

# LANGUAGE ACCESS TRAINING

For Agricultural Educators

*October 2025*

# AGENDA

- Introduction
- What is Language Justice?
- Plain Language & Communication
- Working with Interpreters
- Debrief/Discuss

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS “LANGUAGE JUSTICE”?

- “The right everyone has to communicate in the language in which we feel most comfortable.” (Antenna, *How to Build Language Justice*, [antenaantena.org](http://antenaantena.org))
- “Building and sustaining **multilingual spaces**...recognizing the social and political dimensions of language and language access, while working to dismantle language barriers, equalize power dynamics, and build strong communities for social and racial justice.” (The Highland Center, *Language Justice Toolkit*)
- Creating multilingual spaces benefits everyone

## LANGUAGE JUSTICE

What would language justice or multi-lingual spaces look like in action in your work?



# PLAIN LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

## WHAT IS PLAIN LANGUAGE?

- Plain language ensures that **the listener understands as quickly, easily, and completely** as possible. Plain language strives to be easy to understand and use. It avoids wordy, confusing language and slang.
- A communication is in plain language if the language, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can **easily find** what they need, **understand** what they find, and **use** that information. (*Source: International Plain Language Federation*)

## WHAT IS PLAIN LANGUAGE?

- Plain language communicators aren't over-simplifying their topic. They're **helping their audience find the information** they need.
- It is respectful to think of your audience as “**people who have questions I will answer.**”
- Whether communicating across a language barriers or not, plain language is a valuable skill.

## 8 ELEMENTS OF PLAIN COMMUNICATION

1. Use everyday language or familiar words.
2. Use short sentences.
3. Choose words with fewer syllables.
4. Remove repetitive language.
5. Use active voice.
6. Use “you.”
7. Avoid extra detail.
8. Explain unfamiliar terms.

# #1: USE EVERYDAY LANGUAGE OR FAMILIAR WORDS

- “Reach out to”
- Call
- “Hash it out”
- Talk about
- Encroach
- Block

## Chemical Properties of Soil

### Nitrogen

- Vegetative Growth
- Green Leafy Shoots
- Vigorous Stems



## #2: USE SHORT SENTENCES AND SECTIONS

WEEKLY Vendors selling whole, uncut fresh produce, bread, cookies, fruit pies, jams, jellies, honey, apple butter, and syrups made with sugar fall under the Omaha Farmers Market umbrella permit. These vendors do not need a separate temporary permit from the Douglas County Health Department. This does not cover you for any other events or markets. Fresh produce, meat, poultry, eggs, game animals, and commercial bakeries items must have a Douglas County retail permit. Nebraska Department of Agriculture permits are not an acceptable alternative unless expressly stated by Douglas County.

WEEKLY Vendors that fall under the Omaha Farmers Market umbrella permit do not need a separate temporary permit from the Douglas County Health Department. This includes vendors who sell:

- whole, uncut fresh produce,
- bread,
- cookies,
- fruit pies,
- jams and jellies,
- honey,
- apple butter,
- and syrups made with sugar.

This does not cover you for any other events or markets.

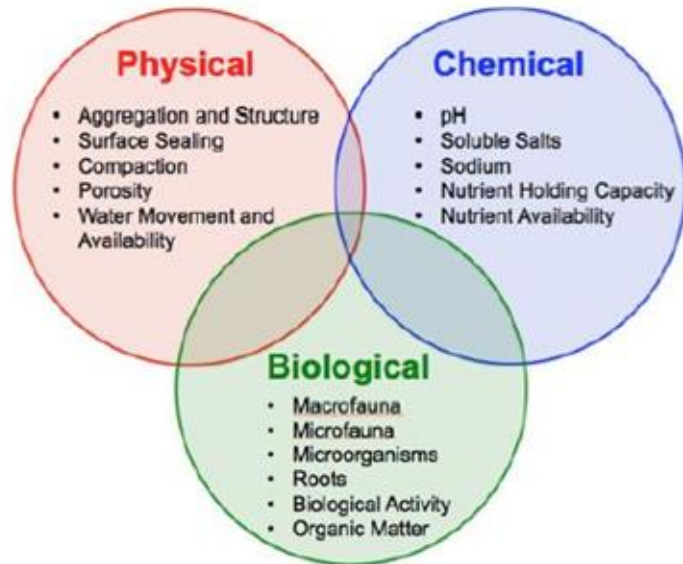
Vendors who sell:

- Fresh produce,
- meat,
- poultry,
- eggs,
- game animals,
- and commercial bakeries items

must have a Douglas County retail permit. Nebraska Department of Agriculture permits are not an acceptable alternative unless expressly stated by Douglas County.

## #2: USE SHORT SENTENCES AND SECTIONS

### What is Soil?



### Summary

- Food Safety is very important!
- Reduce your contamination risk
- Sanitize everything
- Keep Produce Cool



### #3: CHOOSE WORDS WITH FEWER SYLLABLES

- Sufficient
- Enough
- Experiment
- Test
- Curriculum
- Lessons, class work

## #4: REMOVE REPETITIVE LANGUAGE

- *Put the sweet potato slips in the ground and plant them.*
- *Plant the sweet potato slips.*
- *It is important for students to complete homework in a timely manner and turn in all assignments on or before the due date.*
- *Students need to turn in homework assignments on time.*
- **A sufficient number of**
- Enough
- **On a monthly basis**
- Monthly

## #5: USE ACTIVE VOICE

- When the subject of a verb does something (acts), the verb is in the active voice. When the subject of a verb receives the action (is acted upon), the verb is in the passive voice.
- *The content of any signage in a vendors' booth is limited to information that is relevant to products or the business.*
- *Limit signage to information that is relevant to products or the business.*
- *Price signs should be displayed before the start of market*
- *Display prices signs before the market starts*

## #6: USE “YOU”

- Meetings with the teacher can be requested.
- You can request meetings with the teacher.
- Garlic scapes can be eaten or sold at the market.
- You can eat garlic scapes or sell them at the market.

## #7: AVOID EXTRA DETAIL

- Sun dry peppers ~~for a long time, at least~~ fourteen hours.
- ~~We need to find a restaurant that serves delicious food, has a clean and spacious environment, offers vegetarian options, and is affordable.~~
- We need to find a good, affordable restaurant with vegetarian options.
- ~~There's a bakery around the corner that sells these amazing cupcakes with fluffy vanilla frosting and sprinkles that look like tiny jewels.~~
- There is a bakery around the corner with delicious cupcakes.

## #8: EXPLAIN UNFAMILIAR TERMS

- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Spell out acronyms the first time you use them



### Vocabulary List

- **Hilling:** forming soil onto a heap/pile, in this case to cover the potato.
- **Mulch:** organic material, like straw or leaves, that covers bare ground to hold moisture in the soil and prevent some weeds.

## CAN THE INTENDED AUDIENCE...

- ...**Easily find** what they need?
- ...**Understand** what they find?
- ...**Use** that information?

# WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS

# BEFORE THE MEETING

- Ask if participants need interpretation
- Consecutive vs simultaneous interpretation
- Interpretation versus Translation
- Schedule the interpreter
- Create and agenda with notes
  - Send the interpreter the agenda
- Introduce participant and interpreter
- Let others at the meeting know an interpreter is present—set expectations for the pace of the meeting
- Set up the space- make sure the interpreter can hear you and the other speakers
  - Seating/comfort/hearing

## DURING THE MEETING

- Speak directly to the person, not the interpreter
  - Don't say, "Tell her..."
- Speak at a moderate pace (not too fast or too slow)
- Speak in short, manageable phrases
- Pause between sentences for time
- Avoid asides or rambling
- Use plain language

# UTILIZING AN INTERPRETER

- Let's watch an example:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdTAFySAOeM>
- What do you notice about how she works with the interpreter?
  - Pace of speech
  - Word choice
  - Use of props
  - Use of hand-gestures

# HIRING INTERPRETERS

## LOCAL INTERPRETERS

- In-person is preferred
- Standard pay rate
- Typical 2 hour minimum for in-person

## ONLINE OPTIONS

- Tarjimly
- CLI
- TIN

**DISCUSS & DEBRIEF**

## WRAPPING UP

- Discussion:
  - What did you learn?
  - What skills will you put into practice?
  - What do you want to learn more about?
  - What would language justice or multi-lingual spaces look like in action in your work?
- Thank you for participating
  - Language justice and multilingual spaces are possible!

# RESOURCES

## INTERPRETATION

- Switchboard Trainings:
  - <https://learning.switchboardta.org/courses/intro-to-working-with-interpreters>
  - <https://learning.switchboardta.org/courses/Overcoming-Challenges-in-Interpretation>
- Refugee Farmer Teaching Handbook (ISED) – Chapter 4, Communication and Interpretation <https://nesfp.org/new-american-resources>

## PLAIN LANGUAGE

- Plain Language guides, checklists: <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/>
- Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, MEd, Tufts University
- Soul Fire Farm Language Justice Guide: <https://www.soulfirefarm.org/portfolio-items/food-justice-guide/>
- “How to Build Language Justice,” Antena: [http://antenaantena.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/langjust\\_eng.pdf](http://antenaantena.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/langjust_eng.pdf)