



# An Act Relative to Language Access and Inclusion

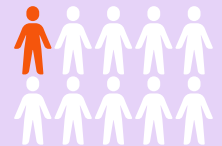


**SD.1066** (Sen. DiDomenico)

**HD.3616** (Rep. Madaro and Rep. González)

People depend on state agencies to address needs and challenges – from applying for unemployment assistance, to keeping food on the table and staving off an eviction, to navigating the complexities of the child welfare system. But language access failures at critical agencies deny non-English speaking families access to government services and information that protect and empower state residents.

Language barriers affect hundreds of thousands of state residents. Massachusetts must dismantle longstanding barriers to equal access and ensure state agencies meet the language needs of all residents.



Nearly **1 in 10** MA residents is considered limited English proficient.

## The Language Access and Inclusion Act would:

### Ensure Effective Communication For All Communities

Require all public-facing agencies, and outside service providers they use, to offer **interpretation services and translate vital documents**, including websites and online applications, for limited English proficient speakers.

### Standardize and Enforce Robust Language Access Plans

Provide **minimum standards** for these plans and require regular data collection so that state agencies know the linguistic needs of the populations they serve.

### Ensure Adequate Staffing to Meet Language Access Needs

Require agencies to employ **statewide and regional language access coordinators** to develop, implement, and train staff on agency language access plans and protocols.

### Engage Communities to Assist Agencies with Compliance

Create an **advisory board** with representatives from limited English speaking communities, the deaf or hard-of-hearing community, and community groups/legal service providers to help agencies implement the law.

### Create Mechanisms for Phased-In Implementation

Initially apply to **12 essential public-facing state agencies [1]** that provide services such as healthcare, housing, education, and childcare, before expanding to include other executive offices.

#### Questions? Contact:

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[1] MassHealth, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Early Education and Care, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Unemployment Assistance, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance, the Department of Mental Health, and the Office of Access and Opportunity.



# Endorsing Organizations



- American Immigration Lawyers Association
- Ascentria Care Alliance
- Asian Community Development Corporation
- Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence
- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
- Boston Bar Association
- Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
- Boston Immigrant Justice Accompaniment Network
- Boston University School of Law Immigrants' Rights and Human Trafficking Program
- Brockton Neighborhood Health Center
- Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee
- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell, Inc.
- Center for Surgery and Public Health - Brigham and Women's Hospital
- Central West Justice Center
- Children's Charter, Key Program Inc.
- Children's League of Massachusetts
- City of Fitchburg's Human Rights Commission
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission
- Community Economic Development Center of New Bedford
- De Novo Center for Justice and Healing
- Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath)
- Family and Community Resources, Inc.
- Found in Translation
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- HarborCOV Communities Overcoming Violence
- Healing Abuse Working for Change
- Health Care For All
- Health Law Advocates
- Holyoke Public Schools
- Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc. (IAC)
- Immigrant Justice Working Group at Brandeis University
- International Institute of New England
- Jane Doe Inc.
- Justice at Work
- Just Word Co-op
- La Colaborativa
- La Comunidad, Inc.
- Linguists Without Borders
- MAPA Translations Inc.
- Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
- Massachusetts Bar Association
- Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
- Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
- Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
- Mass General Brigham
- Matahari Women Workers' Center
- Maverick Landing Community Services
- MetroWest Legal Services
- New Hope, Inc
- Northeast Justice Center
- Pioneer Valley Workers Center
- SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs
- St Mark Community Education Program
- The Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc.
- The Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts
- TranslateLive
- Unitarian Universalist Mass Action
- YWCA Cambridge