

**ADANN SPANISH LANGUAGE OUTREACH PROJECT**  
**Research Brief: Understanding Regional Context**  
**REGION 6 Southwest ADA Center**



**Background**

The Spanish Language Outreach Project (SLO) is a new five-year collaborative national initiative of the ADA National Network (ADANN), ten regional ADA Centers, and the ADA Knowledge Translation Center. The first stage of the SLO project (2022-2023) aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the context of Spanish-speaking communities and assess their ADA-related information needs through research and expert consultation nationally and within each of the ten regions.

**Region 6 Summary**

This research brief reports on the key findings from the ADANN Region 6, Southwest ADA Center. Region 6 includes the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. As of 2021, Hispanics and Latinos made up the largest minority of the region, with a population of 13.6 million people. In each state, more than 6% of the Hispanic population had a disability.

**Data and Methods**

Using a participatory process, the project team identified community members and conducted semi-structured interviews. Participants interviewed included 4 community members: 3 in Arkansas and 1 in Texas. Most of the participants were female and half had some knowledge about the ADA. Most of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. Community members staff resource centers and translation and interpretation services with each having roles such as director of programs, resource manager or speech and language pathologist among others.

**Findings and Key Highlights**

In Region 6, language barriers are one of the most significant obstacles for the Spanish Speaking community. This includes the availability of information in Spanish, quality of translation and interpreting services, and lack of bilingual staff in state entities and service providers. Additionally, immigration status represents a significant fear for a lot of people in the Spanish-speaking community. In terms of accessing services and programs, lack of access to information was also a barrier. Another barrier was the stigma attached to disability, especially mental health as a barrier for this community to access information and find support. Last, technology can be a barrier to accessing information, especially for older generations in the community.

**Barriers**

Translation and interpretation services  
 Lack of bilingual staff  
 Fear  
 Lack of awareness about disability rights  
 Stigma  
 Technology

*“Cultural humility plays a big part and really staying your role as an interpreter. An interpreter has to be trained in this. The cultural differences, even within your own culture or within. There’s also on the assumption that all Hispanics have the same culture and that is incorrect.”*

*“People are afraid of being rejected, in the legal part, there are many undocumented people, and they are afraid to ask for help. They are scared of deportations. Even if their children are born here, but the fact that the parents are undocumented, it brings a lot of fear.”*

**Access to Information**

Social media  
 Word of mouth  
 TV and radio

*“WhatsApp is the easiest way to communicate with their family members, more for communication”*

**Recommendations**

Recommendations include community training, specific educational sessions, partnering with local organizations, and increasing representation in the community when trying to deliver a service. Specific strategies included:

- Community trainings
- Specific educational sessions for mental health information
- Partnerships with community leaders
- Increasing representation in the community

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**CONTACT**

**Southwest ADA Center, Region 6**

Website: <http://www.southwestada.org/>  
 Email: [swdbtac@ilru.org](mailto:swdbtac@ilru.org)  
 Phone: 1-713-797-7171

**ADA National Network**

Website: <https://adata.org/>  
 Email: <https://adata.org/email>  
 Phone: 1-800-949-4232