



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**Department of
Developmental Services**

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

Revised January 2026

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Introduction

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is committed to improving the accessibility of its programs and services for eligible non-English speakers and limited-English-proficient (LEP) individuals within the Commonwealth. DDS has prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP) to outline the Department's commitment to providing universal access for all Individuals, whether they are served by the Department or seeking to participate in services, programs, and activities. This includes those Individuals who are deaf, late-deafened, and hard of hearing.¹ This is the third LAP prepared by DDS. The first was prepared and posted on the DDS website in 2017. The LAP is an integral part of the Department's effort to ensure that services offered enhance the lives of the Individuals we serve and their families and that they are of the highest quality. The LAP also helps ensure that DDS is viewed as an Employer of Choice for human services employees whose first language is not English.

The Department will review and update this plan every two years to ensure that the Department is continuing to respond to community needs and to comply with executive orders [614](#) and [615](#), with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F) [Administrative Bulletin 16](#) with section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, and with federal regulations at 45 CFR 92.201: *Meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiencies*, which requires that DDS provide meaningful access to LEP persons.

Purpose

This plan sets the framework and gives guidance to ensure LEP Individuals and/or persons have equal access to Department services, programs, information, and activities. The Department is determined to take appropriate and required actions within its business and operational function to provide communication access to LEP Individuals and/or persons, including but not limited to:

- In-person or telephonic communications.
- Whenever possible, provide in-person services
- Written correspondence
- Documents explaining the Department's services, programs, and activities.
- Information relating to rights and regulations (e.g., Vital Documents); and,
- Documents of waiver, release, consent, or other such documents as required by law.

This Plan applies to all individuals, families, and persons seeking or receiving services from DDS and its employees, contractors, and interns. An individual maintains the right to self-identify as an individual needing translation and interpretation services. Management will rely on the LAP to outline how the Department will maintain compliance with Administrative Bulletin 16 by disseminating policy directives, assigning responsibility for implementation-related efforts, and furnishing staff with guidance.

This LAP does not create new services; it strives to eliminate barriers for LEP individuals accessing existing services and ensure that all staff can assist individuals in accessing those resources. The Department of Developmental Services will provide quality language assistance to LEP individuals in a fair and timely manner, ensuring meaningful access to the Department's services.

¹ DDS procedure is shaped by the Department's regulations regarding language assistance service requests.

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 these Language Access Guidelines are to:

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

Policy

It is the Department of Developmental Services' policy to provide meaningful access to programs and services to people based on their communication needs.

Applicability

This policy applies to all offices within the Department of Developmental Services.

Agency Description

The Department's mission is to work in partnership with others to create innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate fully and meaningfully in, and contribute to, their communities as valued members. Through a comprehensive system of specialized services and supports, DDS serves more than 51,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Since 2014, and the passage of the Autism Omnibus Law, adults with autism spectrum disorder without an intellectual disability are also eligible for services that support self-determination and provide the tools and services to maximize their quality of life. The types of specialized services and supports include day support, employment support, residential support, family support, respite, and transportation. The Department provides its services through community-based state-operated day and residential programs and by contracting with private provider agencies.

The Department is comprised of the following organizational structure, which administers the state and federally funded specialized services and supports.

Central Office

Located at 40 Broad St., Boston, the Central Office oversees all our functions and operations throughout the state and establishes statewide policies and procedures. Within the Central Office, the primary staff includes the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance, General Counsel, Assistant Commissioners, Director of Human Rights for Individuals, and the Statewide Director for Investigations.

Four Regional Offices

Each Area Office reports to one of four Regional Offices. The Regional Offices are geographically located around the state: Central West Region, Northeast Region, Southeast Region, and Metro Region. The Regional Offices provide management of the 23 area offices, 257 state-operated residential group homes, and 2 Developmental Centers (Hogan and Wrentham).

The primary staff contacts located in the Regional Office include a Regional Director, Community Systems Director, Regional Operations Manager, Regional Family Support Director, Regional Quality Enhancement Director, Senior Investigator, and Assistant General Counsel.

23 Area Offices

Most individuals and families have contact with us through their local Area Office. These 23 offices are located throughout Massachusetts. The staff contacts located in the Area Offices include the Area Director, Assistant Area Director, Area Clinical staff, Program Monitors, and Service Coordinators. Area Offices are responsible for overseeing and monitoring the services we provide or arrange for the Individuals and their families, living within each Area Office's designated area, in the cities/towns covered by the respective Area Office.

Language Access Plan

The plan will be fully implemented, subject to the availability of fiscal resources. This plan has been developed to adhere to the language access policy and guidelines of A&F Administrative Bulletin 16, to Executive Order 614: *Establishing the Digital Accessibility and Equity Governance Board*, and Executive Order 615: *Promoting Access to Governance Studies and Information by Identifying and Minimizing Language Access Barriers*. Language Access Plans developed by the agency, including those developed based on the October 12, 2012, Administrative Bulletin from the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, "Language Access Policy and Implementation Guidelines," were consulted while putting together this plan.

This Language Access Plan represents the Department's administrated blueprint to provide meaningful access to the Department's services, programs, and activities on the part of LEP individuals and outlines the tasks the Department will undertake to meet this objective. This is the third LAP prepared by DDS. The first was prepared and posted on the DDS website in 2017.

1. DDS Language Access Coordinator

DDS-designated Language Access Coordinator:

Jennifer Mancia
Workforce Development Program Manager
40 Broad St. 10th Floor Boston, MA 02119
jennifer.mancia@mass.gov
(781) 835-0816

2. DDS Language Access Needs Assessment

A. Predominant Language

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 25.8% of Commonwealth residents age 5 years and older speak a language other than English at home. This data was captured in 2024.²

As of January 2026, DDS client records show that English is the predominant language, spoken by 83.6%, followed by Spanish at 7.2%. Other predominant languages, such as Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, and Arabic, constitute less than 1%. Additionally, records indicate that American Sign Language (ASL) is the preferred language for 256 of the individuals served by DDS.

Enhanced intake and data collection processes are strengthening reported outcomes. The rollout of a new client management system, combined with updated intake forms that allow families to self-identify their preferred language, contributes to the increases cited above. Alongside these two processes, the Language Access Coordinator is working closely with the Family Support Program Director to improve service delivery through contracted Family Support Centers to ensure that outreach to families is conducted in multiple languages.

B. Language Makeup of Client Population

The current language makeup for individuals served by DDS as of January 28, 2026, is identified in Appendix A.

In 2023, the DDS Data Governance Committee initiated a project with the regions and area offices to identify and update missing language preferences and race entries in its current Client Management Database (MediTech) in anticipation of the data exchange to its new Client Management System. The new client management database (The Hub) went live in October 2025. The Hub was designed to capture Race and Ethnicity data that aligns with current data and reporting trends. The new system now includes new fields to capture Preferred Written and Spoken Language for the individual, family, guardian, and secondary contacts. A new Intake and Eligibility application that will replace the existing application in 2026 also contains these same new fields.

C. Points of Contact between the Department and Client Population

Electronically - The Department communicates electronically with the individuals served and the public through its website at [DDS Services](#). Outreach and educational messaging are shared by email and social media.

Telephone – Members of the public can call Central Offices, Regional offices, and Area offices that serve their community. Contact information for DDS offices by town is provided on DDS's website via the DDS Area Office Locator link.

² <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

Written (Paper) Correspondence - The Department sends written communication by the U.S. Postal Service regarding the provision of services, such as eligibility and enrollment information, and individual service plans, and periodically sends information and outreach materials.

In-person – The Department meets with individuals served by DDS and the public in its Central, Regional, and Area Offices. Staff also meet in the community with individuals served at program sites, homes, and public venues.

D. Language Resources Assessment

The Agency is committed to an ongoing assessment of its Language Access Plan and intends to implement improvements, as needed, to strengthen universal access to the Department's programs, services, and activities as population changes dictate.

DDS will review the financial resources available to furnish LEP services annually.

In terms of community-based resources, DDS Regional Offices hold contracts with language translation providers in their regions, and DDS Central Office holds statewide contracts with Bay State Interpreters and Proprio Translation Services.

DDS has reviewed the Operations Services Division (OSD) procurement contract regulations for obtaining Foreign Language and Translation Services (PRF75)³.

Through DDS-funded Multicultural Family Support Centers and some Family Support and Autism Support Centers, DDS can access language resource capacity for interpretation and translation. Multicultural Family Support Centers provide information and referrals in the languages of the communities they are contracted to serve.

In addition to the Central Office contracts for Interpretation and Translation, the Regional Offices also have contracts for those services.

3. Language Service Protocols

A. General Interpreter Services

Qualified interpreters provide language assistance via in-person, telephone, and video services. Central Office, Regional, and Area Offices hold contracts from the Operational Services Division list.⁴ of qualified providers of Interpretation and Translation services, or access to these services provided by DDS-funded Multicultural Support Centers. Since each office has different contractual arrangements, staff should request the contact information from their supervisor.

B. Multilingual and Multimodal Communication Access

DDS is committed to expanding multilingual and multimodal communication services, including Deaf-specific language access, to promote full linguistic and cultural access across DDS programs

³ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/prf75/download>

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/prf75/download>

and services.

For assistance for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, DDS staff should seek support coordinating interpretation from the DDS ASL Interpreter Coordinator assigned to the region they are working in. Staff can access information and request forms through the SharePoint site's Resource page that is currently under construction. Staff can reach out to their supervisor or Jennifer Mancia at jennifer.mancia@mass.gov. If staff are not able to locate the information, the Language Access Coordinator can also be used as a resource.

Bilingual and/or multilingual staff who are paid a differential to provide interpretation and translation for the individuals they support on their caseloads may be requested to assist in some circumstances. Requests for such support must go through the bilingual and/or multilingual staff's supervisor.

DDS does not enlist family or community members for language assistance, and this should only be used in exceptional circumstances or when the person requests language assistance from them. Interpretation and translation are provided free of charge.

Professional interpretation services shall be offered as promptly as possible, and generally within a reasonable time frame comparable to services provided in English.

C. In-person Interpretation

Regional and Area Offices should use bilingual staff in that office to communicate with LEP individuals whose primary language is the same as the bilingual staff member's. This includes assisting individuals with understanding program materials, filling out forms, answering questions about programs, and responding to requests for information. At present, DDS employs 66 bilingual and/or multilingual staff who carry caseloads and provide interpretation and translation for the individuals they support. DDS also employs bilingual staff who are not paid a differential, and who may volunteer for interpreting services, but DDS is mindful of creating a burden on these staff members. As stated above, professional interpretation services shall be offered as promptly as possible, and generally within a reasonable time frame comparable to services provided in English. When bilingual staff are unavailable, staff must utilize approved over-the-phone or video interpretation services without delay.

D. Phone Interpretation

Individual(s) will have the availability of bilingual staff when requesting information or making appointments with staff. The Regional and Area staff will be instructed to place calls for individual(s) to the appropriate bilingual Service Coordinator, who will assist the individual(s) who may be seeking services or assistance. Area and Regional staff should use the Proprio Interpreter on Demand phone number (844) 864-0263 when the bilingual Service Coordinator is unavailable, or when the individual self-identifies as an LEP who speaks a language other than

that of the bilingual Service Coordinator.

E. Common Notice Solution

A notice is posted at Area, Regional, and Central offices stating that DDS has developed a language access plan, which is available free of charge upon request. The posted notice outlines how to access language assistance.

The Department of Developmental Services created a “Notice of Free Interpreter Services” to reflect the current leading languages that will be available at Central/Regional and Area offices, and it is posted next to the public notice at entrances and other areas where individuals identifying as needing interpretation and/or translation services may interact with the organization and need assistance.

“I speak” cards or “language identification cards,” which help identify what language an individual speaks, and to identify what language an interpreter will need to speak to communicate effectively with that individual, are available at Central/Regional and Area offices. The cards will contain the text “I speak” in the languages used most by people DDS serves. They are intended to help an individual point to a language he or she understands. DDS will also incorporate the use of taglines on printed and electronic materials. Taglines are designed to inform individuals with limited English proficiency about the availability of language assistance services.

Staff in the Department of Developmental Services will also work toward multimodal Deaf specific materials that will be available to staff at Central/Regional and Area offices to assist an individual with identifying needed translation and interpretation services.

F. Community-Based Resources

The Department of Developmental Services provides funding for Family Support Centers across the state, designed to provide information, assistance, and an array of supportive services to families with children and adults with disabilities who are living at home.

Any member of the public can contact one of the Family Support Centers listed in this Directory for information and referral services: [Family Support Centers](#).

G. Translating Publications

The Department of Developmental Services is committed to maintaining all its widely applicable publications in the five most spoken languages in the Commonwealth: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Chinese (Simplified and/or Traditional). For publications that are related to the general public, service recipients, and/or their families, requests are sent to the Language Access Coordinator along with a request for the languages needed for translation. The Language Access Coordinator will determine which of the two contracted vendors to submit the request.

H. Written Translation Guidelines

The Department contracts with two vendors; Baystate interpreter Services to provide culturally competent and linguistically appropriate written documents for outreach and informational documents. For written documents that are not translated to general notices for service recipients and their families, requests are sent to the Language Access Coordinator along with a request for the languages needed for translation. The Language Access Coordinator will determine which of the two contracted vendors to submit the request. Written documents for Intake and Eligibility and DDS specialty programs, such as DESE, and Children's Autism Waiver are made available on the DDS website, in Arabic, Burmese, Chinese (Simplified and/or Traditional), Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese (European), Spanish, Khmer, Vietnamese, Nepali, and Somali. Taglines are included on documents to indicate that Interpretation and Translation are available in other languages at no cost.

Documents that need translation for specific individuals served by the Department that cannot be handled by bilingual staff are handled through the contracts held by the four Regional Offices, and staff follow the business process for their region. Written responses to LEP constituents shall be provided within the same service timelines as responses to English-speaking constituents. Translated materials shall be clear, accurate, and culturally appropriate.

I. Correspondence

Documents that need translation for specific individuals served by the Department that cannot be handled by bilingual staff are handled through the contracts held by the four Regional Offices, and staff follow the business process for their region. Business process documents may be obtained from the appropriate Regional Contract Office.

J. Interpreter Services for Walk-in Constituents

Where feasible, the Department should use bilingual staff to communicate with individuals seeking interpretation and translation services whose primary language is the same as the bilingual staff member's native language. This includes assisting individuals with understanding program materials, filling out forms, answering questions about programs, and responding to requests for information.

Central Office, Regional, and Area staff can utilize the Proprio Interpreter on Demand phone number (844) 864-0263 in the absence of the availability of the bilingual Service Coordinator, other bilingual staff, or if the LEP individual speaks a language other than that of the bilingual Service Coordinator/Staff. The Interpreter on Demand can be placed on the phone or on a video remote interpreting platform with the LEP individual and the staff assisting the individual.

K. Hotline and General Phone Lines

Central Office, Regional, and Area staff should utilize the Proprio Interpreter on Demand phone number (844) 864-0263 in the absence of the availability of the bilingual Service Coordinator, other bilingual staff, or if the LEP individual speaks a language other than that of the bilingual Service Coordinator. The Interpreter on Demand can be conferenced into a call or a video remote

interpreting platform with the LEP individual and the interpreter.

L. Over the phone, Language Services

Individuals will have the availability of multilingual and/or multimodal staff when requesting information or making appointments with staff. The Regional and Area staff will be instructed to place calls for individuals to the appropriate multilingual and/or multimodal Service Coordinator, who will assist individuals who may be seeking services or assistance. Area and Regional staff should utilize the Proprio Interpreter on Demand phone number (844) 864-0263 in the absence of the availability of the bilingual Service Coordinator or if the individual speaks a language other than that of the bilingual Service Coordinator.

M. Interpretation for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing at DDS Events

Central Office, Regional, and Area staff should utilize Julie B. Kingsley, the DDS American Sign Language Interpreter Coordinator, to request interpretation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individual and group meetings, events, or training by email at Julie.kinglsey@mass.gov. Southeast Region should reach out to the DDS American Sign Language Interpreter Coordinator to request interpretation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and group meetings, events, or training by email at kerri.a.joyce@mass.gov.

The Language Access Coordinator, Jennifer Mancía (jennifer.mancia@mass.gov), can also be contacted as a resource.

4. **Vital Document Translation**

The Department of Developmental Services prioritizes translating essential documents, determining their significance based on the program information they convey and the potential impact on the LEP individuals if the information is not provided accurately or promptly.

Vital Documents shall be translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Simplified Chinese before public release, or as soon as reasonably possible. Additional languages shall be included when outreach is targeted to specific communities with identified language needs.

Documents that may be considered “vital” may include, but are not limited to, specific communication regarding an individual and the Department, such as waiver forms; application forms; public outreach or educational materials (including web-based material); forms or written material related to individual rights; notices of community meetings or community outreach.

Documents requiring translation for specific individuals served by the Department that cannot be handled by bilingual staff are processed through the contracts held by the four Regional Offices, and staff follow the business process for their region. Business process documents may be obtained from the appropriate Regional Contract Office. Staff can access information and request forms through the SharePoint that is currently under construction. Staff can reach out to their supervisor or Jennifer Mancía at jennifer.mancia@mass.gov. If staff are unable to locate the information, the Language Access Coordinator can also serve as a resource.

Written documents for Intake and Eligibility, SIS evaluations, and DDS specialty programs, such as DESE, and Children’s Autism Waiver, that are managed out of the DDS Central Office are sent to the Central Office Coordinator for those programs, who will work with the Language Access Coordinator, who will coordinate the translation.

5. DDS Website /Web Content

The DDS website at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-developmental-services> contains valuable information for families and individuals currently receiving services or interested in receiving services. Currently, some member information, such as member notices and forms, is available in Spanish. In addition, the Children’s Autism Waiver Program, the DDS/DESE program, and Intake & Eligibility documents are available in several languages.

All mass.gov websites feature a “Select Language” option in the menu at the top of the page. By choosing this widget, visitors to the site can translate the page into 42 languages.

In Development

As part of the LAP, the Department is undertaking an inventory of all documents on the website to determine if any need to be translated into Spanish, if there is a need for additional language translations of publications to reach underserved populations, and if documents need to be updated to include taglines. DDS plans to complete the inventory in 2026.

6. Accessibility

Accessibility

Section 504 requires appropriate steps to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities, including the provision of auxiliary aids, the use of plain language, and services such as sign language interpreters.

For virtual meetings, DDS ensures that the platform used provides closed captioning and that the host enables it. DDS ensures participants can highlight another participant’s screen and keep focus on that screen so that sign language users can focus on a sign language interpreter, even if the interpreter is not speaking. DDS uses ZOOM as a preferred platform for training, as it meets the needs of DDS staff who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. DDS staff can request the use of a ZOOM account through Regional Training Coordinators for meetings with individuals, families, and the public.

DDS provides attendees with the option to request auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in the virtual meeting invitation so that individuals with disabilities may take part in the meeting. In practice, this will generally amount to requests for captioning and/or sign language interpreters so that attendees with disabilities may participate. The invitation may require that any requests for auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications be made by a certain date before the meeting to allow the meeting organizer sufficient time.

For eLearning and other video recordings, written transcripts are available to download. Training materials from MassAchieve are also available in print to DDS staff.

Plain language

The Department of Developmental Services strives to ensure documents are accessible to all by using plain language appropriate for the audience and by making them clear, concise, and well-organized, in accordance with the Federal Plain Language Guidelines.⁵

In Development

DDS is rewriting documents related to the service descriptions the Department provides to eligible individuals in plain language. The projected timeline for the documents will be available on a SharePoint site for staff to print and posted on the DDS website by 2026. The SharePoint site is currently under construction. Staff can reach out to their supervisor or Jennifer Mancia at jennifer.mancia@mass.gov

7. Stakeholder Consultation

The Department of Developmental Services collaborates with various stakeholder groups, including community-based organizations, self-advocates, advisory boards, provider agencies, labor unions, and organizations dedicated to or representing individuals with limited English proficiency. Ongoing feedback from these groups informs decisions on optimizing the accessibility of DDS programs, services, and activities for LEP populations.

On an ongoing basis, DDS welcomes input and proactively consults with community-based organizations that serve the populations DDS serves. It also welcomes input from any stakeholder group or the public on this Language Access Plan and will continue to update it as needed.

DDS will share this plan with our two primary interpreter services, Baystate Interpreter Services and Propio Language Services and our DDS-funded [Multi-Cultural Family Support Centers](#).

8. Staff Training

All staff will have access to the training that is posted on Mass Achieve. The video shares how to access the Language Access Plan. In addition, the Language Plan (LAP) will be:

- Posted internally for all employees.
- Incorporated into the orientation for new employees and accessible to all employees through [MassAchieve](#).
- 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.

In Development

The DDS Learning and Development Team will update the Department's LAP training video and upload it to the Commonwealth's [MassAchieve](#) Learning Management System (LMS). The new DDS LAP [MassAchieve](#) eLearning will be mandatory for all existing DDS staff in 2026 and will be added as part of the [MassAchieve](#) mandatory training for all new incoming DDS employees. Using [MassAchieve](#) will enable the Department to track staff compliance with the LAP training completion.

⁵ [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/). March 2011, revised May 2011 <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/>

9. Notice to Public

The Department's LAP will be available to the public in written form and on the DDS website <https://www.mass.gov/lists/dds-language-access-plan>. A notice will be posted at Central, Regional, and Area offices stating that DDS has developed an LAP and is available free of charge upon request.

10. Agency Monitoring

The Department of Developmental Services will review and update its Language Access Plan at least every two years or more frequently, as needed. The review assesses:

- a. Whether there have been any significant changes in the composition or language needs of the population served.
- b. Whether the staff know and understand the LAP document and are comfortable using the services described within.
- c. Whether additional documents require translation.
- d. Identification of any issues or problems related to serving LEP persons which may have emerged during the past year; and
- e. 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, expanding capacity or the number of OSD-qualified interpretation and translation service providers contracted with by DDS, or changing staffing priorities).

Monitoring the effectiveness of a Language Access Plan may include:

- a. Analyzing current and previous data on language assistance usage, including languages served.
- b. 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 LEP communities in their service area; and
- c. Monitoring feedback from community-based organizations, legal services, and other stakeholders about the Department's effectiveness and performance in ensuring meaningful access for LEP individuals.

11. Assessment of Language Access Services

Since the publication of the first DDS Language Access plan, the agency has made improvements in service delivery and intake processes, which have extended to the implementation of the Language Access Plan. Intake forms now provide families and individuals with the opportunity to identify their preferred language. In parallel with this process, the agency has implemented a new client management system that captures data in real time. Appendix A reflects increased numbers served by preferred language. At publication, more than 11,000 constituents were served in more than 30 languages. In parallel with the implementation of a new client management system, the agency also hired 17 additional bilingual staff, with many adding capacity to access services provided in Spanish.

The Language Access Plan has led to well-established processes with third-party vendors providing language access services if multilingual staff are not available. Promotion of services and service delivery is under continuous review. Intake and eligibility processes will continue to create mechanisms to ensure

that LEP individuals receive timely and accessible services. In addition, Multicultural Family Support Centers and Deaf Services have identified and begun working with the DDS Language Access Coordinator on improvements to service promotion and delivery. The Language Access Coordinator also coordinates internal communication and an education plan to ensure that staff understand the importance of the Language Access Plan and how to implement services. Such efforts occur through formalized new employee orientation training, awareness campaigns, and a thorough communication plan that reaches all employees.

12. Complaints

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

Department of Developmental Disabilities
Attn: Jennifer Mancia, Language Access Plan Coordinator

Jennifer.Mancia@mass.gov

40 Broad St., 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

Or

Office of Access and Opportunity

Attn: Eduardo Moreno Mendez

eduardo.morenomendez@mass.gov or govcommunityaffairs@mass.gov

State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Appendix A – Preferred Language

Preferred Language	Region							TOTAL
	CW	ME	NE	SE	ATI	FFAC	MCBC	
English	14,196	7,724	8,878	9,894	193	197	13	41,095
	1,050	1,045	1,728	1,475	61	20	6	5,385
Spanish	1,747	803	994	256	47	2		3,849
Portuguese	98	131	115	165	6	1		516
American Sign Language	59	59	61	52			25	256
Creole Haitian	11	96	69	47	2			225
Vietnamese	60	66	28	26	4			184
Other	82	49	37	12	3			183
Arabic	63	31	40	20				154
Khmer (Cambodia)	4	2	116	2		1		125
Non-Receptive	8	86	9	16	3			122
Cape Verdean		43	1	63	1			108
Chinese, Cantonese	1	42	17	33	6			99
Chinese, Mandarin	6	23	24	28	4			85
Unknown	29	7	5	12			9	62
Russian	30	21	6					57
Chinese, Other	7	22	14	5				48
Sign Language - Other	2	9	8	10			2	31
Somali	10	13	3	1	2			29
Albanian	9	6	1	3				19
French	6	7	2	2	1			18
Creole Portuguese		1		13				14
Korean	3	7	4					14
Creole French	1	4	4	4				13
Hindi (India)	3	4	5					12
Polish	10	1						11
Farci/Iranian/Persian	1	3	6					10
Urdu (Pakistan and India)	4	1	4					9
Japanese		3	3	1				7
Armenian		6						6
Greek		3	3					6
Italian		3	2					5
Hmong	3			1				4
Punjabi	1	1						2
Serbian			1	1				2
Bosnian			1					1
Laotian			1					1
Total	17,504	10,322	12,190	12,142	333	221	55	52,767

Appendix B – Use of Artificial Intelligence in Language Access Services

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has entered into a new partnership with OpenAI. DDS recognizes that the use of qualified professional human translators/interpreters to provide language access and translation services should always be a priority to accomplish these services. While AI tools have the potential to assist government agencies in various internal administrative functions, AI should not be the only tool used by government agencies and/or entities to provide direct translation/ interpretation services to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) constituents. Professional language service providers (PLS) or staff who are native speakers are crucial to providing accurate translations, maintaining cultural competency, providing confidentiality, protecting constituent rights, and meeting the Commonwealth's meaningful access standards. When using AI for translation services, DDS will make sure to have a professional translator and/or native speaker reviewing the document for accuracy.

Appendix C – Definitions

Interpreter and Translation Services

In ensuring that the Department of Developmental Services meets the language needs of its membership, the Department currently provides the following services.

Interpreter

An interpreter facilitates communication between individuals who use different languages and/or modalities, including spoken languages and signed languages. Interpreting may be provided in simultaneous or consecutive mode, depending on the setting, complexity of information, and the individual's communication access needs.

American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter

An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter interprets between American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken English. ASL is a distinct, fully developed language with its own grammar, syntax, and discourse norms. ASL interpretation is a language service, not a communication aid

Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)

A Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) is an interpreter who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing and may work in tandem with a hearing ASL interpreter when needed to ensure effective communication. CDIs are especially appropriate in situations involving:

- language deprivation or limited language exposure
- use of non-standard, home-based, or emerging sign systems
- individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who use visual language differently
- complex, high-stakes, or nuanced discussions

Translator

A translator converts written text from one language into written text in another language. Written translation does not replace interpreting and does not ensure access for individuals whose primary language is signed.

Modes of Interpreting

- Simultaneous interpreting: interpretation occurs in real time.
- Consecutive interpreting: interpretation occurs after the speaker pauses, allowing for clarity, accuracy, and processing in complex discussions.

13. Approvals



Sarah Peterson,
Commissioner
Department of Developmental Services

April 13, 2026

Date



Dr. Kiame Mahaniah,
Secretary of the
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

04/30/26
