

Massachusetts Office on Disability Language Access Plan

I. Introduction

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) has prepared this Language Access Plan (“LAP” or “Plan”), which defines the actions to be taken by MOD to ensure meaningful access to MOD services, programs and activities on the part of persons who have limited English proficiency. MOD will review and update, on a biannual basis, this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (“ANF”) Administrative Bulletin #16.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure clients of MOD meaningful access to services, programs and activities although they may be limited in their English language proficiency.

MOD is committed to this Language Access Plan as the appropriate response to meeting our clients’ needs. The Plan is consistent with the requirements of Administrative Bulletin #16 as promulgated by the Executive Office of Administration and Finance.

Consistent with the guidance of ANF Administrative Bulletin #16, a Limited English Proficient (“LEP”) person is someone who is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with Agency staff. A client maintains the right to self-identify as a LEP person.

III. Agency Description

Created in 1981 under M.G.L. Chapter 6 Section 185 the primary mission of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) is to ensure the full and equal participation of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life by working to advance legal rights, maximum opportunities, supportive services, accommodations and accessibility in a manner that fosters dignity and self determination. It is the state advocacy agency that serves people with disabilities of all ages.

While MOD is a small agency with very limited resources, its output is significant. It is the designated agency to oversee and administer the Commonwealth’s compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is the touchstone within government for technical assistance, trouble-shooting and advice on all disability related issues. It serves as ombudsman, conscience, facilitator and critic as major changes in state policies and services emerge while resources dwindle.

The work of the Office and the commitment of the staff have been recognized by the Commonwealth by awarding four of the staff the Manuel Carballo Award for

Excellence in Public Service four consecutive years, in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. These awards acknowledged the extraordinary work done by this very small agency with its very small staff.

The Office has three main components that function to fulfill its priorities: the Government Services Program, the Client Services Program, and the Community Services Program. While each program is uniquely distinct, they intersect and interact with each other in order to effectively ensure that people with disabilities are treated fairly in the Commonwealth.

The [Government Services program](#) works to ensure that Massachusetts' policies and practices are consistent with state and federal laws. This unit works with other facets of state government on behalf of the needs of people with disabilities to resolve problems before they turn to crises.

The [Client Services Program](#) is an extensive information and advocacy system for people with disabilities. Responding to over 10,000 requests a year, the program helps people, their families and friends, as well as professionals and government officials, learn about the government program that help citizens with disabilities live independently and about their civil rights. When consumers report that systems are not responsive to their individual or collective needs or that their civil rights have been violated, the Program investigates and advocates that legitimate problems be corrected. The Program also houses the federally mandated Client Assistance Program, which addresses similar information and advocacy concerns about the functioning of federally funded vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs.

The [Community Services Program](#) interacts with approximately 8,000 people per year through training and technical assistance to help ensure that people with disabilities learn of their rights and responsibilities and that state, local and private entities know how to comply with their non-discrimination responsibilities. This Unit developed and runs the nationally acclaimed and replicated Community Access Monitor (CAM) Program.

IV. Language Access Plan:

Approach:

The MOD Language Access Plan shall be fully implemented subject to the availability of fiscal resources to implement said language access plan. This Language Access Plan has been developed to adhere to the Language Access Guidelines of ANF Administrative Bulletin #16. This Language Access Plan represents Agency administrative blueprint to provide meaningful access to Agency services, programs and activities on the part of LEP individuals. This Language Access Plan outlines the tasks Agency will undertake to meet this objective.

Language Access Plan:

1. MOD Language Access Coordinator:

Michael Dumont is MOD's Language Access Coordinator. He can be reach:

- by phone at 617 727-7440, extension 27304;
- by email at michael.dumont@state.ma.us; or
- by conventional mail at:
Massachusetts Office on Disability
One Ashburton Place, Room 1305
Boston, MA 02108.

2. Agency Language Access Needs Assessment:

a. Steps to ensure meaningful access:

The steps MOD takes to ensure such services, programs and activities provide meaningful access to the populations whose language meet or exceed the 5% threshold include notice displayed in the office's lobby and website, as well as on communications made available to the general public. MOD does not have regional offices.

b. Language Makeup of Client Population

MOD has historically addressed the needs of consumers with limited English proficiency on an as needed basis. It does not keep statistical data concerning the language make-up of its client population. MOD adopts the position that the Spanish language, on a statewide basis, is the only non-English language that exceeds the language access threshold.

c. Points of Contact between MOD and Client Population

The points of contact are:

- MOD's Office at 1 Ashburton Place, Room 1305, Boston, MA 02108
- MOD's Website at [Massachusetts Office on Disability](#)
- MOD's telephone at 617-727-7440 or toll free at 800 322-2020, both V/TDD

3. Language Resources Assessment:

a. Identification of existing staff

MOD staff includes people who are linguistically, culturally, and technically able to deliver services in a language other than English and/or to serve as interpreters for the following languages:

- i. Spanish
- ii. Italian
- iii. Hebrew
- iv. Swahili

v. Kikuyu

b. Community-based resources

When MOD is asked to provide a speaker for a local events where attendees with limited English proficiency are expected to attend, MOD requests assistance from the event organizer to obtain interpreter services.

4. Language Service Protocols:

a. Which language services are required to implement the Language Access Plan

For consumers who speak languages other than those listed in item 3a, this is accomplished using the internet language translation site at [Babelfish](#). Where more complex communication is needed, an appointment is made for a date when an interpreter can be present. In such circumstances, the [Statewide Contract - Foreign Language Interpretation \(In-Person\) and Translation PRF48](#) is utilized.

b. Define and describe Agency's language access protocols for providing interpretation services

Interpreter services are provided on request. If the consumer arrives at MOD without having made prior arrangements, MOD bilingual staff members do their best to ascertain the nature of the consumer's need and to communicate what assistance MOD can provide.

c. Define how a client will be able to access and utilize the resources identified in paragraphs (a) and (b)

Consumers can utilize the resources identified above by contacting MOD by using any of the contact media identified in item 2 and 3 above.

5. Vital Document Translation:

a. Vital documents, in whole or in part, to translate including timeframe for translation

1. MOD Brochure – When resources become available
2. Client Assistance Program Brochure – Done
3. Notices of events – as needed

b. Website content, by list, to translate including timeframe for translation.

1. Landing Page & linked documents – When resources become available
2. Client Services & linked documents – When resources become available

- i. Client Assistance Program – When resources become available
3. Community Services & linked documents – When resources become available
4. Government Services & linked documents – When resources become available
5. Publications & linked documents – When resources become available

6. Stakeholder Consultations:

Due to limited resources for the development of this plan, MOD did not consult consumers in the development of this plan.

7. Staff Training:

Current MOD staff members are aware of the resources available to address the needs of consumers whose primary language is other than English. If the need to refresh this knowledge becomes evident at some future time, training will be conducted using the content of this plan as a template.

8. Notice to Public.

MOD notifies consumers of the availability of free translation assistance related to our program content by a notice posted in MOD’s lobby and on its website. The notice also identifies the method by which a complaint may be filed. See attached. See attached.

9. Agency Monitoring:

MOD monitors this plan based on receipt of complaints.

10. Complaints:

Complaints must be in writing and be filed within 180 Days of the incident giving rise to the complaint. The LAP Coordinator will be responsible for investigating the complaint and taking whatever action is deemed appropriate to resolve the complaint within 60 Days of its filing.

Agency Head
Date

Secretary
Date:

Attachments A

MOD Language Access Complaint Procedure

You may file a complaint with the MOD Language Access Coordinator or the Office of Access and Opportunity if you believe you have been denied the language access promised in the MOD Language Access Plan. A copy of the plan is available on the MOD website at [Massachusetts Office on Disability](#). You must file your complaint within 180 Days of the alleged denial. Your complaint must file in writing. To file a complaint with the Language Access Coordinator, submit the written complaint to:

Michael Dumont, Language Access Coordinator

- by email to michael.dumont@state.ma.us; or
- by conventional mail to
Massachusetts Office on Disability
One Ashburton Place, Room 1305
Boston, MA 02108.

To file a complaint with the Office of Access and Opportunity, please submit the written complaint to the attention of:

Ronald Marlow, Language Access Coordinator

- by email to Ronald.Marlow@state.ma.us
- by conventional mail to:
Office of Access and Opportunity
Executive Office of Administration and Finance
State House, Room 373
Boston, MA 02133

Attachment B

PUBLIC NOTICE



MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE ON DISABILITY Limited English Proficiency Services

January, 2013

The Massachusetts Office on Disability strives to make its programs, activities and services available in languages other than English available to individuals with limited English proficiency, consistent with its Language Access Plan.

The plan is available for review from MOD's Language Access Coordinator, Michael Dumont.

Mr. Dumont can be reached:

- by phone at 617 727-7440, extension 27304;
- by email at michael.dumont@state.ma.us; or
- by conventional mail at

Massachusetts Office on Disability
One Ashburton Place, Room 1305
Boston, MA 02108

Complaints should be addressed to Mr. Dumont in writing, no later than 180 Days after the incident giving rise to the complaint. To the best of its ability, MOD will resolve any complaints filed within 60 Days after filing.