

Vermont Language Assistance Services Emergency Communications Working Group Meeting Minutes from 10/25/24

Attendees: Eric Forand, Mark Bosma, Alison Segar, Jay Barton, Xusana Davis, Joe Tymecki, Amber Leventry, Stephanie Vogel, William Pendelbury, ASL interpreters

Section 1 - Structure of the Report:

Subsections:

Memo titled Racial Equity, Economic Justice, and the Use of Artificial Intelligence/Large Language Models for the Provision of Public Services

Emergency Communications Manual that details best practices

Recommending the state hire full time interpreters - how many? Specific?

Recommendation that resources are garnered to create pre existing videos in other languages

Existing channels of communications that the state already has - make sure we keep them, but also codifying the state's use of those - how does the PIO get to the channels that Amber or Alison for example have and that they're always available. Is there a specific position at, for example VDH, that needs to be created?

- Amber - which emergency communications do you translate? Also, if there is funding available, great, but the money seems to be slow. Hiccups with Propeo.
- VT Language Justice Project - reminder that they can get videos out relatively quickly
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3zjPpeFnXqvESr1y3d4DvQ>
- Xusana says the distribution of translated emergency communications is a place where AI could be used (ie set up an inbox that microsoft power flow sends to).

What are some things a PIO could use as, like, a playbook?

- William suggested reaching out to another state like New York to see how they are doing it?
- Alison suggested books that are already written and available on Amazon to use as a template?
- Amber shared some at VDH have had CERC and Emergency Communications training through FEMA and CDC. They believe there were playbooks used there: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/index.asp>
- Stephanie suggested reaching out to schools that have language interpreters on staff.

Budget for translations? Amber said VDH wants programs to build in budgets for emergency communications.

Section 2 - Geographic Needs:

How do we get translated emergency communications out to that 5% we're missing effectively?

- Bring the contacts/multilingual liaisons known to this working group to the focus groups we're going to advise the legislature are needed:
 - USCRI, ECDC, Association of Africans Living in Vermont, Bridges to Health, Migrant Justice
 - Think about other groups?
- Xusana advised us to be mindful of how much we are asking of these contacts/multilingual liaisons because they are called upon so often. We should also make sure that in the report, we call out how important these people are and show the correct amount of respect.