

ADANN SPANISH LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROJECT
Research Brief: Understanding Regional Context
REGION 1 New England ADA Center



Background

The Spanish Language Outreach Project (SLO) is a new five-year collaborative national initiative of the ADA National Network (ADANN), ten regional ADA Centers, and the ADA Knowledge Translation Center. The first stage of the SLO project (2022-2023) aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the context of Spanish-speaking communities and assess their ADA-related information needs through research and expert consultation nationally and within each of the ten regions.

Region 1 Summary

Region I includes the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. As of 2021, the population is approximately 14.9 million people, with 11.9% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. In each state, more than 10% of the Hispanic population has a disability.

Data and Methods

Using a participatory process, the project team identified community members and conducted semi-structured interviews. This research brief reports on the key findings from the ADANN Region 1, New England ADA Center. One community member participated in the project interview. This participant was a Hispanic male who lived in Connecticut and had minimal ADA knowledge. The participant was a person with a disability, and he was associated with a disability organization.

Findings and Key Highlights

In Region 1, language barriers are an issue of concern. Such language barriers occur when community members ask for help but do not receive accurate information due to the low availability of bilingual staff in state and federal organizations.

Additionally, to build trust within the communities, leaders must actively engage with the members and provide insight into the ways organizations can benefit the Spanish-speaking community. Participants also shared that, despite documentation status, community members were not aware of the services, programs and benefits they were entitled to. Another barrier was the challenge older people face when trying to understand how technology works, which can impact the amount of information they receive.

Barriers

Language
 Lack of information
 Lack of trust

"It's hard for people to explain what their issue is, so I think we need more people that speak Spanish."

"People come to me because I speak Spanish, because it generates trust, I send them where to go, and I do my best to provide information in Spanish."

"Lots of Spanish speaking people, they don't know the services available...when I got on board, I didn't know of any program they had, so telling my family and my friends they would tell me 'Oh, I never knew that you guys had this program, so it's hard.'"

Access to Information

Social media
 Word of mouth
 TV and radio

"They [the radio] play a lot, one in the morning, one at noon and one at night time, I would say 3 times a week."

Recommendations

Recommendations include more training on ADA and disability, educating the community on services and benefits, increasing participation in community events, training staff members from different state and federal organizations, and providing specific information for each state in the region. Specific strategies included:

- In person sessions and workshops.
- Sending letters and Spanish language resources in the mail.
- Increase in person interactions such as word of mouth to distribute information.

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