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Translating Vital Documents:
A Practical Approach

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September 2016

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Vital Documents

vi-tal
/vīdl/ [adjective] absolutely necessary or important; essential

doc-u-ment
/dä kyü ment/ [noun] an official paper that gives information about something

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Vital Documents

vi-tal doc-u-ment
/vīdl dä kyü ment/ [noun] {insert definition here}

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Identification of Vital Documents

- Poll all divisions within agency:
 - To identify documents that are meant for service users
 - User-prompted documents
 - Agency-prompted documents
 - To identify location and owners of source files
 - To address any version control issues

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Identification of Vital Documents

- To prepare for potential translation needs, also identify:
 - Length of documents (pages and words)
 - Whether translations already exist and into which languages
 - Whether source files exist and, if so, in which file format

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Vital Document Report (sample)

Title of Doc.	Page Count	Word Count	Revision Date	Owner of Doc.	Existing Translations
Registration Form	1	300	1/2016	Registration	2 Languages
Welcome Sign	1	10	9/2016	Facilities	1 Language
Regulation	20	6000	5/2010	Legal	None

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What gets translated first?

- Consider frequency document comes in contact with LEP service users
 - Forms
 - Flyers
 - Information brochures
- Consider documents linked to pre-established deadlines
 - Periodic or seasonal communications
 - Communications connected to calendared events

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What gets translated first?

- Consider most-visible communications
 - Signage at sites where service users may frequent
 - Website
- Consider documents by size
 - Documents with lesser word counts are cheaper and less time consuming
- Consider documents that drive policy
 - Mandates, regulations that detail policy affecting service users

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Priority Report (sample)

Title of Doc.	Page Count	Word Count	Revision Date	Priority
Registration Form	1	300	1/2016	High
Welcome Sign	1	10	9/2016	Med
Regulation	20	6000	5/2010	Low

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Cost/Resources

- Remember...

Translating vital documents is an on-going process.

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Tracking & Archiving

- Why?
 - Allows for easy listing of agency's translated documents
 - Identifies the source/owner of document
 - Identifies who did the translation
 - Identifies date of translation
 - Allows for quick retrieval of translated documents
 - Expedites the translation of documents that have been updated
 - Reduces translation costs

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Tracking & Archiving

- How?
 - A tracking tool or mechanism is required
 - Database (e.g., Microsoft Access)
 - Spreadsheet (e.g., Microsoft Excel)
 - Required fields should include, at a minimum:
 - Contact information (e.g., name, office, number, email)
 - Document information (e.g., name, length)
 - Provider of services (e.g., internal/external, cost)
 - Tracking or job number
 - Archiving requires a file naming convention and location
 - Example: 201_Invite for Winter Meeting_SP_1.22.15

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Tracking & Archiving

- Who?
 - Anyone or all involved in the coordination of getting documents translated
 - If your agency doesn't yet translate documents, this is a good place to start

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Bonus step!

- Ensure vital documents are language access ready
 - Read your document from the lens of a LEP service user
 - Additions/subtractions of text could make document more practical

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Flyer vs. Translation ready flyer

Join us next week to learn more about our program

Guest Speaker: Jane Smith

Date: January 1, 2015

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Library

For more information or to register for the event, visit anywebsite.com

Join us next week to learn more about our program

Guest Speaker: Jane Smith

Date: January 1, 2015

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Library

For more information or to register for the event, visit anywebsite.com (English only) or call 111-222-3333

Interpretation services will be available.

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Letter vs. Translation ready Letter

<January 22, 2015>

Dear <Jane Smith>,

This is regarding your child, <Joe Smith>.

Please contact us at 111-222-3333.

Thank you.

January 2015

Dear Parent,

This is regarding your child. Please contact us at 111-222-3333. Interpretation services will be available.

Thank you.

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TRANSLATION IN PROCESS

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Getting the word out!

- Steps taken so far:
 - ✓ Identified vital documents
 - ✓ Categorized and prioritized documents
 - ✓ Created a tracking and archiving system
 - ✓ Made documents “language access” ready
 - ✓ Translated documents
- Final step: Ensure that all of this work reaps benefits

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Dissemination of translated documents

- Hard copy delivery (i.e., print version)
 - Send all language versions of the communication along with the English
 - Send English only with foreign-language reference to where/when translation can be obtained
 - Use data (if available) to pre-identify need and send appropriate language
 - If applicable, post online

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Dissemination of translated documents

- Soft copy delivery (i.e., email)
 - Send English communication, along with translated versions as attachments
 - Send English communication, with a reference to when or where online translation can be obtained
 - Post online

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Dissemination of translated documents

- Online access to translations (i.e., website)
 - Consider developing two interfaces online
 - Public facing interface (user-prompted documents)
 - Internal interface (agency-prompted documents)
 - One-stop shop for accessing translations

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