STATE OF NEW YORK

9379

IN SENATE

March 6, 2026

Introduced by Sen. JACKSON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Civil Service and Pensions

AN ACT to amend the civil service law, in relation to establishing language-specific civil service titles for customer-facing roles in state and local agencies

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

Section 1. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds that limited English proficiency continues to impede equitable access to public services. To ensure meaningful language access, agencies must formally designate language-specific civil service titles for customer-facing roles where high-need languages are prevalent. This act mandates the creation, certification, and staffing of such titles based on county and statewide language data.

§ 2. The civil service law is amended by adding a new section 155 to read as follows:

§ 155. Language-specific titles for customer-facing roles. 1. As used in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Customer-facing title" shall mean any competitive or non-competitive civil service title of the state or of any municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state in which the primary duties involve direct interaction with members of the public for intake, eligibility determination, service provision, or complaint resolution.

(b) "High-need language" shall mean any language that:

(i) Ranks among the top three spoken languages (excluding English) in the county served by the agency; or

(ii) Ranks among the top five spoken languages (excluding English) statewide, as determined by the most recent U.S. Census or agency intake data.

(c) "Language-specific title" shall mean a civil service title of the state or of any municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state formally designated to require proficiency in a specific high-need language, reflected in the title name and examination criteria.

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

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2. The department shall establish language-specific variants of existing customer-facing titles where high-need language thresholds are met. Such language-specific variants of existing customer-facing titles shall include language proficiency testing as part of the examination process and be listed separately on eligible lists.

3. (a) Every agency shall fill no fewer than twenty-five percent of customer-facing positions in applicable titles using language-specific designations aligned with their service area's high-need languages. An agency may exceed this threshold based on demonstrated limited English proficiency service demand.

(b) An agency may request a waiver for specific titles if customer service metrics established by the department are being met.

(c) Interpretation services shall be used by an agency where the applicable language-specific title list is empty.

4. (a) Every agency shall submit an annual report to the department detailing:

(i) The number of language-specific positions filled and vacant;

(ii) The number of limited English proficiency clients served of each language; and

(iii) The use of interpretation services and unmet language needs.

(b) The department shall publish on its website a statewide dashboard tracking compliance with the provisions of this section, disaggregated by agency, title, county, and language.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.