

# Limited English Proficiency Outreach Report

King County Department of Elections

投票!

vote!

bỏ phiếu!

ivota!

투표하세요!

## Introduction

A central component of the mission for King County Elections is making sure that every eligible County resident, no matter what language they speak, is able to exercise their right to vote. Over the past several years the department, in collaboration with the King County Council and the Executive, has made some important strides in providing more inclusive, accessible elections.

This report is the fourth and final update on King County Elections' efforts to provide more options to communities with limited-English speaking proficiency.

## Background

Since 2013, there have been several important pieces of legislation passed related to translation and outreach to communities for whom English is a second language. Because these steps were important milestones and provide context for the County's broader commitment to serving traditionally under-represented communities, each legislative action is summarized below.

## Previous Legislation

- **2014 Budget**. The 2014 Adopted Budget, Ordinance 17695, Section 33 included Elections Proviso 1, which requested that the department provide "an analysis of options or factors that could provide minority language voting materials for LEP populations in Tiers 1 and 2," including a description of alternative translation materials and services, cost estimates and a feasibility assessment.

The subsequent report titled, "Analysis of options for LEP population" was submitted by the department in June, 2014 and included many recommendations from an LEP Advisory Committee and four specific alternatives:

- An Instructional Brochure to be translated in Tier 1 and 2 languages.
- An Online Toolkit with educational and outreach materials.
- An Elections Ambassador Program through which civic activists would be recruited and compensated in order to provide a direct connection with specific communities. Their role would include providing technical assistance for voter registration and advising the department on key barriers faced by the community.
- Civic Engagement in Schools specifically in support of mock elections for children K-12.

- **2015-2016 Budget**. In the following budget for the 2015-2016 biennium, Ordinance 17941, Section 34, Proviso 2, the Council requested that the Department of Elections report on the activities outlined in the June 2014 report semiannually (specifically June 30, 2015, December 31, 2015, June 30, 2016 and September 30, 2016).
- **Ordinance 18086**. In July, 2015 the Council passed Ordinance 18086, which added Spanish and Korean to the list of languages in which all ballot materials must be translated; prescribed targeted outreach for those language communities with limited-English proficiency; and, set-up a path forward to use data and specific criteria to identify additional languages in the future.
- **Mid-Biennial Supplemental Budget**. In February, 2016 through the mid-biennial supplemental budget process, the Council approved funding for two additional positions for the Department of Elections to provide on-going Spanish and Korean translation and support. They also approved one-time funding for a pilot partnership project for community-based organizations to do voter outreach.

This report is in response to the 2015-2016 Budget proviso described above.

## **Progress Report on Specific Activities**

The following is an update on the specific activities called out in the original “Analysis of options for LEP population” report, as well as several related efforts.

### **1. Translation of Instructional Brochure**

This alternative was reported on in the previous three reports and has been completed.

### **2. Online Tool Kit**

This alternative was reported on in the previous three reports and there have been no new developments since the last report.

### **3. Elections Ambassador Program and Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations**

As a result of funding approved by the King County Council in February of 2016, the Department has been able to launch a pilot program to collaborate with community-based organizations to do voter outreach and engagement. Many of these organizations have been working with limited-English speaking communities for decades and are effective,

trusted institutions. Rather than hiring, training and deploying additional employees to do outreach, King County Elections premised the program on the belief that it will be more successful, respectful and cost effective to resource these community organizations to do the work in which they are already experts.

In partnership with the Seattle Foundation, King County Elections has provided funding to 22 community-based organizations to do voter outreach and education with limited-English speaking communities. The organizations that have received funding and the geographic areas and communities they proposed to serve are detailed in the table below.

<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Target Populations</b>	<b>Target Geographic Area</b>
Asian Counseling and Referral Services	Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian-Pacific Islander	All of King County with an emphasis on East and South King County and Southeast Seattle
Latino Community Fund of Washington State (SPIARC & Colectiva Legal Del Pueblo)	Spanish	South Park, White Center, Burien, Tukwila, Des Moines, Federal Way, Kent, Auburn, Renton, Beacon Hill
International Community Health Services	Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish	NewHolly, Chinatown/International District, Bellevue, Shoreline
Interim Community Development Association	Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean	Chinatown/International District, Beacon Hill, Rainier Valley
Korean American Coalition	Korean	All of King County
White Center Community Development Association (Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees & Communities of Color)	Vietnamese, Spanish, Somali and Khmer	White Center
APACEvotes	Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino (Tagalog)	South Seattle, Chinatown/International District, Bellevue, Tukwila
Eritrean Community in Seattle and Vicinity	Eritrean (Tigrinya)	North Seattle, West Seattle, White Center, Southeast Seattle, Central District, Tukwila, Burien, SeaTac, Shoreline, Kent, Renton, Federal Way, Auburn
Iraqi Community Center and South King County Emerging Communities for Equity; Bhutanese Community	Central and East Africa, Arabic	South King County with a focus on Kent

Resource Center for WA, Nsanga Corporation and Partner in Employment		
Open Doors for Multicultural Families	Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Korean, Khmer, African American	South King County and Seattle
Rajana Society	Cambodian (Khmer)	South King County and Seattle
SeaMar	Spanish	Bellevue, South Park, Seattle, White Center, Burien, Des Moines, Kent
Somali Community Services	Amharic, Oromo, Somali, Tigrinya	South Seattle, Renton, Skyway, Tukwila, SeaTac
Somali Family Safety Task Force	Somali	West Seattle and South Seattle
Somali Youth and Family Club	Somali, Amharic, Arabic	Renton, Skyway, Tukwila, SeaTac, Kent
Tasveer	Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Bangla, Nepali, Tamil, Urdu, Dari	Redmond, Sammamish, Issaquah, North Bend, Bellevue

Over two phases of awards, 34 organizations submitted proposals to become Elections community partners. Criteria for evaluation included:

- Qualifications to do voter education, outreach and engagement
- Representation of communities served in leadership and organizational staff
- Experience working with community groups and institutions
- Experience reaching targeted communities, especially with respect to voter engagement

So far community partner organizations have held more than 75 events and make contact with more than 10,000 potential voters. What's more, using language preference postcards and online tools more than 510 voters have changed their preferred language. The table to the right shows the new registrations and language preference changes for each of King County's five mandated languages.

Language	New Registrations	Language Preference
Chinese	283	99
English	105,356	3
Korean	39	208
Spanish	140	50
Vietnamese	229	153

As participants in the community partnership program all participants are expected to:

- Meet on a monthly-basis to report on field plan progress, discuss barriers and provide feedback to King County Elections; and
- Provide a final report on their efforts included data on the number of individuals reached.

### Ambassadors

Additionally, in an effort to reach communities with less organized infrastructure, King County Elections brought on-board four community ambassadors to serve as liaisons and technical resources to the Ethiopian, Filipino, Russian and Ukrainian, and Samoan communities. Ambassadors were interviewed and selected in August, have successfully been trained and on-boarded and are already implementing their individual field plans.

### Advertising and Media

King County Elections is also working to get the word out about language preference options through a variety of advertising and media mechanisms, including:

- **Ethnic media advertising.** Register to vote and language preference ads have been running throughout the month of September in publications like The Seattle Chinese Times, El Mundo, La Raza del Noreste, the NW Vietnamese New and NW Asian Weekly, and the International Examiner.
- **Facebook advertising.** Targeted “Get your materials in your language” ads in all four languages have run throughout September and into early October on Facebook and Instagram.
- **Pandora advertising.** A Spanish ad for King County Elections encourage voters to get their materials in Spanish is currently running on Pandora.
- **Earned media.** Our Language Services and Community Engagement staff have done a variety of interviews for radio stations to help get out the word that voting materials are available in a variety of languages.

## 4. Mock Election Program

King County Elections continues to work with Seattle Public Schools to support school and classroom participation in mock elections. Since the civic curriculum workshop in May additional tools for teachers and students have been developed and the district is collaborating with King County Elections on what ballot measures should be submitted to the Secretary of State for the November mock election.

## Going Forward

A top priority for King County Elections is continuing and expanding outreach to limited-English speaking and other historically disenfranchised communities. The department has included in its 2017-18 budget proposal designated funding to continue and make permanent the community partnership program. In addition to furthering one of the department's three primary goals, removing barriers to voting, the program is also in direct alignment with the county's new Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, which explicitly calls for county organizations to "provide resource support to community-based organizations to leverage their expertise toward advancing ESJ outcomes."

Additionally, per Ordinance 18086, the Department of Elections will submit a report by January 30, 2017 that reviews available data from the US Census and other reliable and relevant sources to determine the threshold for adding new languages going forward.