

Tonight's Carrboro Town Council meeting will be in English and Spanish. That's a big deal.

by Melody Kramer

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Tonight Carrboro Town Council meeting will live interpreted in Spanish. This is a first and really awesome.

How it will work

We asked Catherine Lazorko, the town's Communication Director, how this will work tonight. She said this: "We will have interpretation headsets available for anyone who requests them. We'll offer some headsets at the dais for Council member use as well. We have scheduled two certified interpreters who will be taking turns providing interpretation over the course of the meeting.

If a person in the audience would like to address the Council in Spanish, the interpreter will join them at the podium for consecutive interpretation at the mic.

Also, [our YouTube livestream](#) includes closed captions which can be translated into other languages on YouTube.

Why it's happening

Language interpretation services will be added tonight because Council will be considering the adoption of a [Language Access Plan](#) and to amend the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with UNC-Chapel Hill to receive a \$25,000 grant from the [Building Integrated Communities Program](#) at the Institute for the Study of the Americas at UNC-Chapel Hill to fund the plan's first-year implementation.

If the plan is approved, Carrboro will be one of a handful of local governments investing in a language access plan which will **have a number of benefits**, including:

- Translation and interpretation for programs, activities, services, and resources
- Translation of vital documents and emergency communications
- Supporting multilingual staff to provide in-language services or to interpret as part of their job duties
- Providing interpretation and translations for meetings and 1:1 interactions upon request
- Staff trainings
- Notifications to residents about language assistance services



[Click here to read the full plan](#)

This is something that Council Member Eliazar Posada has been pushing for since his first meeting on council and while on the town's Comprehensive Planning Task Force. (He helped ensure that workshops were conducted in Spanish, Burmese, and Karen.) The Town also offers **interpretation equipment** to community members and organizations for free.

We think this is a great idea – 15.5 % of households in Carrboro speak a language other than English at home – and translation is the most-needed first step. This means more of our community will be able to participate in town governance. Kudos to Posada and the Department of Communications and Engagement.