



How to Include LEP Communities' Voices During Elections

— Summary —

In 2019 a re-interpretation of AB-918 expanded the language requirements for counties during elections. Under the new requirements, language access is required when languages represent 20% or more of voting-age residents in a precinct district. Under these new provisions, **California counties needed to add 16 new languages to their communications.** With the general elections in sight, there was a need for immediate sourcing and implementation. **Avantpage was strategically placed as an established partner with over half of the affected counties to source and meet the communities' needs.**

— Scope —

The update in AB-918 meant language access requirements changed for counties immediately, requiring new languages to be added into communication plans. **Under the previous interpretation, individual precincts risked excluding specific LEP populations due to community geographies.** Not only did this create an equality issue, but it also risked election outcomes that might not accurately reflect the local populations. Since the re-interpretation took effect before the general election, counties needed to quickly meet new languages to ensure compliance.

— Solution —

The new measures meant counties needed to add new languages into language access plans that fit local precinct thresholds. Counties needed to act swiftly to update their actions as the primary election had already passed, and they were in the midst of planning and budgeting for the general election. Some languages proved to be more difficult to source as they were less commonly available languages, such as lu Mien.

Avantpage had the network to act quickly on language sourcing, and with the partnerships already established at the county level, it only took absorbing new needs into current workflows, procedures, and documents. This helped counties meet the strict deadlines of the general elections.

The first step was to make sure all Avantpage partners were aware of the changes and help them navigate the new needs. Avantpage quickly jumped on sourcing all languages proactively, seeking out language needs before the project start. From this point, Avantpage worked with each county to quickly get project approvals and then begin the services. By streamlining the beginning stages, Avantpage was able to focus the bulk of the time on the actual translations. Focusing the majority of the time here meant Avantpage would meet necessary deadlines despite the short timeline and expansive needs.



— Outcome —

Avantpage understood how to meet each county's needs, source the languages, and rapidly implement new translations on a short and critical timeline. The affected counties needed an immediate and rapid action plan to meet new compliancy. **Avantpage was able to successfully source and implement 13 new languages for the 10 current county partners.**

This ensured language access and accurate political representation for precincts during the general election.