How to Serve the World @ your library®

Serving Non-English Speakers in U.S. Public Libraries

Based on the 2007 analysis of library demographics, services and programs.
www.ala.org/nonenglishspeakers

There are 21 million people in America who speak little or no English–

one of every fifteen persons.

What do you do when they come into your library?

What will you do if they don't?

Key Findings from the Study

www.ala.org/nonenglishspeakers

Spanish is, by far, the most supported non-English language in public libraries. Seventy-eight percent of libraries reported Spanish as the priority #1 language to which they develop services and programs. Asian languages ranked second in priority at 29 percent. Another 17.6 percent of libraries indicated Indo-European languages as a second priority.

Smaller communities are serving a larger proportion of non-English speakers. The majority of libraries serving non-English speakers are in communities with fewer than 100,000 residents (484 of all responding libraries). The majority (53.6 percent) of residents in these smaller communities traveled between 1-3 miles to reach a library, and another 21 percent traveled between 4-6 miles.

Literacy is both a barrier for non-English speakers and is what most libraries support in specially designed services and programs for these patrons. Reading and library habits negatively impact use of the library by non-English speakers (76 percent). Knowledge of the services offered by the library was the second most frequent barrier to their participation (74.7 percent) identified by librarians.

Libraries reported the most successful library programs and services developed for non-English speakers were: English as a Second Language (ESL), language-specific materials and collections, computer use and computer classes, story time and special programs.

About 21 million people in the United States speak limited or no English – 50 percent more than a decade ago. Staff is faced daily with someone who needs services and does not speak English.

This guide will help you use the study to empower the non-English speakers in your local community.

5 Positive Reasons to Engage your English Language Learners

They will...

- Become lifelong learners.

- Become productive citizens in the community.

- Develop communication skills.

 - Increase their cultural literacy and cultural awareness skills.

- Recognize the value of diversity among people.

5 Ways Employers Can Help

 - Provide diversity training.

- Offer foreign language classes.

- Target community groups as partners to facilitate and not duplicate efforts of the library.

- Create a survey to find out what your employees need to support new members of your Community.

- Initiate a program of volunteer tutors to teach and communicate with non English speakers.

Break Through Barriers

Percieved Barrier	Breakthrough
- Reading/Library Habit	- Make reading, library visits fun
- Transportation	- Library outreach in the community
- Literacy Skills	- Library programs for everyone
- Discretionary Time	- Display collections, information prominently
- Knowledge of Services	- Translate library information
- Trust in government agencies	- Build relationships and trust

Three Keys to Success

one...
Know Your Community

two...
Involve the Whole Family

three...
Partner with Local Community Organizations

Candid Comments

On welcoming...

"When you say "Hola" to me when I come to the library, it makes me feel good, and then I want to be there. Even if that is all the words we share, that is OK. You reach out to me and I am happy."

> *Yolanda Vega*
> Library user, Advocate, and Volunteer

On speaking a foreign language...

"Even if a person mispronounces something or gets it a little bit wrong trying to speak another's language, it is good because this breaks the ice. It makes you a human being who can now be more easily approached and asked questions."

> *Kisha Whitney*
> ESL Teacher

On beginning a new program...

"Whatever you do, stick with it! If only a few people show up, so what? They will go out and spread the word in the community. More will come and your program will be a success."

> *John Zika*
> Regional Library Manager
> Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County

Top 10 "To Do's"

1. Hire bilingual library staff. Recruit bilingual volunteers. Make a telephone list of library staff members who speak other languages.

2. Display "Welcome" signs, library activities and materials information in the languages spoken in your community.

3. Smile, sincerely. You will be speaking the universal language of kindness.

4. Assume no prior knowledge of libraries or lending policies.

5. Provide library application forms and orientation materials in your library users' native languages. If cost is prohibitive, provide a template that labels the key information items.

6. Honor the choice of each individual: Ask whether a library user wants the library card application or flier in English or another language.

7. Learn how to retrieve foreign language materials and resources at your library – what search terms to use in your public access computer (PAC), i.e., SUBJECT: Chinese Language Materials.

8. Know the holidays and festivals celebrated in your community. Create displays to acknowledge and commemorate these.

9. Contact your state, local municipal and social service agencies; ask for information materials printed in other languages for public distribution. Locate online resources offering other language information, such as the Internal Revenue Service, Bureau of Motor Vehicles, etc.

10. Get to know the community newspaper editor or reporters of other language weeklies: They can provide free newspapers and translate and publish your program calendar in the paper's community calendar.

Big Ideas

- Computer instruction in other languages.

- World language collections.

- Bi-lingual library card campaigns.

- Basic Adult Education in other languages.

Citizenship Help

www.civicsandcitizenshiptoolkit.gov

Request a Civics and Citizenship Toolkit from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, created with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the U.S. Government Printing Office.

Best Bet

WebJunction, an online community for library staff, where minds meet. A wealth of information is available. Explore the Spanish Language Outreach area. It includes free courses, including a 4-hour Spanish Outreach tutorial.

Where to Start?

Begin by...

- Talking to library users to determine their information and service needs. A short survey is a useful tool!

- Moving delivery of service to meet the needs of library users

- access to library – 24/7 service point with few exceptions such as holidays or election days

- access to materials – 24/7 with few exceptions such as holidays or election days

What a Survey Can Do

1. Provide documentation for funding of special projects.

2. Inform program planning and collection development.

3. Strengthen staff training.

4. Facilitate paradigm shifts—critical strategic, structural, philosophical and organizational.

Collection Development

- collect materials your library clients can use [books, videos, journal and magazines in appropriate languages]

- language tapes [collect language tapes to fit the needs of your constituents including English]

- Information/orientation fairs [twice per year host information fairs orientating and welcoming new citizens into the community

Spanish Language Book Newsletters

- America Reads Spanish, a campaign created by the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade and Spanish Association of Publishers Guilds to promote literature and reading in Spanish and the presence of books in Spanish in the U.S. www.americareadsspanish.org

- Criticas, An English speaker's guide to the latest Spanish language titles. www.criticasmagazine.com

Vendors

- Lectorum, the oldest and largest Spanish book distributor in the U.S. www.lectorum.com

- Multicultural Books & Videos, working with OCLC to bring foreign language materials to libraries economically. www.multiculturalbooksandvideos.com

Program Possibilities:
Examples of successful programs across the country

The American Dream Starts @ your library

www.americandreamtoolkit.org

In April 2008 ALA funded 34 public libraries in 18 states as part of the American Dream Starts @ your library funded by Dollar General. These 34 libraries successfully demonstrated community need, library capacity, project sustainability, and the determination to provide exemplary library literacy services for adult English language learners. American Dream libraries serve urban, rural, and suburban cities and towns ranging in size from 850 to over 1 million.

Right now, the American Dream libraries are expanding their literacy collections, adding literacy and language programs, developing new community partnerships, building mobile computer labs, and training teachers and tutors. In the coming year, their bibliographies, webliographies, training manuals, video commentaries, best practices, and lessoned learned will all be added to the American Dream Toolkit.

Amigos de la Biblioteca

A tutoring program affiliated with the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to provide tutoring aid for ESL (English as a Second Language) children. The program trains high school students to tutor elementary school children once or twice a week in a library setting. They help children in reading, writing, and homework in general. Parents and children also have an opportunity to discover library services and resources available to them.

Conexiones que Cuentan
Connections that Count

A storytime for children from birth to age five that is presented entirely in the Spanish language. By centering the program around the parent's or caregiver's native language, it encourages early learning and developmental literacy. A trained volunteer can be passionate about providing this opportunity to help their community. Library staff can help by providing space and program resources, such as musical instruments, flannelboards, art supplies, etc., and by creating displays of library materials of interest.

Crossroads Café

An open house gathering for adults who are learning to speak English, encouraging them to practice their conversational skills. The library may provide space, light refreshments, name tags, and a facilitator. Truly the library as community space, it also provides opportunities to promote collections, online resources, and programs.

Dunia

A small informal and multi-language group that organizes events, celebrations, and field trips to help acclimate them to the U.S. They go shopping, visit local orchards, museums, and more. Together they learn about U.S. customs and institutions, idioms and American colloquialisms. The word, "Dunia," means "world" in Swahili, Hindi, Arabic, Malay, and Indonesian languages.

Training for Research & Academic Careers in Communications Sciences (TRACCS)

www.indiana.edu/~sphs/traccs

An intensive summer research program offered by the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences of Indiana University at Bloomington for international, multicultural, and minority students. Students learn how to conduct library research in their field, particularly using electronic resources.

MORE IDEAS ONLINE

To learn more about the study and what other libraries are doing, visit:
www.ala.org/nonenglishspeakers

Sensing Success

It looks like...

Bridging the Gap Family to Family: Athenian-Mexican Cultural Exchange and Learning
The Athens Regional Library was awarded PLA's 2007 Highsmith Library Innovation Award for their Pinewoods Library and Learning Center's project: Bridging the Gap Family to Family: Athenian-Mexican Cultural Exchange and Learning. Library Director Kathryn Ames says, "I'm firmly convinced we've saved at least one life," in an instance where a Mexican diabetic was shown how to use a test kit by a health educator and a nutritionist talked to her about her diet.

Families Growing Together
The East Chicago Public Library implemented a program called "Families Growing Together," that targeted immigrant families with children in high school. Through a grant, the title Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan was provided to families in both English and Spanish. At the end of the program, one of the mothers said this was the first time she had read a book all the way through.

WorldLinks Virtual Library
From Hennepin County's WorldLinks virtual library branch, users can access library materials, activities, and policies in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish. Also, at Hennepin's extranet, service providers can find articles on best practices and components for successful World Language Storytimes.

ESL—Nationality Night
The Mt. Lebanon Public Library won the Best Practices in Early Learning Award in 2008 from the Pennsylvania Library Association for their ESL—Nationality Night: a community welcome and orientation program held in the fall. Collaborating with the schools, ESL teachers sent invitations to new families. Librarians prepared an introductory program; Russian and Chinese translators were available; foreign language materials were highlighted, as well as those used to learn English. The children received a special story program and a free book.

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
The New York Public Library offers English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at 21 library sites and piloted a successful project of Technology Assisted ESOL Instruction. There are also conversation programs run by volunteers, computer classes in Spanish, citizenship help, world language collections, and staff training in customer service for multicultural environments.

20 years of ESOL/Literacy Instruction
The Watertown Free Public Library in Massachusetts celebrated 20 years of ESOL/Literacy instruction last year and published a booklet of student writings commemorating the event.

It sounds like...
- A marimba, mariachi, or steel band.

- Laughter: needs no translation.

- Graceful, colorful dancing.

It feels like...
- The earnest blessing received from parents, grateful for the tutoring provided their child.

- The enthusiastic hugs from the children at storytime, before, during, and after.

- Pride, knowing you can make a difference.

It tastes like...
- Authentic native cuisine at cultural festivals and celebrations. Yum!

- Kimchi, not for the faint-hearted.

- Comfort food.

It smells like...
- Excitement in the air.

- Spices and perfume.

- Favorite books.

Resources

Books

Alire, Camila A.
Serving Latino communities : a how-to-do-it manual for librarians / Camila Alire, Jacqueline Ayala. 2nd ed. New York : Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007.

Block, Marylaine
The thriving library: successful strategies for challenging times / Marylaine Block. Medford, NJ : Information Today, 2007.

Bridging cultures : ethnic services in the libraries of New York State / edited by Irina A. Kuharets, Brigid A. Cahalan, Fred J. Gitner. Albany, NY : New York Library Association, Ethnic Services Round Table, 2001.

Byrd, Susannah Mississippi
¡Bienvenidos! = Welcome! : a handy resource guide for marketing your library to Latinos / Susannah Mississippi Byrd. Chicago : American Library Association ; El Paso, TX : Cinco Puntos Press, 2005.

Carlson, Ann and Carlson, Mary
Flannelboard Stories for Infants and Toddlers, Bilingual Edition. / Ann Carlson and Mary Carlson. Chicago, IL : American Library Association, 2005.

Cuban, Sondra
Serving new immigrant communities in the library / Sondra Cuban. Westport, CT : Libraries Unlimited, 2007.

From outreach to equity : innovative models of library policy and practice / Office for Literacy and Outreach Services ; edited by Robin Osborne. Chicago : American Library Association, 2004.

Multicultural Librarianship : an international handbook / edited for the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations by Marie F. Zielinska with Francis T. Kirkwood. München ; New York : K.G. Saur, 1992.

Pavon, Ana-Elba
25 Latino Craft Projects / Ana-Elba Pavon and Diana Borrego. Chicago, IL : American Library Association, 2003.

CONTRIBUTE ONLINE

This guide is only the beginning, to share questions, successes, challenges and observations, join our discussion list at:
lists.ala.org/wws/info/nonenglishspeakers

Articles

"Illegal Immigrant Curbs Face Uphill Climb" (in "USA Today," March 7, 2008)
www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-03-07-immigrationbills_n.htm

"U.S. Libraries and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment—How Librarians Are Coping with Discrimination to Better Serve Hispanic Communities" (in "Criticas," October 1, 2007)
www.criticasmagazine.com/article/CA6487725.html?industryid=48434

"Surge in Immigration Laws Around U.S." (in "New York Times," August 5, 2007)
www.nytimes.com/2007/08/06/washington/06immig.html?scp=2&sq=surge+immigration+laws&st=nyt

"Libraries Examine Policies as Two Counties Target Illegals" (in "American Libraries Online," July 2007)
www.ala.org/ala/alonline/currentnews/newsarchive/2007/july2007/immigrants.cfm

"Libraries Boost Offerings for Immigrants" (in "The Washington Post," April 23, 2007)
www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/23/AR2007042300134.html

Reports

"Serving Non-English Speakers in U.S. Public Libraries, 2007 Analysis of Library Demographics, Services and Programs" (American Library Association, Office for Research and Statistics, Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, Office for Diversity, Public Programs Office, April, 2007)
www.ala.org/nonenglishspeakers

"Welcome Stranger, Public Libraries Build the Global Village," (Urban Libraries Council, January 2008) (follow link to file)
www.urbanlibraries.org/publications/details.html
Includes 5 Strategies for Success: 1) Understand local immigration dynamics, 2) Bring sensitivity to service delivery, 3) Build English capacity, 4) Create connections to local institutions, and 5) Encourage civic engagement.

"Library Services for Immigrants: A Report on Current Practices," (Office of Citizenship, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, March 2006)
www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/G-1112.pdf

"Public Library Services to New Americans: Speeding Transitions to Learning, Work and Life in the U.S.," (Urban Libraries Council, April 2003)
www.urbanlibraries.org/files/ULC_New_Americans.pdf

Contacts

ALA Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT)
www.ala.org/emiert

ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS)
www.ala.org/olos

American Indian Library Association
www.ailanet.org

Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association
www.apalaweb.org

Black Caucus of ALA
www.bcala.org

Chinese American Librarians Association
www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/othergroups/affiliates/cala.cfm

Indiana Black Librarians Network
www.indianablacklibrarians.org

Indiana Health Sciences Librarians Association
www.incolsa,net/~ihsla

Monroe County Public Library
www.monroe.lib.in.us

North Carolina Library Association
www.nclaonline.org

Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County
www.plcmc.org

REFORMA- The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking
www.reforma.org

Documents

ALA Resolution in Support of Immigrant Rights (January, 2007)
www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governanceb/council/councildocuments/ResolinSupportofImmigrantRights.doc

"The Immigration Debate: Who is the Public Library Meant to Serve" (in "Versed", Bulletin of the Office for Diversity, ALA, May-June 2006)
www.ala.org/ala/diversity/versed/versedbackissues/may2006abc/immigration.cfm

ALA Resolution in Support of Immigrants' Rights to Free Public Library Access (June 2005)
www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governanceb/council/councilagendas/annual2005a/CD65.doc

Free Parent Education Handouts in Other Languages Available
www.walearning.com

Leading Edge Librarians' Information Literacy Kits
www.ilfonline.org

"Librarian's Toolkit for Responding Effectively to Anti-Immigrant Sentiment" (REFORMA, May 2006)
www.reforma.org/ToolkitPartI.htm

RUSA Guidelines for the Development and Promotion of Multilingual Collections and Services (January 2007)
www.ala.org/ala/rusa/protools/referenceguide/guidemultilingual.cfm

RUSA Guidelines for Library Services to Spanish-Speaking Library Users (January 2007)
www.ala.org/ala/rusa/protools/referenceguide/guidespanish.cfm

IFLA Multicultural Library Manifesto: The Multicultural Library – a gateway to a cultural diverse society in dialogue (IFLA Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section, January 2008)
www.ifla.org/VII/s32/pub/MulticulturalLibraryManifesto.pdf

Find the study and additional resources at **www.ala.org/nonenglishspeakers**, or join or mailing list at **http://lists.ala.org/wws/info/nonenglishspeakers** and share your thoughts and experiences.

ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation
Office for Literacy and Outreach Services

June 2008