

April 7, 2017

# **Design For America Consultants' Report: Multilingual Signage**



## Content Recommendations

**Structuring** information and providing **consistency** will empower visitors, reducing cognitive overload and inspiring confidence.

- **Structure**

- When communicating language availability, it is important to clearly address what exactly is available to the visitor. Vague wording can leave visitors feeling like they haven't received the correct information.
  - E.g. Instead of saying "We speak", be more specific and communicate *what* language is spoken and state "We speak English".
- If possible, add a resource or important contact that allows the individual to act on the information that an interpreter is available.
  - Could be something as simple as a phone number, room number, name, webpage, etc.
    - Studies have shown that QR codes are ineffective as a mode of dissemination.
  - Through this addition, the individual in need of this service will know what to do next and how to get in touch with an interpreter.
- There is an opportunity to expand the use of iconography to be effective in communicating how an interpreter can be contacted.

- **Consistency**

- Any text that indicates similar ideas should be grouped together. Proximity can change the way information is understood by creating sub-hierarchies. The availability of an interpreter should be positioned at the top of the sign because this is the most pertinent message trying to be conveyed.
  - E.g. "We speak English and the following languages: /Se habla español y los siguientes idiomas:" are currently separated by the languages available.
- Communicate that an interpreter is available in every language offered
  - E.g . It is not informative to say "Russian" in Russian because that does not communicate to the individual who only speaks Russian the important information that there is an interpreter available to help them

## Visual Recommendations

*Designing with **clarity** and **visual focus** will create more impact to allow visitors to recognize the most pertinent information.*

- **Clarity**
  - From afar, the level of legibility of many letters is low (e.g. the “K” in the white poster and the “P” and “a” in the black one).
  - Color for signage should be used to highlight information.
  - Color of “We Speak” and “Se Habla” should be the same, since it’s the same kind of information. The disparity of colors separates the two phrases.
  - The color gradient behind the “We Speak” heading visually distracts from the word and is not legible.
- **Visual Focus**
  - Consistency of language and color is important due to the variety of the palette in these signs.
  - Some variation in font weight would establish information hierarchy. This helps the user to be able to distinguish the most important information immediately.

Free Interpreter Available  
We Speak

Español 普通话 Русский لعربية  
Kreyòl Ayisyen 广东话 Français বাংলা  
Polski ڳو اردو Ελληνικά Shqip  
हिन्दी עברית Português Türkçe  
Italiano Tiếng Việt 日本語 Ўзбек  
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ پنجابی Română नेपाली Tagalog  
Hrvatski Magyar שיידי 한국어

Se Habla  
Intérprete Gratuito Disponible

For court interpreters go to room:

Free Interpreter Available  
We Speak

Español 普通话 Русский لعربية  
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