



# An Act Relative to Language Access and Inclusion



SD.1757 (Sen. DiDomenico)  
HD.3876 (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 long standing language barriers to the equal access of government services and ensure state agencies meet the language needs of all residents.



Nearly **1 in 4** MA residents speak a language other than English at home

## The Language Access and Inclusion Bill would:

### Ensure Effective Communication For All Communities

Require certain public-facing agencies, and outside service providers used by them to **offer interpretation services and translate vital documents**, including websites and online applications, for the limited English proficient community.

### Standardize and Enforce Robust Language Access Plans

Provide minimum standards for the creation of plans and require regular data collection through assessments so state agencies know the language needs of the communities they serve.

### Ensure Adequate Staffing to Meet Language Access Needs

Require agencies to employ a **language access coordinator on a full time basis whose sole responsibility** is to develop and implement the agency's language access plan and train staff on agency language access 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, community organizations, legal service providers and the Office of Access and Opportunity in the Governor's office to help agencies comply with the bill.

### Create Mechanisms for Phased-In Implementation

Initially implemented by **5 public-facing state agencies** [1] focused on vital services like healthcare, housing, and emergency assistance before expanding in subsequent years to other agencies.

Questions? Contact:

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[1] MassHealth, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Unemployment Assistance, all departments, divisions and offices within the executive office of housing and livable communities that administer emergency shelter assistance, rental assistance, housing subsidies or other housing benefits to state residents



# Endorsing Organizations



- Alvarez Consulting & Advocacy
- 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
- Conexión Inc.
- 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
- Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
- 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 Commission on the Status of Women
- Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
- Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
- Mass Families
- Mass General Brigham
- Matahari Women Workers' Center
- Maverick Landing Community Services
- Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- MetroWest Legal Services
- New Hope, Inc
- Northeast Justice Center
- Pioneer Valley Workers Center
- Progressive Massachusetts
- Project Bread
- Safe Medford
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
- SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs
- St Mark Community Education Program
- Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice
- The Circle of Vietnamese Parents
- The Health Fluency Project
- The Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts
- TranslateLive
- Unitarian Universalist Mass Action
- United Communities
- YWCA Cambridge