



MARYLAND

Department of Labor, Licensing and
Regulation

**Division of Workforce Development
and Adult Learning**



ETA/ASTD Regional Technical Forum
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Verlaging van culturele en taal barrieres in interactie met buitenlandse klanten

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Engels voor sprekers van andere talen



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Lowering Cultural and Language Barriers in Dealing with Clients with Limited English Proficiency

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AGENDA

- Language Access Requirements
- Reducing cultural barriers
- Reducing language barriers
- Application



Laws that apply to language access:

Enforced and administered by USDOL Civil Rights Center

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 formulate the law. Executive Order 13166 contains regulations that implement both these statutes.

- Prohibits discrimination based on national origin
- “No person” shall be: Excluded from participation in a program or activity, denied the benefits of a program activity or subjected to discrimination under a program activity
- Important case: Lau v. Nichols 1974 Supreme Court Case: All English Education does not provide an LEP person with “a meaningful opportunity to participate” in an education program.



What are the implications of these laws and regulations

1. Access translation and interpretation services when needed
2. Translate vital documents into high demand languages
3. Outreach obligation to potential LEP customers
4. Front line personnel needs to be comfortable dealing with cultural differences, accents and other languages
5. LEP customers need to feel welcome in our agencies

I cannot help you is not an option!

How accessible are we ?

- Are our front line people equipped and comfortable dealing with LEP customers?
- Have we provided them with training on how to reduce cultural barriers and language barriers?

HOW CAN WE REDUCE CULTURAL BARRIERS IN OUR OFFICES





WHAT IS CULTURE

- A complex system of knowledge, customs, beliefs, religion and norms that govern behavior
- Everything we believe in and we do to identify with a group
- Ice berg:
Top is external, visible piece -- music, food, clothes.
Bottom is internal piece--beliefs, values, assumptions, conceptions of the world.

To really get to know somebody takes cultural understanding.



The cultural proficiency continuum

Edward Sapir: Psychology of culture

Indicator of the ability to handle cultural differences:

- **Cultural Destructiveness:** This is America, you have to speak English
- **Cultural Incapacity:** Mexicans are not smart
- **Cultural Blindness:** All clients complete this form individually, I cannot help you
- **Cultural pre-competence:** We need a Latino cultural awareness training to help us better serve clients from Hispanic origin
- **Cultural competence:** I am not having any snacks on my desk during Ramadan
- **Cultural proficiency:** Since we have seen an increase in Korean clients we will now translate the following documents in Korean **THIS IS WHERE WE WANT TO BE!**

What stages do you recognize in your office?

Five elements of cultural competency

1. Accepting and respecting differences, value diversity
2. On-going assessment of one's own and the organization's culture, see how actions affect people from other cultures
3. Attention to the dynamics of differences when cultures interact
4. Continuous expansion of knowledge and resources, institutionalize cultural knowledge
5. Adaption of values and behaviors to the organization's policies

What can you do in your workplace to become more culturally competent?



MARYLAND

- 14.3 % (726,913) of Marylanders speak a language other than English (Modern Language Association, 2005)

Language		Language	
Spanish	289,481	Vietnamese	16,756
French	46,959	Hindi	16,042
Chinese	39,898	Persian	12,070
Korean	32,649	Portuguese	11,327
Kru (Liberia)	23,792	Amharic (Ethiopia)	10,863
Ibo, Yoruba (Nigeria)			
Tagalog (Philippines)	21,802	Italian	10,581
German	21,307	Greek	9,265
Russian	21,200	Urdu	9,091



Characteristics of Hispanic/Latino Cultures

- Behavioral/emotional expressiveness
- Restraint of feelings, particularly anger and frustration
- Limited verbal expressions toward authority figures
- Preference for closer personal space; avoidance of eye contact when listening or speaking to authority figures
- Present time perspective; relaxed about time and punctuality and immediate short-term goals
- Collective, group identity, interdependence, cooperative rather than competitive, emphasis on interpersonal relations Family oriented

What can you do with this knowledge, to be more effective with this population?



Communication Style and Values for Cross-Cultural Collaboration

Training tool for your front line staff:

- Handout on “Your communication style and values.”
- Compare your own ratings with the ratings of the cultures you encounter in your office
- How do you compare with this type of clientele in terms of your communication style?
- Did you have an AH...HA?



HOW CAN WE REDUCE LANGUAGE BARRIERS



What does this mean?

You can never say: “I am sorry I can not help you.”

- You are obligated to “take reasonable steps” and “make reasonable efforts” to meet the language needs of an LEP client
- For languages used by a significant number of clients (DOJ Threshold: 1000 or 5% whichever is smaller, Maryland threshold 3%) there are higher expectations than for languages not used by a significant number of clients



Language only
represents 7% of what
we communicate the
remaining 93% is non
verbal communication



What can you do when there is no interpreter/translator?

1. Slow down, be aware of your pronunciation and make sure you enunciate
2. Avoid negative questions
3. Do not talk to LEPs as if they are children
4. Take short turns, make a point and then listen
5. Write it down (numbers), use pictures, use emotions, arms, legs and gestures
6. Use and show examples
7. Try different words for the same concept
8. Be supportive
9. Check for understanding, summarize what has said in order to verify
10. Avoid slang and idioms



Proof of the Pudding

- Concluding the seminar in Dutch applying the strategies discussed



- Hartelijk dank voor Uw aanwezigheid
- Ik ga nu de evaluaties uitdelen
- Kunt U de evaluaties invullen a.u.b.
- We hebben 5 minuten
- Als U klaar bent
- Op het achterste bankje achter laten
- Ondersteboven



The End



Maryland Division of Workforce
Development and Adult Learning