

Employment Provider Bilingual Recruitment Guide

Guide for employment providers on how
to recruit more bilingual staff to support
the Latino/a/x/e community with I/DD





Introductory Section

The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) has teamed up with Applichat, a recruitment marketing agency, to identify barriers and provide recommendations for increasing employment opportunities for Latino/a/x/e individuals with I/DD. Hiring bilingual, culturally competent staff is the most frequently recommended solution by employment service providers to address language and cultural barriers for Latino/a/x/e individuals with I/DD in Oregon, according to Applichat's Capacity and Barriers Report (Dec 2024)

Recommendation	Percent
Hire bilingual staff	64%
Hire culturally aware staff	36%
Include translation resources	27%
Hire interpreters	14%
Increase outreach	9%
Have a Spanish-language website	5%

Recommendations to address language and cultural differences to make services easier to access, according to Employment Service Providers.

Why Focus on Bilingual Recruitment?

Hiring bilingual staff is crucial for creating an inclusive, effective, and culturally competent workforce. For organizations serving the Latino/a/x/e community, having employees who can communicate fluently in Spanish and English can significantly improve service delivery, trust, and engagement.

Organizations that prioritize bilingual recruitment benefit in several ways:



Improved Job Seeker Experience:

Staff who can communicate in a job seeker's native language build trust and enhance service quality (Capacity and Barriers Report, 2024).



Greater Accessibility:

Bilingual professionals help bridge cultural and linguistic gaps, ensuring all job seekers receive the support they need (Marketing Strategy Report, 2025).



Stronger Community Ties:

A diverse, multilingual workforce strengthens relationships with local communities, increasing outreach and engagement (Capacity and Barriers Report, 2024).



Competitive Advantage:

Employers who actively recruit and retain bilingual staff position themselves as leaders in inclusive service delivery (Capacity and Barriers Report, 2024).

This guide presents strategies aimed at assisting employment providers in efficiently recruiting a greater number of bilingual professionals.

Updating your employer brand to attract bilingual candidates

According to the [2019 report 'Making Languages Our Business' by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages \(ACTFL\)](#), 9 out of 10 U.S. employers rely on employees with language skills other than English, and 56% anticipate that their demand for these skills will increase in the next five years. For organizations serving the Latino/a/x/e community, a strong employer brand that attracts bilingual candidates is essential for providing accessible and equitable services.



1

Create a Compelling Message

Your employer brand should communicate your commitment to serving diverse communities

Key messaging should include:

- A welcoming, inclusive workplace.
- Career development opportunities for bilingual staff.
- The impact of bilingual employees in bridging service gaps for Latino/a/x/e individuals with I/DD.



2

Leverage Bilingual Storytelling

- Share success stories of bilingual employees in your organization.
- Highlight their contributions and career growth to inspire potential candidates.
- Use both English and Spanish in marketing materials.



3

Optimize Your Online Presence

- Ensure your careers page is available in both English and Spanish.
- Encourage bilingual employees to leave reviews on platforms like *Glassdoor* and *Indeed*.
- Highlight bilingual staff contributions in social media posts and newsletters.

Strategies For Recruiting More Bilingual Staff

The demand for bilingual and multilingual employees is rapidly growing across the U.S. job market. This trend underscores the importance of recruitment strategies that attract and retain diverse language talent, particularly for organizations serving Latino/a/x/e and other multilingual communities.

Here are some strategies to help you attract bilingual talent:

1

Targeted Outreach in Bilingual Communities

- Partner with Latino/a/x/e community organizations, cultural centers, and Spanish-speaking churches.
- Advertise on bilingual job boards.
- Attend culturally relevant job fairs and networking events.

2

Job Listings That Speak to Bilingual Candidates

- Clearly state that bilingual skills are highly valued and offer additional pay or benefits.
- Write job descriptions in both Spanish and English.
- Emphasize career advancement opportunities for bilingual employees.
- Post on Impact Oregon, (<https://impactoregon.careers/>) connecting job seekers with careers in the field of developmental disabilities services in Oregon.

3

Incentivize Employee Referrals

- Your current bilingual employees can be your best recruiters. Offer referral bonuses for employees who successfully bring in qualified bilingual candidates.

4

Provide Language Development Support

- Offer professional development courses in both Spanish and English.g.
- Implement mentorship programs that pair bilingual and non-bilingual employees for cultural exchange and growth.



Understanding Your Current Staff and Defining Your Ideal Candidate

Building a strong, diverse workforce starts with understanding who your current employees are and what motivates potential hires. Candidate personas help organizations tailor their recruitment strategies by identifying key skills, backgrounds, and values that align with their mission. By developing these personas, employers can create job postings, outreach efforts, and workplace cultures that attract and retain the right talent.



Examples, based on research findings:



Laura Herrera
The Social Justice Seeker

Age: 28

Location: Salem, Oregon (*originally from Guadalajara, México*)

Profile Type: Job Coach Candidate

Background:

Laura is passionate about empowering others. With a background in social work and a deep connection to her Mexican roots, she has experience mentoring youth and advocating for underserved communities.

Daily Life:

- Laura spends her mornings volunteering at a local shelter and afternoons working as a community organizer.
- She attends cultural events to connect with her heritage and build her network.

Barriers:

- **Limited Resources:** Laura feels unsupported in finding opportunities to advance her career in disability services.
- **Heavy Workload:** Balancing multiple commitments leaves her with little time to explore new roles.

Opportunities:

- Connecting Laura with career growth opportunities in Impact Oregon would help her transition to a job coach role.
- Highlighting the impact of job coaching on Latino/a/x/e families could inspire Laura to take the next step in her career.
- She could be reached through social media with an impactful success story from a current job coach and directed to Impact Oregon to explore opportunities in the sector.

Personal Goals:

Laura envisions herself as a leader in her community, helping individuals with I/DD thrive while creating systemic change.

The Capacity and Barriers Report emphasizes the need for bilingual and culturally competent staff in ODDS services. Laura's background and dedication align with this critical gap, highlighting the value of recruiting professionals like her to improve access and trust within Latino/a/x/e communities.

Hiring bilingual staff was one of the primary recommendations identified in our research. However, hiring culturally competent staff at local and national levels is challenging for employment providers.



Sarah Harper

The Community Engagement Seeker

Age: 38

Location: Eugene, Oregon

Profile Type: Job Coach Candidate

Background:

Sarah has worked in employment services for about six years, primarily supporting individuals with I/DD. While she is passionate about helping people access opportunities, she has limited experience working with Latino/a/x/e individuals and families. She wants to provide better support but struggles with cultural nuances and language barriers.

Daily Life:

- Sarah spends her day coordinating with employers and families to create job opportunities for individuals with I/DD.
- She regularly attends meetings to align services with state and local programs.
- She researches ways to improve outreach but feels uncertain about how to engage effectively with Latino/a/x/e communities.

Barriers:

Cultural Understanding: Sarah is unfamiliar with the cultural dynamics and values of Latino/a/x/e families, which can lead to unintentional miscommunication

Language Barrier: Limited Spanish proficiency makes it difficult for her to connect with non-English speaking families.

Awareness Gap: Sarah is totally unaware of how systemic barriers like mistrust of institutions impact access for Latino/a/x/e communities

Opportunities:

- Webinars and training guides in cultural competency and basic Spanish phrases could help Sarah better engage with Latino/a/x/e families.
- Creating partnerships with local Latino/a/x/e organizations could bridge gaps in understanding and trust.
- Bilingual resources and interpreters would support Sarah in providing equitable services.

Personal Goals:

Sarah wants to become a more inclusive advocate by learning how to better support the Latino/a/x/e community and ensuring her services meet their specific needs.

She aspires to build trust with families and empower them to navigate employment systems confidently.

The Capacity and Barriers Report emphasizes the lack of language accessibility tools available to employment service providers. One participant shared the struggles they face when serving the community:

“Serving Latino individuals and their families usually results in increased time spent on specific tasks just to obtain the basic understanding... it limits my ability to complete other job tasks and assist others”.

When asked if there were specific cultural or language training programs for staff working with Hispanics and Latinos/a/x/e, only 27% said there were any. However, the effectiveness of such programs was highly rated, as 67% said those training efforts resulted in good or excellent results, and only 17% said their effectiveness was poor or very poor.

For staff like Sarah, increasing the availability of language proficiency programs, cultural competency workshops, and bilingual resources, would not only improve their ability to serve diverse communities but also empower them to provide more efficient and empathetic support to Latino/a/x/e families.



Enhancing Cultural Competency and Language Skills

To foster an inclusive and effective workplace, it is essential to provide ongoing training not just for new hires but also for existing staff. Many employees may not have prior experience working with Spanish-speaking job seekers or multicultural communities, making cultural competency training critical for improving communication, reducing misunderstandings, and strengthening relationships.

[Sarah's experience](#) highlights the importance of continuous learning—like many employees, she is eager to support diverse communities but benefits from structured training to do so effectively.

Consider the following initiatives:



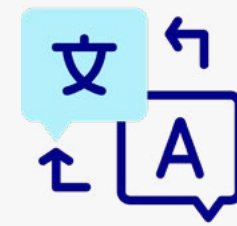
Webinars by Experienced Bilingual Staff

- Host sessions where bilingual employees share insights on effectively serving the Latino community.
- Provide real-world examples and practical strategies to improve interactions.



Glossary of Key Terms in Spanish

- Create and distribute a reference guide with commonly used terms in Spanish to assist non-Spanish-speaking staff.
- Include industry-specific vocabulary to enhance communication accuracy.



Workshop on Using Translation Tools

- Train employees on best practices for using translation apps and software to bridge communication gaps.
- Demonstrate how to use tools like Google Translate effectively while ensuring accuracy and cultural sensitivity.



Writing Compelling Bilingual Job Ads

A job ad is like the storefront of your organization. Just as an inviting storefront attracts customers, a well-crafted job ad captures the attention of bilingual candidates and encourages them to apply. However, research shows that around 98% of job ad viewers do not click “apply”, meaning many qualified candidates—who may already be employed but seeking more mission-driven roles—need a compelling reason to engage with your posting.

This is especially relevant for candidates like **Laura**, *The Social Justice Seeker*, who prioritizes impact-driven careers over generic job listings. To attract high-quality bilingual professionals like her, your job ads must be candidate-centric, highlighting not just role requirements but also the benefits, impact, and growth opportunities that come with the job.

[Laura is motivated by meaningful work—your job ad should reflect the real-world difference bilingual employees make in supporting diverse communities.](#)

This section will help you craft job postings that highlight opportunities for bilingual staff and align with the needs of the communities you serve.

Anatomy of a Successful Job Ad for Bilingual Staff

● **Headline:**

Grab Attention

Start with a powerful statement that stands out. Your headline should highlight the role's unique value and appeal to bilingual candidates.

Example:

"Empower Communities, Inspire Change – Join Us as a Bilingual Employment Specialist"

● **Interest:**

Engage Potential Candidates

Once you have their attention, convert it into interest. Communicate why bilingual professionals are essential to your mission and how their skills will be valued.

Example:

"Imagine waking up every morning knowing that your work is directly impacting lives. As a bilingual employment specialist, you will help job seekers overcome language and cultural barriers, opening doors to new career possibilities. If you are passionate about equity and inclusion, this is your chance to make a real difference."

● **Description:**

Highlight the Role's Value

Rather than just listing responsibilities, explain the positive impact of the role.

Example:

"Your ability to speak both Spanish and English can empower families, build trust, and create access to life-changing opportunities. In this role, you will guide job seekers through career development, provide culturally responsive support, and partner with employers to foster more inclusive workplaces. Every day, you'll play a key role in shaping brighter futures."

● **Action:**

Encourage Immediate Applications

Close with a strong call-to-action that urges candidates to apply.

Example:

"Join our mission-driven team and be the advocate bilingual job seekers need. Apply today and start making a lasting impact!"



Example Job Ad

Numbers tell the story, but real people inspire change.

“My child needs help, but I don’t know where to start.”

“I want to work, but they told me there were no resources in Spanish.”

These are just some of the stories we hear from Latino families in Oregon. And this is where you come in.

What does the data say?

13%

of employment providers believe outreach efforts to the Latino community have been effective.

4%

of Latinos with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) receive employment services, even though they make up 8% of the population eligible for ODDS services.

How can you help?

If you speak Spanish, you can be the bridge between the Latino community and employment services, ensuring that more people get access to the opportunities they need.

Join (company name) and help build a more inclusive future: (Link)

Headlines:

The numbers speak for themselves, let’s connect more Latinos with job opportunities.

Let’s change the statistics and help more Latino individuals with I/DD find jobs.



Conclusion

Recruiting bilingual employment service professionals requires a strategic approach that highlights their value and impact. By crafting inspiring job ads, defining your ideal candidate, and leveraging community networks, you can build a workforce that truly represents the communities you serve.

Want to assess your bilingual recruitment strategy?

Take our Bilingual Recruitment Self-Assessment to see how well your organization supports and attracts bilingual employees:

[Take the Assessment Now](#)

At the end, you'll receive a score and recommendations on improving bilingual hiring practices.

Glosary of Key Terms

1. Bilingual Recruitment – The process of attracting and hiring employees who are fluent in multiple languages, ensuring better service for diverse communities.

2. Cultural Competency – The ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across different cultures, particularly in a workplace setting.

3. Latino/a/x/e – Inclusive terms used to represent individuals of Latin American descent, ensuring gender-neutral and non-binary inclusivity.

4. I/DD (Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities) – A term that encompasses disabilities affecting cognitive function and daily living skills, requiring specialized support.

5. Employer Branding – The perception of a company as a workplace, shaped by its culture, values, and reputation among employees and job seekers.

6. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) – Voluntary, employee-led groups focused on fostering inclusion and professional development, particularly for underrepresented communities.

7. Bilingual Pay Differentials – Additional compensation offered to employees who use their bilingual skills in their roles, recognizing the added value they bring.

8. Flexible Scheduling: The ability for employees to have control over their working hours, allowing for adjustments to meet personal needs while maintaining job responsibilities.

9. Work-Life Balance: The balance between the demands of work and personal life, important for employee satisfaction and reducing burnout.

10. Burnout: A state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress and frustration, often seen in high-pressure industries like healthcare.

11. Compensation: The total of salary, benefits, and other financial rewards provided by an employer to an employee in exchange for their work.

12. Inclusive Job Descriptions – Job postings designed to attract diverse candidates, using accessible language and highlighting equity-driven workplace practices.

13. Workplace Inclusivity – The practice of ensuring all employees, regardless of language or cultural background, feel valued and have equal opportunities for growth.

14. Retention Strategies – Practices used by employers to keep employees engaged, satisfied, and committed to their jobs, including mentorship, career growth opportunities, and inclusive work environments.