



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

# TRANSLATION STYLE GUIDE

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## Contents

Sections with **CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS** marked with an asterisk (\*).

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Checklist for all Philadelphia translation projects</i>	4
<i>Acknowledgements and Thanks</i>	5
<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Reworking from the English source text</i>	7
<i>Punctuation</i>	7
<i>Numbers</i>	7
Digits and Written Numbers *	7
Long Scale and Short Scale	7
Phone Numbers *	8
Dates *	8
Times *	9
Units of Measure (Distance, Size, Weight, etc.) *	9
Localizing Units	10
Translating Units	10
<i>Names and proper nouns</i>	11
City Agencies, Offices, Departments, Events, Etc. *	11
Diacritics and Accents	13
Transliterations	13
Acronyms *	13
Addresses *	13
<i>Errors in the source text *</i>	15
<b>Naturalness</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Plain speech *</i>	16
<i>Commands and questions</i>	17
<i>Loanwords</i>	17
<b>Respect</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Distinctions between formal and informal Language</i>	18
<i>Audience-sensitive language *</i>	18
Gendered Language	18
Health and Disability Language	19
LGBTQIA+ Language and Gender-Neutral Pronouns	19
Pronouns and Neopronouns	20
<b>Guidance rationales and further guides/reading</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>A: English non-dominant Philadelphians thrive with us</i>	21
<i>B: Facilitating quality control for employees</i>	21
<i>Contacts</i>	22

## INTRODUCTION

Translation services in Philadelphia support operations in government buildings, websites, public engagements and installations, City outreach, and other functions. Translated materials help us communicate with the public regarding critical topics like health and safety, City resources, events, legal notices, and more.

All languages used in Philly are living languages that evolve with the needs and wants of the speakers. All our language communities are dynamic, diverse, and important. The City wants to use language in ways that are accessible and precise, but also creative and alive. **The Language Access program does not consider languages beyond English as “foreign languages”:** these living languages are spoken here, in our community by our neighbors, friends, colleagues and residents. Many language communities have long, rich histories in our City and are valuable threads of Philadelphia’s fabric.

Our primary goals are **accuracy, naturalness, and respect**. Our “plain language” approach to English-language messaging helps accessibility and clarity. We encourage our translators to use a similar approach. This guide has both prescriptive rules (which must be followed) and descriptive (suggested) guidelines for the translator. Above all, we encourage every translator to use their best judgement in creating a translation that feels natural and accessible to a wide audience, and we welcome **intentional** language choices suited made with our goals in mind.



*All contracted translations for the City of Philadelphia are required to use this style guide and our term base. Translations that do not use these tools may be sent back for revision or redelivery.*

These tools help ensure **quality** and **consistency** in our translations. We encourage translators to send feedback on terms in our glossary or new terms from the text as relevant and necessary. Translators may also provide any special justifications or notes with translations if relevant to the requesting agency or the Language Access Program.

## CHECKLIST FOR ALL PHILADELPHIA TRANSLATION PROJECTS

Every item on the following checklist **MUST** be followed for **ALL** professionally contracted translations completed for the City of Philadelphia. Please ensure that you or the translators working underneath you on your project have completed every step of our translation process.

- Ensure you have received our termbase and/or access to our web-based glossary. All translation projects **must** use this termbase/glossary as a reference. If you need access, please contact your project manager or the Translation Quality Coordinator.
- Review all notes from the request. Notes may come as a separate file or may be a part of the source document.
- Review the newest version of the style guide. New updates will be highlighted in a “Changelog” for those already familiar.
- Check the source document for legibility. If the source document contains significant corruptions or errors that impede your translation, please contact the requestor immediately.
- Complete translation and quality assurance checks as usual.
- Optional:* Translators are encouraged to keep any notes on the translation and submit them as feedback to aid in updating this style guide or our glossary. Translators can also add any justification for making certain language choices in the document if they choose.
- On all submissions to the client, make sure to copy the Language Access Program Director and Translation Quality Coordinator.

Thank you for working with us!



This guide was prepared by the City of Philadelphia Translation Quality Coordinator. Please contact [kahlil.thomas@phila.gov](mailto:kahlil.thomas@phila.gov) with questions, comments, concerns or other feedback.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

This style guide was realized as a joint project between the Philadelphia Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Office of Innovation and Technology, sponsored by the Operations Transformation Fund. These Offices worked tirelessly to produce these materials to improve language access in Philadelphia, as well as to improve the translation quality of Phila.gov.

To complete this work, we partnered with local community organizations and held focus groups with members of Philadelphia's different language communities. Our residents provided feedback in over thirteen languages on the quality of government translations that helped to inform these guides.

We would like to first thank the dozens of Philadelphia residents who helped us with this project. Your expertise is invaluable, and we look forward to continuing to listen to and serve you and your communities.

We give a special thank you to Maria Giraldo Gallo, whose leadership and integrity drove incited and drove this work.

We acknowledge the work of Powerling and the translators they hired who consulted on this project. Thank you all.

We also would like to thank the City agencies who provided feedback, guidance, space and other support in this process. Thank you for investing into this step for municipal language access:

- The Equitable Community Engagement Collaborative
- The Free Library of Philadelphia
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- The Office of Innovation and Technology
- The Creative Design Studio
- The Department of Communications
- The Office of LGBT Affairs
- The Office for People with Disabilities
- Philadelphia CityID
- The Philadelphia City Fund

We also recognize the great work that was done by Philadelphia's community organizations to facilitate our engagements. The staff at these organizations all went above and beyond for this project and our residents:

- Taller Puertorriqueño
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- The African Family Health Organization (AFAHO)
- First Haitian Church of God
- Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture
  - Special thank you to Shimaa Eid and Hadeel AlHabaishi!
- The East Luzerne welcoming center

## COMMUNITY TAKES ALL OF US!

## ACCURACY

**Accuracy** is our goal for translations To be correct in both language usage and content. **This does not mean word-for-word translation.** We would rather the translator be faithful to the purposes of the document itself and the audience it serves. Translators should attentively make sure the translation contains **all the information** from the source, as well as **the same quality** of information. Translators should proof their work for both erroneous additions and subtractions.

### REWORKING FROM THE ENGLISH SOURCE TEXT

Translators can carefully but creatively rework source text so that it can flow more naturally in the target language. This can mean shuffling words around in a sentence, finding appropriate substitutions or finding altogether new phrasing to communicate the same point. Translators should be especially careful that information available in the source document is not confused, muddled, or deleted by changes made. It is also a mistake to add new information not originally present.

### PUNCTUATION

Punctuation in a source document is primarily used for function. Pay careful attention to punctuation in the source text and use punctuation in the translation to minimize ambiguity and facilitate word flow. Ensure that punctuation is not contributing to ambiguity in the translation.

Please conform to general standards for your language’s punctuation use, including for serial commas, quotations, inverted punctuation, etc.

### NUMBERS

It’s important to remain exact when dealing with data, quantities, and other numerical information. Readers in other languages will rely on accuracy in these domains as they navigate the City and its services, and they have a right to information that reflects reality as best possible.

#### Digits and Written Numbers \*

**Translators should prioritize numerals (not spelled out numbers) for numbers in a series, dates/times, contact information, and for any number greater than 99.** Unless there are strong cultural tendencies in your language toward writing numbers out, it is preferable to use numerals 0 through 9.

The City of Philadelphia **requires** use of West Arabic numerals (0123456789) when typing digits if they are compatible with your language’s script, as opposed to any other numeral system—for example, East Arabic numerals (٠١٢٣٤٥٦٧٨٩).

#### JUSTIFICATION



Employees need to be able to read and edit numbers when overlooking translations. See appendix B.

#### Long Scale and Short Scale

Large numbers are communicated differently in certain languages. Be aware of and specific regarding differences between short-scale numerals (used in English, Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, etc.), long-scale numerals (used in Spanish, French, Farsi, Malagasy, etc.) or other scaling in the target language. Mistranslations of numerals can have critical implications on the final translation. If the translator is afraid of causing confusion, use numerals to express the number rather than words.



**EXAMPLE**

Numeral	Short scale (American English)	Long scale (many European languages)
100,000	One hundred thousand	One hundred thousand
1,000,000	One million	One million
1,000,000,000	One billion	One milliard/One thousand million
1,000,000,000,000	One trillion	One billion
1,000,000,000,000,000	One quadrillion	One billiard/One thousand billion

**Phone Numbers \***

American phone numbers should always be written left-to-right with standard American digit grouping:

[3-digit area code] - [3 digits] - [4 digits]

Please follow the source in using parenthesis or separating these groups with a dash (-), space, or another standard symbol.

Only, when necessary, begin the number with the country code. If the country code is not “1”, add a plus sign.

**Dates \***

Dates should **always** include the written month name (or a standard abbreviation), to avoid ambiguity with languages who prefer to list day before month. In the target language, use the date format that will be most familiar to your audience, including a written month with appropriate capitalization. Exceptions are made for formats where this is not possible, like web URLs, fields on forms, etc. In these cases, match source formatting.

Always use Julian calendar months or their equivalent in your language (January through December). In languages where it is the norm, digits may be used in month names (e.g. Korean does not name Gregorian months). Abbreviate month names in cases where adequate space is not available in the document.



**EXAMPLE**

<b>Example source text:</b>	The election is 11/12/2025.
<b>Spanish translation:</b>	La elección es el 12 de noviembre de 2025.
<b>Korean translation:</b>	선거는 2025 년 11 월 12 일입니다.



**JUSTIFICATION**

Languages use many different abbreviations and shortcuts for describing dates. For a person reading a translation, it can be confusing to see mismatched dates and formats, especially for monolingual residents or employees. Using only numbers to express the date can cause confusion as different cultures express dates like this in contradictory ways. See justification appendices A and B.

**Times \***

Times should aim to match source formatting. Generally, do not write out times, but leave them expressed numerically. The primary exception to this is written expressions for “noon” and “midnight”.

Times generally will be in 12-hour am/pm format in source materials. Translators are encouraged to maintain this format, if possible, only switching to 24-hour format if no other linguistic recourse is available.

Match the source formatting of “am/pm”. Alternatively, standard words in your target language may be substituted. Some acceptable examples:



**EXAMPLE**

Closed at **8:45pm**  
 Fechado ás **8:45pm**  
 폐점 시간 – **8:45 오후**



**JUSTIFICATION**

Rendering time this way helps employee’s quality check or quickly edit translations when there are last-minute changes. Most Philadelphia residents, regardless of language, are aware of US conventions for date and time. See appendix A.

**Units of Measure (Distance, Size, Weight, etc.) \***

Units should be dealt with very carefully. Many units do not translate well cross-culturally, and mistranslations can lead to considerable confusion for the audience. Translators are asked to use judgement in sorting source units of

measure as **pro-localization** or **pro-translation** based on the context. Above all, these decisions should be made based on the audience’s best interest.

### Localizing Units

Sometimes it is more helpful for the audience to compare measurements found in a source document with units more familiar units. **The translator can localize the units into familiar terms when the audience requires a more precise understanding of the measurement.** A precise understanding of, for example, height and weight limits for an activity may be important. Knowing these limits in familiar units may improve a reader’s experience.

It is important to also keep in mind accuracy when localizing. While being too broad can make a localized unit inaccurate, being too specific can do the same. When localizing units, make sure to match the number of **significant figures** in the source text. See the table below for an example of this.



#### EXAMPLE

	# Significant Figures	Notes
<b>(Source text)</b> Hiking Trail – 3 miles	1	The hiking trail may not be exactly 3 miles, but this number was determined to be accurate enough for hikers.
<b>(Poor example translation)</b> Sentier de randonnée – 4,83 kilomètres	3	The number of significant figures is too high. This overcomplicates the reading and is too precise.
<b>(Good example translation)</b> Sentier de randonnée – 5 kilomètres	1	This number of significant figures matches the source.



#### JUSTIFICATION

“Hiking Trail – 3 miles” (1 significant figure) should **not** have the distance localized to “4.83 kilometers” (3 significant figures). This would be overly specific for the context, potentially less accurate, and more complicated for the reader. It would be better to localize this as “5 kilometers”, (matching the source text’s 1 significant figure). Make similar considerations whenever localizing quantities.

### Translating Units

Sometimes localizing units can create a burden for the audience. *The translator should not localize units when this creates difficulty or ambiguity for the audience.* For example, nearly all vehicles in the US monitor speed in terms of miles per hour, and kilometers per hour is very difficult to calculate or record accurately. Localizing “miles per hour” into “kilometers per hour” could also create ambiguity for the audience as to the exact speed of a vehicle or the speed limit of an area. In this case, it is more helpful to the audience to retain the source units, miles per hour.

**NAMES AND PROPER NOUNS**

Generally, proper names of people and places, including streets, buildings, and neighborhoods, should **not be translated**. That is, the translator should try to match the source name as best possible. For example, do **not** translate “Michael Nutter” into Spanish as “Miguel Nucero”, nor “Strawberry Mansion” (a neighborhood of Philadelphia) to “Mansión de Fresas”.

If the subject in question already has a standard localized name, either one well known to the target speech community or one that is officially established, it is appropriate to use that name. For example, “Philadelphia” is always “Filadelfi” in Haitian Creole and “Filadelfia” in Spanish. It is appropriate to localize country and City names as they would normally appear in the target languages.

**City Agencies, Offices, Departments, Events, Etc. \***

City agencies, offices, departments, and events often have a descriptive title that informs the audience of their function and purpose. These names are particular and need close attention when translating. Many City agency names have been standardized in our glossary.

**Immediately after the first translation, include the agency’s ENGLISH acronym in parentheses (or an appropriate enclosure).** If additional space available, the translator may add the English name of the agency.

Our greatest need for acronyms in our translations is **consistency**. Use the acronym that is most likely to help the audience find the correct information and maintain that acronym’s use consistently throughout the document.

**Nondescriptive names**, which are normally puns, slogans, or other creative terms, **should NOT be translated at all**.



**EXAMPLE**

<b>Source :</b> (Descriptive name)	the Office of Special Events
<b>Long translation :</b> (Spanish)	la Oficina de Eventos Especiales (Office of Special Events, OSE)
<b>Short translation :</b> (Spanish)	la Oficina de Eventos Especiales (OSE)
<b>Source :</b> (Nondescriptive name)	SmartCityPHL
<b>Translation :</b> (Spanish)	SmartCityPHL
<b>Source :</b> (Ambiguous name)	Jump Start Philly

<b>Long translation :</b> (Spanish)	Programa Jump Start Philly
<b>Short translation :</b> (Spanish)	Jump Start Philly

## JUSTIFICATION

Many City agencies offer direct services to residents. If that agency has chosen a name that reflects their operations, it's important to communicate those operations clearly in all languages. However, it can be difficult to translate more creative names in a way that accurately reflects the agency's purpose. It can also make further information about the agency more difficult to find.

Consistency is key to making sure our residents know where exactly to find the services that they need. Translating department names helps residents understand the function of these agencies, while an acronym can help them find more information on the web or request services from an employee in person.

### Diacritics and Accents

In general, leave the names of proper nouns as in the source. Only add accents to names in the target text if it is clear the person being spoken about uses them in their own name, either in the source or target language. This is most easily verified with research: for example, a person may have their name listed with accents on Wikipedia, LinkedIn, or a personal website. However, if no information is given or available, maintain the source usage.

Names are personal and in a US context, they do not always follow foreign standards. Many people have foreign sourced names that they employ without an accent, and translators may not always have enough context to determine the appropriate accents.

If your language does not use Latin characters, these accent rules can be disregarded.

### Transliterations

In general, it is best to stick to one script for most translations. Translations should minimize the amount of script switching as much as is culturally appropriate—some languages' readers are more comfortable with mixed scripts than others.

If current standards are undefined or unclear (for example, transliterating words originally from Indigenous American languages) translators are encouraged to research the English pronunciation of the name in question and provide a reasonable attempt to transliterate it.

In cases where it is crucial that the audience know the Latin-script spelling for a name, include the name afterward in parenthesis or another appropriate enclosure.

### Acronyms \*

Acronyms are used widely in the City of Philadelphia and may assist the audience in locating more information or services. For local agencies, like Offices and Departments of the City, organizations, and events, **do not localize** acronyms. **Always** include the acronym (in parenthesis or another appropriate enclosure) after the first mention of an agency if its name has been translated. Acronyms that have standard translations in other languages (e.g., HIV, IVF, USA, etc.) may be translated as usual.

### Addresses \*

Our publications use addresses for the purpose of directing a reader or a piece of mail somewhere in the City. For this reason, there is a balance to be struck between informing the reader where they are going and maintaining the postal functionality of the information. Below is an example of how to translate with more details:



**EXAMPLE**

Part of address	English	Instruction	Arabic
<b>Recipient’s name</b>	Julia Immigrant	Recipient: Leave as source, add a transliteration in parentheses if needed	Julia Immigrant (جوليا يمكرانت)
<b>Office, department, etc.</b>	Office of Immigrant Affairs	Organization/Office: Translate with source acronym	مكتب شؤون المهاجرين (OIA)
<b>Building, room #</b>	City Hall, room 1620	Building and room: Translate “room” (or equivalent) only	City Hall, غرفة 162
<b>Street address</b>	1 Penn Square	Street address: Do not translate	1 Penn Square
<b>City, State, ZIP code</b>	Philadelphia, PA 19104	City, State, Country: Do not translate	Philadelphia, PA 19104



**JUSTIFICATION**

Most Philly language communities rely on digital map services like Google or Apple for navigating the City. These applications work best with the original English addresses. It is also helpful to have certain information visible in English as they may have to ask another resident or a City employee for guidance. However, certain information in their language is important for transparently orienting the reader.

Part of Address	Justification
<b>Recipient’s name</b>	All City employees have access to language support services like interpreters. It’s important that the reader is directed to the right person. A good transliteration can support but is not essential.
<b>Department, office, etc.</b>	Translate the department for transparency: the reader will want to know exactly what kind of agency they’re being directed to. All Philadelphia City agencies should also be referred to by their appropriate acronym if available. These acronyms are typically familiar to City employees, who can help with directing.
<b>Building, room #</b>	Most buildings in Philadelphia are called by their English name as a proper name, even in other languages. Using the English name

	also helps with navigation using apps or City employees. Translating “room”, “suite”, etc. can help the reader navigate, whereas an employee would be familiar enough to understand.
<b>Street address</b>	Translating street addresses can cause confusion and misdirection for readers, digital devices, mail carriers and employees alike.
<b>City, state, ZIP code</b>	The city, state and zip code <b>MUST</b> be present on any mail in the United States to reach its destination. The post office prefers all this information, including the city, to be in English.

**ERRORS IN THE SOURCE TEXT \***

If you encounter major digital corruption, spelling mistakes, or other technical errors that impede the workflow or clarity of the source document, please let your project manager know, and communicate them back to the client as soon as possible. You may be provided a clean source document.

Minor mistakes or errors can be noted along with translator feedback at the translator’s discretion.

## NATURALNESS

The City of Philadelphia should sound approachable, authoritative, and helpful. We hope our translated materials carry this same tone in a way that is attuned to our different language communities. We encourage grammar and vocabulary that are familiar to the audience when possible, and using registers that the audience will expect and find comfortable.

Different speech communities may have different expectations when encountering the same document. The translator should “tune into” these expectations and make decisions to meet these expectations as best possible.

Because the City’s translation needs are so diverse, different translations may require different approaches to tone and register. Generally, we ask the translator to best match the source document’s tone in a context- and culture-sensitive way.

### PLAIN SPEECH \*

In general, aim for a “Plain Speech” register in your translations. Opt for vocabulary that is more current and grammar that is used in everyday speech. Sometimes a complicated grammar pattern can get the point across as it was originally expressed, but the translation may read more naturally when using common language. We ask translators to never sacrifice meaning from the source text, but also to never over-complicate the translation for the reader. Feel free to rearrange phrases, use synonyms, or adapt the information to best hit the audience’s eyes and ears.

The following are some of the City’s suggestions (not requirements) for plain language. Originally these were intended for English-language writers, and so their relevance to your target language may vary, but they are hopefully illustrative of the kinds of language that can hinder audience understanding or participation.

- We strongly prefer, but do not require, active voice (rather than passive voice)
- Overly figurative language can make meanings harder to correctly interpret for the audience
- We prefer short versions of phrases; for example, instead of writing “for the purpose of”, we prefer a simple “to”.
- Prefer common words (e.g. “about” or “use”) over formal/complex terms (“approximately” or “utilize”)

Local Philly flavor can come across in some of our messaging. Some of this terminology can be found in our glossary.

## COMMANDS AND QUESTIONS

Some of our text can contain direct questions or commands posed to the audience, often acting as the important “call to action” of the document. Depending on the target language and the specific source text involved, this can be either a piece of cake, or a conundrum for the translator. We encourage translators to use creativity in this process and to try and maintain the spirit of the phrase while doing what is best suited to the tastes and needs of the audience. Some languages have additional guidance in supplemental style guides.

## LOANWORDS

Our audiences exist in a United States context where English is the common language. Many communities use and mix English and additional languages in their daily communication. The use of loanwords should be kept appropriately restrained to ensure broad understanding by the audience. However, this does **not** mean that they are forbidden. In fact, sometimes a loanword is the best way to get information across. While we discourage using loanwords excessively or needlessly, they can be a useful tool in a translator’s repertoire. Cultural elements, like regions of the City, local terms and events, or certain identities and statuses may only make sense using loanwords. See guidance A for more information.

## RESPECT

Respecting our audience is crucial, no matter what their language background is. Even within speech communities, Philadelphia is incredibly diverse: every translation should expect to reach readers of all ages, social classes, and backgrounds. Keeping this in mind, translations should work to make readers feel spoken to (not translated at) and maintain general respect and dignity (even when casual).

This guide on respect does not supersede the source text. If a translator encounters language that this guide would consider “disrespectful” in the source, it is imperative to translate exactly the content and intention of the original. However, as in most cases the source author’s intention is respect, it should be at the forefront of the translator’s mind also.

### DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL LANGUAGE

Some languages may distinguish formal/polite and informal/casual speech. Translators may find it difficult to know when one or the other is most appropriate. These general guidelines will help the translator decide how to proceed.

- For languages where formality is highly important in daily life and informality would be considered rude (for example, Japanese, Korean) translators may prefer to stick with a standard formal register across most translations. It is sometimes appropriate to localize a less formal register (for example, talking to children or translating an internal thought).
- In some cultures, language formality can make verbiage feel more impersonal or cold. This can be used to the translator’s benefit; authority and impersonality can be leveraged in some documents using formal forms while closeness, solidarity, and camaraderie can be expressed with informal forms.
- Translators should never mix formal and informal forms in the same document without justification.

### AUDIENCE-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE \*

Language used in City translations should be respectful to the general audience and sensitive to the subjects of the document as much as possible. Specifically, though not exclusively, translators should be sensitive to issues of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, health and disability status, and other significant demographic information.

Some translators may need to do additional research or employ empathetic creativity in their target language to make sure that language remains respectful. Core languages can find additional suggestions and guidelines in supplemental material. All translators are encouraged to research, train and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of inclusive language in their own target language’s context. Philadelphia’s plain language guidelines can serve as a further resource.

### Gendered Language

The City prefers the most natural-sounding gender-neutral language possible in its translations. This includes best efforts to not choose men and boys as the default audience member, or as the default in other sectors of life. Translators are encouraged to reword the text slightly to maintain gender neutrality and make sure text is inclusive of women and non-binary Philadelphians to the same degree.

People who consistently use a non-binary pronoun in English (e.g., they or xir) should be referred to using the best similar option in the target language. There is further guidance in the section “LGBTQIA+ Language and Gender-neutral Pronouns” below.

## Health and Disability Language

The City prefers a “person first” use of language for people with disabilities. When speaking about disability subjects, we wish to highlight the personhood of the individuals involved rather than reduce them to their disability. Generally, we find phrasing like “people with disabilities” or “people with autism” to be more equitable than “disabled people” or “autists”. Please take similar considerations in your translation to focus the humanity of the people we’re discussing.

There are many conditions that in popular speech are considered “disabilities”. However, people in our community who have these conditions may not see themselves as “disabled”, even as they rely on accommodation services. Out of respect to these groups and people, we recommend avoiding stigmatizing terminology, especially when it comes to intellectual differences and mental disorders, Deafness, Blindness, and other common statuses.

## LGBTQIA+ Language and Gender-Neutral Pronouns

Members of the LGBTQIA+ community in Philadelphia use a variety of terms and phrases to express themselves and their identities, and sometimes these terms can be difficult to translate. Depending on the cultural background of your target language, these words may not yet exist in standard form, or there may only be negative/derogatory terms available. Our translators must make *every* effort to avoid language that stigmatizes our LGBTQIA+. Every language and cultural group is represented within this community, and we must serve them with equal respect and dignity.

Translators are encouraged to do research in their target language, as sensitive terminology in this domain can update or change quickly. However, do not use obscure terminology that will be unfamiliar to the reader. **If there is no appropriate terminology in your language, or no approved translation in our glossary, you may use English terminology or transliterate the original English.**

The following are key terms that will be used in Philadelphia communications and definitions to help the translator:

- **Agender** – A person does not align with any gender at all.
- **Aromantic** – A person does not generally feel romantic attraction to anyone.
- **Asexual** – A person does not generally feel sexual attraction to anyone.
- **Bisexual** – A person experiences attraction to their own gender and other genders.
- **Cisgender (Cis)** – A person feels aligned with the gender given to them at birth (the opposite of trans).
- **Gay** – A person (typically a man, but not always) is only attracted to their own gender.
- **Gender** – The social characteristics (like clothing style, hairdo, social habits, etc.) that are associated with manhood/boyhood, womanhood/girlhood and beyond.
- **Genderqueer** – Typically, someone who rejects a hard gender definition, and who embraces fluidity in their gender.
- **Intersex** – born with a mix of male and female anatomy.
- **Lesbian** – A woman who is only attracted to other women.
- **Nonbinary** – A person who does not identify with either male or female. They may identify with both or neither.
- **Pansexual** – A person who is attracted to every gender, or regardless of gender.
- **Polyamorous** – Having (or having capacity for) more than one romantic partner.

- **Pride (Month)** – The month of June celebrates the Stonewall Uprising and the ongoing movement for LGBTQ+ liberation. Members of the community and allies are encouraged to celebrate LGBTQIA+ culture and resilience. Typical celebration includes a parade.
- **Queer** – Referring generally to non-heterosexual or non-cisgender people and things. This term can be controversial, as it was previously a slur, but community efforts are reclaiming it as a proud term.
- **Sex** – Biological characteristics (anatomy, chromosomes, etc.) that determine male/female/intersex status.
- **Transgender (Trans)** – A person who has transitioned from the gender given to them at birth to a different gender.

## Pronouns and Neopronouns

Translators should be aware of pronoun usage and gender in a United States context. These topics reflect ongoing developments in how US Americans talk to and about LGBTQIA+ people and people in general. Because this is so culturally specific, it can be difficult to find accurate translations for non-standard pronouns. Below this guide describes pronoun uses and offers appropriate strategies for the translator to consider. Pronoun usage has become a significant political topic in the United States. As such, many US Americans will include a set of 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns when introducing themselves, describing others in text, or in email signatures.

Typically, Philadelphians use one of three English 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun sets for themselves:

- He/him/his – typically used for men and masculine-identified people.
- She/her/hers – typically used for women and feminine-identified people.
- They/them/theirs – can be for a person of any gender or who has no gender or whose gender is unknown.

Note, some people can use “neopronouns” that are newly created, and not common or standard (e.g., xe/xim/xir), but this is very rare. Often, US Americans will list their pronouns after their name, especially in digital communications like emails, social media, articles, etc.

Additionally, some people may include more than one set of pronouns or a mixed set (e.g., “he/they”). In these cases, it is clearest to use only one of the specified pronouns (e.g. use only “he” or only “they” pronouns).

Some strategies the translator can employ for use when encountering these pronouns are:

- Avoiding pronoun use for the individual altogether in the translation.
- Use the pronouns listed under “they/them/their” in our City glossary
- Researching and applying another common neopronoun in your language
- Asking the requestor or the Translation Quality Coordinator for guidance
- If a person’s pronouns are given, those pronouns should be used for them throughout the work. When nongendered pronouns are explicitly indicated, the translator should only resort to gendered pronouns as a last resort.

## GUIDANCE RATIONALES AND FURTHER GUIDES/READING

### A: ENGLISH NON-DOMINANT PHILADELPHIANS THRIVE *WITH US*

Our translations serve language communities with origins across the world. Our most primary audience is Philadelphia residents who prefer or need languages that aren't English for their civic participation. While we recognize there is a difference in language background and experience between language communities, they are by no means isolated. Philly is a large, multilingual community. No language group is isolated here, and our translation style intends to help languages retain their core identity and integrity while recognizing that they are an integrated part of our broader society. Many residents of foreign origin become quickly familiar and comfortable with local and broader US American customs like discussing dates and times, thinking in miles, or in pounds. While some residents who use different languages might come from foreign places, they live and thrive here in Philadelphia, and we share the whole City with them equally as home.

### B: FACILITATING QUALITY CONTROL FOR EMPLOYEES

We commission translations to serve dozens of language communities. The employee commissioning your work may or may not be familiar with the language you're presenting them, but they are responsible to our community to make sure the information presented is accurate. When looking over translations for accuracy, it can help these employees if the information is presented in a way that will be immediately familiar to them. An employee cannot always verify a phone number, date or time if written in a foreign format. The translation should be legible and clear to the target audience, but certain key information needs to also be accessible for employees commissioning translations. If information like a date, time or phone number is changed at the last minute, maintaining this information in formats an English-speaker can understand means that City employees can respond faster and more precisely with our foreign language materials.

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