

Note on better words to use instead of “limited English proficiency” (LEP)

The federal government describes people who have difficulty understanding English as “limited English proficiency.” “Limited English proficiency” is shortened to LEP. People who talked with the Office of Racial Equity said it is disrespectful to call someone “limited English proficiency.” The Office of Racial Equity recommends saying:

- ◆ “People with language access needs.”
- ◆ “People with communication access needs.”
- ◆ “People who use languages other than English.”

State government employees are responsible for giving people language assistance.

You can find respectful terms for people with hearing loss at this website: <https://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files/documents/HearingTerminology.pdf>. Appendix B of the full report has more information about people with hearing loss.

Introduction

The Office of Racial Equity’s purpose is to change State government systems that are unfair to people of color. Government systems that are unfair to people of color are unfair to everyone. The report is about how the State government can improve language access for people who use a language other than English.

State governments must follow federal rules related to language access. The federal rules make sure everyone has meaningful access to the same government services. The federal government investigated 2 parts of the Vermont State government in the last 3 years. The federal government found that they were not following federal language access rules. These investigations cost the State money. Providing language access is the right thing to do for our neighbors who use languages other than English.

The Office of Racial Equity held two community meetings in 2022. The people in those community meetings talked about what the State government is doing to provide language access. People at the meetings also talked about how to make language access better in Vermont. The first meeting was held in April 2022 in Waterbury, VT and online with ZoomGov. The people at the first meeting came up with ideas of how the State government can improve language access. The notes from the first meeting are in Appendix F of the full report.

The second meeting was in August 2022. People at the second meeting discussed the list of 26 recommendations from the first meeting. The Office of Racial Equity gave people a survey after each meeting. People could use the survey to tell the Office of Racial Equity their ideas to improve language access.

The Office of Racial Equity also researched how much it would cost to translate very important documents to languages other than English. These very important documents are called “vital documents.” The federal government’s rules say that State

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

governments must translate vital documents into languages other than English. The State government has not translated many vital documents. Appendix G of the full report describes the vital document research project.

Basic Parts of a Language Access Plan

A language access plan describes how a government agency will make sure that people who speak any language can access its services. The full report has more information about the federal government rules for language access plans.

State government agencies must make sure people who use any language can access the same services. Language access equity is when everyone has what they need to access State government services, no matter what language they use. Appendix B of the full report has more websites and articles about language access equity.

Vital Documents

“Vital documents” contain important information that people need to know to access State government services. Only documents available to everyone in Vermont are vital documents. Anyone who gets money from the federal government has to follow rules about translating vital documents. A person always has the right to spoken interpretation if they need it to have meaningful access. The full report has more information about vital document translation rules.

Plain language versions of vital documents help people understand complicated information. Plain language summaries of vital documents can be shorter than the original version. A shorter document is less expensive to translate into another language. Appendix B of the full report has more information about plain language documents.

It is very difficult to find out how many people speak each language in Vermont. The 2021 American Community Survey says that about 7,705 people with language access needs live in Vermont. 7,705 people is about 1.3% of all the people who live in Vermont. The American Community Survey data should not be the only information that State agencies use when they make language access plans.

The American Community Survey does not count every person with language access needs. There are probably 1,000 to 1,200 people in Vermont who speak Spanish or an indigenous language of Latin America. Vermont government agencies should always translate vital documents into Spanish.

Many people with hearing loss in Vermont use American Sign Language to communicate. The Americans with Disabilities Act has rules about giving language assistance to people with hearing loss. Vermont government agencies must follow these rules. The Office of Racial Equity recommends that State agencies translate all

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

vital documents into American Sign Language. American Sign Language translation means creating a video of a person signing the words in a document.

When they make language access plans, State government agencies must find out how many people who use their programs use each language other than English.

Telling people what language services are available to them

Any government agency that gets money from the federal government must tell people about language access services any time they send a communication that a person must respond to. Telling people about language access services is called a “notice of language access services”.

The Office of Racial Equity recommends that Vermont government agencies send out notices of language access services in 14 languages:

- ◆ Arabic
- ◆ Bosnian
- ◆ Burmese
- ◆ Dari
- ◆ French
- ◆ Kirundi
- ◆ Simplified Chinese characters used to write Mandarin Chinese
- ◆ Nepali
- ◆ Pashto
- ◆ Somali
- ◆ Spanish
- ◆ Swahili
- ◆ Ukrainian
- ◆ Vietnamese

The Office of Racial Equity also recommends that notices of language access services include two more things:

- ◆ On all written communications, tell people who use assistive technology to communicate that there are resources they can use for free.
- ◆ Put a video of an American Sign Language signer telling people about free language assistance on all State government websites and electronic communications like e-mails.

The list of languages comes from the Agency of Human Services Limited English Proficiency Committee and Office of Racial Equity community conversations. **Before translating vital documents, each State agency must find out what languages people who use its services speak.**

More people will ask for language services once State government agencies do a better job of telling people about free language services.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

See Appendix C of the full report for more information about the Agency of Human Services Limited English Proficiency Committee. Appendix C of the full report discusses the number of refugees who resettled in Vermont between 2012-2022.

Language Access Operations Manuals

A language access operations manual tells State employees the information they need to get language access services for clients. Appendix E of the full report has an example language access operations manual from the Vermont Department of Labor.

Findings and Recommendations

Most of these recommendations come from the community conversations in April and August 2022. A few findings and recommendations come from the Office of Racial Equity's research on vital documents. There are 6 categories of findings and recommendations. The list is organized by category. The list is not organized by importance. State and local governments should do as many of these recommendations as possible.

1. Values, Framework, and Culture

Our values tell us how we should treat people.

Findings:

- ◆ The State government does not have a statement about our values related to language access.
- ◆ People who have language services jobs are often not paid enough money to support themselves. This does not make sense because interpreters and translators need a lot of training to be successful.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Create an official values statement about language access. The values statement should say that the State government promises to make sure everyone who speaks or signs a language other than English in Vermont can access State government services. An example values statement is in Appendix D of the plain-language summary and the full report.
- ◆ The Legislature should make laws related to language access plans. The law should require State agencies to have a language access plan that is at least as strong as the language access plan in Appendix D of this report.
- ◆ Some people said that there should be one place in State government where anyone with language access needs can get help. Some people said that the Office of Racial Equity should be the place where anyone can get language assistance. Some State employees said that the Agency of Human Services should be where people go for language assistance. More discussion is needed to make a final decision.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

- ◆ The State government should increase how much it pays companies who employ interpreters and translators. That way, the companies can pay the interpreters and translators more.

2. Data, Evaluation, and Reporting

Data are information. Evaluation tells us how well we are doing at giving people language access.

Findings:

- ◆ The State government does not have enough information about how much money language access services cost. State employees do not keep track of what languages people use when they ask for language assistance.
- ◆ The State government does not have enough information about how many people use a language other than English in Vermont.

Recommendations:

- ◆ State employees need training to collect information about what languages people use.
- ◆ Each State program should find out how much it costs to translate its vital documents.
- ◆ The Legislature should make laws that require all State agencies to track how much they spend on language access services.
- ◆ State employees should not keep people's personal information in the same place that they keep language services information. Personal information includes things like people's names or birthdates. This is to protect people's privacy.

3. Operations and Staff Protocols

These recommendations are related to how State employees give people language access services.

Findings:

- ◆ Some State agencies do not have enough resources to follow the federal government's language access rules. Resources include employees and money.
- ◆ Most State agencies are not following federal rules about telling people about free language services.
- ◆ Most State agencies are not following federal rules about translating vital documents.
- ◆ Some vital documents need a plain-language summary before translating them into another language.
- ◆ State employees can give people language assistance faster if they use computer programs to tell them when someone needs language assistance.
- ◆ Most State employees only speak English.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

- ◆ State employees who can use languages other than English should not interpret or translate if they do not have training.
- ◆ Most State employees do not have enough chances to practice giving people language access services.

Recommendations:

- ◆ The Governor's Office and the State Legislature should give State agencies more resources so they can follow federal language access rules.
- ◆ State agencies should always send information about free language access services with mail that people must respond to.
- ◆ State agencies should translate vital documents into languages other than English. They should make sure to translate vital documents again whenever they update vital documents.
- ◆ State agencies should make at least one employee in each agency responsible for keeping vital documents up to date.
- ◆ State employees should make plain-language summary versions of long vital documents.
- ◆ State employees should use computer programs to tell them when they will help people who need language services.
- ◆ State employees should use cards with a list of translated questions to help people tell employees what language they speak. These cards are called "I Speak" cards. Appendix B of the full report has examples of "I Speak" cards.
- ◆ State employees should use a device with a video of a person signing American Sign Language to help people who sign American Sign Language.
- ◆ The Department of Human Resources should test an employee's language skills before the employee can interpret or translate. Right now, the Department of Human Resources does not have rules about State employees interpreting or translating for clients.
- ◆ State employees should use professional interpreters and translators until the Department of Human Resources makes rules about State employees interpreting or translating for clients.
- ◆ The Department of Human Resources should make sure that State employees who do interpretation or translation receive enough pay for doing that.
- ◆ State agencies should pay people who speak many languages to help State employees practice language assistance skills. State agencies should make sure that State employees practice regularly. State agencies should help State employees learn to help people who need language services if State employees are not doing well.

4. Technology and Resources

These recommendations are related to State government websites and video meeting programs. State websites need changes so people who use languages other than English can use them.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

Findings:

- ◆ Most State government websites do not show web links to translated documents or notices of language assistance in easy-to-read places.
- ◆ Most State government websites are only available in English. Some State government websites use Google Translate. Google Translate often makes translation mistakes that can be dangerous.
- ◆ State government websites where people can make complaints about government services are all in English.
- ◆ State government websites sometimes do not work if you use a smartphone or tablet computer. People who are Black or Hispanic use smartphones or tablets more often than people who are White and not Hispanic in the United States.
- ◆ Most State government safety messages are in English. Most State government safety messages do not have captions or translated versions in other languages.
- ◆ Different parts of the State government all use different computer programs to hold video meetings. Using different programs is confusing for people who meet with State employees. Zoom/ZoomGov has the best features for working with interpreters.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Every State of Vermont government website should include:
 - A page that tells people how to get free language assistance.
 - A disclaimer that tells people about the risks of using Google Translate. The disclaimer should tell people how to get free language assistance.
 - Web pages translated into other languages that let people make complaints about government services. The translated complaint web pages should explain how to make a complaint.
- ◆ People who do not speak English cannot understand what a website link means when a website link is written in English. State websites should always show the links to translated documents in the language the document is written in.
- ◆ State employees should make sure that State websites work when you use a smartphone or tablet. They should check that the State website works on a smartphone or tablet every time they add new information.
- ◆ State agencies should translate important safety messages into languages other than English. State agencies should make important safety messages into videos to help people who cannot read. Video safety messages should include open captions in English and closed captions in the language of the video. Open captions always appear on screen. Open captions will help people who do not understand how to turn on closed captions.
- ◆ The State government should pick one program to use for all video meetings. If the State government does not pick one program, it should publish instructions for using each different program. The State government should translate video

meeting instructions into the 14 written languages recommended by this report and an American Sign Language video.

- ◆ State employees should send the video meeting instructions with all invitations to a video meeting. The instructions should tell people about free language assistance.
- ◆ Appendix B of the full report has more information about the best way to use Zoom with interpreters.

5. Professional Development and Qualifications

An interpreter or a translator is a language service provider. These findings and recommendations are related to making sure that language service providers are good at their jobs.

Findings:

- ◆ Language service providers who do not live in Vermont may not know about Vermont-specific information. Vermont-specific information can include the names of places.
- ◆ The language service providers who State employees ask for language assistance from are not always good at their jobs. Usually, they are very good at their jobs. The language service businesses who work with the State government have their own employee training programs.
- ◆ It is very important for language service providers to have specific training when they work in health care settings or legal settings. A hospital is an example of a health care setting. A courtroom is an example of a legal setting. Language service mistakes in a health care setting or a legal setting can have serious consequences.
- ◆ Requiring people to get a license or certificate can make it harder for people to work as language service providers. This is because licensing or certificates cost money.
- ◆ Employees in the Judiciary branch of State government are making rules to make sure that language service providers have legal skills.
- ◆ Federal government language access rules say that State agencies must translate tests and training information for jobs where people don't need to know English.

Recommendations:

- ◆ The State Legislature should do more to recruit people to live and work in Vermont as language service providers. Language service provider job training programs will recruit more people from different cultures to live in Vermont. Better pay for language service providers will attract more people to work in Vermont.
- ◆ The State Legislature should ask people who know about language services to work together to make licensing or certification rules for Vermont. The rules

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

should make it easy for people who work as language service providers to keep doing their jobs. The groups who should help make the rules include:

- Businesses that provide language services to State agencies
- The Office of Racial Equity
- The Office of Professional Regulation
- People who need language access services
- ◆ The State government should pay for language service providers to get licenses or certificates. This will help to make sure that people can keep working as language service providers.
- ◆ The State government should create a way for people to complain if they have a bad experience with a language service provider.
- ◆ State government agencies should translate training information and tests for jobs where people do not need to know English. You can read a story about people who were able to work as school bus drivers after they got information in their languages here: “With bus drivers in short supply, Winooski’s immigrant parents take the wheel,” published December 29, 2022, by Auditi Guha at <https://vtdigger.org/2022/12/29/with-bus-drivers-in-short-supply-winooskis-immigrant-parents-take-the-wheel/>.

6. Recommendations for following the Americans with Disabilities Act language assistance rules

These recommendations are about ensuring that the State government follows the Americans with Disabilities Act communication rules. The Office of Racial Equity thanks leaders at the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living for their help with this section.

Between 62,000 and 125,000 people in Vermont have some hearing loss. 33%-50% of people over age 65 have some hearing loss. The Office of Racial Equity supports people of all races and ethnicities who are living with disabilities.

State government employees must let people with disabilities decide how they want to communicate. This website has more information the Americans with Disabilities Act rules for language access: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/effective-communication/>.

Findings:

- ◆ "Disability accommodations" are the things State employees do to help people with disabilities access government services. Few State websites have a web page to request disability accommodations.
- ◆ State websites are all made from a template that is accessible to people who use assistive technology. Some State websites are no longer accessible once State employees add content to websites. "Content" means things like pictures, text, and videos.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

- ◆ The State government does not translate important emergency messages into American Sign Language.
- ◆ Relying on computer programs to make captions for videos leads to mistakes. Captioning mistakes can be dangerous for people who need captions.
- ◆ Hearing loop systems are important for people who use hearing aids or cochlear implants. There are no hearing loop systems in any State government buildings in Vermont.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Every State website should have a disability accommodation request web page. The State government should translate the accommodations request webpage. This will help people with disabilities who use languages other than English.
- ◆ State employees should make sure that State websites remain accessible to people with disabilities every time they add website content. Appendix B of the full report has more information about website accessibility.
- ◆ The State government should translate all emergency messages into American Sign Language.
- ◆ State agencies should have people make captions on all important emergency messages. Having a person make the captions prevents dangerous mistakes.
- ◆ A person should review the automatic captions if State agencies continue to use automatic captions.
- ◆ Video messages should have open captions added in English. Open captions help people with hearing loss who do not know how to access closed captions.
- ◆ Video messages should also have closed captions. Closed captions help people who use Braille displays to read messages.
- ◆ The State government should install hearing loops in at least one meeting room in each State government building. The State government should make sure all government buildings follow the Americans with Disabilities Act rules. This is important so people with disabilities can evacuate a government building safely.

Additional Policy Recommendation: Multilingual Liaison Needs Assessment

English language learners are students who use a language other than English. The federal government has rules about teaching English language learners. English language learners must go to the same school as English-speaking students. English language learners must learn the same things as English-speaking students.

Multilingual liaisons speak English and other languages. They work in schools to help English language learner students. Multilingual liaisons help the parents of English language learner students understand school systems. We do not know how many multilingual liaisons Vermont needs to support all English language learners. The Agency of Education should study how many multilingual liaisons Vermont needs. The State legislature should give the Agency of Education money to do so. The "First Report of the Racial Equity Task Force" discusses this on pages 11 to 12. The link to the "First Report of the Racial Equity Task Force" is here:

https://racialequity.vermont.gov/sites/reap/files/doc_library/RETF%20Report%201%20FINAL.pdf.

Plain language summary of appendices:

Appendix A: Glossary

The glossary has definitions of words used in the report. There is a plain language summary of the glossary after this section.

Appendix B: Additional Resources

Appendix B of the full report has links to more information. Topics in Appendix B include:

- ◆ Resources for planning language access programs.
- ◆ Resources for language access for people with hearing loss.
- ◆ Resources for following the rules of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ◆ Resources for testing websites to see if people with disabilities can use them.
- ◆ Resources for asking people to share their opinions about language access plans.
- ◆ The best way to use Zoom/ZoomGov when working with sign language interpreters.

Appendix C: Population Estimates of People who Use Languages other than English in Vermont

Appendix C of the full report lists the number of refugees who moved to Vermont between 2012-2022. Appendix C talks about the Agency of Human Services Limited English Proficiency Committee. The Agency of Human Services Limited English Proficiency Committee is a group of State employees who share information about language access services. The Agency of Human Services Limited English Proficiency Committee members are thinking about changing the Committee's name. They want to change it to something instead of "Limited English Proficiency." Changing the name will show respect for people who use languages other than English.

Appendix D: Recommended Model Minimum Language Access Plans

The plain-language summary of Appendix D is after the plain-language summary of Appendix A. Appendix D has an example language access plan that State agencies can use. The example language access plan uses the recommendations from the Language Access Report.

Appendix E: Department of Labor SharePoint Language Access Operations Manual

Appendix E of the full report has an example of a language access operations manual from the Vermont Department of Labor. Appendix E of the full report has more information about working with interpreters.

Appendix F: April 2022 Language Access Brainstorm Session Summary Document

Appendix F of the full report has the notes from the April 2022 language access meeting. The notes include:

- ◆ The topics discussed at the meeting.
- ◆ Who was at the meeting.
- ◆ How the meeting was organized.

Appendix G: Summary of Executive Branch Agencies' Vital Document Translation Cost Estimate

Appendix G of the full report explains the Office of Racial Equity's vital document research project. The Office of Racial Equity only looked for vital documents in the Executive branch. Appendix G explains how much money Executive branch vital document translation might cost. Appendix G discusses how much money parts of the State government spent on language access services in the past.

Appendix A: Glossary (Meanings of Important Terms)

Americans with Disabilities Act – A federal law that describes how governments, businesses, and others must treat people with disabilities. See this website for Americans with Disabilities Act language access rules:

<https://www.ada.gov/resources/effective-communication/>.

Communicative Autonomy – A person's ability to control the meaning and feelings in their words or signs. A person has communicative autonomy when they work with an interpreter.

Interpreter– An interpreter is trained to communicate the meanings and feelings from a person who uses one language to a person who uses another language. "Interpretation" is what an interpreter does. More information about the different types of interpretation at: <https://www.ncihc.org/assets/documents/NCIHC%20Terms%20Final080408.pdf>.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – describes people who do not understand or speak English as well as someone who speaks English as their first language.

Language Access Services/Language Assistance Services – things that help someone who does not speak a language to understand information. Examples of language access services/language assistance services include:

- ◆ Telling people that the government can pay for an interpreter to help them communicate.
- ◆ Asking for an interpreter to help a State employee talk with someone who uses a different language.
- ◆ Writing or signing documents in the language a person understands.
- ◆ Using technology like hearing loop systems to help someone with hearing loss hear better.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

- ◆ Using “I Speak” cards to find out what language a person uses, so someone can call an interpreter for them.

Meaningful Access – when a person who does not understand the dominant language gets the same government services as someone who speaks the dominant language. A person gets meaningful access when they have communicative autonomy.

Plain Language – a way of writing in English that is easy to read and understand. More information at: <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/checklist/>.

Translation – changing a written document, audio, or video from one language to another language. You need a video of a signer to translate a written document into a signed language.

Video Remote Interpretation - when an interpreter works in a different place from the people they help to communicate. Video remote interpreters use a webcam or smartphone to send a video of the interpreter. You need a strong, reliable internet connection to do video remote interpreting. Everyone needs to be able to see the hands of a person who is signing. People can do video remote interpreting for spoken languages.

Vital Documents – written information that is important to understanding a government service. See “Vital Documents” for more information.

Appendix D: Recommended Model Minimum Language Access Plans (Plain-Language Summary)

The Office of Racial Equity is part of the Agency of Administration. The following example language access plan uses all recommendations from the 2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report. The example or “model” language access plan will work for State agencies similar to the Agency of Administration.

“Walk-in services” or “counter service” is when people can go to a State office and ask for help from the employees. Most of the Departments and Offices in the Agency of Administration do not give walk-in services. The Department of Libraries is the exception. Libraries are important places for people to find help with government services. The Department of Libraries should create its own language access plan that adds parts related to walk-in services. There are optional parts of a language access plan after the model minimum plan. The optional parts include:

- ◆ Walk-in services/counter service.
- ◆ Emergency communications.
- ◆ Job training and testing information.

This model minimum language access plan may change if the State Legislature or Governor’s Office makes new language access rules. Agencies who use this model minimum plan can add the glossary from Appendix A to define important words.

Plan last updated: Tuesday, January 23, 2023

1. Values Statement

The Vermont Agency of Administration supervises the functions of State government. The Agency of Administration includes 9 Departments and Offices. The Agency of Administration provides services that affect everyone in Vermont. The Agency of Administration promises to give language assistance services to all people in Vermont. The Agency of Administration promises to respect the cultural differences of all people in Vermont when providing language assistance.

2. Needs Assessment/Outreach Plans

The Agency of Administration does not know how many people in Vermont use languages other than English. The Agency of Administration does not know how many people use each language besides English. The Agency of Administration will write down the following data to learn that information:

- ◆ What language a person uses when they ask for language assistance.
- ◆ The type of language assistance services the Agency of Administration gives them.
- ◆ How much it costs to give people language access services.

The Agency of Administration will not write down personal information in the same place as language assistance services information. Personal information includes things like someone's name or birthdate. Keeping personal information separate protects people's privacy.

The Agency of Administration will review its language access services one time a year for the first 5 years. The Agency of Administration will review its language access services once every 5 years after the first 5 years.

The Agency of Administration will ask for the opinions of people with language access needs to design its language access programs. The things that the Agency of Administration plans to do to contact people with language access needs include:

- ◆ Hosting meetings in person and online to discuss people's language access needs.
- ◆ Providing any language access services that people need to participate in the meetings.
- ◆ Telling people about the language access meetings on the Agency of Administration website.
- ◆ Translating the meeting announcements into 14 written languages and a video in American Sign Language.
- ◆ Talking to community groups that serve people with language access needs to help promote the meetings.
- ◆ Translating online language access comment and complaint forms into 14 languages plus a video in American Sign Language.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

- ◆ Keeping translated comment and complaint pages on the Agency of Administration website to help improve the language access plan in the future.

3. Notification of Services

The Agency of Administration will tell people how to access language assistance services in 14 written languages plus American Sign Language videos.

The 14 written languages include:

- ◆ Arabic
- ◆ Bosnian
- ◆ Burmese
- ◆ Dari
- ◆ French
- ◆ Kirundi
- ◆ Simplified Chinese translations of Mandarin Chinese
- ◆ Nepali
- ◆ Pashto
- ◆ Somali
- ◆ Spanish
- ◆ Swahili
- ◆ Ukrainian
- ◆ Vietnamese

The Agency of Administration will put a notice of language assistance services on its website. The notice will be on the top of the home page in large, easy to read writing. The website will show the link to each translated notice of language assistance in the language it is translated into.

The Agency of Administration will tell people about free language assistance services any time it sends a person mail that asks for a response. The notice of free language assistance services will tell people with disabilities about free accessible communications resources.

4. Language Assistance Services

Agency of Administration employees will use trained language service providers to help people with language access needs. Agency of Administration employees who speak more languages than English will not interpret or translate for someone unless the Department of Human Resources makes sure they can do so. Agency of Administration employees who speak more languages than English will not have to interpret or translate for someone if doing so would break the rules of the Vermont State Employees' Code of Ethics.

Each Department or Office in the Agency of Administration will ask at least two employees to be the point of contact for language assistance requests. One employee will be the first person people can call if they need language assistance services. The

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

second employee will help if the first employee is not available. The Agency of Administration will let Departments and Offices hire new employees if two employees are not enough.

Employees will send people instructions for video meeting software whenever they hold video meetings. The Agency of Administration will translate the video meeting software instructions into 14 written languages plus a video in American Sign Language. The Agency of Administration website will show the links to video meeting software instructions in the language they are translated into.

Vital Documents

The Agency of Administration will find out which documents are vital documents starting right away. Vital documents will always be translated into a language other than English when there are:

- ◆ At least 1,000 people in Vermont who speak the language.

OR

- ◆ 5% of the total number of people in Vermont speak the language, whichever number is less.

If people ask for a vital document to be translated, the Agency of Administration will either:

- ◆ Translate the vital document into the requested language.

OR

- ◆ Create a plain-language summary of the vital document and then translate it.

The Agency of Administration will make shorter plain-language summaries of long documents before translating them.

Each Department or Office will make sure that at least one employee is in charge of keeping vital documents up to date. The employee will review the vital documents at least once per year. The Agency of Administration will update the translated vital documents every time it updates the original vital document.

The Agency of Administration website will show the web link to a translated document in the language the document is translated into.

Website and Electronic Communications

All Departments and Offices will update their websites to include a notice of language assistance services. The Agency of Administration will translate the notice into 14 written languages plus an American Sign language video. The website will show the links to the translated welcome messages in the language of the translated welcome messages.

2023 Office of Racial Equity Language Access Report Plain-Language Summary

The Agency of Administration knows that Google Translate sometimes makes mistakes. The Agency of Administration will put a statement that explains the risks Google Translate on its website. A statement that explains risks is a "disclaimer." The Google Translate disclaimer will tell people about free language access services. The disclaimer will be on the website near the Google Translate button. The Agency of Administration will translate the Google Translate disclaimer into 14 written languages plus an American Sign Language video. The website will show the links to the translated Google Translate disclaimers in the language of the translated disclaimer.

The Agency of Administration will ensure its websites are accessible to people with low vision or other disabilities any time it updates its websites.

5. Employee Training on Language Access Services

Every Department or Office will have a language access operations manual. The language access operations manual will have information that employees need to give language assistance.

Every Department or Office will print out a copy of the language access operations manual. The printed copy can help in case of a power outage or internet service interruption.

All Agency of Administration employees will get language access training once per year. The language access training will include:

- ◆ how to respect people from different cultures.
- ◆ how to work with interpreters and translators.
- ◆ how to request language assistance services from State contractors.

One leader in each Department or Office will ensure that all of their employees receive language access services training.

Employees who do billing or invoicing will be trained to make invoices for language assistance services. Training employees will help track how much the Agency of Administration spends on language assistance services. Employees will not record personal information in the same place as billing information. Personal information includes things like people's names and birthdates.

6. Language Access Program Evaluation

The State government uses "results-based accountability" to tell if it is succeeding at providing services. The Agency of Administration will use results-based accountability questions to tell if language access programs are successful.

Additional parts of language access plans: "I Speak" Cards

State agencies that give people counter service can add the following sections.

Optional addition to Section 4. Language Assistance Services: “I Speak” Cards

Employees will use “I Speak” cards to find out what language a person uses. Any office that has “I Speak” cards will have a device with an American Sign Language video of an “I Speak” card. Employees can use the American Sign Language video “I Speak” card if someone comes to the office who signs American Sign Language.

Optional to add this to Section 5. Training on Language Assistance Services: “I Speak” Cards

Employees will receive training to use “I Speak” cards during their yearly language access training.

The State agency will pay a person who speaks multiple languages to go to each state office once every three months. The person will pretend not to know English. They will see how well the employees help the person get language access services. Employees who do not do well will get extra help to learn how to give people language access services.

Optional to add this to Section 6. Language Access Program Evaluation: Counter Service/ “I Speak” cards

State agencies will measure how successful counter service is using results-based accountability questions.

More Optional Parts of Language Access Plans: Emergency Communications

Some State agencies tell people information related to their safety in emergency situations. Appendix D of the full Language Access Report includes example emergency communications language access plan text.

More Optional Parts of Language Access Plans: Job Education and Training

Some State agencies have licensing programs for jobs where people do not need to use English to do those jobs. Appendix D of the full Language Access Report includes example job training and testing language access plan text. State agencies need to translate these job training and testing materials to follow federal language access rules.