



TRANSLATION GUIDELINES FOR EQUITY IN RESEARCH

COMMUNITY COALITION
FOR EQUITY IN RESEARCH
THE HARVARD CLINICAL
AND TRANSLATIONAL
SCIENCE CENTER | HARVARD
CATALYST

THE COMMUNITY COALITION FOR EQUITY IN RESEARCH creates tools and materials for researchers to help address common issues identified during the study review process. This guide focuses on best practices for incorporating written translation of materials in a research study.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Language should not be a barrier to participation in research studies. Researchers should intentionally design their studies to include translation and interpretation. This ensures that studies reach a representative and diverse study population. Having translation incorporated into the research can also help with sharing that research to a wider audience after the study is complete.

ACTION STEPS FOR BUILDING TRANSLATION INTO YOUR RESEARCH



KNOW

your target audience by talking with community members about language needs, and communication preferences.



IDENTIFY

translators who are bilingual and bicultural ([vetted listed found here](#)).



TRANSLATE

materials using plain language that is easy to understand. See our [plain language checklist here](#).



PILOT

test translated materials with bilingual and monolingual audiences.

REVIEW YOUR STUDY WITH US:

The Community Coalition for Equity in Research serves as a free resource for high-quality community input on research proposals and protocols, as well as a trusted communication channel between researchers and community stakeholders.

Please email community@catalyst.harvard.edu if you are interested in having your research study reviewed by our coalition members.

TIPS FOR ENSURING EQUITY WITH HIGH QUALITY TRANSLATION



Budget for translation at the beginning of research planning. Some institutions provide in-house interpretation & translation services.



Interpretation and translation are different skills. Interpretation requires real-time translation of the words, nuance, and emotion of the speaker. Aim to have an interpreter for recruitment and consent discussions and throughout the study as needed.



Review the research study goals, methods, and materials for translation with the translator. Set a clear timeline for translation and expectations.



Consider translation best practices such as using back translation and multiple translators to ensure the high quality. Some translation services include these.



Ensure accessibility of translations. For audiovisual materials, you will need subtitles and alternate text. The pictures and graphics on your materials should be culturally appropriate.



Translate materials with cultural context in mind. For example, there may be many ways to say one phrase or word in Spanish. Think about the audience and tone of the content before deciding which phrase to use.

OTHER RESOURCES:

[Beyond Translation: Promoting a New National Standard for Equity in Health Materials Translated from English:](#)

A short commentary on the importance of including equitably translated materials in research. It outlines seven key guidelines for translating research materials.

[How to Translate Materials for Non-English Speakers \(PDF\):](#) A two-page document with step-by-step instructions to translate materials into various languages, depending on the needs of study participants. This document explains translation approaches, including examples of documents that have been both translated well and translated poorly.

[Working with Translators: Lessons Learned:](#) This journal article discusses three research projects that used translators and provides lessons learned and suggestions for researchers. Recommended reading: page 114 (Recommendations for Strengthening Cultural Competence with Translators). Reach out to community@catalyst.harvard.edu for the full PDF of the article.

[Regulatory Research Participant Brochures:](#) Resources that provide useful information and helpful questions to think about and to ask before deciding to participate in a research study.