

New Institute to Examine Spanish of the USA

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New York City, NY – Spanish language experts have come together to found an organization dedicated exclusively to understanding and promoting the use of “Spanish of the United States.” The Research Institute of United States Spanish, or RIUSS, responds to the reality that Spanish is the de facto second language of the nation, but one without standards or norms to guide its use in the public and private sectors, media and other areas.

“With about 38 million speakers (not counting 3.5 million in Puerto Rico), and with Spanish proliferating, in a generation we will be the world’s second largest Spanish-speaking country after Mexico,” said Leticia Molinero, a RIUSS founder and a translator. “RIUSS responds to critical commercial, societal and media realities about Spanish that cry out for consistency in recognizing national preferences. It will also conduct research to determine “US-Spanish plain-language” in public administration communications so as to ensure the broadest possible reach.”

Among Spanish speaking nations, RIUSS founders point out, the United States is unique in that 1) Spanish lives in daily contact with and, hence, is influenced significantly by English, and 2) Spanish-speakers in the United States come literally from every land where Spanish is spoken – including the American Southwest where it has been spoken for four centuries.

Laura Godfrey, Director of Multilingual Strategies and Chair of the government-wide Multilingual Community of Practice at the General Services Administration’s office that works to improve and standardize the use of the Spanish language in government communications, welcomes the advent of RIUSS. “Official Spanish language agency names, common use terminology, clear instructions to apply for benefits, for example, are critically important to Spanish-speaking users of government services,” she said.

RIUSS, a membership organization, plans to work closely with a broad range of government, nonprofit and Hispanic organizations. “Health care services are among the most critical areas in which common, understandable terms are indispensable,” said Maria Cornelio, a RIUSS founder and head of the Spanish translation/interpretation program at City University of New York’s Hunter College. “Accurate, understandable terms and instructions are literally a matter of life and death in health care.”

Among the services that RIUSS offers are:

- â—• Spanish language usage research to be shared broadly through its website and other means
- â—• Periodic webinars focused on key subject areas
- â—• Spanish language usage and comprehension surveys in professional fields; posting of findings on the website
- â—• RIUSS© surveys on Spanish language usage
- â—• RIUSS© seminars and conferences and participation in other events
- â—• Convenient membership categories
- â—• Collaboration with entities concerned about the proper use of Spanish in the US
- â—• Services to federal, state and local government entities

â—• Consultations and advice on usage

Given its unique mission and focus, RIUSS will serve members from diverse professions, among them academia, media, the private sector, translators, interpreters and others. Membership is open to all interested parties. For further information on RIUSS and membership please visit www.RIUSS.org.

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CONTACT:

Frank GÃ³mez
fgomez@riuss.org
917.593.8764