

# STATE OF NEW YORK

7235--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

May 15, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. DE LOS SANTOS, KELLES, SHIMSKY, CRUZ, COLTON, ALVAREZ, EPSTEIN, STIRPE, REYES, SAYEGH, FORREST, TAYLOR, WALKER, GLICK, GIBBS, ROZIC, JACOBSON, LEVENBERG, RAMOS, CUNNINGHAM, SIMON, RAGA, BURDICK, CLARK, HEVESI, CHANG, J. A. GIGLIO, DINOWITZ, MAMDANI, LAVINE, BURGOS, DICKENS, SEPTIMO, GONZALEZ-ROJAS, SHRESTHA, ARDILA, LEE, SOLAGES, SEAWRIGHT, L. ROSENTHAL, MEEKS, ZACCARO, DAVILA, OTIS, RIVERA, TAPIA, BICHOTTE HERMELYN, SILLITTI, CARROLL, ANDERSON, MITAYNES, SIMONE, GUNTHER, KIM -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations -- recommitted to the Committee on Governmental Operations in accordance with Assembly Rule 3, sec. 2 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the executive law, the public authorities law and the county law, in relation to requiring certain documents and forms to be provided in multiple languages

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

1 Section 1. Subdivision 1 of section 202-a of the executive law, as  
2 added by section 1 of part GG of chapter 56 of the laws of 2022, is  
3 amended to read as follows:  
4 1. (a) Each state agency that provides direct public services in New  
5 York state shall translate all vital documents relevant to services  
6 offered by the agency, including essential public documents such as  
7 forms and instructions provided to or completed by program beneficiaries  
8 or participants, into the twelve most common non-English languages  
9 spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in the state who  
10 arrived within the last five years, based on the data in the most recent  
11 American Community Survey published by United States Census Bureau,  
12 including but not limited to data collected by public schools, local  
13 interpreting agencies, federal refugee resettlement programs, and state  
14 agencies. [~~Agencies subject to this section, in their discretion, may~~

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

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~~offer up to four additional languages beyond the twelve most common languages. Such additional languages shall be decided by the state agency in consultation with the office of general services and approved by the office of general services based on the number of limited-English proficient immigrants of five years or less in New York state in need of language translation services according to the American Community Survey, including the growth of recent arrival populations in the geographic regions in which the agency's services are offered, the population of limited-English proficient individuals served by the agency, feedback from impacted community or advocacy groups, and any other relevant data published by the United States Census Bureau.]~~

(b) Each agency shall additionally make such translations available within each region of the state, as established by article eleven of the economic development law, in the three most common non-English languages which are spoken in that region and are not already included among the twelve languages specified in paragraph (a) of this subdivision. Such additional languages shall be decided by the state agency in consultation with the office of general services and approved by the office of general services based on the number of limited-English proficient immigrants who have arrived in New York state within the last five years, according to the United States census bureau and American community survey, including the growth of recent arrival populations in the geographic regions in which the agency's services are offered, the population of limited-English proficient individuals served by the agency, feedback from impacted community or advocacy groups, and any data collected from the sources listed in paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

(c) The list of most common languages shall be updated every two years, based on the most recent data collected by the United States census bureau and American community survey, including but not limited to the data sources listed in paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

(d) Each agency shall provide competent and timely interpretation services to individuals in their primary or preferred language with respect to the provisions of services and benefits. This includes both in-office services, and services provided outside of the department office. Competent interpretation shall mean spoken or signed, real-time communication in which the qualified human interpreter is fluent in both the source and target language and is trained as an interpreter.

§ 2. Subparagraphs (viii) and (ix) of paragraph (c) of subdivision 3 of section 202-a of the executive law, as added by section 1 of part GG of chapter 56 of the laws of 2022, are amended and three new subparagraphs (x), (xi) and (xii) are added to read as follows:

(viii) an explanation as to how the agency determined it would provide any additional language beyond the top twelve languages required by this section; ~~and~~

(ix) the identity of the agency's language access coordinator~~[-]~~;

(x) accommodations for communication access shall be available upon request including American sign language interpretation via an on-site interpreter, video remote interpreter, or communication access real-time translation for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have hearing loss;

(xi) a phone number or email address by which the public can lodge complaints against the agency for noncompliance, such complaints shall be kept for a minimum of two years; and

(xii) a process to make public the number of complaints during a twelve month period against noncompliance and resolution to such complaints.

1 § 3. Article 9 of the public authorities law is amended by adding a  
2 new title 13 to read as follows:

3 TITLE 13  
4 LANGUAGE ACCESS

5 Section 2988. Language access.

6 § 2988. Language access. 1. For the purposes of this section, "covered  
7 state authorities" shall mean state authorities that are determined by  
8 the office of language access to provide direct public-facing services  
9 that have an impact on a significant amount of residents of New York.  
10 Covered state authorities shall translate vital documents, including  
11 essential public documents such as forms and instructions provided to or  
12 completed by program beneficiaries or participants. The translation  
13 shall be available in the twelve most common non-English languages  
14 spoken by limited English proficient immigrants in the state who arrived  
15 within the last five years according to the American community survey,  
16 as published by the United States census bureau.

17 2. Covered state authorities shall make translations available in  
18 correspondence with the region of the state such covered state authori-  
19 ties serve, in the three most common non-English languages which are  
20 spoken in that region by limited English proficient immigrants who  
21 arrived within the last five years according to the American community  
22 survey, as published by the United States census bureau, which are not  
23 already included among the twelve languages specified in subdivision one  
24 of this section.

25 3. The list of most common languages shall be updated no less than  
26 every two years from the effective date of this section, based on the  
27 most recent American community survey, as published by the United States  
28 census bureau.

29 4. Each covered state authority shall provide interpretation services  
30 between the authority and an individual in such individual's primary  
31 language, including American sign language, with respect to the  
32 provision of services or benefits. This includes both in-office  
33 services, and services provided outside of the authority office.

34 5. Within ninety days of the effective date of this section, covered  
35 state authorities shall publish a language access plan which reflects  
36 how the authority will comply with the language access requirements  
37 pursuant to this section, and shall set forth, at a minimum:

38 a. core communication principles with respect to people in the limited  
39 English proficient community;

40 b. when and by what means the authority will provide or is already  
41 providing language access services;

42 c. the titles of all available translated documents and the languages  
43 into which they have been translated;

44 d. the number of public contact positions in the authority and the  
45 number of bilingual employees in public contact positions including the  
46 languages they speak;

47 e. a training plan for employees which includes, at a minimum, annual  
48 training on the language access policies of the authority and how to  
49 provide language assistance services;

50 f. a plan of how the authority intends to notify the population of  
51 offered language assistance services;

52 g. a language access coordinator at the authority, who shall be  
53 publicly identified;

54 h. accommodations for communication access shall be available upon  
55 request including American sign language interpretation via an on-site  
56 interpreter, video remote interpreter, or communication access real-time

1 translation for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have hear-  
2 ing loss;

3 i. a phone number or email address by which the public can lodge  
4 complaints against the agency for noncompliance. Such complaints shall  
5 be kept for a minimum of two years; and

6 j. make public the number of complaints during a twelve month period  
7 against noncompliance and resolutions to such complaints.

8 § 4. The county law is amended by adding a new article 24-A to read as  
9 follows:

10 ARTICLE 24-A  
11 LANGUAGE ACCESS

12 Section 950. Language access.

13 § 950. Language access. 1. Every county of New York state shall trans-  
14 late vital documents, including essential public documents such as forms  
15 and instructions provided to or completed by program beneficiaries or  
16 participants. The translation shall be available in the twelve most  
17 common non-English languages spoken by limited English proficient immi-  
18 grants in the state who arrived within the last five years according to  
19 the American community survey, as published by the United States census  
20 bureau.

21 2. Each such county shall make such translations available in corre-  
22 spondence with the region, in the three most common non-English  
23 languages which are spoken in that region by limited English proficient  
24 immigrants who arrived within the last five years according to the Amer-  
25 ican community survey, as published by the United States census bureau,  
26 which are not already included among the twelve languages specified in  
27 subdivision one of this section.

28 3. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision one of this section,  
29 a county may add additional languages as necessary to accommodate local  
30 variances from statewide languages, provided such languages are added  
31 after public notice and opportunity to comment.

32 4. The list of most common languages shall be updated no less than  
33 every two years from the effective date of this section, based on the  
34 most recent American community survey, as published by the United States  
35 census bureau, and any additional languages such county shall choose to  
36 select.

37 5. Each such county shall provide interpretation services between the  
38 entity and an individual in such individual's primary language with  
39 respect to the provision of services or benefits.

40 6. Within ninety days of the effective date of this section, each such  
41 county shall publish a language access plan which reflects how the coun-  
42 ty will comply with the language access requirements pursuant to this  
43 section, and shall set forth, at a minimum:

44 (a) core communication principles with respect to people in the limit-  
45 ed English proficient community;

46 (b) when and by what means the county shall provide or is already  
47 providing language access services;

48 (c) the titles of all available translated documents and the languages  
49 into which they have been translated;

50 (d) the number of public contact positions in the county and the  
51 number of bilingual employees in public contact positions including the  
52 languages they speak;

53 (e) a training plan for employees of the county, which includes, at a  
54 minimum, annual training on the language access policies of the county  
55 and how to provide language assistance services;

1 (f) a plan of how the county intends to notify the population of  
2 offered language assistance services;

3 (g) a language access coordinator employed by the county, who shall be  
4 publicly identified;

5 (h) accommodations for communication access shall be available upon  
6 request including American sign language interpretation via an on-site  
7 interpreter, video remote interpreter, or communication access real-time  
8 translation for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have hear-  
9 ing loss;

10 (i) a phone number or email address by which the public can lodge  
11 complaints against the county for noncompliance. Such complaints shall  
12 be kept for a minimum of two years; and

13 (j) make public the number of complaints during a twelve month period  
14 against noncompliance and resolutions to such complaints.

15 § 5. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become  
16 law.