

**Massachusetts Department of
Transitional Assistance**



**Language Access Plan
Updated: February 2024**

I. Introduction

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA or the Department) has developed and prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP) outlining ongoing efforts taken to provide language services to constituents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

This plan also defines the actions DTA is taking to ensure meaningful access to programs, services, activities, and materials for all constituents with LEP.

DTA will review and update this LAP as needed to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with Executive Order 615 as well as the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (ANF) Administrative Bulletin # 16 ([Language Access Policy and Implementation Guidelines](#)).

DTA serves a diverse population of various ages and linguistic origins. A person with LEP is someone who cannot speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that allows them to interact effectively with staff. A constituent maintains the right to self-identify with LEP.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this LAP is to ensure meaningful access to programs, services, activities, and materials for all constituents with LEP.

DTA is committed to making services available to persons with LEP as part of its mission. Based on this commitment, DTA makes every attempt to assist constituents with LEP in accessing its services.

This LAP does not create new services, rather, it strives to eliminate barriers for constituents with LEP accessing existing services and ensures that all staff can assist constituents with LEP in accessing resources.

DTA will provide quality language assistance to constituents with LEP in a fair and timely manner, ensuring meaningful access to the agency's services.

This LAP centralizes language access materials for staff and outlines the regular training for new hires to ensure that all staff can access the materials and services listed in the sections below.

The objectives of this Language Access Plan are to:

- Improve access to and quality of DTA programs, services, and activities for non-English speakers and constituents with LEP;
- Reduce any disparities and delays in the provision of programs/services to eligible constituents with LEP; and
- Streamline training and resources for staff to increase effectiveness and ensure public satisfaction with DTA.

III. Policy

It is the Department of Transitional Assistance's policy to provide meaningful access to programs and services to persons who are non-English speakers or those with LEP.

IV. Applicability

This policy applies to all local Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs) and Central Office business units within DTA. This LAP informs all aspects of DTA's business process which include, but are not limited to, how DTA:

- produces notices, forms, resource materials, and messages;
- writes policy and procedural guidance for DTA's Online Guide;
- offers language choices for self-service options;
- interacts with constituents with LEP face to face, telephonically, or virtually; and
- prioritizes the hiring of multilingual case managers and support staff.

V. Role

DTA's mission is to assist and empower low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long term economic self-sufficiency. DTA offers a comprehensive system of programs and support to help individuals and families achieve greater economic mobility, including food and nutritional assistance, economic assistance, and employment supports.

DTA serves one out of every six people in the Commonwealth (over one million individuals), including working families, children, older adults, and people with disabilities. The Department currently has 20 local offices throughout the state and employs approximately 1,750 employees.

DTA receives input and guidance from Community Advisory Boards that represent individuals and organizations in the catchment area of each local TAO. These Community Advisory Boards convene periodically to discuss issues relevant to DTA's constituents and make recommendations on policies and operations.

VI. Language Access Plan

DTA's Language Access Plan was developed to adhere to Executive Order 615, the Language Access Guidelines of ANF Administrative Bulletin #16, and the Federal Plain Language Guidelines outlined in 45 CFR 92.101. This LAP is posted on DTA's internet page under the "About the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)" section. The link to this page can be accessed [here](#).

Over the last two decades, DTA has continued to work with the Office for Civil Rights of the federal Department of Health and Human Services and community/legal service organizations to improve services to LEP constituents. The Department recently held focus groups with community-based stakeholders to simplify language and increase readability of DTA forms, documents, and notices. Feedback and recommendations from the Department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council are also heavily involved in the agency's language access efforts.

The guidelines outlined within this current LAP build upon the blueprint established in previous plans. With each successive year the Department demonstrates its commitment to language access by prioritizing the translation of vital documents, increasing the hiring of bilingual or multilingual staff, and adopting more inclusive practices.

This LAP shall be fully implemented, subject to the availability of requisite fiscal resources. It represents the Department's commitment to ensuring that all residents of Massachusetts can readily access information and resources from the Department of Transitional Assistance.

For staff, this plan centralizes resources, training, and the Department's multilingual content and publications, while outlining the minimum standard of access to the agency for constituents with LEP.

According to 2022 statistics from the United States Census Bureau, 25% of Massachusetts households speak a language other than English at home. This figure represents 1,660,772 residents who have bilingual or multilingual capabilities. From within this subset, roughly 9.6% of residents speak Spanish.¹

¹ 2022 United States Census Bureau: American Community Survey – Language Spoken at Home (1-Year Estimates Subject Tables).

Currently, Spanish-speaking constituents with LEP make up approximately 11% of the Department’s service population. A figure slightly higher than the state average. No other non-English language, besides Spanish, makes up more than 3.6% of our constituent population. See chart below.

| Primary Language Spoken by DTA Household | # of DTA Households Who Speak Language | % of DTA Households Who Speak Language |
|--|--|--|
| English | 555,733 | 79.2 |
| Spanish | 77,637 | 11.0 |
| Haitian Creole | 25,184 | 3.6 |
| Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, etc.) | 8,880 | 1.3 |
| Brazilian Portuguese | 6,684 | 1.0 |
| Vietnamese | 5,152 | 0.7 |
| Russian | 5,007 | 0.7 |
| Arabic | 3,352 | 0.5 |
| Khmer (Cambodian) | 2,978 | 0.4 |
| Cape Verdean Creole | 2,324 | 0.3 |
| Other* | 9,463 | 1.3 |

Figure 1: Language Breakdown of DTA Households. Statistics derived from analyzing active household data from within DTA’s BEACON eligibility system.

*The Other category includes Albanian, French, American Sign Language (ASL), Somali, Nepali, Amharic, Polish, Greek, Armenian, Italian, Laotian, Tagalog, Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian, etc. The percentage of households that speak these individual languages is less than 0.1% across the entire service population.

a. Language Access Coordinator

The Language Access Coordinator shall assist the agency head in complying with the outlined responsibilities under [Executive Order 615](#). Additional duties include locating interpreters or contracting vendor translation services in situations where the necessary language skills are not present within a local office. Individual(s) in this role are also responsible for updating the Department’s LAP as policies change.

A complaint may be filed with the DTA Language Access Coordinator if any individual believes they have been denied the benefits of this LAP. The complaint must outline the incident and be submitted in writing.

To file a complaint with the Language Access Coordinator, submit the written complaint to both representatives below:

Sarah Stuart

Associate Commissioner for Local Implementation and Special Populations
 600 Washington Street, 5th Floor
 Boston, MA 02111
 857-303-1248 (cell)
sarah.stuart@mass.gov

Kevin Pouv

Acting Director of Local Office Implementation
600 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02111
857-274-9315 (cell)
kevin.pouv@mass.gov

To file a complaint with the Governor's Office, submit a written complaint to:

Yarlennys Villaman
Director of Community Affairs
Language Access Coordinator
Office of the Governor Maura T. Healey
Massachusetts State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133
617-947-9759 (cell)
yarlennys.k.villaman@mass.gov

b. Language Resources

Multilingual Staff

The Department of Transitional Assistance is committed to hiring and retaining multilingual staff for all positions. DTA has actively recruited and hired staff to meet the language needs of many of our constituents. There are multilingual staff in all local offices, based on the unique language needs of the constituents in that catchment area. The majority of in-person interpreting is provided by staff within the office.

Constituents with LEP who present in office and for whom there is not a staff person available with that language skill set, are offered several options to conduct business including the use of a [virtual interpreter](#), [telephonic interpreter](#), or [scheduling a future in-person appointment](#) for which an interpreter can be arranged in advance. If the constituent opts for a future in-person appointment, staff will escalate the case to their management team so they may request the assistance of the Language Access Coordinator. If it is determined that staff assigned to another work location can assist, the appointment is scheduled in coordination with that office/individual. If there are no staff available, the Language Access Coordinator will request services through one of the state's contracted vendors.

The primary source of in-person interpretation support is provided by Human Services Assistants (HSA). The Department employs 90 Human Service Assistants who work as interpreters within the local offices. Each HSA is affiliated with a specific office. The list of HSAs for all offices is located on the [DTA Online Intranet site](#). This is an increase of 37 additional interpreters from the year before. The languages these employees speak are Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin), Portuguese, Vietnamese, Khmer, Cape Verdean Creole, French, Hindi, and Tibetan.

Staff can also access [contracted interpreter services](#) by phone or video when DTA employee interpreters are not available. Moreover, in procuring vendors who provide constituent services for the Department (e.g., employment services providers), the ability to work with LEP constituents is an important factor in making contracting decisions.

General Phone Line

The Department’s statewide phone system, the DTA Assistance Line, provides Interactive Voice Response (IVR) in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Cantonese), Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese. Local office main phone lines have messaging in a minimum of English and Spanish, with some office phone systems having the capacity for a third language.

IVR allows constituents to find out information about their case and make certain changes or requests, such as proof of benefits, without having to wait to speak with DTA staff. Also, the IVR is programmed to first connect constituents with staff who speak their language. Staff who primarily assist constituents with LEP are paid a language differential. This service is currently available for Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin), Portuguese, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, Khmer, and Cape Verdean Creole constituents.

The Department has a well-accessed mobile application and website, called DTA Connect, which enables constituents to easily update their case, request an EBT card, access forms, or find out information about their cases. DTA Connect is available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese.

Staff making outbound calls to constituents are required to assess potential language needs by reviewing the case file and obtaining a telephonic interpreter prior to calling the constituent. If receiving an inbound call through the DTA Assistance Line, the language of the constituent is identified so that the call can be prioritized for staff with the same language capacity or for staff to conference in a telephonic interpreter.

Interpreter Services for In-Person Business Transactions

Walk-In Constituents

DTA informs its constituents of the availability of free language services in two primary ways. All local offices display a “Do You Need an Interpreter” poster, which states: “Point to your language. An interpreter will be provided at no cost” in 16 different languages. This document is also found in the LEP Service Binder, kept at every local office’s reception desk.

Copies of the [Language Identification Flashcard](#) are available in all local office lobbies for front end staff to use. The card states “I speak” in 38 languages and can be used to identify the language spoken by constituents with LEP seeking DTA services.



Figure 2: Language Identification Flashcard

While the preference is to provide direct service to constituents with LEP in their primary language, staff also have access to an over-the-phone language service that can provide translations for 380 languages. Step-by-step instructions on how to use the over-the-phone language service, including ASL, are outlined in the Interpreter Services booklet listed under the Cross Programs section of the [DTA Online Guide](#).

[Interpreter Services](#)














-  Video Remote Interpreters (VRI)
-  Interpreter Services Overview
-  Department Interpreter Services
-  Guidelines for Providing Interpreter Services
-  Accessing Telephonic Interpreters
-  TAO Front End Staff Procedures for Constituents with LEP
-  Case Manager Procedures for Providing Interpreter Services for Telephone Conversations
-  Case Manager Procedures for Providing Interpreter Services to Walk In Constituents
-  Securing In-Person Interpreter Services for Scheduled Constituent Appointments
-  TAO Director and Designee Responsibilities
-  Three-Way Calling Functionality
-  Connecting an Interpreter to a Virtual Meeting
-  Providing Interpreter Feedback

Figure 3: Interpreter Services Chapters from the DTA Online Guide

All local offices include a constituent facing pictorial board to facilitate communication for individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal, or may have limited verbal or English proficiency. The boards include images and descriptive words in eight languages to help DTA staff determine the primary reason for a constituent's visit. This may be to apply for benefits, obtain an EBT card, scan documents, or more. Furthermore, the board has a section on preferred methods of communication for constituents who want to request an ASL interpreter, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services, and/or choose one of the languages available via the over-the-phone language service.

| How Can We Help You? | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Cash Benefits Benefícios em efectivo Benefícios em dinheiro Benefícios legais kach | SNAP Benefits Benefícios do SNAP Benefícios do SNAP Avantajă SNAP | EBT Card Tarjeta EBT Cartão EBT Kart EBT | Self-Service Kiosk Quiosco de auto-servicio Quiosque de auto-servicio Kiosq pwpip hit ou shvis | Copy/Scan Copiar/Escanear Copiar/Scannear Kopi/Scanear |
| Clear Mask Mascara clara Mascara clara Mask Transparan | Phone Telefono Telephone Telefon | Domestic Violence Violencia domestica Violência Domestica Violență Domestică | Letter/Forms Carta/Formularios Cartas/Formulários Lett/Fom | Virtual Appointment Cita virtual Compromiso Virtual Randevou Virtual |
| Employment and Training Emprego ou Educação Emprego ou Educação Travajă ak Formasjon | Child Care Cuidado de niños Creche Gadnj pou timoun | ASL Interpreter Interprete de ASL Interprete ASL Entèprèt ASL | Extra Help Ajuda extra Ajuda extra Ed Suplementă | In Person Meeting Reunión presencial Encontro presencial Reunyon an pèson |
| Other Agency Otras agencias Outra agência Litt Agens | Housing/Shelter Vivienda/Refugio Habitação/Abrigo Logman/Abrig | Application Form Formulario de solicitud Formulário de aplicação Fom aplikasyon | Other Resources Otros recursos Outros recursos Litt Resous | Questions Preguntas Perguntas Respon |

| Preferred Method of Communication | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| ASL Interpreter Interprete de ASL Interprete ASL Entèprèt ASL | Video Remote Interpreter (VRI) Interprete remoto por video Interprete Remoto de vídeo Entèprèt Vidéyo Alaka | Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) Interprete de surdos certificado Interprete de surdos certificado Entèprèt Sètifye pou mun ki Soud | Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Traducción en tiempo real para acceso a la comunicación Tradução em tempo real de acesso a comunicação | Video Relay Service (VRS) Servicio de retransmisión de video Serviço de retransmissão de vídeo Sèvis Relé Vidéyo |
| Language Translation Traducción de idiomas Tradução de idiomas Tradiksyon Lang | In Writing Por escrito Por escrito Akrè | MassRelay Servicio de retransmisión de telecomunicaciones Serviço de retransmissão de telecomunicações Sèvis Relé Telekomunikasyon | Virtual Appointment Cita virtual Compromiso Virtual Randevou Virtual | Other Otros Outros Litt |

| Preferred Language | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I speak English | <input type="checkbox"/> Je parle français (French) | <input type="checkbox"/> Govorim hrvatski (Croatian) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yo hablo Espanol (Spanish) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ես խոսում եմ հայերեն (Armenian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Govorim slovenski (Slovenian) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 我说中文 (Chinese) | <input type="checkbox"/> я говорю на русском (Russian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nagasasatta ako ng Tagalog (Tagalog) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ខ្ញុំនិយាយភាសាខ្មែរ (Cambodian/Khmer) | <input type="checkbox"/> Μόλις ελληνικά (Greek) | <input type="checkbox"/> Govorim srpsko-herceginskom (Serbian-Cyrillic) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ຂໍເວົ້າພາສາລາວ (Laotian/Lao) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parlo italiano (Italian) | <input type="checkbox"/> አማርኛ ቋንቋ (Amharic) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tôi nói tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eu falo Português (Portuguese) | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ASL user (American Sign Language) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mwen pale Kreyòl (Haitian Creole) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mówię po polsku (Polish) | | | |

| How Can We Help You? | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Lợi ích tiền mặt Денежные пособия 現金福利 الغواتك القدية | Lợi ích SNAP Primojennaja programma SNAP SNAP 福利 إيداع SNAP | Thẻ EBT EBT-kartta EBT-卡 Kartă EBT | Ki-ôk tự phục vụ Кiosco самообслуживания 自助服務亭 كشك الخدمة الذاتية | Sao chép / quét Копия сканирования 扫描/复印 تسجيل الصورة |
| Mặt nạ rõ ràng Чистая маска 透明面具 مستطاب وواضح | Điện thoại Telefono 電話 هاتف | Bảo lực gia đình Домашнее насилие 家庭暴力 التعنيف المنزلي | Thư / biểu mẫu Письмо/форма 信件/表 خطاب/نموذج | Cuộc hẹn ảo Виртуальная встреча 虚拟会议 موعد افتراضي |
| Việc làm và đào tạo Трудоустройство и обучение 就業和培訓 التوظيف والتدريب | Chăm sóc trẻ Уход за детьми 兒童看護 العناية بالأطفال | Thống Dịch Viên ASL Переводчик американского языка жестов 美國手語翻譯員 مترجم فوري لغة الإشارات | Chỉ Trợ Уход за детьми 兒童看護 العناية بالأطفال | Hội Thăm Duyệt Персональное взаимодействие 個人見面 مناقشة شخصية |
| Cơ Quan Khác Другие агентства 其他机构 وحدات أخرى | Gia Cư/Nơi Trú Жилье/приют 住所/庇護 إسكان/أبرج | Mẫu Đơn Формы заявления 申請表 نماذج لتقديم الطلب | Các Nguồn Lực Khác Другие ресурсы 其他资源 مصادر أخرى | Câu Hỏi Вопросы 疑問 سؤال |

| Preferred Method of Communication | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Thống Dịch Viên ASL Переводчик американского языка жестов 美國手語翻譯員 مترجم فوري لغة الإشارات | Video Remote Interpreter (VRI) Thống Dịch Viên qua video Tư Xả (VRI) Дистанционный переводчик по видео (VRI) 远程视频(口译员) (VRI) مترجم فوري لغة الجسد عن بعد (VRI) | Thống Dịch Viên cho Người Điếc có Chứng Nhĩ (CDI) Сертифицированный глухой переводчик (CDI) 认证人(口译员) (CDI) مترجم فوري لغة الجسد (CDI) | Thống Dịch Viên Liên Thông Служба реального времени для доступа к коммуникации 服務即時通訊 خدمة الترجمة الفورية (CART) | Dịch Vụ Chuyển Tiếp qua Video (VRS) Служба ретрансляции видео (VRS) 視頻轉接服務 (VRS) خدمة ترحيل الفيديو (VRS) |
| Phiên Dịch Ngôn Ngữ Языковая переводная служба 語言轉譯 خدمة الترجمة اللغوية | Bảng Văn Bản В письменной форме 書面形式 خطيا | Dịch Vụ Chuyển Tiếp Viên Liên Thông Телекоммуникационная служба ретрансляции 電信中繼服務 خدمة ترحيل الاتصالات | Cuộc hẹn ảo Виртуальная встреча 虚拟会议 موعد افتراضي | Khác Другие 其他 اخر |

| Preferred Language | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I speak English | <input type="checkbox"/> Je parle français (French) | <input type="checkbox"/> Govorim hrvatski (Croatian) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yo hablo Espanol (Spanish) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ես խոսում եմ հայերեն (Armenian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Govorim slovenski (Slovenian) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 我说中文 (Chinese) | <input type="checkbox"/> я говорю на русском (Russian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nagasasatta ako ng Tagalog (Tagalog) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ខ្ញុំនិយាយភាសាខ្មែរ (Cambodian/Khmer) | <input type="checkbox"/> Μόλις ελληνικά (Greek) | <input type="checkbox"/> Govorim srpsko-herceginskom (Serbian-Cyrillic) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ຂໍເວົ້າພາສາລາວ (Laotian/Lao) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parlo italiano (Italian) | <input type="checkbox"/> አማርኛ ቋንቋ (Amharic) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tôi nói tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eu falo Português (Portuguese) | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an ASL user (American Sign Language) | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mwen pale Kreyòl (Haitian Creole) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mówię po polsku (Polish) | | | |

Figure 4: DTA Lobby Pictorial Board

Scheduled Hearings

The Request for an Appeal form (DOH-10) includes a space where constituents can list their primary language or dialect as well as phone and relay numbers which they can use to contact the Division of Hearings (DOH). DOH administrative staff includes an individual who speaks Spanish. For other languages, the staff use an over-the-phone language service to communicate with constituents.

If a constituent requests an interpreter and/or if the primary language in DTA’s BEACON eligibility system is anything other than English, DOH contacts Bay State Interpreters or Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) and schedules an interpreter when they are scheduling the hearing.

Interpreter Services for In-Person Events: Requesting a Verbal Interpreter

DTA staff may use [PRF75 Statewide Contract](#) to request in-person interpreters for events. Staff should follow guidance specifically outlined in PRF75 Statewide Contract and adhere to State procurement laws and best practices.

Interpreter Services for In-Person Events: Requesting an ASL Interpreter or CART Services

Interpreters should be requested from the [Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(MCDHH\)](#). The process for requesting interpretation is laid out on the Commission's website, linked above. Additional information on MCDHH services is further outlined on the [Communication Spectrum Tip Sheet for First-Time Interpreter/CART Requests](#).

When registering for events, participants have the option to request an ASL interpreter or CART Services. These requests are collected at least two weeks or more in advance of the event to allow DTA organizers time to reach out to MCDHH with the date and time of the event, obtain a quote for services, and coordinate payment through the DTA Finance Department.

If ASL interpretation is requested, most events will require two interpreters. There may be times when interpreters are contracted from different organizations. It is best practice to make time prior to the event for the interpreters to connect.

If the services are no longer needed or the event is cancelled, DTA will provide notice to MCDHH at least three days before the scheduled date to avoid fees.

Translating Vital Documents and Publications

The Department currently translates all its vital documents, including adverse action notices, into Spanish. Additionally, DTA is committed to maintaining all its widely applicable publications in the six most spoken languages in our service population: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese. As documents are updated or newly developed, translated versions are automatically requested as part of the production process. Longer and more specific publications are translated when there are accessibility concerns for the intended audience.

Consistent with past practice, the Department will use available funding to update already translated documents that need revisions and to expand translation of application related materials to lower incidence languages.

DTA budgets funding annually to pay for translation services and continuously maintains contact with translation vendors on the [PRF75 Statewide Contract](#). The process for translating Department issued notices, forms, resource materials, messages, and other communications is primarily handled by the DTA Policy and Program Support (PPS) Unit.

The process of translating publications is outlined below:

- PPS staff emails a Word document of the publication to one of the contracted vendors;
- PPS staff identify the languages for translation;
- PPS staff request a price quote and delivery estimate from the vendor; and
- Once a quote is received, PPS staff will coordinate with DTA's Finance Department to authorize payment for the project.

Multilingual staff assist as a second level review for accuracy of the translations. Approved publications are forwarded to DTA's print shop (Schrafft's) for production and distribution. If there is an urgent time sensitive

need, DTA staff who are proficient in a particular language are used for initial translation.

TAO Directors and Assistant Directors may also place bulk orders for translated publications through the Department's publication ordering system, WebCRD. Applicable orders are placed based upon the languages prevalent within each TAO's catchment area.

Written Translations

When staff receive a written document from a constituent that needs to be translated, they are directed to reach out to their TAO's Human Services Assistant (HSA), whose primary role is to provide translation/interpreter services. If the HSA does not have the appropriate language skill set, staff must escalate to their TAO management team who works with DTA's Language Access Coordinator to determine if there are staff in another office who can assist. If no such person is available, the Language Access Coordinator will forward the written document to be translated by one of the state vendors.

Correspondence

Regardless of the language on file for the constituent, DTA has long included a multilingual mail insert in all correspondence to constituents. This insert states the following in 22 languages:

“Important! The notice may affect your benefits. Please read it or have someone translate it for you right away. If you do not understand the information or need help translating it, please contact your Transitional Assistance Office right away or call 1-877-382-2363.”

English
Important! The notice may affect your benefits. Please read it or have someone translate it for you right away. If you do not understand the information or need help translating it, please contact your Transitional Assistance Office right away or call 1-877-382-2363.

American Sign Language
 I am an ASL user.

Arabic
هنا يمكن لهذا البلاغ أن يؤثر على العوائد الخاصة بك. الرجاء قراءته أو الطلب من شخص ما ترجمته لك. على الفور. في حال لم تفهم المعلومات الواردة أو كنت بحاجة إلى المساعدة في ترجمته، يرجى مكالمة مكتب المساعدة الانتقالية الخاص بك على الفور أو الاتصال 1-877-382-2363.

Armenian
Կարևոր է! Այս փոփոխումը կարող է ազդել Ձեր կապուստների վրա: Ինքնուրույն կերպով կամ խնդրել որևէ մեկին անմիջապես թարգմանել այն Ձեր համար: Եթե Պարզ չէք հասկանում այս տեղեկությունները, կամ այն թարգմանելու համար օգնության կարիք ունեք, խնդրում ենք անմիջապես կապվել Ձեր Անցումային օգնությունից զբաղվողին կամ կապվել 1-877-382-2363:

Azərbaycanca
Əhəmiyyətli xəbərdarlıq! Bu bildirişiniz sizin faydalarınıza təsir edə bilər. Bildirişi dərhal oxuyun və ya tərcüməçini çağırın. Bildirişə başa düşmədiyinizə və ya tərcüməyə ehtiyacınız varsa, dərhal köməkçi ofisimizə və ya 1-877-382-2363-ə zəng edin.

Chinese
重要! 本通知可能会影响到您的福利。请立即仔细阅读，或请人把它翻译为您的母语。如果您不理解这份文件中的信息或需要翻译，请马上联系“过渡期援助办公室（Transitional Assistance Office）”或致电：1-877-382-2363。

Español
¡Importante! ¡L'avis peut affecter vos prestations. Veuillez immédiatement le lire ou vous le faire traduire. Si vous ne comprenez pas les informations ou si vous avez besoin d'aide pour les traduire, veuillez immédiatement contacter votre Bureau d'assistance transitoire ou appeler 1-877-382-2363.

Greek
Σημαντικό! Η ειδοποίησή μπορεί να επηρεάσει την ασφαλιστική σας κάλυψη σας. Παρακαλούμε διαβάστε ή ζητήστε από κάποιον να σας το μεταφράσει αμέσως. Αν δεν καταλαβαίνετε τις πληροφορίες ή χρειάζεστε βοήθεια σχετικά με τη μεταφάση, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με το Transitional Assistance Office (Γραφείο Μεταβατικής Βοήθειας) αμέσως ή καλέστε 1-877-382-2363.

Haitian Creole
Enpòtan! Notis sa ka afekte benefis ou. Tanpri li oswa fe yon moun tradwi li pou ou lamenn. Si w pa konprann enfòmasyon an oswa w bezwen ed pou tradwi li, tanpri kontakte Ofis Asistans Transizyonèl ou lamenn oswa rele 1-877-382-2363.

Italian
Importante! Il comunicato potrebbe incidere sui Suoi benefici. Si prega di leggerlo o di chiedere a qualcuno di farlo tradurre per Lei immediatamente. Se non capisce le informazioni riportate o ha bisogno di aiuto per tradurle, La preghiamo di contattare subito l'Ufficio di Transitional Assistance o di telefonare al numero 1-877-382-2363.

Khmer
ព័ត៌មាននេះអាចមានឥទ្ធិពលលើប្រាក់បៀវត្សរបស់អ្នក។ សូមអានឬសុំឲ្យអ្នកដទៃបកប្រែជូនអ្នក។ ប្រសិនបើអ្នកមិនយល់ព័ត៌មាននេះ ឬប្រើប្រាស់ប្រាក់បៀវត្សរបស់អ្នកមិនត្រឹមត្រូវ ទ្រង់ជំរាបអ្នកសុំឲ្យអ្នកដទៃជួយបកប្រែឬទាក់ទងការប្រឹក្សា (Transitional Assistance Office) ឬទូរស័ព្ទលេខ 1-877-382-2363។

18-052-0116-05
Multilingual Card (Rev. 01/2016)

Laotian
ສຳຄັນ! ປຶ້ງຂໍ້ມູນນີ້ອາດຈະມີຜົນຕໍ່ຜົນປະໂຫຍດຂອງທ່ານ. ກະລຸນາອ່ານ ຫຼືໃຫ້ຄົນອື່ນຮຽນແອບໃຫ້ທ່ານທັນທີ, ຖ້າທ່ານບໍ່ຮູ້ໂຕເອງ ຫຼື ຕ້ອງການຮຽນແອບຜົນປະໂຫຍດຂອງທ່ານ. ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ຫ້ອງການຮຽນແອບຜົນປະໂຫຍດຂອງທ່ານທັນທີ ຫຼື ໂທ 1-877-382-2363.

Polish
Uwaga! Powiadomienie może mieć wpływ na Państwa świadczenia. Proszę się z nim zapoznać lub poprosić kogoś o jego prze tłumaczenie. Jeśli Państwo nie rozumieją jego treści lub potrzebują pomocy w prze tłumaczeniu powiadomienia, prosimy o natychmiastowy kontakt z Biurem Pomocy Przejściowej (Transitional Assistance Office) lub kontaktem pod numerem 1-877-382-2363.

Portuguese
Importante! O aviso pode afetar os seus benefícios. Leia o aviso ou peça para alguém traduzir agora mesmo. Se não entender as informações ou precisar de ajuda para traduzi-las, entre em contato com o Departamento de Assistência Transitoria agora mesmo, ou ligue para 1-877-382-2363.

Russian
Внимание! Настоящее уведомление может повлиять на Ваши компенсационные выплаты. Пожалуйста, сразу же прочтите его или попросите кого-нибудь перевести его. Если Вы не понимаете информацию или Вам нужен ее перевод, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с отделом помощи Transitional Assistance Office или позвоните 1-877-382-2363.

Serbo-Croatian – Cyrillic script
Важно! Ово обавештење може да утиче на ваше бенефиције. Молимо вас да га прочитате или да вам га неко преведе одмах. Ако не разумете информацију или вам је потребна помоћ при преводу, молимо вас да контактирате или позовете наше Канцеларију за помоћ при транзицији 1-877-382-2363.

Serbo-Croatian – Latin script
Yazn! Ovo obavještenje može uticati na vaše beneficije. Molimo vas da ga pročitate ili da vam ga neko prevede odmah. Ako ne razumijete informaciju ili vam je potrebna pomoć pri prevodu, molimo vas da odmah kontaktirate ili pozovete našu Kancelariju za pomoć pri tranziciji 1-877-382-2363.

Slovenian
Pomembno! To obavestilo lahko vpliva na vaše beneficije. Prosimo vas da ga preberete, ali vam ga negde prevedete takoj. Če ne razumite informacijo, ali vam je potrebna pomoć pri prevodu, prosimo da takoj kontaktirate oziroma pokličete vaše Pisarno za pomoć pri tranziciji 1-877-382-2363.

Somali
Muhim! Ogeysiiskan waxa laga yaabaa inuu saameeyo dheefahaaga. Fadlan akhri ama qof ha kuun turjumo isla markiiba. Haddii aad fahmi weydo macluumaadka ama aad u baahato gargaar xagga turjumaadka, fadlan la soo xiriiir Xafiiska Gargaarka Kalguurka isla markiiba ama soo wac. 1-877-382-2363.

Tamil
முக்கிய! இது அறிவிப்பு உங்கள் நன்மைகளை பாதிக்கலாம். இதை உடனடியாகப் படிக்கவும் அல்லது அதை உங்களுக்குத் தேவையான மொழியில் மொழிபெயர்த்துக் கொடுக்கச் செய்யும் ஒருவரை அழைக்கவும். உங்களுக்குத் தேவையான மொழியில் மொழிபெயர்த்துக் கொடுக்கச் செய்யும் ஒருவரை அழைக்கவும் அல்லது 1-877-382-2363-ஊடில் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்.

Tagalog
Importante! Maaring mapakikutan ng panauwag ito ang inyong mga benepisyo. Paki basa ito o hilangin sa ibang taon na kaangin ulong isalin sa inyong wika para sa inyo. Kung hindi niyo nanintindihan ang impormasyon o kailangan niyo ng tulug sa pagsalin nito, mangyaring makipag-ugnayan sa inyong Transitional Assistance Office sa lalong madaling parahan o tumawag 1-877-382-2363.

Vietnamese
Lưu ý quan trọng! Thông báo này có thể ảnh hưởng đến quyền lợi trợ cấp của quý vị. Vui lòng đọc kỹ hoặc nhờ người dịch cho quý vị ngay. Nếu quý vị không hiểu thông tin này hay cần được giúp phiên dịch thông tin này, vui lòng liên lạc Văn phòng Cơ quan Trợ cấp Chuyển tiếp ngay hoặc gọi 1-877-382-2363.

18-052-0116-05
Multilingual Card (Rev. 01/2016)

Figure 5: DTA Multilingual Mail Insert

More recently, DTA makes robocalls and sends text messages/emails to constituents including case specific information, reminders, and updates. These resources are generated in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese based on BEACON language preferences.

Since its launch in May 2023, all Benefit Decision Notices (BDN) that are sent to constituents are generated in English or Spanish. Beginning in April 2024, households who have a language on file other than English and Spanish will receive a BDN in their preferred language. The BDN will be offered in six languages (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese).

Web Content

DTA has translated many other notices, forms, resource materials, and videos into multiple languages. These items are publicly listed on its [website](#), [Online Guide](#), and [YouTube channel](#). The following is a description of the translations done to date:

- **Paper Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, Khmer, French, Polish, Italian, and Korean.
- **Paper Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) applications:** Translated into Spanish as part of an interactive BEACON system interview with a case manager.
- **Paper Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) applications:** Translated into Spanish as part of an interactive BEACON system interview with a case manager.
- **Online SNAP application:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese.
- **Notices of a DTA action affecting a constituent's case:** Spanish
- **Rights and Responsibilities and SNAP Penalty Warning:** Spanish
- **Your Right to Know Brochure:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Russian.
- **Your Right to an Interpreter and What Noncitizens Need to Know Brochures:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Russian.
- **Do you need an Interpreter Poster:** Albanian, American Sign Language, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese (Simplified), Farsi, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- **Multilingual Mail Insert:** American Sign Language indicator, Arabic, Armenian, Amharic, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese (Simplified), French, Greek, Haitian Creole, Italian, Khmer, Laotian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian Cyrillic, Serbo-Croatian Latin, Slovenian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- **Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Brochures:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, and Vietnamese.
- **Community Information Brochure:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Russian, and Khmer.
- **You Deserve to Be Safe (Domestic Violence) Brochure:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Russian, and Arabic.
- **Do You Need Help Because of a Disability (Americans with Disabilities Act) Flyer:** Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese (Simplified), Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Russian, Khmer, and Laotian.
- **SNAP Outreach, Protect Your Benefits from Scams, DTA Connect, DTA Assistance Line, and P-EBT Flyers:** Available in 11 to 14 languages.
- The Department has also produced a variety of SNAP-related videos in multiple languages, which can be viewed on the agency's [YouTube channel](#).

c. Staff Training

This Language Access Plan (LAP) will be:

- Posted internally for all employees.
- Incorporated into the orientation for new employees.
- Presented to management so they are fully aware of and understand the LAP, to reinforce the plan's importance and ensure its implementation by staff.
- Presented to DTA staff having contact with the public, so such staff are trained to work effectively with constituents with LEP through telephone/in-person interactions.

The Department's protocols for providing services to individuals whose primary language is not English (or

who use American Sign Language) is included in its training materials, including the Online Guide. The following interpreter services guidelines have been issued to staff:

- The Department is committed to ensuring that interpreters have been trained in interpreter services, ethics, and confidentiality. Professional interpreters are offered free of charge to all LEP/ASL constituents to conduct Department business.
- A constituent who presents either in-person, by telephone, or virtual appointment with an adult intending to act as an interpreter must be advised that a professional interpreter can be provided free of charge. The constituent may decline the use of professional interpreter services and choose to have the adult serve as an interpreter.
- Children over age 12 may interpret only to schedule appointments.
- Children aged 12 and under may not be asked to interpret for any purpose.
- A constituent who speaks some English, or appears to understand English, may not have the language skills needed to fully comprehend Department terminology, rights, responsibilities, and penalties. If the case manager or other Department staff believes that a professional interpreter is necessary, at any point in the interaction a bilingual or multilingual staff person, if available, or contracted interpreter must be accessed to effectively communicate with the constituent.
- A constituent has the right to refuse the use of a particular interpreter if uncomfortable for a personal or cultural reason. Department staff must not inquire as to the reason for refusal. In this situation, an alternative staff or contracted interpreter must be accessed to conduct the interview or casework.
- If a contracted interpreter does not appear for a scheduled interview, the case manager must immediately access a telephonic or virtual interpreter to conduct the interview. The case manager must not reschedule the interview in this situation.
- Constituents must be allowed to complete Department business on the date of first contact if time permits. Otherwise, a follow-up appointment must be scheduled using the interpreter to arrange a mutually convenient date and time. All timing-related rights of the constituent must be preserved as of the first date of contact, based on program rules.
- The case narrative must be updated to reflect the method of translation or the refusal of translation services at each constituent interaction.

VII. Monitoring

The Department of Transitional Assistance will review and update its Language Access Plan at least every two years or more frequently, as needed.

The review assesses:

- Whether there have been any significant changes in the composition or language needs of the populations served;
- Whether staff knows and understands the LAP document, and is comfortable using the services described within;
- Whether additional documents require translation;
- Identification of any issues or problems related to serving persons with LEP which may have emerged during the past year; and
- Identification of any recommended actions to provide more responsive and effective language services (e.g., adding documents to be translated, creating, or expanding partnerships with community organizations, or changing staffing priorities).

Monitoring the effectiveness of a Language Access Plan may include, but not be limited to:

- Analyzing current and previous data on language assistance usage, including languages served;
- Surveying staff on how often they use language assistance services, if they believe there should be changes to the services provided or the providers used, and if they believe that the language assistance services in place are meeting the needs of the communities with LEP in their service area; and
- Monitoring feedback from community-based organizations, legal services, and other stakeholders about the agency's effectiveness and performance in ensuring meaningful access for individuals with LEP.

The Language Access Coordinator uses the above information as well as any received from other sources (complaints, local office staff, DTA Advisory Boards, contracted interpreters, etc.) to determine whether its LEP populations are receiving meaningful access to the Department's programs and services.

The Department is exploring using its Quality Improvement (QI) Unit to review compliance with language access policies, either as part of its routine case review function or as a separate review focusing primarily on language access. The QI unit is comprised of specialized staff charged with reviewing and analyzing cases to determine the accuracy of work performed by case managers.

VIII. Approvals



Jeffrey G. McCue
Commissioner of the Department of Transitional
Assistance

February 27, 2024

Date



Kathleen E. Walsh
Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and
Human Services

March 7, 2024

Date