

ADANN SPANISH LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROJECT
Research Brief: Understanding Regional Context
REGION 2 Northeast 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 2 Summary

Region 2 includes the states of New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. As of 2021, the population is approximately 32 million people, with 28% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. In New York, there are about 3 million with disabilities and 12% are Latino or Hispanic. In New Jersey, there are 2 million people with disabilities and 9.1% of them were Latino or Hispanic.

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 2, Northeast ADA Center. 4 community members were interviewed: 2 in New York and 2 in New Jersey. Most of the participants were female and had some knowledge on the ADA. Most interviews were conducted in Spanish. All the participants were non-profits staff and held various roles: volunteer, consultant, and community advocate.

Findings and Key Highlights

In Region 2, language continues to be a significant barrier due to a lack of bilingual staff, lack of information in Spanish, and lack of interpretation or interpretation services. Participants also expressed that people from the Spanish speaking community have a lot of fear related to federal or state institutions attributed to deportation, discrimination, and being disrespected. Additionally, a lot of families and disabled people are not aware of their services because the information is not in Spanish or difficult to find. Last, participants expressed that there were not enough services for the Spanish-speaking community such as healthcare and failed supports.

Barriers

Language
 Lack of trust
 Fear
 Lack of awareness
 Lack of services

“Information is tricky, are you literate? Do you speak the language? If you call that number, are you able to access it? Information works for people who have the resources to access it.”

“When a person does not express their needs is because there are afraid. Because that person is scared of providing information, and that is very common in Hispanics.”

“There are a lot of resources that exists in NJ for disabled people, but I have to say that these are not friendly for the Latino people, and it is even worse when it comes to undocumented people, it is really bad”.

Access to Information

Social media
 Word of mouth
 TV and radio

“The best way for me is face to face interactions because, sometimes, people have so many questions, I really need a person that can explain with details what I am looking for.”

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. Specific strategies included:

- In person training and sessions for the community
- Centralize the information for people with disabilities and their families
- Promote community meetings and conferences about information about different services
- Provide state specific information

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CONTACT

Northeast ADA Center – Region 2
 Website: <https://www.northeastada.org/>
 Email: northeastada@cornell.edu
 Phone: 1-607-255-6686

ADA National Network:
 Website: <https://adata.org/>
 Email: <https://adata.org/email>
 Phone: 1-800-949-4232