equity are at the heart of everything we do. Committing to bilingual and monolingual engagement in English and Spanish is not just enhancing communication; we're hoping to foster trust, collaboration and a sense of belonging that supports health being further in reach.

Guided by principles of language justice, our strategy has focused on creating spaces where Spanish-speaking Coloradans feel seen, heard and valued. And while we've made strides, this work is just beginning.

What We've Accomplished

Between 2021 and 2024, we've focused on several key areas to enhance language access and cultural competence:

- **Understanding language access needs:** By researching gaps and barriers, we've been able to identify key pathways to provide Spanish speakers with the information and resources they need.
- **Hiring and compensating bilingual staff:** Adjustments to our hiring processes have brought in more bilingual team members, strengthening our ability to connect authentically with Spanish-speaking communities. We also adjusted our pay policies to ensure staff who are bilingual or multilingual are appropriately compensated, even if this skill isn't necessarily part of their job description.
- **Expanding Spanish-language offerings:** From grant applications to webinars and events, we've worked to make our communications accessible in Spanish.
- **Creating culturally appropriate spaces:** We've prioritized designing outreach and programs that reflect and respect the unique needs and culture of Spanish-speaking communities.
- **Supporting community interpreters:** In partnership with CLC, we've funded interpreter training programs in areas like Fort Collins, Pueblo, and Denver. The positive response has reinforced our commitment to growing this network statewide.
- **Staff training:** With CLC's help, our team has undergone training on language justice, an essential step as we continue to embed these principles into our work.
- **Bilingual communications:** Through bilingual events and materials, we've successfully connected with Spanish-speaking communities in more meaningful ways.

- **Spanish-language grant applications:** Our grant application system now offers a Spanish applicant portal, making it easier for organizations serving these communities to access grant and sponsorship funding.

What's Next

While we're proud of our progress, we know there's more work to do. Moving forward, we're focusing on:

- **Expanding partnerships:** We'll deepen our collaboration with CLC and explore new partnerships to advance language justice and access.
- **Streamlining bilingual workflows:** Supporting our staff remains a priority. We'll work to improve processes and leverage resources to make bilingual efforts more efficient.
- **Training more interpreters:** By funding additional training in areas like Pueblo, Greeley, and Delta, we aim to build a robust network of interpreters statewide.
- **Ongoing staff education:** We're embedding language justice training into our development programs and onboarding materials to ensure this commitment remains central to our culture.

As we continue to look for opportunities that deepen engagement with the communities we serve and prioritize, language access and overall accessibility will continue to be a learning edge for CHF. We look forward to this challenge, but also know how important it is to hear from all of you about experiences you might have had alongside this journey.

We encourage your thoughts, ideas and feedback by sending an email to either Show email or Show email.

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