



**Agenda Item C.2
PRESENTATION
Meeting Date: August 15, 2018**

TO: Public Engagement Commissioners

FROM: Carmen Nichols, Deputy City Manager
Valerie Kushnerov, Community Relations Manager

SUBJECT: Discussion Regarding Engaging Limited-English Spanish Speakers

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a presentation on the feedback from the City's initial discussion of how to engage limited-English Spanish speakers in the community.

BACKGROUND:

The Community Outreach division of the City Manager's office has had a desire for several years to develop a plan for better engaging our Spanish-speaking community and particularly those with limited English. The City of Goleta population data indicates that 24.5% of our residents speak Spanish. Data indicates the City has a good engagement rate with those who subscribe to City communications in English. However, it seemed that engagement of people who are primarily Spanish speaking could be improved. One of the evidence points was the data on our subscriptions from Fiscal Year 2016/17. For our phone notification system, we had 10,250 subscribers for English messages and just 81 for messages in Spanish. Another metric was for the email/text notifications. There were 9,510 subscribers to messages in English and only 158 subscribers for messages in Spanish. It should be noted that there is just one topic for Spanish language email/text notifications and over 40 topics in English so this could explain some of the disparity.

Staff had initial conversations with a consultant about developing an engagement plan in 2016 and 2017, but this project was put on hold. Soon after, the City Council formed the Public Engagement Commission and the topic was referred to the commission for input.

DISCUSSION:

Recently staff reached out to a small group of individuals who work with Spanish-speakers in the Goleta community with the intent of learning how the City can do a better job of providing information and engaging them. This initial group included certified translators, staff from local non-profits, churches, emergency preparedness representatives, members of the Public Engagement Commission and others well

known and trusted in the Spanish-speaking community. A lunch meeting was held at the Goleta Valley Community Center to discuss the topic generally and the conversation revolved around these questions:

- When you think about government communication to limited-English speakers, what is your impression?
- What methods of communication are most effective with limited-English Spanish speakers?
- How do local limited-English Spanish speakers receive their news?
- Are people interested in the information and not able to access or understand it or are people too busy with day-to-day issues and aren't that interested or is there something else we should consider?

The conversation was dynamic, and a great deal of helpful information was obtained. These were some of the themes:

Trust: With concerns over immigration nationally, the level of trust for government is particularly low. The City needs to earn the trust of this segment of the community and can do so by participating in community events and partnering with trusted sources like the schools, churches and non-profits.

Education: Inform the community about what city government does. What services does the City provide? Why is it important for people to receive communications from and interact with the City?

Method of Communication: Text is the best form of communication followed by radio. The community elders receive their information from the younger generations so they are the conduit to sharing information.

Some ideas for how to start engaging this population:

- Consider putting an informational bilingual kiosk at the Goleta Valley Community Center.
- Contact Radio Bronco to get on the "radio in your community program" and "Inside Isla Vista" radio program.
- Provide specific information to El Latino newspaper on important Old Town news stories.
- Consider using KCSB for public service announcements/information on their Spanish radio show.
- Encourage Commissioner Silvia Uribe to put Goleta-specific information on her radio and TV shows.
- Council and staff can attend local events to speak directly with residents such as Sunday soccer games at Girsh Park or the swap meet.

City staff is researching these ideas and determining which ones need more information and which are possible for more immediate implementation. Staff is also looking into the concept of engaging a contract bilingual engagement coordinator, using existing funding, to help with some of these efforts.

The group agreed to meet again in the fall and expand the discussion partners. All expressed an appreciation for the City in hosting the meeting and beginning the discussion.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with presenting ideas for additional outreach activities. However, some tasks may have costs associated with implementation.

Approved By:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. Nichols', is written over a horizontal line.

Carmen Nichols
Deputy City Manager