STATE OF NEW YORK

2174

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 23, 2019

Introduced by Sen. BAILEY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Social Services

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to ensuring adequate access to information by individuals who have limited English proficiency

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 95-a of the social services law is amended by adding a new subdivision 9 to read as follows:

9. (a) The department shall develop and implement a plan to ensure adequate access to information by individuals who have limited English proficiency or otherwise require communication assistance. Notwithstanding the provisions of any general, special or local law to the contrary, and subject to appropriation, the department shall:

(i) translate necessary documents, including but not limited to, forms and instructions provided to or completed by the program beneficiaries or participants, into the six most common non-English languages spoken by beneficiaries with limited-English proficiency;

(ii) offer, upon request, interpretation services between the entity administering the program and an individual in his or her primary language with respect to the provision of services or benefits; and

(iii) offer, upon request or demonstrated need, services to an individual who requires additional assistance due to partial or total deafness, blindness, speech impediment, or cognitive impairment; and

(iv) subject to appropriation, work with the office for the aging to provide additional translation services to both agencies to assist with informing low-income and elderly households potentially eligible to receive food stamps.

(b) Each commissioner of social services shall retain discretion to offer additional language translation services to low-income recipients, as necessary.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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