

Study of Translated Material Needs

**Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Driver and Vehicle Services**

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a study to identify gaps, in terms of languages needed or locations covered, in the translated materials provided by Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division. DVS makes translated materials available to support people who speak and read a language other than English to access driver and vehicle services at locations throughout Minnesota.

The findings presented are intended to help DVS identify where to focus support and resources for translated materials in the future. They will be shared with the Minnesota Legislature to demonstrate DVS' efforts to implement the requirements required by [Minnesota Session Laws 2024, Chapter 127, Section 123, Subdivision 3](#).¹

Study questions

This study was guided by the following questions intended to address the report requirements set by the Legislature:

- What languages other than English are spoken by the populations served by individual locations, and what percentage of the population speaks each language?
- What locations serve a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English on a yearly basis, and what languages are being requested?
- How many requests for equivalent materials in languages other than English were made, but not at locations that serve a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English on a yearly basis?
- In what additional languages are equivalent materials needed?
- What has been the experience of deputy registrar (DR) or driver's license agent (DLA) locations with requesting and providing materials in languages other than English?

Definitions

The following terms, as defined by the legislative mandate,² are used in this report.

"Deputy registrar" means a public or private deputy registrar appointed by the commissioner under Minnesota Statutes, section 168.33.

"Driver's license agent" means a public or private driver's license agent appointed by the commissioner under Minnesota Statutes, section 171.061.

¹ Minnesota Session Laws 2024, Chapter 127, Section 123, Subdivision 3.
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2024/0/Session+Law/Chapter/127/>

² Minnesota Session Laws 2024, Chapter 27, Section 123, Subdivision 2.
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2024/0/Session+Law/Chapter/127/>

"Equivalent materials" means written materials such as forms, applications, questionnaires, letters or notices that are used to ask or order a person to provide information or to give a person information on provisions relevant to a person's rights, duties or privileges under Minnesota Statutes, chapters 168, 168A, and 171, offered in a qualifying language.

"Qualifying language" means a language not in English and must include Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Karen, Russian, Vietnamese and any other language used by significant populations within Minnesota as determined in subdivision 2.

"Substantial number" means 20 percent of the total number of transactions or office visits at a given deputy registrar or driver's license agent location.

In addition to the terms and definitions provided in the legislative mandate, the following term is used in this report:

"Location" means sites throughout the state at which driver and vehicle services are provided to Minnesotans. These locations are operated by DVS, deputy registrars (DR), and driver's license agents (DLA).

About The Improve Group

Driver and Vehicle Services selected The Improve Group as its external research partner for this study. [The Improve Group](#) is a worker-owned evaluation consulting cooperative that provides evaluation, planning, facilitation and community engagement to support mission-driven organizations. Based in St. Paul, The Improve Group has worked with public, nonprofit and philanthropic clients across Minnesota, the U.S. and internationally for 25 years.

METHODOLOGY

The Improve Group collected qualitative and quantitative data to answer the study questions through a survey and interviews. In addition, The Improve Group analyzed existing data to support findings and cites this data throughout the report.

Survey

The Improve Group administered an online survey to locations that provide driver and vehicle services to Minnesotans. Locations include those operated by DVS, DRs and DLAs. In total, the survey was sent out to contacts at 315 locations. Contacts at each location had from Dec. 15, 2025, to Jan. 8, 2026, to complete the survey. A total of 128 locations took the survey, resulting in a response rate of 41 percent. Respondents from 70 of the 98 counties and Tribes surveyed replied (71 percent), with about a quarter of responses coming from locations in the five-county metro area (27 percent), and the remaining three-quarters of responses from Greater Minnesota.

Interviews

Councils, identified in the legislative mandate,³ and organizations representing people who speak a language other than English were invited to participate in interviews. Due to a short implementation period, holiday constraints and emergent urgent events requiring immediate responses from council members to their communities, The Improve Group was unable to conduct interviews with representatives from most of these councils. The Improve Group conducted an interview with a representative from the Minnesota Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans.

Limitations

This study was completed over a short period, from Dec. 3, 2025, to Jan. 16, 2026, including several holidays, which may have limited participation. In addition, participation was voluntary. As a result, findings do not represent all DR and DLA locations in the state. In addition, most identified councils and organizations representing people who speak a language other than English could not participate during this timeframe, resulting in the inclusion of one council's input. These limitations should be considered when interpreting results and determining the next steps in this work.

³ Minnesota Session Laws 2024, Chapter 127, Section 123, Subdivision 2.
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2024/0/Session+Law/Chapter/127/>

FINDINGS

These findings are intended to provide DVS with information to advance its work in translating materials into languages other than English. They are based on data from the survey administered to DR and DLA locations; however, these locations do not formally track the data they were asked to provide. As a result, the findings are anecdotal and reflect respondents’ experiences and observations. In addition, findings were informed by data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

Languages spoken in Minnesota

In Minnesota, about 12.2 percent of people age 5 and older speak a language other than English at home. Of this group, more than one-third speak English less than “very well.”⁴ Table 1 presents the languages spoken at home by Minnesotans, along with the number of these people who speak English less than “very well.” People who speak English less than “very well” may have the greatest barriers to accessing services from DVS locations in the state.

Table 1. Languages spoken at home by Minnesotans.⁵

Language spoken at home	Number who speak the language	Number who speak English less than “very well”
Total speaking a language other than English	658,004	246,240
Spanish	221,800	84,268
Amharic, Somali or other Afro-Asiatic languages	92,166	39,552
Hmong	71,667	29,267
Vietnamese	22,455	12,883
Other languages of Asia	16,736	10,631
Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese)	23,159	9,061
Yoruba, Twi, Igbo or other languages of Western Africa	17,802	5,780
Arabic	14,792	4,985
Russian	13,842	4,953
French (including Cajun)	16,313	4,819
Thai, Lao or other Tai-Kadai languages	8,760	4,474
Swahili or other languages of Central, Eastern and Southern Africa	12,301	4,084
Khmer	6,558	3,510

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B16001, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACS5Y2023.B16001?q=Language+Spoken+at+Home&g=040XX00US27,27\\$0500000](https://data.census.gov/table/ACS5Y2023.B16001?q=Language+Spoken+at+Home&g=040XX00US27,27$0500000)

⁵ Ibid

Language spoken at home	Number who speak the language	Number who speak English less than “very well”
German	17,362	2,923
Tagalog (including Filipino)	8,138	2,171
Ukrainian or other Slavic languages	4,681	1,854
Other Indo-European languages	7,404	1,852
Korean	4,129	1,666
Nepali, Marathi or other Indic languages	6,472	1,492
Japanese	4,422	1,471
Other and unspecified languages	5,280	1,409
Tamil	7,408	1,388
Telugu	6,123	1,304
Persian (including Farsi, Dari)	2,917	1,248
Serbo-Croatian	2,968	1,088
Hindi	8,062	1,000
Portuguese	3,173	826
Bengali	3,120	809
Gujarati	2,646	796
Urdu	2,711	757
Ilocano, Samoan, Hawaiian or other Austronesian languages	2,162	647
Yiddish, Pennsylvania Dutch or other West Germanic languages	3,067	615
Other Native languages of North America	6,098	533
Polish	2,600	521
Haitian	1,578	424
Italian	1,614	408
Malayalam, Kannada or other Dravidian languages	2,436	261
Punjabi	1,038	245
Greek	958	136
Hebrew	952	114
Navajo	143	11
Armenian	31	4

Data to identify languages spoken in Minnesota

The data used to identify the languages spoken by Minnesotans is from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 five-year estimates.⁶ The ACS data provides the most detailed statewide data available on languages spoken and is therefore the best source for understanding potential translation needs in Minnesota. However, the ACS data has four limitations that users should consider when using it for decision-making, including language

⁶ Ibid.

categories with multiple languages, the age of the data (it is from 2023), a lack of contextual information and limited data about languages spoken in smaller geographic areas.

Some language categories combine multiple languages or dialects, making it difficult to identify potential translation needs by language. For example, as shown in Table 1, one category includes “Amharic, Somali or other Afro-Asiatic languages,” which does not allow for the identification of the number of people who speak each language.

Another limitation is the age of the data. As time passes, the ACS estimates may no longer reflect population changes and the emerging language needs. U.S. Census Bureau data shows that more than 81,000 new Americans moved to Minnesota between 2020 and 2024.⁷ The languages spoken by newer populations may not be reflected in the most recent ACS data, even though they may have significant needs for DVS and face language-related access barriers. As a result, ACS data should not be used in isolation to identify translation needs. For example, Minnesota’s Afghan community has grown in recent years, and Pashto and Dari have been identified as a language access need in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area.⁸ These languages are not represented in the ACS data, yet DVS has already identified this need and has translated some materials into Pashto, such as the “Driver’s License for All in Pashto” resources.⁹ This example demonstrates how DVS is already going beyond population data to identify language access needs, an approach that should continue in future work.

Existing data on languages spoken also lacks important contextual information about the communities that speak each language. For instance, some languages may be primarily oral, with lower levels of literacy among speakers. In these cases, translated written materials may not be an effective way to support access to DVS services.

Another limitation of ACS data is the limited detail provided about languages spoken within smaller geographic areas, such as counties or cities. As the number of speakers of a given language decreases, the total may be too small to be publicly reported. As a result, it is not possible to determine which languages are spoken by clients at individual DR or DLA locations. This produces an incomplete picture of localized language needs and may mask language needs across locations. To address this limitation, data on languages spoken should be reviewed at both the state and county levels to identify translation needs and gaps throughout the state. For languages spoken by a large percentage of Minnesotans, equivalent materials can be proactively translated into the languages and dialects and distributed statewide, given DVS’s centralized approach to creating materials. Appendix A provides a list of DR and DLA locations that completed the survey, along with each location’s estimated percentage of clients who speak a language other than

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Minnesota Chamber of Commerce (2025). Immigration became the leading component of population growth in Minnesota this decade. <https://www.mnchamber.com/blog/immigration-became-leading-component-population-growth-minnesota-decade>

⁸ New American Economy. Minnesota Language and Demographic Data Report.

https://mn.gov/deed/assets/minnesota-language-demographic-data-report_tcm1045-516937.docx

⁹ Minnesota Department of Public Safety - Driver & Vehicle Services. Driver’s License for All in Pashto. <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/license-and-id/dl-all/dl-all-pashto>

English, county-level percentage of residents who speak a language other than English from ACS data, and the languages spoken by clients that locations report serving.

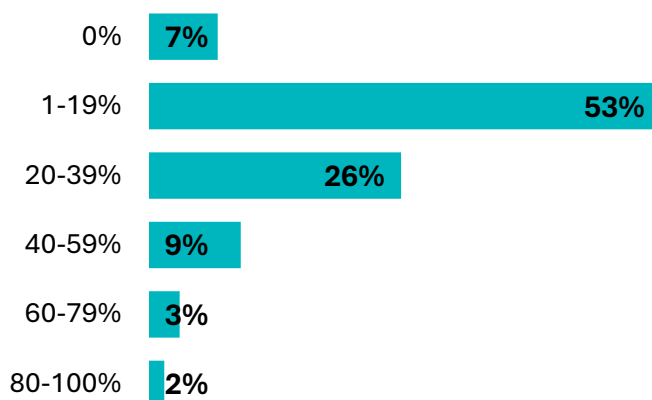
Another available source of data on languages spoken in Minnesota is from the Minnesota Department of Education’s Minnesota Language Survey (MNLS), which collects information on the primary language spoken at home for all enrolled students. For the 2022-23 school year, 345 different home languages were reported across 149,374 students.¹⁰ This shows the diversity in languages spoken by Minnesotans and can be analyzed by county and school district to better understand language use in different geographic areas. However, the MNLS is limited to households with school-age children and does not account for households with multiple school-age children.

Forty percent of responding locations serve a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English.

Of the locations that completed the survey, 51 (40 percent) reported serving a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English, based on the percentage of transactions and office visits completed in a language other than English on a yearly basis. A “substantial number” means 20 percent of the total number of transactions and office visits at a given location.

Locations do not formally track the language in which transactions occur; therefore, what they reported on the survey is their best estimate. As shown in Figure 1, about half of locations conduct one to 19 percent of their transactions and office visits in a language other than English, and about a quarter conduct 20 to 39 percent in a language other than English. A full list of responding locations with a substantial number of transactions and office visits in a language other than English is shown in Table 2.

Figure 1. Percent of locations that conduct each percentage category of transactions and office visits with clients in a language other than English. (n=127)



¹⁰ Minnesota Department of Education. Primary Home Language 2022-23. <https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/basic/cm9k/mdcw/~edisp/prod070853.xlsx>

Table 2. Locations that reported that a substantial number (20 percent or more) of their transactions and office visits are in a language other than English.

Location Name	County
Aitkin County License Center	Aitkin County
Deputy Registrar 150	Anoka County
036 Detroit Lakes	Becker County
Benton County License Center	Benton County
Davis License Bureau	Big Stone County
Blue Earth County License Center	Blue Earth County
Chaska License Center	Carver County
Chippewa County License Bureau	Chippewa County
Clay County Department of Motor Vehicles	Clay County
Cottonwood County Recorder	Cottonwood County
Eagan Auto License	Dakota County
SafeGuard Interlock	Dakota County
Kasson License Bureau #95	Dodge County
City of Richfield Motor Vehicle Department	Hennepin County
Excelsior Motor Vehicle	Hennepin County
Hennepin County Ridgedale	Hennepin County
Midtown Exchange	Hennepin County
Midtown Service Center	Hennepin County
Ridgedale Service Center	Hennepin County
023 Willmar	Kandiyohi County
Baudette License Center	Lake of the Woods County
Marshall Deputy Registrar Inc	Lyon County
Martin County License Center	Martin County
Hutchinson Motor Vehicle	McLeod County
Litchfield Licensing Inc	Meeker County
Morrison County License Bureau	Morrison County
Mower Vehicle Registration	Mower County
Murray County DMV #080	Murray County
Nobles County License Center	Nobles County
License Bureau Inc	Not provided
Edgerton Deputy Registrar 141 Inc.	Pipestone County
Polk County Deputy 008	Polk County
License Bureau of Pope County	Pope County
183 Saint Paul Johnson Pkwy	Ramsey County
License Bureau Inc	Ramsey County
Renville County Driver & Vehicle Services	Renville County
051 Deputy Registrar	Rock County
Sibley County License Center Dep 94/672	Sibley County

Location Name	County
Sauk Centre	Stearns County
Stearns County License Center West	Stearns County
Randalls License Bureau	Steele County
City of Appleton	Swift County
Goples LTD	Todd County
Staples Auto License Bureau Inc	Todd County
Todd County Recorder's Office - (DL Station 677)	Todd County
Wabasha County	Wabasha County
Wabasha DMV	Wabasha County
Washington County Service and License Centers	Washington County
Annandale	Wright County
Wright County License Center Deputy 077	Wright County

Fourteen percent of requests for translated materials are at locations that do not serve a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English.

The survey asked locations how many requests for translated materials they receive. Since this data is not formally tracked, locations provided an estimation for an average month. In the results presented here, monthly estimates were multiplied by 12 to arrive at an annual number of requests. For all locations, the estimated annual number of requests for translated materials is 58,704. Of these requests, 8,232 (14 percent) were made at the 76 locations that do not serve a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English. The average number of requests annually at locations not serving a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English was 114, ranging from zero to 1,800.

Thirty-five languages other than English were identified as spoken by users of DVS in Minnesota.

Survey respondents were asked to identify the languages spoken by their clients. Overall, 35 languages other than English were identified as being spoken by users of DVS in Minnesota. The most common languages identified, aside from English, included Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Russian and Ukrainian. For these languages, DVS has already made efforts to translate materials into the language, and this data confirms the need. The full list of languages identified as spoken by clients includes:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Chuukese
- Creole (French)
- Creole (Jamaican [English])
- Creole (unspecified dialect)
- Dakota

- Dari
- French
- German
- Haitian-Creo
- Hindi
- Hmong
- Japanese
- Karen
- Khmer
- Korean
- Lao
- Mandarin
- Micronesian
- Ojibwe
- Oromo
- Pashto
- Polish
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Swahili
- Tagalog
- Thai
- Ukrainian
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Yoruba

A breakdown of the number and percentage of locations that reported that their clients speak the languages above is included in Appendix B.

Clients have requested 20 languages at locations serving a substantial number of people who speak languages other than English.

Survey respondents were asked to identify in which languages clients were requesting translated materials. Overall, 25 languages were identified. Among locations serving a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English, 20 languages were identified. The languages requested at 5 or more of these locations include Spanish, Somali, Russian, Ukrainian and Hmong. A full list of the languages requested across locations is shown in Table 3, along with the number and percentage of locations that reported receiving requests in each language.

Table 3. Requested languages by all locations (n=120) and locations that serve a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English (n=42).

Language requested	Number of locations (%)	Number of “substantial locations” only (%)
Spanish	86 (72%)	37 (88%)
Somali	31(26%)	16 (38%)
Russian	14 (12%)	9 (21%)
Hmong	13 (11%)	5 (12%)
Ukrainian	9 (8%)	6 (14%)
Arabic	9 (8%)	4 (10%)
Vietnamese	5 (4%)	3 (7%)
French	4 (3%)	3 (7%)
Karen	4 (3%)	2 (5%)
Mandarin	4 (3%)	1 (2%)
Lao	2 (2%)	1 (2%)
Urdu	2 (2%)	1 (2%)

Language requested	Number of locations (%)	Number of “substantial locations” only (%)
Punjabi	2 (2%)	0 (0%)
Amharic	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Chuukese	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Creole (French)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Creole (Jamaican [English])	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Creole (unspecified dialect)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Haitian-Creole	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Hindi	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Japanese	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Khmer	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Micronesian	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Pashto	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Dari	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

Of the 35 languages other than English spoken by clients, DVS has begun translating some materials in 10 of them. This represents 40 percent of the languages in which clients are requesting translated materials, and 50 percent of the languages in which clients are requesting translated materials at locations serving a substantial number of people who speak a language other than English.

In addition to these requested languages, DVS also has data on what documents are most requested in languages other than English based on a recent survey administered to DLA locations. Ninety-seven DLA locations responded to the survey. From those that responded, 38 percent of locations identified the driver’s license application form as a document requested in languages other than English. In addition, 23 percent of locations identified that driver’s license or identification card requirements were requested in languages other than English. For these materials, DVS has already made some translations available through Driver’s License for All.¹¹ For the Minnesota ID card or driver’s license, requirements are available in English, Dari, French, Hmong, Karen, Pashto, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese, while the application form is available in English. About a quarter of locations (27 percent) indicated there are requests for the Application to Title/Register a Motor Vehicle (PS2000) in languages other than English. Other forms identified by several locations include corrections forms (10 percent), duplicate vehicle title application form (8 percent) and manuals (8 percent).

Website analytics data for DVS webpages shows that translated materials are also being used in the currently available languages. For the month of November 2025, the Driver’s License for All webpages were accessed in each language, as shown in Table 4.

¹¹ Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services. Driver’s License for All. <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/license-and-id/dl-all>

Table 4. Driver’s License for All webpage views and users by language for November 2025.¹²

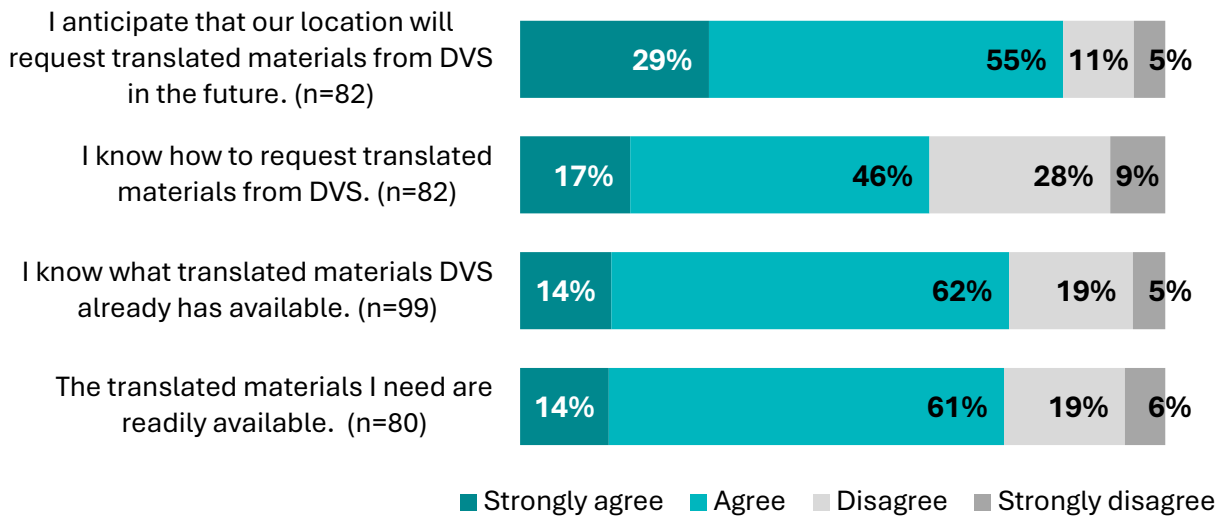
Webpage language	Total views	Total users
Spanish	4,645	2,456
Somali	262	144
Hmong	225	119
Vietnamese	155	83
French	117	68
Russian	86	57
Karen	73	36
Dari	54	44
Ukrainian	33	23
Pashto	20	16

Location experiences with requesting and providing material in languages other than English

Survey respondents were asked about their experiences with requesting and providing materials in languages other than English. They were also asked about potential plans to request translated materials from DVS in the future. When asked about their experience with translated materials, most respondents said they anticipate that their location would request translated materials from DVS in the future (84 percent), although over one-third of them disagreed with the statement that they know how to request materials (37 percent). About three-quarters of respondents reported that they knew what translated materials DVS currently provided (76 percent), and that those materials were readily available (75 percent).

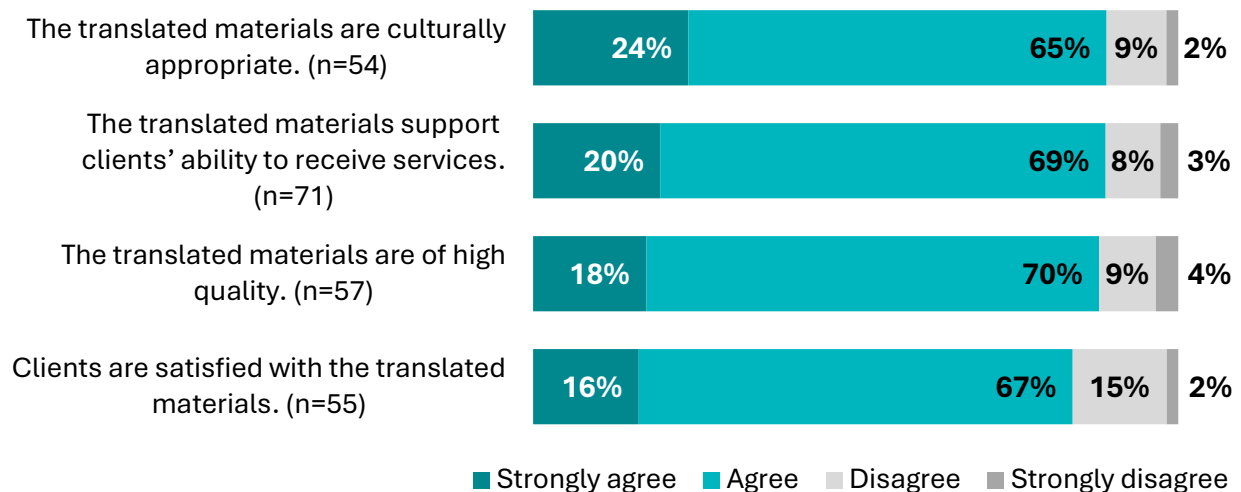
¹² Based on website analytics for <http://www.dps.mn.gov> for the timeframe of November 1, 2025, to November 30, 2025.

Figure 2. Respondent experiences with and plans for requesting translated materials from DVS.



Respondents were also asked to report on the quality and usefulness of translated materials that their location has used, if applicable. As shown in Figure 3, most respondents reported that the materials were culturally appropriate (89 percent), supported clients’ ability to receive services (89 percent), and were of high quality (88 percent). In addition, 83 percent agreed that, from their perspective, clients were satisfied with the translated materials.

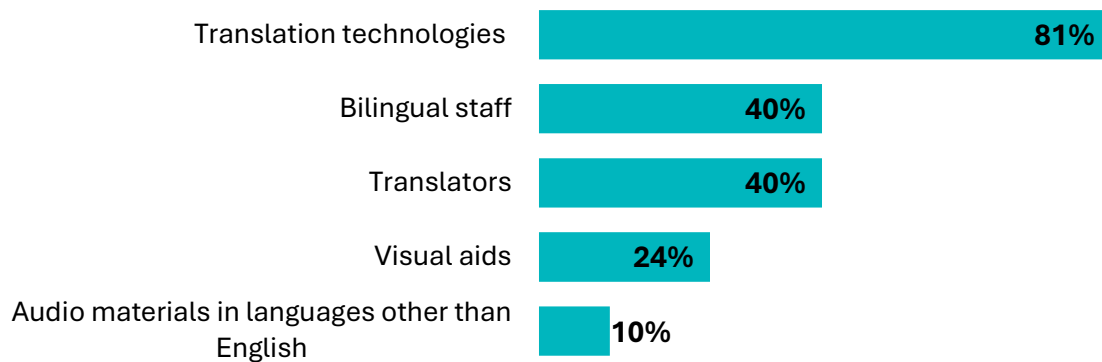
Figure 3. Respondents’ levels of agreement with statements about the quality and usefulness of translated materials from DVS.



Supports used in providing services to clients who speak a language other than English

In the survey, locations were asked about the supports or resources they used, in addition to translated materials, to provide services to clients who speak a language other than English. As shown in Figure 4, translation technologies, such as Google Translate, are widely used. Over a third of locations reported using bilingual staff (40 percent) and/or translators (40 percent).

Figure 4. Percent of locations using each resource to provide services to clients who speak a language other than English. (n=120)



Respondents were then asked about the importance of each resource they reported using. Overall, a high percentage of locations rated all resources as important. As shown in Figure 5, 91 percent of locations rated translated materials as “very important” or “somewhat important,” indicating that they remain a relevant way to support people who speak a language other than English to access driver and vehicle services. Using translation technologies was also rated highly, indicating that DVS should continue to explore this area in future efforts. Audio materials had the lowest percentage of locations rating them as important, but a respondent noted that this can be a good strategy for specific languages.

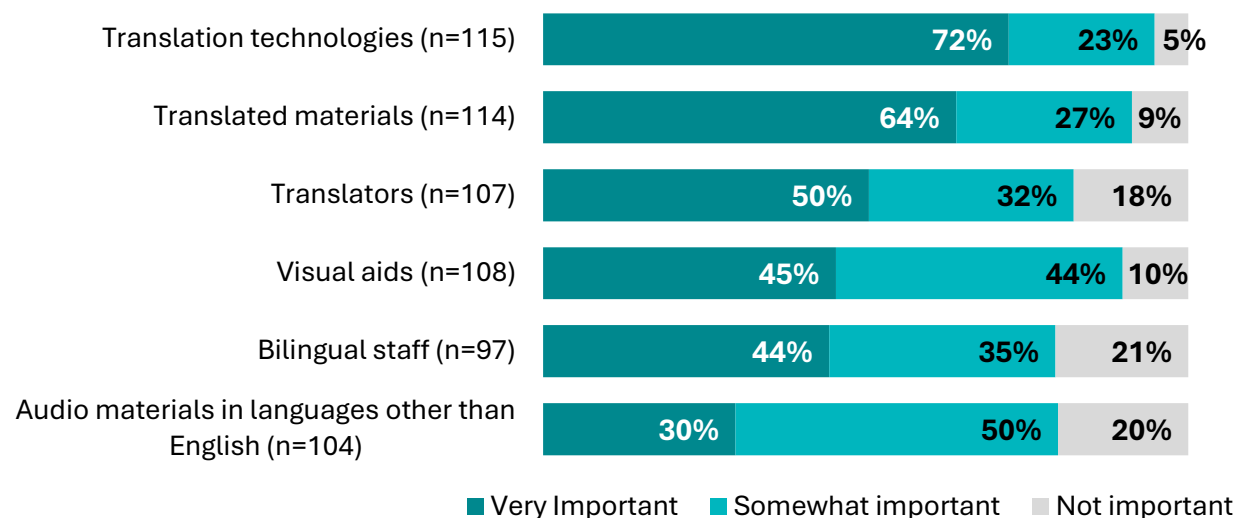
To expand the language resources available to Minnesotans, DVS launched a multilingual virtual assistant in 2023. Currently, the virtual assistant is available in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish. DVS’ plan for the virtual assistant incorporates some of the resources rated in the survey that can be incorporated into an online resource, such as translated materials, translation technologies and audio materials. DVS plans to continue building out the virtual assistant to integrate it with phone systems, support more languages and provide speech-to-text.¹³

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Community Affairs division conducted community engagement to promote the virtual assistant as a tool for all DVS customers and evaluate how well it meets the linguistic, cultural and accessibility needs of Latino, Asian American and Pacific

¹³ Minnesota Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services. Department of Public Safety launches multilingual virtual assistant. <https://dps.mn.gov/news/dvs/dept-public-safety-launches-multilingual-virtual-assistant>

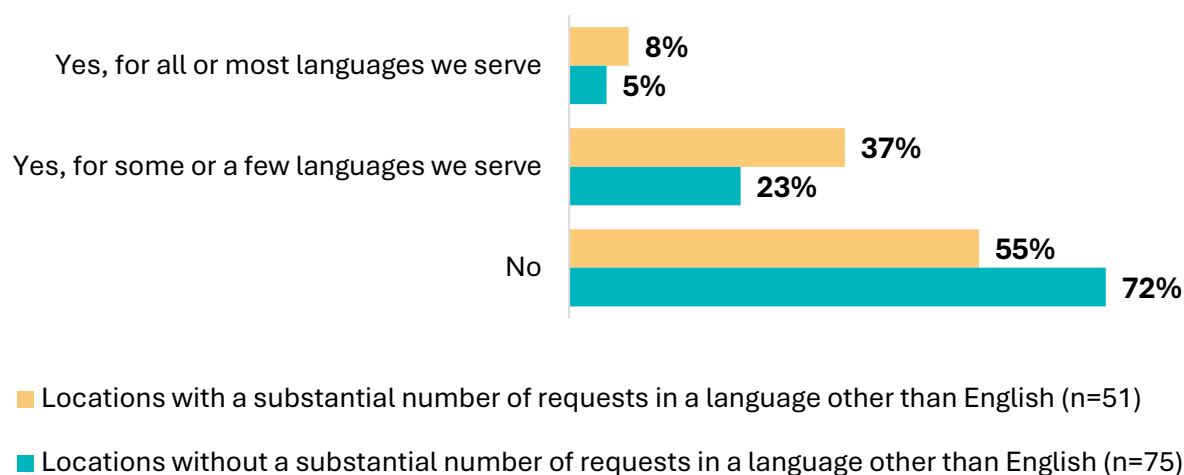
Islanders, Hmong and East African individuals.¹⁴ As a result, recommendations were developed for the platform and access, cultural integration, content enhancements and support features.

Figure 5. Importance of resources in supporting people who speak a language other than English to receive services.



Survey respondents also reported whether their location had public-facing staff members who spoke the non-English languages of those they serve. About three-quarters of locations that do not serve a substantial number of clients in languages other than English reported that they do not have staff who speak the languages, other than English, that their clients speak. Comparatively, about half of the locations that serve a substantial number of clients in languages other than English reported that they do not have staff to serve their clients in languages other than English.

Figure 6. Availability of staff to serve clients in languages other than English



¹⁴ Minnesota Department of Community Affairs. Minnesota DVS Virtual Assistant Community Engagement Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

The following recommendations are intended to help guide DVS' future work in identifying translation needs. These recommendations were informed by the study process, its limitations, and the data collected.

Consider collecting additional data on requests and transaction language, if location-specific information is vital to informing translation needs.

The survey was voluntary and was completed by fewer than half of the DR and DLA locations statewide. As a result, requests for languages other than English and the locations that serve a substantial number of people in languages other than English presented in this report are incomplete. In addition, because locations do not track this information, responses are based on estimates and may over or underestimate the percentage of requests they receive for other languages and the percentage of transactions and office visits conducted in a language other than English.

If this data is important for determining where DVS should prioritize translation support and resources, DVS could focus future efforts on systematically collecting it. Doing so would require additional effort from locations to record and report the data, as well as from DVS to collect and analyze it. Any decision to pursue further data collection should weigh the effort required against the potential benefits and align with DVS' strategies for translation of materials. The primary benefits that emerged in this study included enabling DVS to identify emerging translation needs early and proactively providing translated materials to locations based on the languages spoken by those they serve. This being said, there may be more efficient ways to achieve these benefits than requiring locations to report more data.

Conduct additional training with business liaisons, deputy registrars and driver's license agents related to translated materials.

This would cover what materials are available for their customers and how to access those materials. In addition, it would provide clarification on best practices related to providing translated materials and supporting their use.

Continue translating materials into qualifying languages and other languages used by significant populations.

DVS has already translated some materials into qualifying languages, including Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Karen, Russian and Vietnamese. DVS has also identified translation needs and begun translating materials in additional languages, including Dari, French, Pashto and Ukrainian. In the survey, locations reported receiving requests for translated materials in all of these languages (see Table 3).

Locations also reported requests for translated materials in additional languages. Table 5 lists these languages along with their corresponding ACS language category, the number of people in Minnesota who speak each language and the number who speak English less than “very well.” Note that more languages may be requested that are not represented in this report, since only 40 percent of locations completed the survey. For example, one interviewee described the Bhutanese community, which primarily speaks a Nepali dialect. Although Nepali was not identified as a requested language in the survey, based on working with the Bhutanese community and its size, the interviewee identified Nepali materials as a need.

In addition to languages, it is necessary to identify which materials are the highest priority for translation. DVS has already taken steps to identify these documents by asking DLA locations what materials are requested.

Table 5. Languages in which locations report translated materials have been requested, with corresponding ACS data on the number of Minnesotans who speak the language.¹⁵

Language requested	ACS category	Number who speak the language	Number who speak English less than “very well”
Amharic	Amharic, Somali, or other Afro-Asiatic languages	92,166	39,552
Arabic	Arabic	14,792	4,985
Chuukese	Ilocano, Samoan, Hawaiian, or other Austronesian languages	2,162	647
Creole (French)	Not available	Not available	Not available
Creole (Jamaican [English])	Not available	Not available	Not available
Creole (unspecified dialect)	Not available	Not available	Not available
Haitian-Creo	Haitian	1,578	424

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B16001, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B16001?q=Language+Spoken+at+Home&g=040XX00US27,27\\$0500000](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B16001?q=Language+Spoken+at+Home&g=040XX00US27,27$0500000)

Hindi	Hindi	8,062	1,000
Japanese	Japanese	4,422	1,471
Khmer	Khmer	6,558	3,510
Lao	Thai, Lao, or other Tai-Kadai languages	8,760	4,474
Mandarin	Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	23,159	9,061
Micronesian	Ilocano, Samoan, Hawaiian, or other Austronesian languages	2,162	647
Punjabi	Punjabi	1,038	245
Urdu	Urdu	2,711	757

Develop and implement a community engagement strategy to identify translation needs and ensure that language supports are culturally relevant and useful.

While DVS continues to translate materials into languages other than English, the diversity of languages spoken in Minnesota highlights the need for community engagement to identify and prioritize both established and emerging communities with the greatest needs. Engaging directly with communities is important for understanding the contextual factors that influence the use of different language supports. As a council representative shared, subgroups within the same community may differ in terms of:

- Literacy.
- Their use of national languages versus dialects.
- The utility of limited or relatively new written language systems.
- The level of direct translations for Western concepts and/or words.

These linguistic and cultural differences present challenges in identifying translation needs and developing effective translated materials.

The council representative also provided their perspective on engaging communities in this work. They shared that language needs in communities can best be met when DVS invests in intentional community outreach. This includes partnering with community-based organizations, meeting community representatives in person in their communities and providing targeted outreach to communities identified as facing significant language barriers. Such efforts help build cultural understanding and recognize that a “one-size-fits-all” approach does not meet the diverse needs of different communities. Their input highlights the important perspectives and value that organizations representing people who speak a language other than English can bring to this work. Establishing a structured strategy to engage these organizations would support the identification and development of translated materials that are needed and will be used.

Finally, as language needs continue to evolve due to migration and acculturation over time, DVS should systematically evaluate the cultural relevance, use, and effectiveness of translation support. Ongoing community engagement will help DVS remain responsive and adaptive to changing community needs.

APPENDIX A: LANGUAGE DATA BY LOCATION

The following table lists each location that responded to the survey, along with:

- The county of the location.
- The percent of transactions the location reported it conducts in a language other than English (source: study survey).
- The percent of residents who speak a language other than English in the county (source: ACS 5-year estimates).¹⁶
- The languages other than English spoken by the location’s clients (source: study survey).

Table 6. Language data by location

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
035 South Saint Paul	Dakota County	1-19%	13.2%	Hmong, Somali, Spanish
036 Detroit Lakes	Becker County	20-39%	3.1%	Arabic, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
086 Wabasha	Wabasha County	1-19%	3.8%	Spanish
615 Bagley	Clearwater County	0%	6.3%	None
#031 City of La Crescent DMV	Houston County	1-19%	3.5%	Spanish
#183 Saint Paul Johnson Pkwy	Ramsey County	60-79%	23.2%	Hmong, Karen, Lao
003 Duluth Motor Vehicle Registration	Saint Louis County	1-19%	3.5%	Spanish
023 Willmar	Kandiyohi County	60-79%	13.7%	Hmong, Karen, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
051 Deputy Registrar	Rock County	20-39%	3.7%	Spanish
137 Hawley	Clay County	1-19%	7.7%	Spanish
Airport View License Bureau	Olmsted County	1-19%	14.8%	Spanish

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B16001, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACS5Y2023.B16001?q=Language+Spoken+at+Home&g=040XX00US27,27\\$0500000](https://data.census.gov/table/ACS5Y2023.B16001?q=Language+Spoken+at+Home&g=040XX00US27,27$0500000)

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
Aitkin County License Center	Aitkin County	20-39%	1.5%	Spanish
Annandale	Wright County	20-39%	5.5%	Somali, Spanish
Anoka County - Ham Lake office	Anoka County	1-19%	13.7%	Korean, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Spanish
Baudette License Center	Lake of the Woods County	20-39%	1.9%	Hindi, Spanish
Beltrami County License Center Deputy 006	Beltrami County	0%	4.8%	None
Benton County License Center	Benton County	20-39%	5.1%	Somali, Spanish
Blackduck City Hall	Beltrami County	1-19%	4.8%	Spanish, Ukrainian
Blaine License Center	Anoka County	1-19%	13.7%	Arabic, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
Blue Earth County License Center	Blue Earth County	20-39%	7.9%	Amharic, Arabic, French, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish
Breckenridge Motor Vehicle Inc	Wilkin County	1-19%	2.8%	Spanish
Brown County License Bureau	Brown County	1-19%	4.9%	Spanish
Cambridge Deputy Registrar 90 Inc	Isanti County	1-19%	3.2%	Arabic, Hindi, Russian, Somali
Cass lake license center	Cass County	0%	3.5%	None
Chaska License Center	Carver County	20-39%	7.9%	Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
Chippewa County License Bureau	Chippewa County	20-39%	9.0%	Somali, Spanish, Chuukese

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
Chippewa County License Bureau	Chippewa County	1-19%	9.0%	Micronesian
Chisago City License Bureau	Chisago County	1-19%	3.7%	Hmong, Spanish
City of Appleton	Swift County	20-39%	6.1%	Spanish, Chuukese
City of Granite Falls	Yellow Medicine County	1-19%	4.5%	Spanish
City of Northfield DMV	Rice County	1-19%	13.7%	Hmong, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese
City of Pine Island License Bureau	Goodhue County	1-19%	3.7%	Somali, Spanish
City of Richfield Motor Vehicle Department	Hennepin County	80-100%	18.1%	Arabic, French, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese
City of Tracy #123	Lyon County	1-19%	10.2%	Hmong, Lao, Spanish
City of Tyler	Lincoln County	1-19%	2.2%	Spanish
Clay County Department of Motor Vehicles	Clay County	20-39%	7.7%	Arabic, French, German, Hindi, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Creole
Cottonwood County Recorder	Cottonwood County	40-59%	9.4%	Spanish
Crosby Motor Vehicle	Crow Wing County	1-19%	2.0%	Spanish
Davis License Bureau	Big Stone County	20-39%	3.6%	German, Spanish
Dawson	Lac qui Parle County	1-19%	3.5%	Spanish
Delano DMV #133	Wright County	1-19%	5.5%	Spanish
Delano Motor Vehicle	Wright County	0%	5.5%	None

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
Deputy Registrar	Polk County	1-19%	6.3%	Spanish
Deputy Registrar 150	Anoka County	80-100%	13.7%	Arabic, French, Hmong, Karen, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian
Douglas County License Bureau	Douglas County	1-19%	2.2%	French, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian
DPS OOC	Ramsey County	1-19%	23.2%	Arabic, Dakota, Dari, French, Hindi, Hmong, Karen, Lao, Ojibwe, Pashto, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
DVS	Ramsey County	0%	23.2%	None
Eagan Auto License	Dakota County	40-59%	13.2%	Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian
East Grand Forks License Center	Polk County	1-19%	6.3%	Arabic, Russian, Somali, Spanish
Edgerton Deputy Registrar 141 Inc.	Pipestone County	20-39%	5.4%	Spanish, Ukrainian
Ely License Bureau	Saint Louis County	0%	3.5%	None
Excelsior Motor Vehicle	Hennepin County	20-39%	18.1%	Polish, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Ukrainian
Falls License Bureau	Koochiching County	1-19%	2.3%	Russian, Spanish
Faribault County License Bureau	Faribault County	1-19%	5.4%	Spanish
GM License Bureau Inc #173	Mower County	1-19%	18.7%	Spanish
Goples LTD	Todd County	40-59%	12.8%	Spanish
Grand Marais DMV	Cook County	1-19%	4.9%	Spanish

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
Grant County License Bureau	Grant County	1-19%	3.1%	Spanish
Hallock	Kittson County	1-19%	5.1%	Spanish
Hennepin County North Minneapolis Service Center	Hennepin County	1-19%	18.1%	Arabic, Hmong, Somali, Spanish
Hennepin County Ridgedale	Hennepin County	20-39%	18.1%	Hmong, Pashto, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian
Hennepin County Southdale	Hennepin County	1-19%	18.1%	Amharic, Russian, Somali, Spanish
Houston County License Center	Houston County	1-19%	3.5%	Spanish
Hutchinson Motor Vehicle	McLeod County	20-39%	5.9%	Spanish
Jackson County Drivers License	Jackson County	1-19%	4.9%	Spanish
Jackson Deputy Registrar 50	Jackson County	1-19%	4.9%	Spanish
Kasson License Bureau #95	Dodge County	20-39%	6.0%	Spanish
License Bureau Inc	Ramsey County	40-59%	23.2%	Arabic, Hindi, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Urdu
License Bureau Inc	Ramsey County	40-59%	23.2%	Arabic, Hindi, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Urdu
License Bureau of Pope County	Pope County	20-39%	3.1%	Spanish
License Bureau of Pope County Inc	Pope County	1-19%	3.1%	Spanish, Ukrainian
Lincoln County Auditor Treasurers Office	Lincoln County	1-19%	2.2%	Hmong, Spanish
Litchfield Licensing Inc	Meeker County	20-39%	2.6%	Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
Madison - Lac qui Parle County	Lac qui Parle County	1-19%	3.5%	Spanish, Chuukese
Marshall Deputy Registrar Inc	Lyon County	40-59%	10.2%	Hindi, Hmong, Karen, Lao, Mandarin, Somali, Spanish
Martin County License Center	Martin County	20-39%	5.7%	Spanish
McLeod License Center	McLeod County	1-19%	5.9%	Spanish
Midtown Exchange	Hennepin County	40-59%	18.1%	Amharic, Arabic, Hindi, Hmong, Karen, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Yoruba
Midtown Service Center	Hennepin County	60-79%	18.1%	Amharic, Arabic, Dari, French, Hmong, Lao, Mandarin, Oromo, Pashto, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Yoruba
Midtown service center	Hennepin County	40-59%	18.1%	Hmong, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish
Monticello Deputy Registrar #002	Wright County	1-19%	5.5%	Spanish
Mora Motor Vehicle Inc	Kanabec County	1-19%	2.8%	Arabic, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish
Morrison County License Bureau	Morrison County	20-39%	2.4%	Spanish, Creole (French), Creole (Jamaican [English])
Mower Vehicle Registration	Mower County	40-59%	18.7%	Spanish, Vietnamese
Murray County DMV #080	Murray County	20-39%	6.5%	Spanish

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
New Brighton 163	Ramsey County	1-19%	23.2%	Arabic, Hmong, Karen, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese
Nobles County License Center	Nobles County	60-79%	35.0%	French, Hindi, Somali, Spanish
Norman County License Center	Norman County	1-19%	4.1%	Spanish
Otter Tail County License Center	Otter Tail County	1-19%	4.3%	Somali, Spanish
PBC Deputy 131 Princeton	Mille Lacs County	1-19%	3.6%	Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian
Perham Motor Vehicle	Otter Tail County	1-19%	4.3%	Spanish
Pine River DMV	Cass County	0%	3.5%	None
Polk County Deputy 008	Polk County	20-39%	6.3%	Spanish
Prior Lake License Bureau	Scott County	1-19%	13.3%	Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish
Quick-serv License Center	Dakota County	1-19%	13.2%	Hmong, Spanish
Randalls License Bureau	Steele County	20-39%	7.0%	Somali, Spanish
Red Lake County	Red Lake County	1-19%	2.7%	Spanish
Redwood County License Center	Redwood County	1-19%	5.3%	Spanish
Renville County Driver & Vehicle Services	Renville County	20-39%	6.8%	Mandarin, Somali, Spanish
Ridgedale Service Center	Hennepin County	20-39%	18.1%	Russian, Spanish
Robbinsdale License Center	Hennepin County	1-19%	18.1%	Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
SafeGuard Interlock	Dakota County	40-59%	13.2%	Hmong, Karen, Japanese, Lao, Somali, Spanish
Sauk Centre	Stearns County	20-39%	11.2%	Spanish
Scott County Customer Service	Scott County	1-19%	13.3%	Hindi, Hmong, Karen, Khmer, Lao, Mandarin, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
Sherburne County 671	Sherburne County	1-19%	5.2%	Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian
Sibley County License Center Dep 94/672	Sibley County	20-39%	7.8%	Spanish
Sleepy Eye Deputy 120/Agent 460	Brown County	1-19%	4.9%	Spanish
Sorensen Deputy 069 Inc	Clearwater County	0%	6.3%	None
St Louis County Auditor Service Center	Saint Louis County	1-19%	3.5%	Hmong, Mandarin, Spanish
Staples Auto License Bureau INC	Todd County	20-39%	12.8%	Spanish
Station 630	Isanti County	1-19%	3.2%	Spanish
Station 663	Red Lake County	1-19%	2.7%	Spanish, Ukrainian
Stearns County License Center West	Stearns County	20-39%	11.2%	Somali, Spanish
Stillwater Service & License Center	Washington County	1-19%	11.8%	German, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish
Todd County Recorder's Office - (DL Station 677)	Todd County	40-59%	12.8%	French, Spanish, Haitian-Creo

Location Name	County	Percent of transactions in a language other than English	Percent of county residents who speak a language other than English	Languages other than English spoken by clients
Traverse County License Bureau	Traverse County	1-19%	7.1%	Spanish
Two Harbors License Bureau/Deputy 168	Lake County	1-19%	1.4%	Spanish
Wabasha County	Wabasha County	40-59%	3.8%	Japanese, Spanish
Wabasha DMV	Wabasha County	20-39%	3.8%	Arabic, Hmong, Korean, Spanish
Wadena License Bureau	Wadena County	1-19%	3.0%	Spanish
Walker MV #125 and DL #611	Cass County	0%	3.5%	None
Waseca County License Bureau	Waseca County	1-19%	7.0%	Spanish
Washington County Forest Lake	Washington County	1-19%	11.8%	Arabic, Hmong, Spanish, Vietnamese
Washington County Service and License Centers	Washington County	20-39%	11.8%	Hmong, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese
White Bear Lake License Bureau	Ramsey County	1-19%	23.2%	Arabic, Hmong, Lao, Mandarin, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
Winona County License Center	Winona County		4.9%	Hmong, Somali, Spanish
Woodbury License Center	Washington County	1-19%	11.8%	Hmong, Karen, Mandarin, Somali, Spanish
Wright County License Center Deputy 077	Wright County	20-39%	5.5%	Somali, Spanish

APPENDIX B: LOCATION COUNTS AND FREQUENCIES PER LANGUAGE

The following table lists each language, other than English, identified by responding locations as a language spoken by clients. It also lists the number and percentage of locations that reported serving clients who speak each language.

Table 7. Location counts and frequencies per language

Language spoken by clients	Number of locations that serve clients who speak each language	Percent of locations that serve clients who speak each language
Amharic	4	3%
Arabic	20	16%
Chuukese	3	2%
Creole (French)	1	1%
Creole (Jamaican [English])	1	1%
Creole (unspecified dialect)	1	1%
Dakota	1	1%
Dari	2	2%
French	9	7%
German	3	2%
Haitian-Creo	1	1%
Hindi	10	8%
Hmong	33	26%
Japanese	4	3%
Karen	10	8%
Khmer	1	1%
Korean	6	5%
Lao	8	6%
Mandarin	8	6%
Micronesia	1	1%
Ojibwe	1	1%
Oromo	2	2%
Pashto	3	2%
Polish	2	2%
Punjabi	3	2%
Russian	30	24%
Somali	46	37%
Spanish	115	92%
Swahili	2	2%
Tagalog	2	2%

Language spoken by clients	Number of locations that serve clients who speak each language	Percent of locations that serve clients who speak each language
Thai	1	1%
Ukrainian	24	19%
Urdu	2	2%
Vietnamese	15	12%
Yoruba	2	2%