# From High Costs to High Engagement: How One City Reduced Expenses and Boosted Language Access with AI Translation



## Challenge: Serving a Multilingual Population and Overcoming Barriers to Inclusive Public Participation

As one of the nation's most diverse metropolitan areas, this city of nearly one million faced a significant challenge: meeting the needs of its multilingual community. With over half of residents speaking a language other than English at home – including Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cantonese – clear, inclusive communication became a top priority. The city's strong immigrant presence from Latin America and Asia further underscored the need to ensure all residents could participate in decisions affecting their daily lives.

Despite this focus, the city struggled to provide language access at council and community meetings. Spanish-speaking residents were often placed in separate rooms for interpretation, creating physical and social barriers to full participation.

The traditional reliance on in-person interpreters was costly, inefficient, and inflexible. With multiple languages in demand, translation costs reached hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. Even so, many residents still lacked adequate access, especially for last-minute or less common language needs.
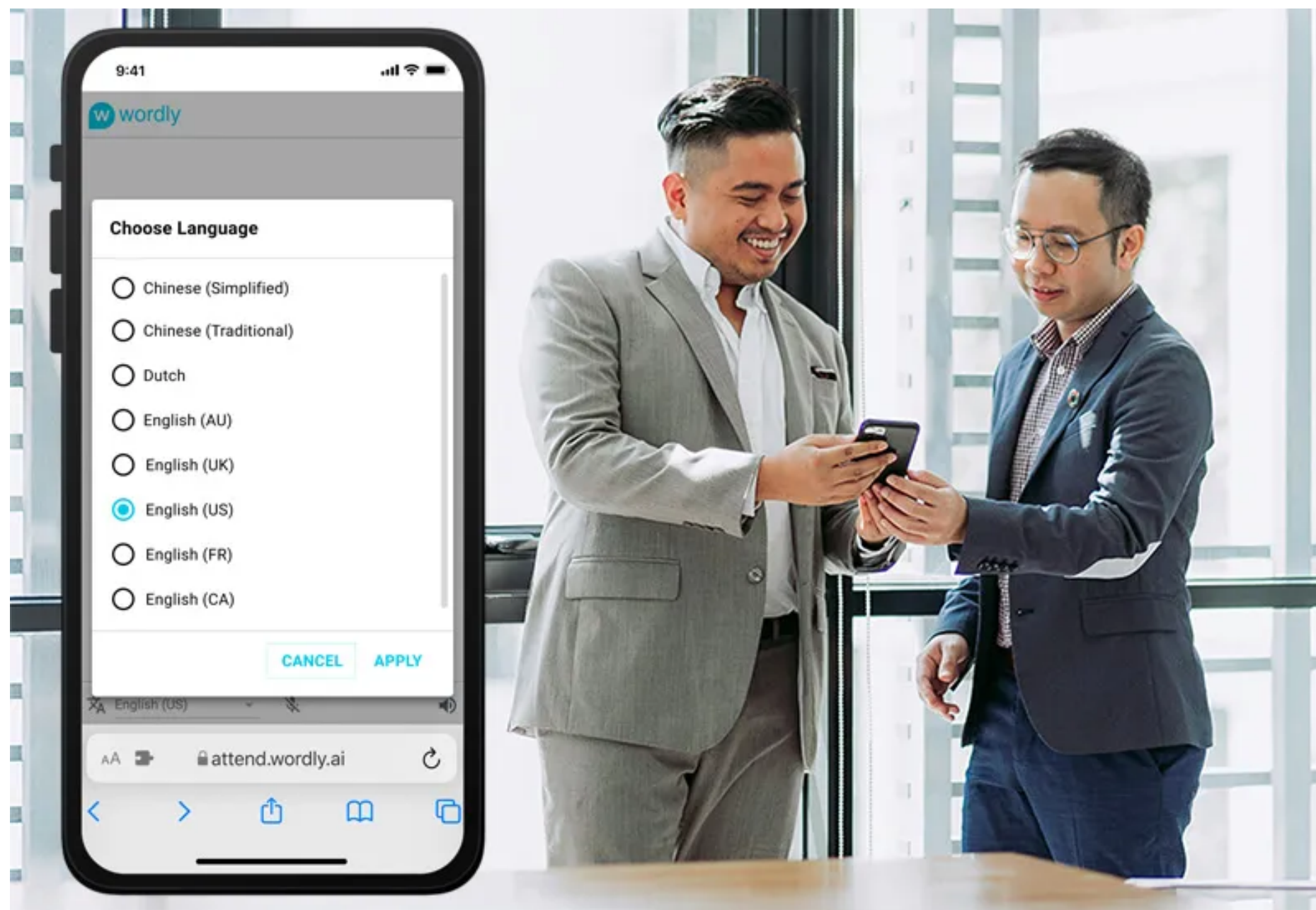
To improve engagement, city officials began exploring a more modern and cost-effective approach to language access, recognizing that the old system could no longer meet the city's growing needs.

## Solution: A New Era of Inclusive and Cost-Effective Civic Engagement with AI Translation

In 2023, the city adopted Wordly, an AI translation platform that enabled real-time access to over 60+ languages during city council and community meetings. This marked a significant shift from the traditional reliance on in-person interpreters, which had been costly, inflexible, and logistically complex.

Unlike conventional interpretation services, Wordly required no advance scheduling or coordination. It was always available, on-demand, allowing instant language support regardless of the language spoken or the size of the meeting. This ensured that no residents were excluded from participating in public discussions due to language barriers or last-minute translation needs.



Wordly AI technology also provided a distinct advantage in neutrality. It translated only what was said, without adding opinion or bias. This created a more transparent and trustworthy communication experience for residents. With context-aware translation and a custom glossary feature, cities could fine-tune translations to include local terminology, community organization names, and public officials, enhancing both accuracy and public trust.

By deploying Wordly, the city improved its ability to engage a linguistically diverse population while reducing translation costs. This not only generated savings but also marked a meaningful step toward more inclusive and equitable civic participation.

## Results: City Cuts Translation Costs by Over Two-Thirds While Tripling Community Participation

The adoption of Wordly marked a turning point in how the city connects with its diverse community. What was once a costly, fragmented, and exclusionary system transformed into a model of accessible, efficient, and inclusive civic engagement.

**Significant Cost Savings.** Replacing in-person interpreters with AI translation cut language access costs by over two-thirds, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars while improving service.

**More Inclusive Engagement.** AI translation removed barriers, allowing non-English speakers to participate in meetings side-by-side and in real time.

**Rapid Growth in Spanish Participation.** Spanish-language livestreams and digital channels saw a 300% increase in use, reflecting greater trust and inclusion.

**On-Demand Language Support.** Instant access to 60+ languages eliminated scheduling challenges and ensured no one was excluded, even for last-minute needs.

**Smarter, Trusted Translations.** Custom glossaries improved translation accuracy and cultural relevance by including local terms and official titles.

This approach not only cut costs but also created a more inclusive, equitable civic experience by amplifying diverse community voices.

# Future: Expanding AI Translation and Strengthening Community Partnerships

Building on this success, the city plans to expand AI translation to additional departments and community meetings. Quarterly feedback will be conducted, including reviews with community stakeholders to monitor quality, guide enhancements, and foster broad adoption as part of its commitment to equity and innovation.

## About Wordly

Wordly is the pioneer and leader in AI translation, providing a high-quality, secure, easy-to-use, and affordable live AI translation and caption solution for communicating across multiple languages. Wordly translates dozens of languages in real-time, making in-person and virtual meetings and events more inclusive, accessible, and engaging. Its SaaS platform meets enterprise-grade security & privacy standards and eliminates the need for human interpreters or special equipment. Millions of users across thousands of organizations - including corporate, nonprofit, government, education, and religious sectors - trust Wordly for their multilingual communication needs.

For more information, visit www.wordly.ai.