

Functional Spanish for Transit Front Line Employees

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

What is Functional Spanish in a Transit Environment?

- Pronunciation of Spanish vowels and consonants
- Common phrases & questions
- Days, months, colors & directions
- Bus/Rail schedule and fare terms
- Rules, warnings, & cautions

Why Transit-Based Functional Spanish at WMATA?

- Improved customer service
- Improved response in event of an emergency
- Empower employees
- Positive company image

Why Transit-Based Functional Spanish at WMATA?

- Growth of Latino population in WMATA's transit zone
 - District: 56% growth from 1990-2002
 - Montgomery and Prince George's counties accounted for 65.8% of total statewide Hispanic gains between April 2000 and July 2004.
 - In Northern Virginia, Hispanics accounted for 26% of population growth from 1990 to 2000.

Why Transit-Based Functional Spanish at WMATA?

- Ability to Speak English “Not Well” or “Not at Well” -- Spanish or Spanish Creole speaking persons
 - District: 32.8%
 - Maryland: 25.7%
 - Virginia: 28.0%

Why Transit-Based Functional Spanish at WMATA?

- Regulatory Guidance and Requirements
 - Title VI Compliance with EO 13166
“Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency” (LEP)
 - Language Access Act of 2004

Status of Initiative

- Cross-departmental team
- Recommendation development stage
 - Economical way for front line staff to learn transit-based functional Spanish
 - Front Line Staff
 - Daily contact with customers - emergency encounters
 - Recurring contact with customers

Status of Initiative

- Training Approach Under Consideration
 - WMATA employees to become certified trainers
 - Identified possible vendors to develop curriculum and provide certified training
 - Learning aides: handbook, audio, DVD
- Pilot Program
 - Bus Operators and Station Managers