

School registration can be daunting with online applications and in-person appointments, documentation requirements ranging from health and immunization records to proof of residency and custody documents, and more. In the spring of 2024, during a peak enrollment period for Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), staff members in our English Learner (EL) Office reported increasing challenges in helping families understand required documentation and acceptable proofs of residency using existing materials. Target Audience: Families of newly enrolling ACPS English Learner students Goal: The goal of this initiative was to create a short, multilingual video that clearly explains the six documentation requirements for ACPS school registration, particularly for EL families enrolling in our school district for the first time. Research and Planning: ACPS serves more than 16,300 students hailing from 118 countries and speaking 127 languages. With English learner families representing nearly 50% of all student registrations, it is one of the most diverse school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. EL Office staff shared that families were finding traditional registration materials dense, text-heavy documents overwhelming and difficult to navigate, even when translated. These challenges extended the registration process over multiple days, requiring families to return with alternate documents and resulting in missed instructional days for students. Having accessible materials, regardless of language proficiency or literacy level, was key to minimizing obstacles to student registration and maximizing instructional days for every student. To identify best practices in visually communicating key information, simplifying complex steps, and ensuring accessibility for diverse families, we reviewed the communications materials infographics, flyers, videos and other digital resources of 10 school districts. Through this research, we determined that a concise, visually engaging video in our divisions primary languages Amharic, Arabic, Dari, English and Spanish would be the most effective way to communicate the documentation requirements for registration. Implementation: Our team worked with the ACPS EL Office to review and simplify existing registration materials, design a concise, easy-to-follow storyboard and script that outlines the documentation requirements for registration, and produce an explainer video in ACPS top five languages: English, Spanish, Dari, Amharic, and Arabic using an AI-powered video creation platform that uses AI avatars to replace voice overs or actors.

Evaluation: The final product is a visually engaging, step-by-step explainer video that helps families understand what documents they need to complete the registration process. The registration videos were uploaded to the ACPS enrollment website and will continue to be shared widely through our primary communication channels. We created these videos in anticipation of the start of the upcoming kindergarten registration and peak enrollment periods approach this spring and summer. As of March 10, 2025, the videos have been viewed over 400 times. EL Office staff have reported that the video is a valuable tool for guiding families through the registration process, helping streamline family interactions and ensure a smoother, more efficient registration experience.