



# Hey Polly

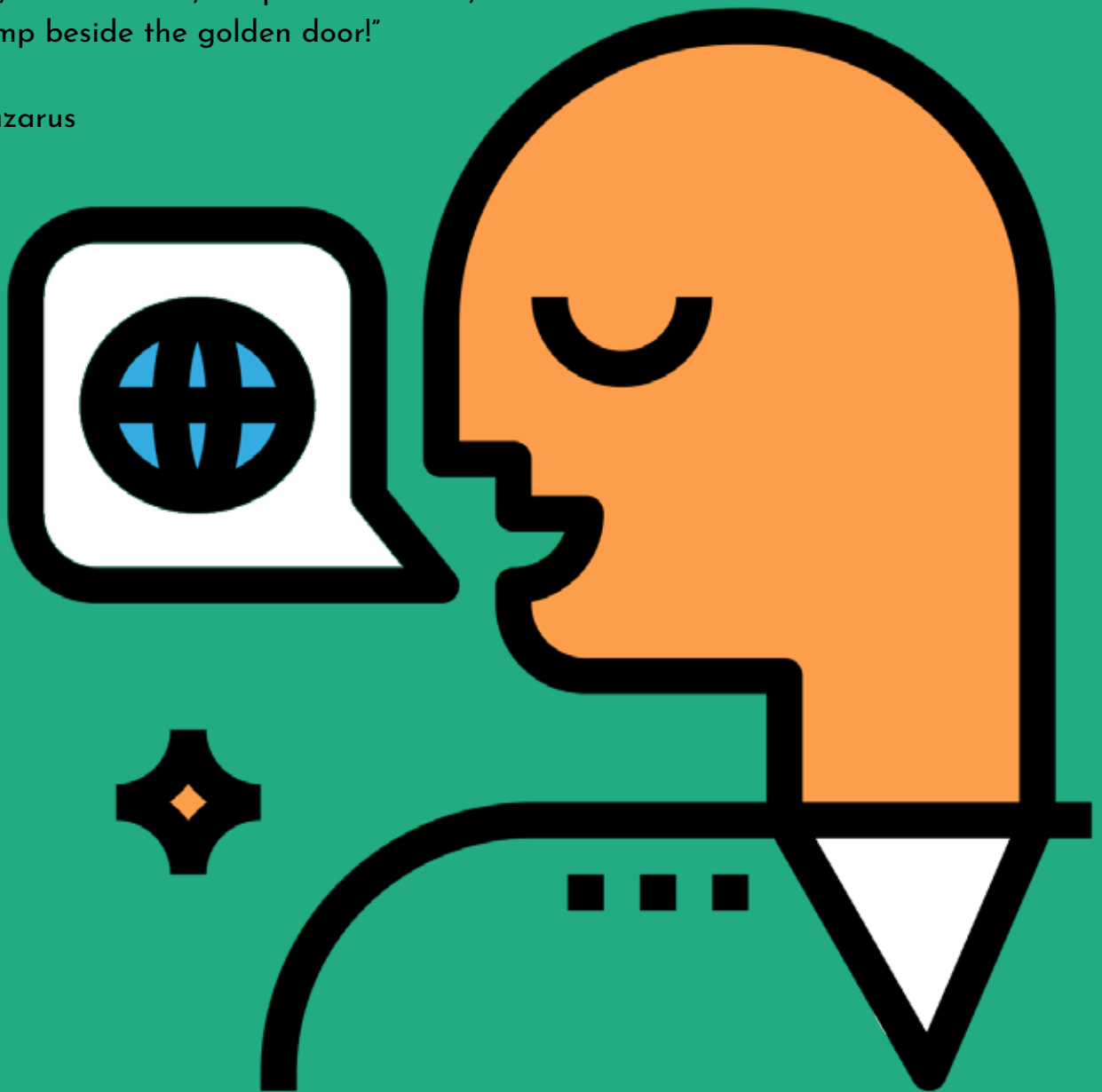
Civic Rights Regardless of Language

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Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
MOTHER OF EXILES. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

- Emma Lazarus





## **Hey Polly**

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Advisor: Jeff Franklin

April 2018

# Context



## Key Terms:

**Limited English Proficient (LEP):** A person who do not speak English as their primary language and who may have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

**Interpretation:** The process of orally rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another language.

**Translation:** The process of converting written text from one language into written text in another language.

“ For too many LEP Americans, applying for a license, filing a complaint or simply getting information is not just mildly frustrating; it’s all but impossible. ”

Source:  
Center for Popular Democracy & Make the Road New York. Language access in New York State:  
A snapshot from a community perspective. Brooklyn, NY: Authors.

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As defined by the U.S. Department of Justice, LEP individuals are persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who may have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

In the United States, there are 25 million LEPs representing 8.6% of the population. Language access allows Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals access to a wide range of services.

When both of us started the thesis process, we knew we were going to work with language, we just didn't know how or where. We started with our own cities and we learned that according to the Census, 21.4% of the population in Jersey City and 23.0% of New York City's residents were LEPs. <sup>1</sup>

LEPs are a vulnerable group as speaking English is integral to one's success in assimilating into the United States. Without English, it is difficult to navigate even the most basic day-to-day tasks, much less participate in civic society.

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[ 1 ] US Census Bureau. "American Community Survey (ACS)." Census.gov, [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/)

# Barriers to learning English:

Cost  
Availability of Classes  
Time

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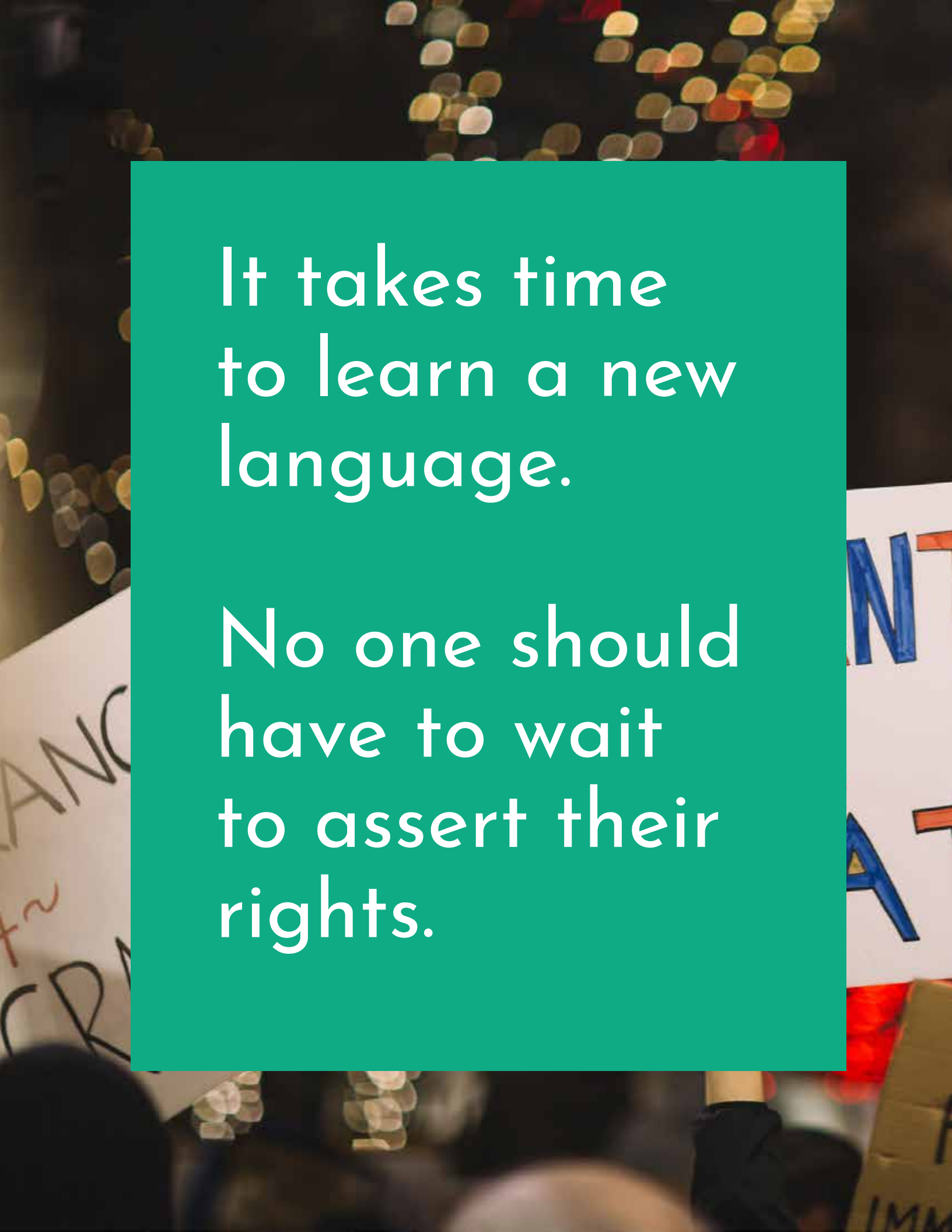
To solve this problem, we initially thought we would be working on language learning and spoke to both language teachers and LEP advocates. From language teachers, we learned that language teachers face challenges in having students grasp the complexities of grammar and vocabulary, and they believe that language is best learned through immersion and constant practice.

As for LEPs, initial interviews and research revealed that they face difficulties learning English because of three main reasons: they can't afford English classes. There are two year long waits for free or low-cost classes<sup>1</sup>. Finally, they don't have the time to learn English due to work and other responsibilities.

While not all LEPs are immigrants, and not all immigrants are LEPs, many LEPs are immigrants. With the 2016 US presidential election results, there was increased concern about the rights of immigrants. To address those concerns, many rights-based organizations started translating materials to inform LEP immigrants of their rights. With that in mind, we reached an epiphany of the direction we wanted to go for our thesis:

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[1]<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/south/2014/07/30/immigrants-can-wait-years-for-free-english-classes-south-boston/5jW-SOp21w51zO9sQEzmdjK/story.html>

The background of the image is a blurred photograph of a protest. At the top, there are out-of-focus lights in shades of yellow, orange, and red. Below the lights, there are several white signs with handwritten text in blue and black ink. Some of the visible words include 'ANG', 'f2', 'CR', 'N', 'A', and 'IMM'. A teal rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing two lines of white text.

It takes time  
to learn a new  
language.

No one should  
have to wait  
to assert their  
rights.

# Process

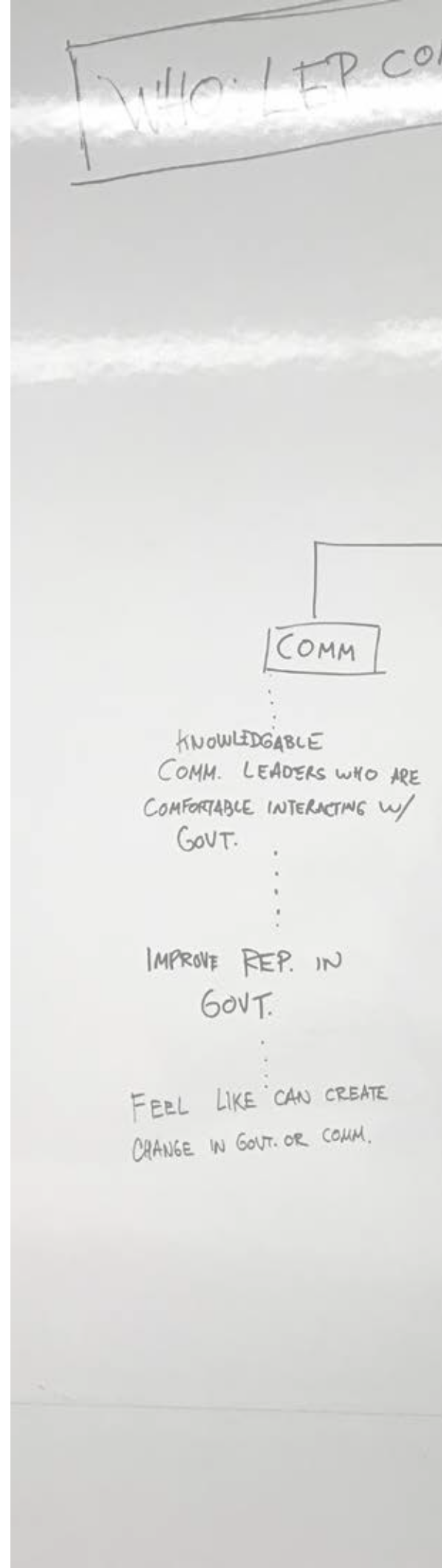
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## RESEARCH

Desk Research  
User Interviews  
Observation  
Rapid Prototyping

## STAKEHOLDERS

LEPs  
Government Staff  
Community Members  
Community Groups





4M.

# Big Goal :

## LEP'S ABILITY TO EXERCISE RIGHTS FULLY

ACCESS

GOVT

AWARENESS

LEP

- that services exist
- that they have a right to free interpretation

GOVT

know that LEPs EXIST

there is a ne

make material visible.

CREATE/USE MATERIALS  
VISIBLE & EASY TO  
COMPREHEND + TRANSLATE

MAKE GOVT SEEM LESS  
DAUNTING & MORE TRUSTWORTHY

they need to  
feel that gov  
will held accountable.

MOBILIZE COMM.

IMPROVE REP. IN GOVT.

Belief that  
they can make  
change through  
government

# Government

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After narrowing our thesis topic down to the access of civic rights and government services in Jersey City, we spent our summer learning how different cities and countries approach language access for immigrants, refugees, and residents with different language needs. From desk research, sitting in language access training in New York City, showing up at community meetings in Jersey City, and interviewing government staff in both cities, our first insight began to emerge:

**Government employees who take the responsibility of providing access do so informally, and often because they have ties to the LEP community.**

# Barriers to providing service:

## Cost

## Disparate Knowledge

Over the course of our thesis, New York City expanded its Local Law 30, requiring City agencies that provide direct services to the public to translate their most commonly distributed documents into the top 10 citywide languages. While Jersey City, a smaller city with 3% of New York City's population, was still trying to figure out how to best serve their diverse community.

Initially, we believed that New York City provided better language access because they have more comprehensive laws that would translate to more resources and policies. From interviewing a language coordinator in New York City, we learned that even New York has its own set of challenges and issues. We compared them with insights from Jersey City and found that the following issues were consistent in both governments:

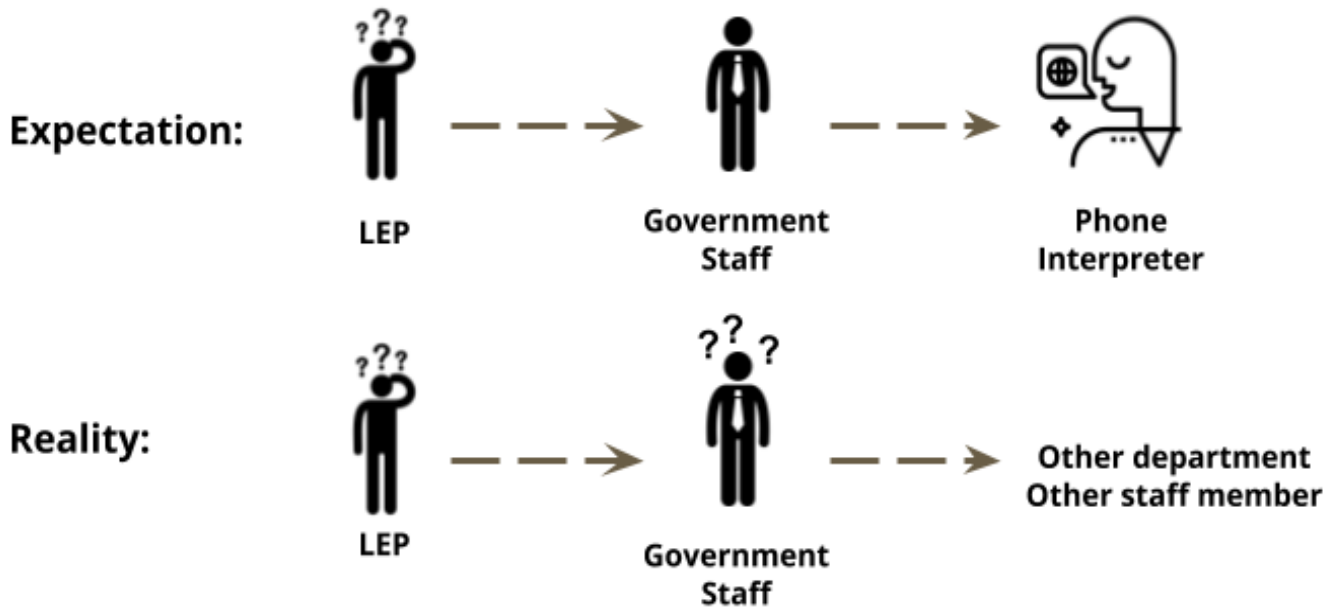
First, cost is a large barrier in ensuring that language access is provided. We were surprised to learn that telephonic interpretations were the most cost-effective form of language access compared to translated print materials. We had assumed that printed translations would be more affordable because they were reuseable.

Second, there was disparate employee knowledge of language access because not all staff are required to be trained in cross-cultural communication or providing language access. In some cases, some government employees were not aware of the language access services that their department provided to LEPs.

“ Other departments  
(in Jersey City) don't  
have phone interpretation. ”

“ (Telephonic interpretations)  
are an underutilized  
resource in our department. ”

“ When they don't  
speak English, ”  
they get sent to us.



Since Jersey City has a smaller government and the Office of Welcoming Communities seemed receptive to the idea of improving language access, we wanted to help LEP individuals gain access to services by working directly with the people who can help them gain access. Hence, our initial target audience was the Jersey City Government with LEPs being the beneficiary.

# LEP Community



Former LEPs  
Current LEPs  
Children of LEPs

In addition to interviewing government staff, we also interviewed members of the LEP community. Some of our participants were former LEPs who gained English proficiency later in life, some were children of LEPs who interpreted for their parents, while others were LEPs who spoke halting English.

We also gleaned insights from a 2013 study by the Center for Popular Democracy and Make the Road New York that surveyed over 500 LEPs on their experience with language access in New York state. We focused on the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) data as it was the most extensive.

From the study we learned that:

68% of respondents received no support on their visit to the DMV. Of the 32% who received interpretation support, over half—53%—said that these services had allowed them to get information or services they needed. Another 26% said their needs had been met to some degree, and the remaining 21% reported that their needs had not been met.

This means that around 83% of LEPs who visit the DMV report that their needs were not fully met.

“

All too often, these individuals arrive at government agencies to find that interpreters are overwhelmed or simply unavailable and translated materials are not on hand.

Frequently, they must recruit untrained friends and relatives—in many cases English-speaking children—to help them communicate. The confusion and errors that sometimes result can have serious consequences.

”

Source:

Center for Popular Democracy & Make the Road New York. Language access in New York State: A snapshot from a community perspective. Brooklyn, NY: Authors.

# LEP Community Quotes

“

It's painful. It's hard for my mom. Having lived in Haiti for 40 plus years, she knew how everything works. Here, it feels like we don't have common sense. We were always at the mercy of a someone in the family that spoke English. We couldn't do anything if it wasn't with them at first. ”

Randy, Son of LEP



“  
I know I need to bring  
someone with me to interpret.  
They can say there is a law,  
but the truth is nobody cares.”

Elsa, LEP

Source:  
Center for Popular Democracy & Make the Road New York. Language access in New York State:  
A snapshot from a community perspective. Brooklyn, NY: Authors.

“  
There is always a fear that  
when someone doesn't speak  
the language, it is easy to  
fraud them.”

Lorraine, Lawyer and Daughter of LEP Immigrant

“  
When you don't speak English  
and you're not confident in  
your skills, you keep yourself  
away from these situations”

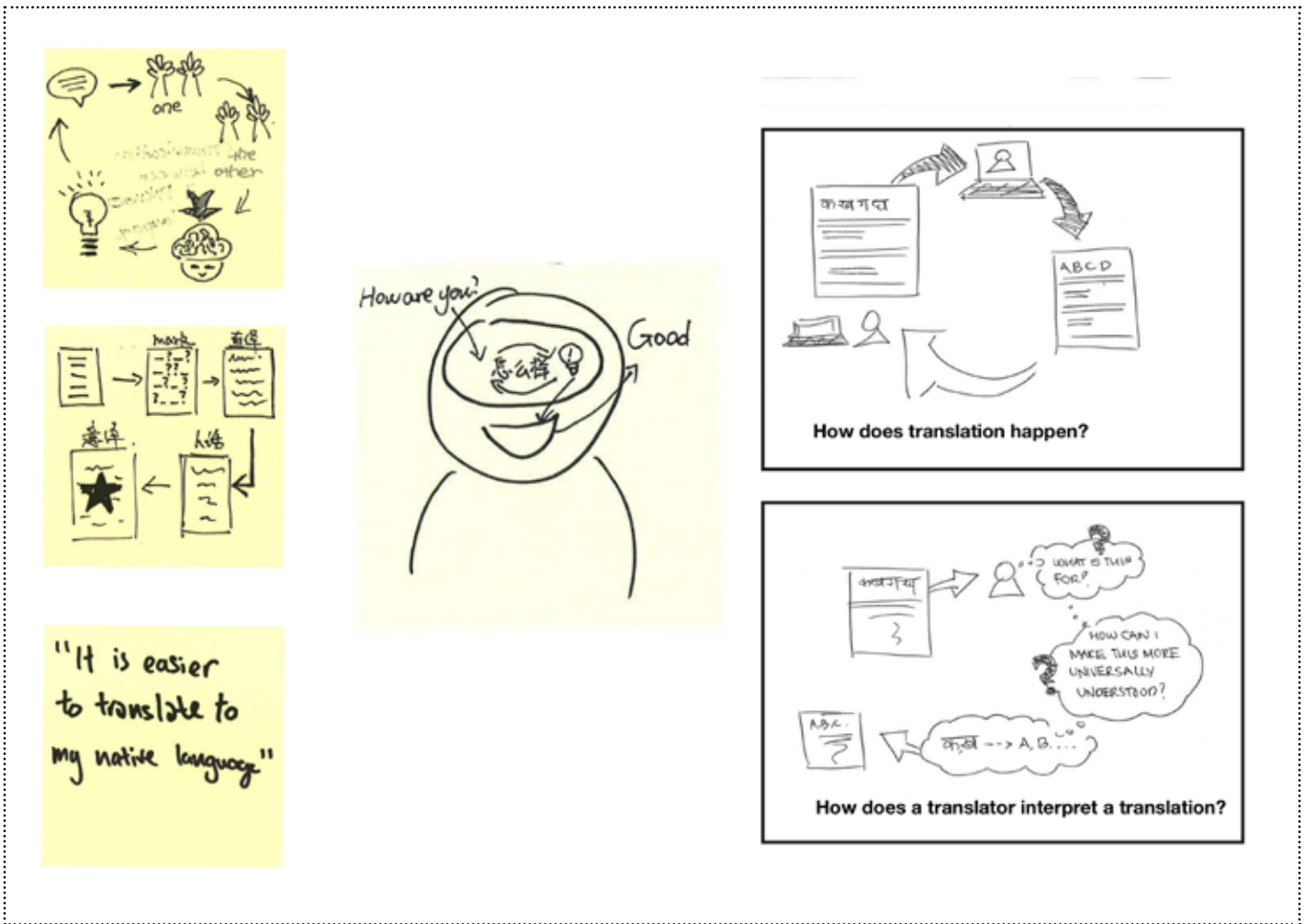
Luis, Former LEP and Son of LEP

# Volunteers



When we interviewed government staff, we also found out that it was a challenge recruiting volunteers to interpret and translate for their community. To understand why, we interviewed bilingual community members.

We learned that everyone understood interpretation and translation differently. Many of them feel hesitant to volunteer because they feel that it would be too difficult to translate government documents.



Sketches by community members on how they understood translation

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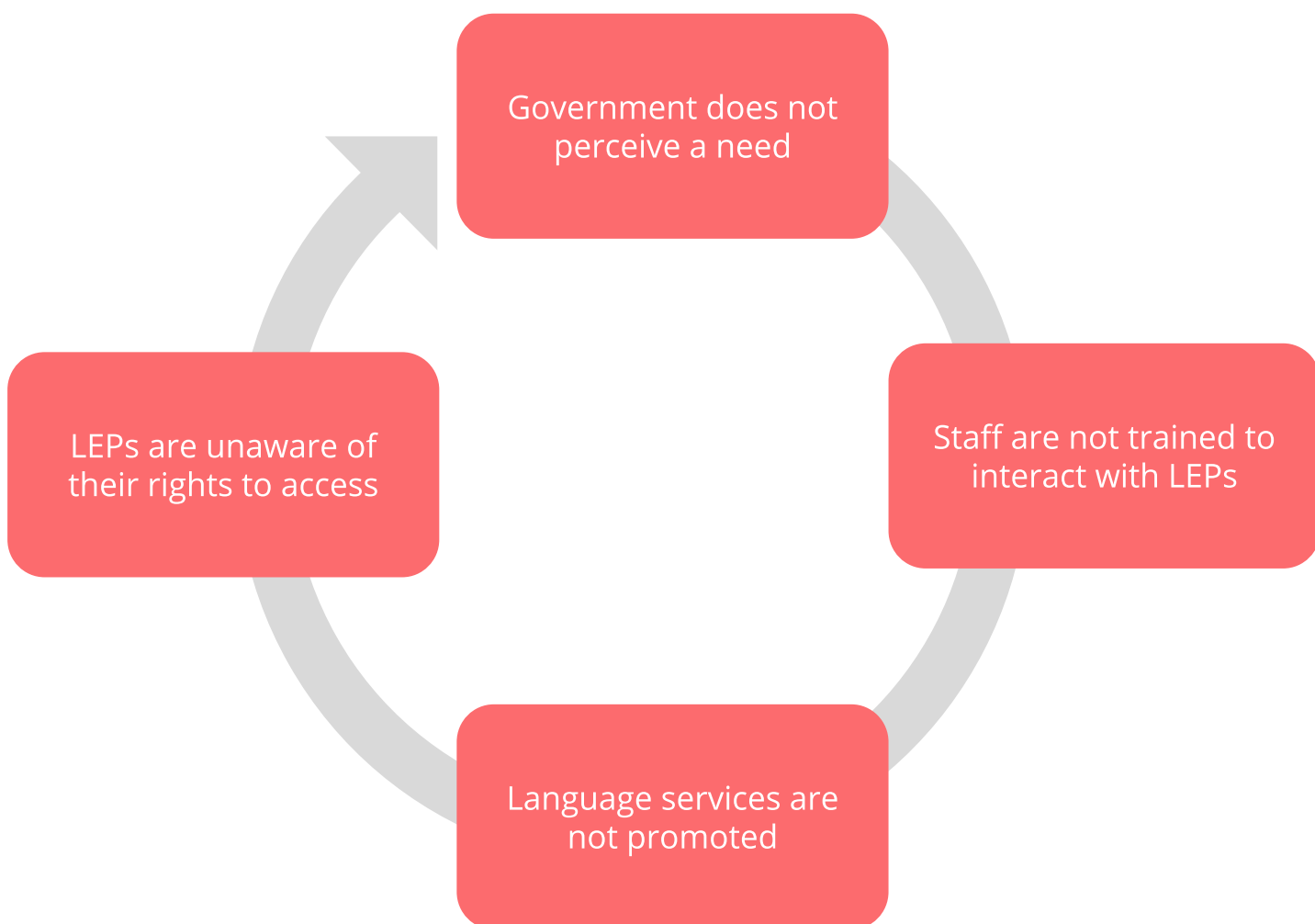
When you ask someone to translate and you use the word government it instantly becomes intimidating and may turn people off to participate and help, or feel its too daunting of a task to be able to help.

”

Kris, Bilingual Community Member

## Problem Statement:

Government is limited in their ability to serve their community because they are unaware and unable to connect with segments of their population.



How might we ensure that information about government services is easily accessible regardless of language?

# Design Focus

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When we first started our research, we casted a wide net and interviewed LEP community members regardless of language backgrounds. We assumed that there was good language access in Spanish and wanted to focus on languages with little to no access. However, when we observed firsthand how an online spanish form was down for months, we decided to focus on Spanish. We realized that to provide language access for all, we needed to start with good practices in Spanish.

We decided to focus on digital solutions for wider information dissemination and after hearing feedback from various government departments and non-profits on how difficult it was for them to sustain the cost of producing print documents. Furthermore, as we were preparing our prototypes, the Jersey City Government released their new government site.

We were initially pleased to see that they were taking steps to provide access even if it were just a simple Google Translate plug-in. However, when we tested the new site, we quickly realized that when using a plug-in like Google Translate, certain site functions such as the search button wouldn't work.

From digital.gov, we later learned that when web content is machine-translated using a plug-in or API such as Google Translate, the translated content is invisible to search engines. Hence, when a person is searching for information to accomplish a task in a language other than English, the website will not come up in the search results because that content does not exist.

“

The NY.gov website is providing the “Google Translate” option to assist you in reading the NY.gov website in languages other than English. Google Translate cannot translate all types of documents, and may not provide an exact translation. **Anyone relying on information obtained from Google Translate does so at his or her own risk.**

The State of New York does not make any promises, assurances, or guarantees as to the accuracy of the translations provided. The State of New York, its officers, employees, and/or agents shall not be liable for damages or losses of any kind arising out of, or in connection with, the use or performance of such information, including but not limited to, damages or losses caused by reliance upon the accuracy of any such information, or damages incurred from the viewing, distributing, or copying of such materials.

”

Source:  
<https://www.ny.gov/google-translate-disclaimer>

# Prototyping



With all this research in mind, we came up with three guiding principles to keep in mind when developing our prototypes with our community.

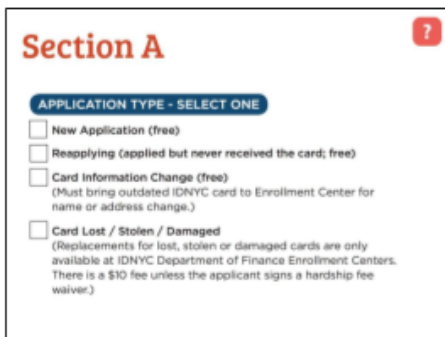
## **Main Guiding Principles:**

Agency

Trust

Accountability





## Prototype 1: Augmented Forms

Hypothesis:

If forms were better labeled, it will be easier for LEPs to navigate and translate the forms with the aid of technology

Feedback:

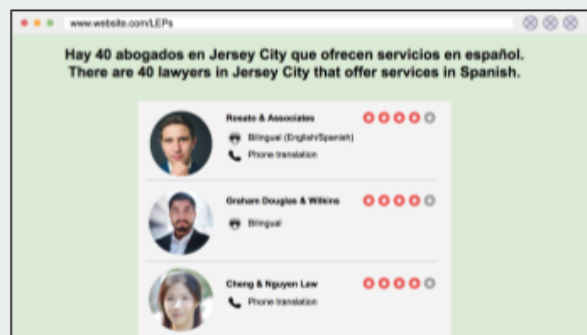
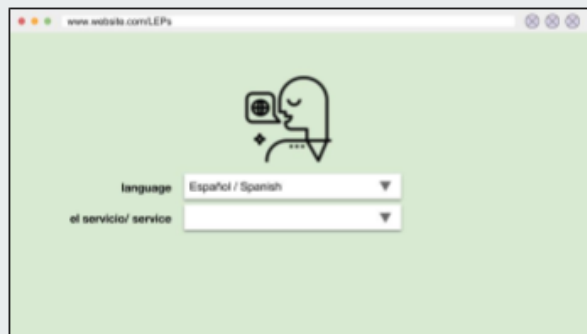
“I was able to translate and fill out the form but it is still cumbersome”

Hypothesis:

LEPs currently rely on community knowledge, what if their networks were amplified?

Learnings:

LEPs seem less worried about translated forms and more focused on finding someone who speaks their language.

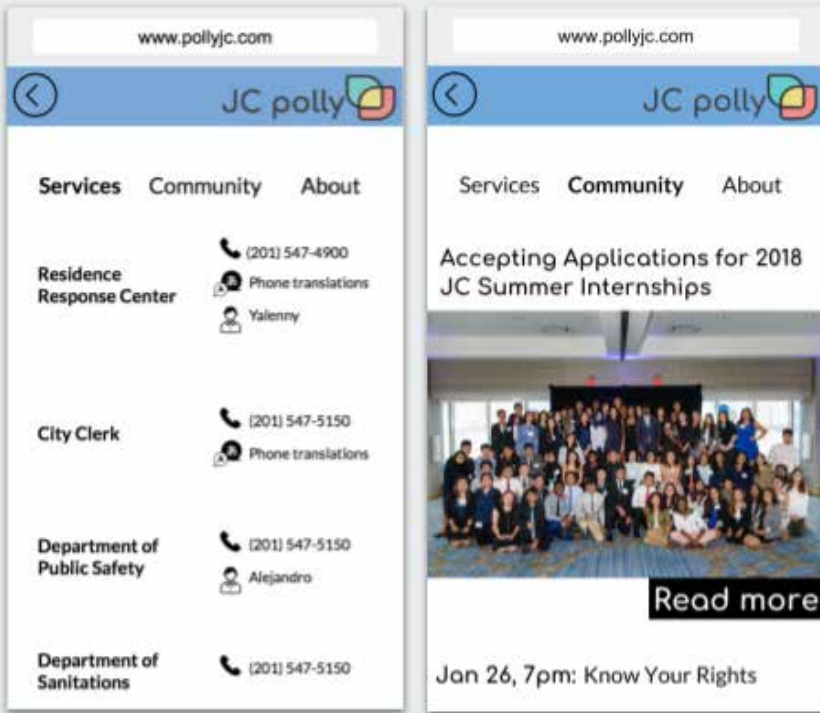


## Prototype 2: “Yelp for LEPs”

# Language Directory



While the language directory was well-received by LEPs, by itself, it did not address how it would hold government accountable when LEPs are unable to receive services at different government offices. We brainstormed and came up with Hey Polly, a web-based language directory that works together with a sms-based reporting system. It was a large complex system that would have taken longer to test and develop. We decided to focus on just the directory while exploring a complementary system that addresses the need for accountability. In our next prototypes we explored additional features that would interest LEPs and get them to use the platform.



## Prototype 3: Directory + Community Information

Hypothesis:  
LEPS would trust and be more willing to use Polly if it shows community events and ties to the community.

Learnings:  
The community events calendar wasn't a big draw and people were more interested in knowing how to find information.

Hypothesis:  
LEPs want the autonomy to find answers themselves and making their own informed decisions on which government service to go to.

Learnings:  
Having too many options can be overwhelming for LEPs and turn them off using the Hey Polly portal.



## Prototype 4: Directory + Government Information

# Language Directory + Q&A Feature

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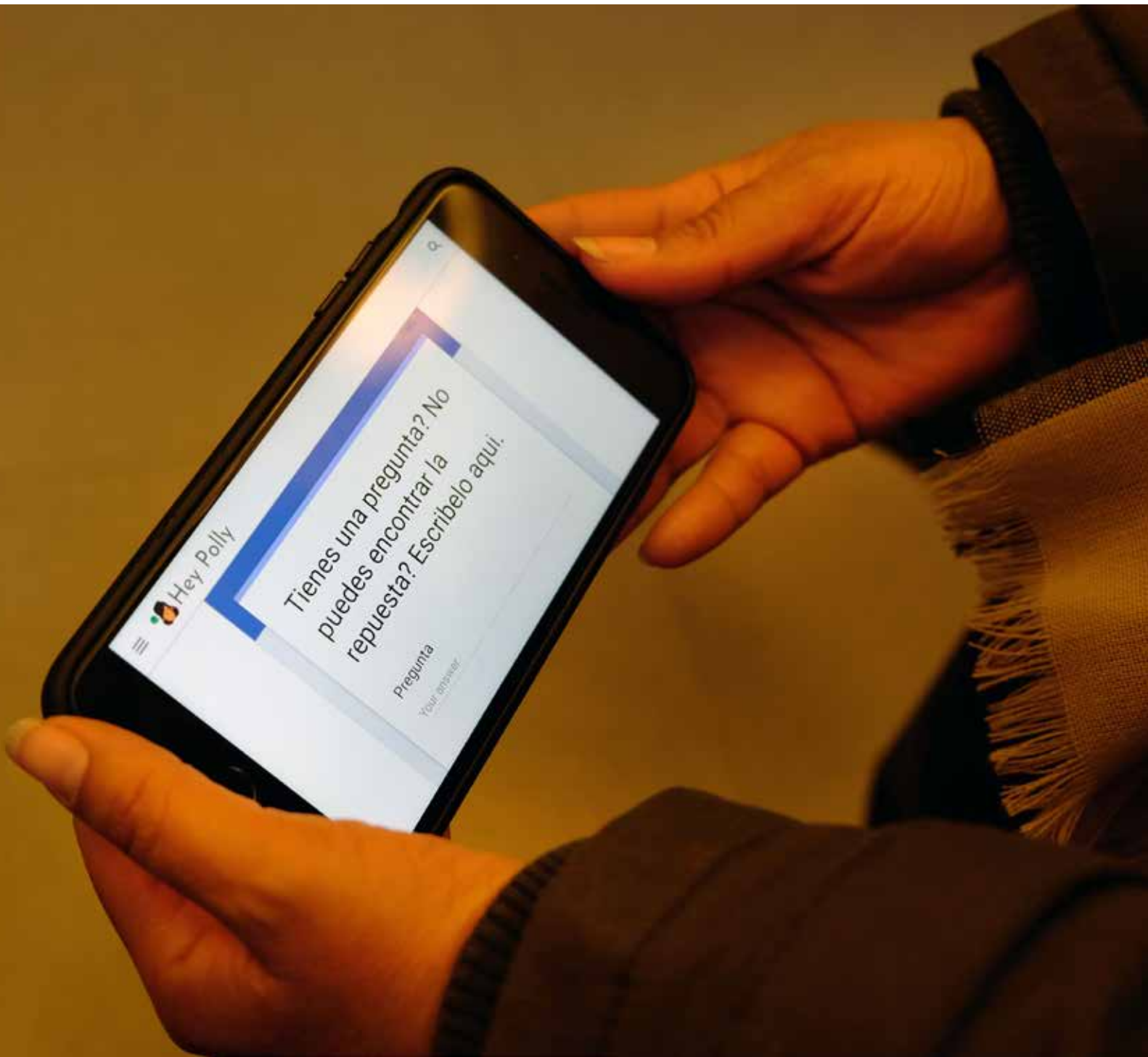
## Hypothesis:

Being able to ask questions and get answers in their language would make government resources more accessible.

## Feedback:

"What do you mean this doesn't exist yet?"

"I can see this being utilized, but I don't understand why it hasn't been made?"



# Hey Polly

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**¡Tengo una pregunta!**

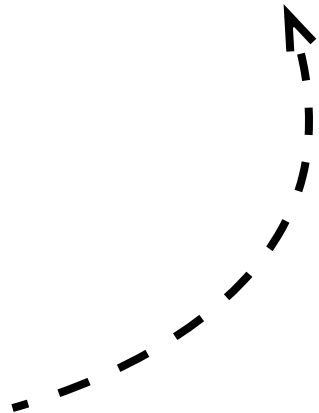
I have a question!

If a LEP resident has a question, they can access the Hey Polly portal to see if the question has already been answered. Any answer posted on the portal has already been verified either by trusted community members or the government.



Once the resident receives an answer that directs them to a government office, they can check the language directory and see what language services the office provides.

This will allow them to plan ahead for offices that may have less extensive language access plans in place.



If the question has not been previously asked or answered, the resident would be able to submit their question in their native language.

They may leave an email address or a phone number to be notified once the question has been answered. If not, they can remain anonymous.



# Hey Polly Volunteers



Keeping in mind the concerns of volunteers, we identified different tasks that would be more manageable for volunteers.

Depending on the comfort level of the volunteer, they may be researching answers to questions, translating the questions and answers, or just verifying and proof-reading translations.

By opening up of what it meant to volunteer, Hey Polly would lower the barriers to entry for potential volunteers.



## Language Volunteers

### Tasks:

Translate questions from origin language into English  
Translate answers from English to origin language.

Proofreading translations:  
finding spelling errors,  
grammatical issues, improper translations or misused words.

- Read document.
- Make notes on sections that aren't clear.

Notes:  
*Incorrectly translates to:  
Please far turn around guardians when you are made.*

*The translation does not even translate the same concept as the one in English*



### How would you find an answer for...

"Is there a way to sign up for reduced or subsidized housing?  
How do I do this as a first time immigrant?"

**Answer:**  
*The New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development develops and preserves affordable housing. There is a online guide that helps New Yorkers prepare for housing lottery.*  
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/renters/ready-set-apply.page>

**Notes:**  
*The guide is translated into Spanish  
Chinese link not working  
It took me 25 minutes for me to find this document*

## Content Volunteers

### Tasks:

Research answers to questions by using online search engines, calling relevant offices and in-person visits to find the correct answer and solutions to our LEPs' pressing questions

# Accountability

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To create the language directory, data will be requested directly from different government departments. We believe that sharing language access plans and reports shows acceptance of accountability. If departments are unwilling or unable to do so, the information will be crowdsourced by volunteers.

To further encourage government accountability, Hey Polly will create a monthly report. The report will include a list of community concerns, discrepancies in language access, questions answered by Hey Polly, and questions that volunteers are unable to answer. Hey Polly would request assistance from the government in answering unanswered questions.

Our report will be valuable to governments in understanding their constituents by making their needs and concerns more visible.

## Our Community + Language Access

In the United States, more than 25 million people over the age of 5 in the United States were considered Limited English Proficient in 2013<sup>1</sup>, that's around 8% of the entire US population. In Jersey City, there are around 50,000 of LEPs, representing around 25% of the population.

In Jersey City, the top 5 language are Spanish, Tagalog, Hindi, Arabic and Chinese. It is important that we serve LEPs in our community because compared to the English-proficient population, the LEP population was less educated and more likely to live in poverty<sup>2</sup>. As the Hey Polly Jersey City Chapter, we believe that language should not be a barrier to exercising your rights in this country. Furthermore, LEP individuals protected from national origin discrimination under Title VI that states:

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

### This report includes:

- Community Concerns**
- Languages Service**
- Language Service Directory Report**

#### **List of Answered Questions**

#### **List of Unanswered Questions**

There are a list of questions that our volunteers were not able to easily find answers to on the government's website. We hope you would kindly assist us in providing community with the resources they need.

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<sup>1</sup> Zong, Jie, et al. "The Limited English Proficient Population in the United States." Migrationpolicy.org, 2 Mar. 2017. [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states)

<sup>2</sup> Zong, Jie, et al. "The Limited English Proficient Population in the United States."

# Key Values

A red wavy line underlines the text "Key Values".A solid orange vertical bar is located on the right side of the page.

# Agency

LEPs can use  
Hey Polly independently

# Trust

LEPs can ask questions  
anonymously and receive  
verified information.

# Accountability

The community runs  
Hey Polly and holds the  
government accountable.





# Bringing it Back

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Once we had our LEP testers excited about the the Hey Polly portal, we went back to Jersey City's Office of Welcoming Communities. The office was excited by how Hey Polly would allow them to better serve the LEP community. Given the features of Hey Polly, it was simple enough to adapt to free site-builders. The lower tech barrier also assured the department the ease of maintenance.

The fact that Hey Polly would provide verified information to LEPs and give them a better understanding of community needs through user generated questions were key selling points. They also validated how easy it was to maintain and could see themselves running it alongside a community group.

They were realistic about the timeline to get Hey Polly cleared through the legal and communication departments. Adding that they could see other community groups being interested in running and maintaining Hey Polly.

With this feedback, we finalized our Hey Polly portal prototype and also developed an online toolkit so interested community groups could set up their own community Hey Polly.

“

We can think of community groups that would be interested in Hey Polly, but we need something like this too!

”







“

Now, I always think about what language access we provide when going into a meeting.

”

The Hey Polly Toolkit includes:

Volunteer Training Slides

Pitch Deck

Community Assets Audit

Reporting Templates

Links to other language access  
reference materials

## About Language Access

Language access allows Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals access to a wide range of services.

As defined by the U.S. Department of Justice, LEP individuals are persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who may have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

### Useful Terms

**Limited English Proficient (LEP):** A person who do not speak English as their primary language and who may have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

**Interpretation:** The process of orally rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another language.

**Translation:** The process of converting written text from one language into written text in another language.



## About the Toolkit

Hey Polly is an online platform that connects LEPs to government and community resources. Its features allow LEPs to easily find resources, allowing them to easily navigate in their community. Hey Polly is one of many methods to solve for language access and we believe that it is the most effective when used with other language access strategies.

Other awesome organizations have developed and kindly shared great resources in bringing language access to your community. Our toolkit hopes to amplify the existing efforts of these organizations while also sharing the Hey Polly platform.

Please email us if you spot any broken links.

## Why Hey Polly?

Web translations are often seen as a cost-effective way to provide access to vital information to LEPs online. It allows information to easily shared outside the constraints and limitations of print.

However, when web content is machine-translated using a plug-in or API such as Google Translate, the translated content is invisible to search engines. Hence, when a person is searching for information to accomplish a task in a language other than English, the website will not come up in the search results because that content does not exist. (Source: [DigitalGov](#))

### Community Polly Examples

Basic: English - Spanish

Advanced: English \*Coming Soon\* - Spanish \*Coming Soon\*



## Starting Your Community Polly

Setting up your Community Hey Polly Portal \*coming soon\*

Introducing Hey Polly Slides

Community Access Audit

Hosting an In-person Hey Polly Session \*coming soon\*

Hey Polly Volunteer Training Slides

Measuring Success (Source: Migration Policy Institute)

Hey Polly Reporting Template

## Take Action

Advocate for Language Access Law \*coming soon\*

Contact your Elected Officials (Source: Ballotpedia)

Adopt Digital Best Practices for Multilingual Sites (Source: DigitalGov)





# Hey Polly Toolkit

We believe that the Hey Polly portal is one of many methods to solve for language access and we believe that it is the most effective when used with other language access strategies.

Just by showing up to local government, we were able to change mindsets within government even before we showed them our final prototype. With the tools and resources in our toolkit, anyone can advocate for language access in their communities.

# Final Intervention

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To test for scalability, our final intervention, we went back to New York City to see if Hey Polly would be viable in a larger community. The New York Public Library offers free English Conversation classes for LEPs. We showed librarians at the NYPL both the toolkit and the portal. There seems to be great initial interest in adopting Hey Polly and the fact that LEPs already trust and go to the library makes them a possible distribution point in the future.











# User Feedback

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“I’m surprised this hasn’t been made available yet. Looking on the internet and google for answers is always a difficult process, you look for the answers in your language and your directed to answers that don’t answer your question. If I’m looking for answers to a question in spanish here in the US, I still get directed to resources in other Spanish-speaking countries. I can’t fully trust the answers I do find, I can’t be totally sure that they are accurate. Another alternative is searching through online forums for answers to questions you may have, but this is tedious and not always successful. Why would I want to endlessly search for an answer that I need now”  
- Esther, LEP

“I’m confused as to how I would even learn about this as a tool I could use. Once I find it though I could see myself using it for several things. Here in New York when we (immigrants and LEPS) first arrive we are all lost. We have questions about our visas, immigration and application procedures, what resources are even available to us since its not the same as our home countries, and what is free and what we should be paying for. For me, I only know the basics of google searching so I’m never certain I’ll find what I need when I search”  
- Marianne, LEP

“Providing people with information and resources, more than just facts in books, is the goal. Job help, resume help, language and citizenship help, resources for children and adults, I think the library is changing from being a solely information resource to a multifaceted community resource. I’m always wondering how we could improve the program, and further our outreach to volunteers and potential community members who want to help”

- Sarah, Librarian

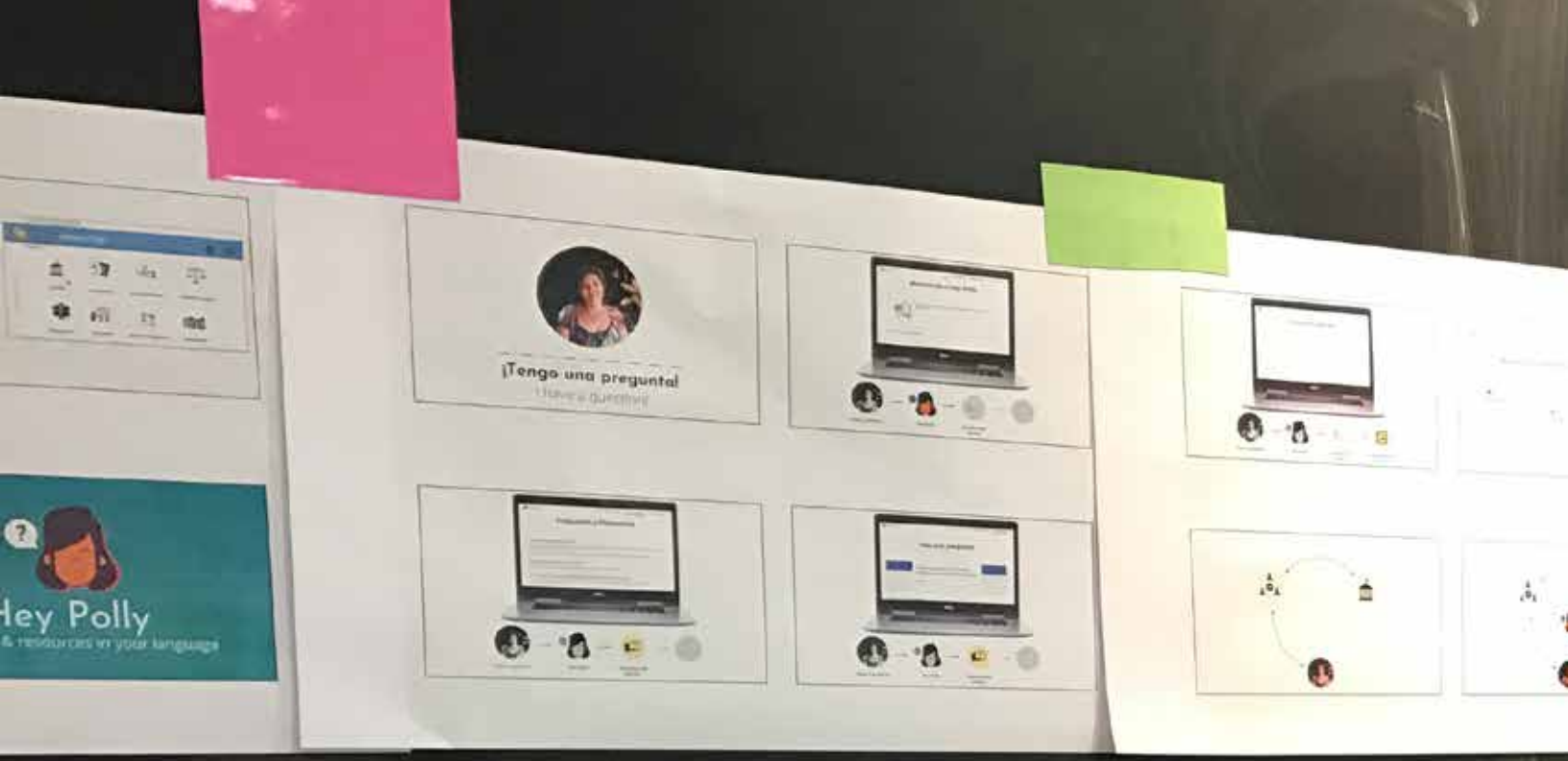
“311 is an option available to New Yorkers, but even here not everyone is comfortable using or even fully understands how to use the service appropriately. I can see this being useful at the library, the community already relies on us for information and this could be another tool we use to get them that information. This already feels like something we are working towards, we are supposed to help people find out information and this seems like another tool we could use to help our community. The fact that this is free you’ll have a lot of people willing to give it a try, as all other resources are either confusing for them or require them to pay”

- Lina, Librarian









# Learnings + Conclusions

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## We Spoke to Diverse Stakeholders

We didn't limit who we spoke with in the beginning of the project. We reached out to government staff in multiple departments, ESOL teachers, computer developers, immigrants and the children of immigrants from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We were able to use the relationships we had forged with key government officials to connect us with community groups that were working on similar topics and with LEPs that were willing to talk with us and test our service.

## We Were Open and Curious

Once we finalized our idea it was about testing what aspects the community needed the most and what parts of our hypothesis were disproven. We saw our prototypes as tests and were curious about our users experience. We were open to change and did not hold attachments to any one aspect of our prototypes. Once a hypothesis was disproved by our users feedback we kept what worked and stripped away what didn't. When something was too confusing we simplified it and if something was consistently overlooked or seen as unnecessary we removed it. We built upon the aspects that our testers consistently felt were most useful and came to a finalized version once all elements needed were met.

# Reflections



## Strengths

## We Were Resilient and Flexible

Over the course of our thesis, 3 different government contacts left their position which required us to find a new person each time to serve as our liaison and keep our partnership with government alive. Having dived deep into our initial user outreach and research, we were able to build up and keep our momentum throughout the project and tackle obstacles and changes as they came up. We were able to use our extensive research as a guide when aspects of the project changed, allowing us to look back and see what other nuggets of information held potential uses for our project and could lead to our next breakthrough. We created and kept several contingency plans in ready as we learned that working with government is filled with uncertainty.

## We Remained Optimistic

Whenever we told people that our thesis would involve the government, we were met with skepticism and were asked many times if we were sure. Despite the obstacles and changes, we remained optimistic and true to the vision of what we want to see in our community.



## We Forgot the Library

We didn't think about collaborating with the library until the last few weeks of our thesis and didn't realize what a great resource they are already for LEP's. We could have built up a partnership with an institution that has been working with our target community for years and built up on their existing infrastructure and practices. We also originally limited our research to just Jersey City, hypothesizing that New York was already operating fully realized language access plans. We later learned that even cities with expansive language access protocols have gaps and are unable to reach each potential user, unwittingly limiting the access to their citizens.

## We Relied Heavily on Proxies

Due to the current political climate, many LEPs were reluctant to participate or speak to us, feeling that their identity or the information they provided us would be compromised and put themselves and their families at risk. Because of this, we began to interview adult children of immigrants who had learned English and had served as the defacto translator for their families while they grew up. This gave us an in depth perspective of the heavy responsibility and reliance LEP families place on any member of their family that can help them communicate and survive in this country.

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## Areas for Growth



## Data & Accountability

Our data could have the potential to hold government accountable and potentially influence future policies around unseen needs or the implementation of language access protocols. The types of questions asked, the frequency they are asked and in what language are all valuable data points that can show gaps and blind spots governments and policy makers may have previously overlooked or didn't have data available to prove otherwise. However, with concerns about data privacy after the Cambridge Analytica scandal, we need to think carefully about how we were collecting data and what data should be shared.

## We Underestimated Politics

Protocols and staff can vary dramatically depending on who's in power and the specific agenda of each party. Political agendas can affect the budgeting and resources available to vital projects for the community. This can make working with government and vital stakeholders on public policies both controversial and extremely difficult. Throughout our thesis, we witnessed the state of New Jersey transfer hands from a Republican governor to a new Democratic governor, we also saw the re-election of Jersey City's democratic mayor.

# Next Steps

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In the short-term, we will continue speaking to the Jersey City Government and the New York Public Library to pilot the Hey Polly portal in the community they serve.

We heard feedback on how our volunteer training guide and materials can be adapted into high school civic projects. We will be looking to recruit volunteers in high schools and colleges.

As Hey Polly scales, we will look into developing new features that would allow LEPs to report poor access, holding their government accountable.

Hey Polly is a part of a much larger conversation about equity in the United States and we hope Hey Polly furthers this conversation.



LEPs are aware of their rights to access



Government is aware of need



Staff members are equipped to meet needs



Language services are promoted

# Thank you to everyone who made Hey Polly possible.

## **Special thanks:**

Our thesis advisor Jeff for guiding and supporting us through this hectic process and making sure we stuck to our principles and stayed focused on our goals.

Our many LEP testers for being so candid and open about their struggles, their experiences and for allowing us to advocate for their rights.

Our contacts in government for being patient and listening to our ideas, being open to collaborating with us and willing to do what's best for the community.

Our friends and fellow students who helped connect us to other resources and cheered us on as we made our way together through our thesis projects.

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