

2nd Annual Hawaii Conference on
Language Access
September 28, 2009

Language Access – Where we've
been, where we are, and we keep
going....

Wanda Jung
Program Director

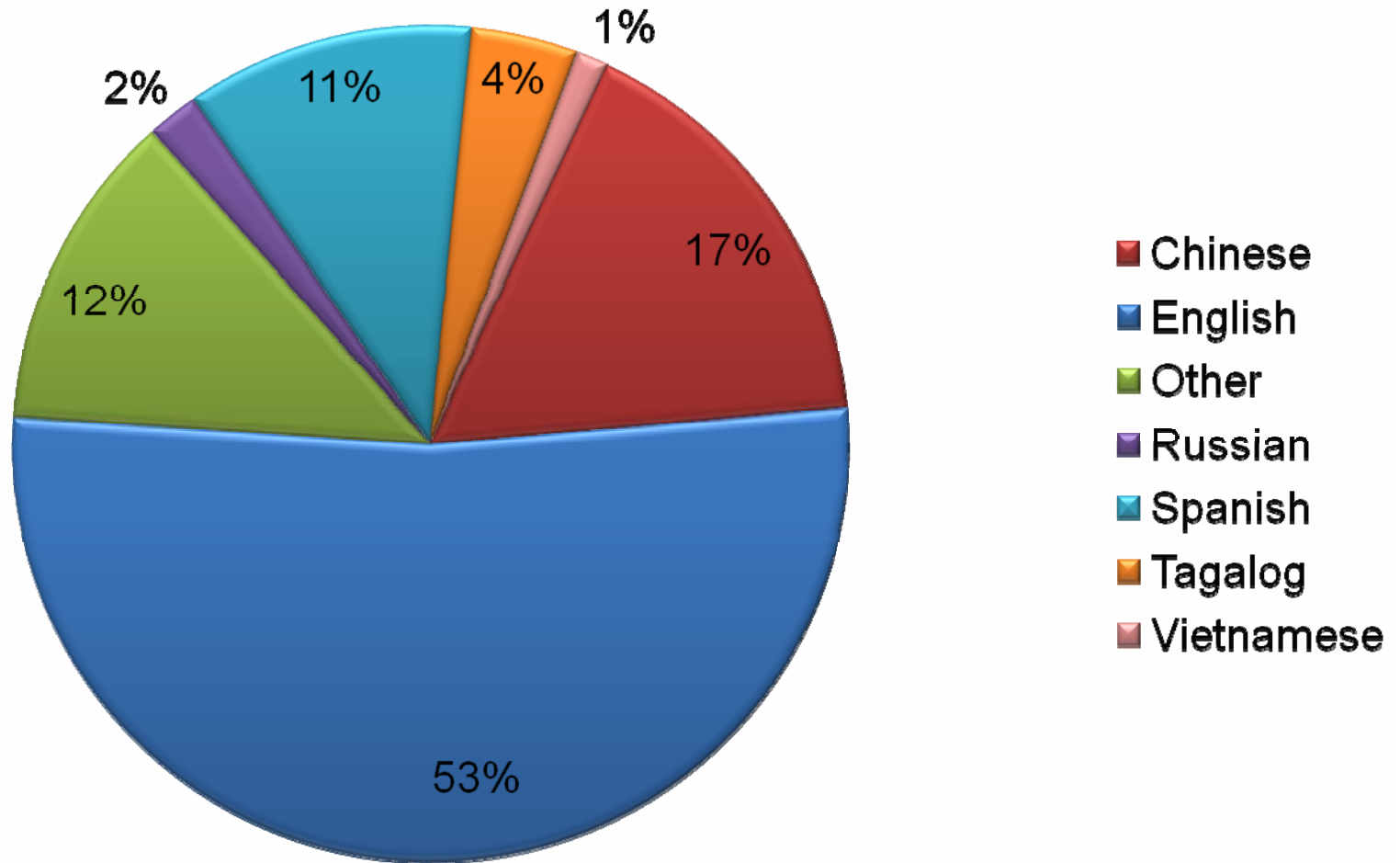
*helping people
who are disadvantaged or in crisis
to obtain the resources they need*



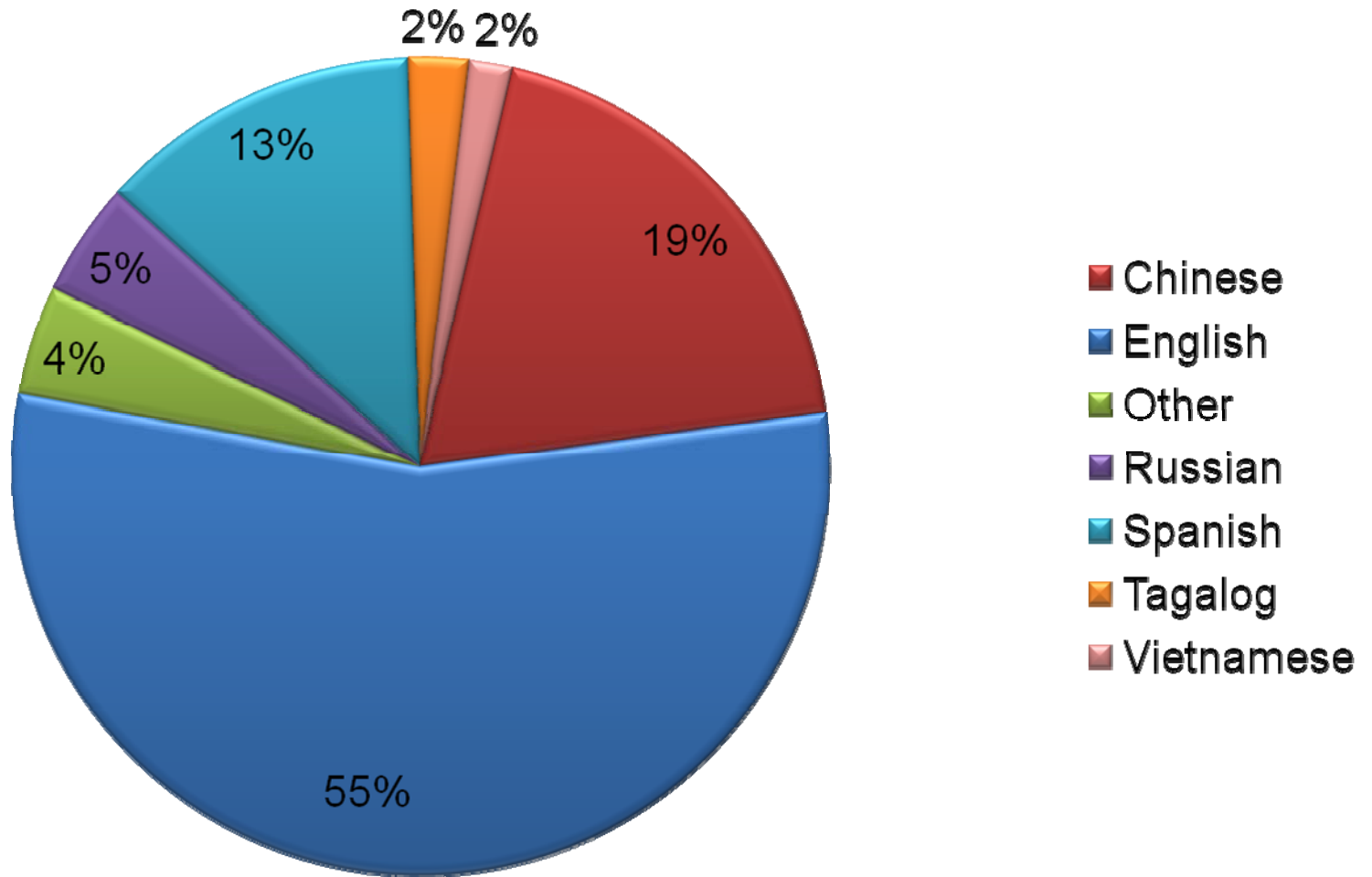
San Francisco Human Services Agency

- Background
- Mandates
- Language Access
- Challenges

SF Residents by Primary Language



HSA Client Language Breakdown



San Francisco/ SFHSA Client Population

- Increase of immigrant population, as of 2005:
 - 41% of San Franciscans were born in another country
 - 32% statewide
 - 13% nationwide
 - 46% speak a language other than English at home
 - 33% are Asian/Pacific Islanders

SFHSA Staff

Employees	1789
Bilingual Staff	30%
Spanish	13%
Cantonese	10%
Russian	3%
Vietnamese	2%
Tagalog	1%

What we spend on language services:

Employee bilingual pay	\$ 550,000
Training for bilingual employees (Communication Skills)	\$ 33,300
Contract Services for interpretation & translation services	\$ 178,000

Language Access - Bilingual Services

- Direct services
- Interpreter services
- Translation services

Mandates

- Federal
 - Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Executive Order 13166 of 2000
- California
 - Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act of 1963
 - Division 21
- San Francisco
 - Patricia F – lawsuit (1990)
 - Equal Access Ordinance (June 2001)
 - Mayor’s Cultural Competence Task Force (Nov. 2005)

Bilingual Services Task Force

- May 2001 – Formed Bilingual Services Task Force
- Agency's overall goal: To provide services at an equal level to all clients regardless of ability to speak English
- After 16 months:
 - Established Bilingual Services Committee
 - Commitment to fund
 - Agreed to translation process
 - Agreed to establish formal translation protocol and development of glossaries
 - Agreed to begin process to revise bilingual test

Bilingual Services Committee

(Formed in 2002)

- Purpose: To provide continued oversight, make recommendations regarding agency's policies, assist to establish practices, and develop strategies to address language access services.
- Nine member committee – representatives from various programs, IT, Planning/Policy, Human Resources

Accomplishments -Translation

- Translated Agency's Guidebook and other publications into other languages
- Translated priority notices/forms for programs.
- Provided easy access to translated forms via agency's intranet system (Forms Central)
- Developed translation glossaries
- Implemented formalized translation process
- Implemented use of envelopes with language to contact worker for help

“If you do not understand the enclosed document, ask your worker for help.” (English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Tagalog)

Accomplishments:

- Revised/standardized protocol to identify language needs of clients.
- Implemented multi-language telephone language line interpretation services
- Expanded bilingual pay policies and procedures.
- Made recommendations regarding recruitment and retention of Spanish-bilingual employees.
- Made recommendations regarding policies on designation of bilingual positions.
- Made recommendations to revise bilingual test .
- Established working relationships with community partners.

Challenges - Bilingual Staff

- Staff and population changes are not align
- Bilingual skills test to meet the various levels required depending on the job requirement
- Difficulties to align bilingual staff to language needs of clients “coming in the doors”
- Equitable work distribution between bilingual and monolingual staff
- Bilingual staff is hired to perform specific jobs, i.e., eligibility workers, social workers. They are not hired to act as full time interpreters or translators
- Recruitment and retention of bilingual staff
- Labor union agreements, civil services rules, current budget climate

Challenges - Working with Interpreters

- Less effective communication via 3rd party
- Contract services
- Lack of standards for certification processes for social services
 - Knowledge of social services business
 - Sensitivity to working with vulnerable individuals involving sensitive matters
 - Cultural sensitivity
- Delay in response time
- Increase time for interviews
- Concerns regarding privacy/confidentiality
- Difficulties to develop trust and comfort level

Challenges - Maintenance

- Language access is an ongoing endeavor.
- Translating forms – Rules and regulations change. Forms need to be revised.
- Ongoing decision-making on bilingual staffing.
- Ongoing review of language access protocols and practices.
- Addressing needs of immigrants with less common language needs, i.e., Arabic, Burmese, Mongolian, Tigrinya.
- When program services change, forms, documents, notices need to be changed and translated.

Challenges - Maintenance

- Technology changes, i.e., translations of website, web applications
- Keeping current – assessment of needs, glossaries, protocols.
- Keeping language access as a priority and retaining support for the work, especially in times of budget cuts.
- Keeping the group who is responsible to provide oversight to language access, engaged and enthusiastic with the work - retaining interest and commitment.
- Maintaining adequate funding to support good language access program practices.

Summary

- Language access is an integral part of how we do business
- The work is ongoing
- The resources needs continue to grow
- Network of experience and expertise continues to expand
- Language access is essential to the competency and effectiveness of services provided