



Tips for Translation

If you have an immigrant population from Latin America in your local community, then it is likely you will need translations into Spanish for such things as signs, flyers, announcements, brochures, and informational pamphlets. If hiring a translation service is too costly, you may prefer to have this done in-house. Keep in mind that not all Spanish-speakers in the U.S. are literate in Spanish. This may include the bilingual employee to whom you assign translation work!

- If your employee has not learned how to read and write in Spanish at school or college, he or she is not a good candidate for this task. Look for literate Spanish-speakers. Ask them to avoid slang and regional colloquialisms.
- No one should rely on automated translation software. However, you can double-check your translations through dictionaries, online dictionaries and translation software to find flaws in your finished work. Since a dictionary will offer multiple options in Spanish for a single word in English, look up each Spanish term to double-check its meaning in English.
- When in doubt about the accuracy of a term in Spanish, run the Spanish term through a search engine to assess how common it is, and in what context native speakers use the term. Look at the sources you find in your searches: is this term only used in particular countries? Can you find a more commonly used term?
- For help translating information about governmental programs and agencies, you may be able to consult an English-Spanish glossary published by the agency. For example, government and social agencies such as the IRS (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p850.pdf>), HUD (http://www.hud.gov/buying/terms_eng-sp.cfm), and even the state of California (<http://www.saccourt.ca.gov/general/legal-glossaries/docs/spanish-legal-glossary.pdf>) post glossaries. These agencies do this to encourage consistency in the translation of technical terminology and the titles of government programs. Some agency websites will allow you to download Spanish-language information for the public.