



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2021.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).


PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: Language Navigators
Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Brandon Hinton
Title: Deputy County Manager for Administration
Signature: 

Program Overview

The Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) Language Navigators program was created during the fall of 2020 to provide much needed access to vital school information for Henrico's immigrant communities. The program is an extension of the Equity Ambassadors program, which, as one of its areas of focus, supports equity and access for non-English-speaking students and families.

The Navigators program consists of 90 bilingual students from all HCPS high schools. They represent 16 ethnicities, with the goal of incorporating more. The students are divided into 24 groups according to language. The members collaborate to create and post videos explaining announcements and important details families need to support their children's education. Students use slides, voice-overs, charts, and arrows to explain the various procedures in their native languages.

Once completed and approved, the videos are posted on the HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity YouTube channel. The videos' popularity with our immigrant families was evident by the many appreciative responses we have received. Many immigrant communities have a leader who points their neighbors toward needed resources, and the translation videos have quickly become an important resource for them. The students are proud of their work and excited that they are able to serve in such a necessary capacity.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Henrico County comprises a very diverse population of communities. Language is a primary barrier for many of these families, so there needed to be more resources available to them for assistance in navigating their children's access to an equitable education. The Language Navigators program provides an important service by translating important details found on the Henrico County Public Schools website. From directions about completing forms, access to their

child's Schoology details, and important dates and timelines. The Navigators create videos in their native languages to provide equitable access to this vital content.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

Language Navigators is an innovative program that combines the need for multi-language resources for families with community involvement and service for high school students. It has strengthened connections with many immigrant and multilingual communities within our county and provided much needed information for families of HCPS students. With minimal funds needed, this is a program that could be readily replicated by other school divisions.

How Program Was Carried Out

Students who choose the Language Navigators project assist with creating, filming and posting videos in multiple languages to Henrico County Public Schools' Department of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity YouTube channel. The videos help students and families navigate virtual learning, and provide valuable information families need to support their children. Volunteer hours and a certificate are given to students who participate in the project. In addition, a certificate of participation and supporting recommendations from HCPS' Department of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity is provided to students who actively participate (as confirmed by staff within the Department of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity) in this project. Volunteer hours are only available for students who participate in department initiatives such as the Language Navigators program.

The program's approximately 90 bilingual students are from several HCPS high schools. Some of the students also participate in HCPS "Equity Ambassadors" program, which advocates for and facilitates conversations about diversity at their schools. Participating students support Henrico's immigrant families by providing videos they have created, using slides and voice-overs that translate important information into 16 different languages and dialects. Many of our families

speak no English whatsoever. They often miss announcements, directions, timelines, and other information that are important for their children to be able to access lessons, teachers and activities. The Navigators provide a platform for inclusion for families who may otherwise be left out of communication. Immigrant community members have responded that they no longer feel alone, knowing that there is a place to find out much of what they need to know about their children's education and procedural particulars. In addition, the Navigators use warm, inviting delivery in their translation video voice-overs, giving immigrant families comfort and making them feel welcome and supported. Since all students have laptop computers provided by HCPS, parents can use this technology to access the Equity, Diversity and Opportunity YouTube channel in their homes without going to a public library or relying on others for access because they are economically unable to own a computer. As the Language Navigators program grows in popularity, more families have become aware of their services and more bilingual students are requesting to serve. Our hope is that the group will attract bilingual students who are bilingual in other needed languages such as Swahili and Tai.

Financing and Staffing

The cost of the program consists of payment for two part-time program coordinators who work on this program approximately 5 hours collectively per week.

Program Results

Students who participate in HCPS' Language Navigators program assist with creating, filming and posting videos in multiple languages to the Equity, Diversity and Opportunity YouTube channel, to help students and families navigate virtual learning and important information needed to support their children. We have more than 90 students from HCPS high schools working in our language navigators program. We divided them into 27 groups, with each group including

students who speak more than 16 languages. As of today, our students have produced videos in the following languages:

- Chinese/Mandarin
- Spanish
- Tamil/Kannada
- Telugu
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Russian
- Hindi
- Ashanti
- Persian
- Korean
- Bosnian
- Burmese
- Bengali
- Arabic
- Swahili

These include instructions on accessing HCPS' learning management system, Schoology, and its Parent Portal. Videos also include information on the HCPS Welcome Center and tips on virtual learning. Here is the [YouTube Channel](#) for the HCPS Office of Equity, Diversity and Opportunity. Language Navigators are currently working on their second translation video, which will entail directions for using HCPS' platform for online forms, the phase-in timeline for in-person learning, and the updated health forms and procedures for COVID-19 safety protocols. All videos can be

found under the Equity Ambassadors playlist and the Parent Portal playlist on the YouTube channel.

The Language Navigators program has grown quickly in popularity as a tool for equity and inclusion. HCPS serves diverse immigrant communities, many of which have no access to information they need to support their children's education. When we planned the program last fall, we had no idea just how eager our students were to serve families of their own ethnicities. We had so many students that we had to divide them into two groups: Navigators and Ambassadors. We certainly did not want to leave any of them out, knowing how much they wanted to be a part of an equity-based program. In addition, we are thrilled that so many families are using the website and that word has spread about this tool for inclusion provided by students. The students are the ones making the Navigators program what it is. It is their excitement and eagerness to serve that makes their projects so invaluable to our immigrant communities. They have taken the concept, and with their creativity and technology savvy, have brought it to life. The program is something that we need now more than ever.

The Equity and Diversity website address is <https://henricoschools.us/equity-and-diversity/>

The Language Navigators YouTube channel address is

[Equity, Diversity and Opportunity YouTube Channel](#)

Brief Summary

Henrico County is a beautifully diverse community that includes individuals and families from over 100 countries. The Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) Language Navigators program was created during the fall of 2020 to provide much needed access to vital school information for Henrico's immigrant communities.

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Language Navigators Supplemental Material

The Equity and Diversity website address is <https://henricoschools.us/equity-and-diversity/>

The Language Navigators YouTube channel address is

[Equity, Diversity and Opportunity YouTube Channel](#)