LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
135 Santilli Highway, Everett, Massachusetts 02149-1962
Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu

I. Introduction

The DESE Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has developed and prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP) outlining ongoing efforts taken to provide language services to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

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

DESE will review and update this LAP as needed to ensure continued responsiveness to students, community, and stakeholder needs.

DESE serves a diverse population of individuals of various ages and linguistic origins. An LEP person is someone who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. A constituent has the option to self-identify as LEP.

I. Purpose

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

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

This LAP does not create new services; rather it strives to eliminate barriers for LEP constituents accessing existing services and ensure that all staff can assist LEP constituents in accessing those resources.
DESE will provide language assistance to LEP constituents in a fair and timely manner, promoting meaningful access to the agency's services.

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

The objectives of these Language Access Plan are to:

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

II. Policy

It is DESE's policy to provide meaningful access to programs and services to persons who are limited in English proficiency.

III. Applicability

This policy applies to all offices within DESE.

IV. Role

Our educational vision document describes the DESE's aspiration – our vision – for elementary and secondary public education and adult basic education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This vision is anchored in our commitment to high-quality teaching and learning in the Commonwealth. We will continue to work with districts, schools, and educators to promote teaching and learning that is antiracist, inclusive, multilingual, and multicultural; that values and affirms each and every student and their families; and that creates equitable opportunities and experiences for all students, particularly those who have been historically underserved.
As a result of their public education in Massachusetts, students will:

- **Attain academic knowledge and skills:** achieve in a comprehensive and diverse range of subjects and apply their competencies in relevant, real-world contexts.
- **Understand and value self**: know their own strengths, interests, and areas of growth, be self-aware, be a self-advocate, and make responsible decisions.
- **Understand and value others**: understand differences and multiple perspectives, empathize with others, and build connections with peers and adults.
- **Engage with the world**: understand and think critically about local, national, and world events and societal systems; and create positive change through civic action.

So that they can:

- **Be curious and creative:** find joy in learning, pursue their interests, and use innovative thinking to approach opportunities and solve challenges, including those previously unseen.
- **Shape their path:** be well prepared to thrive in college and/or career and be positioned for lifelong learning.
- **Feel connected:** see themselves as valuable and involved members of their communities and be aware of their independence and interdependence.
- **Be empowered:** play a role in advocating for equity, justice, and liberty in their communities and beyond.

a. DESE's Client Populations

In keeping with DESE's statutory responsibilities, the programs, services, and activities that DESE provides are primarily directed to public school educators. By statute, public school educators are required to be literate and fluent in English (G.L. c. 71A, Section 2, as amended by Chapter 138 of the Acts of 2017). Therefore, these individuals have access to all of DESE's information, services, programs, and activities.

As a service to school districts, DESE provides translated documents that districts may use to provide important information to LEP families of students in the district. Similarly, DESE provides translated documents that approved special education day and residential schools and educational collaboratives serving publicly funded students may use to provide important information to LEP parents and guardians. The DESE also provides translations of key documents for Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs serving individuals who have limited English proficiency.

The DESE also provides services directly to members of the public through DESE's Problem Resolution System (PRS). Through PRS, DESE responds to complaints that allege a school or district is not meeting legal requirements for education. Anyone, including parents, students, educators, community members, and agency representatives, may contact PRS for assistance. The intake form and its information guide are translated into nine languages.

The DESE works in partnership with districts, programs, families, and community partners and work to model, share, and replicate practices that advance equity. We strive to build genuine relationships over time between

students, families, educators, and the community. Positive relationships and shared responsibility supports family well-being, and children's healthy development from the earliest ages into young adulthood.

V. Language Access Plan

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

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

Language Access Coordinator
Helene Bettencourt
Associate Commissioner of Communication and Planning
Helene.H.Bettencourt@mass.gov
781-338-3120

a. Language Resources

Translating Publications

DESE is committed to maintaining all its publications that are widely applicable for families of non-English speakers and LEP students; in the seven most spoken languages in Massachusetts public schools: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Chinese (Simplified or Traditional), Cape Verdean Creole, and Vietnamese. When reaching out to specific communities in the Commonwealth, DESE staff should ensure that Guidance documents and other written materials intended for families of non-English speakers and LEP students will be accessible in the languages prevalent in each community. Longer and more specific publications should be translated when there are accessibility concerns for the intended audience.

DESE Internal Procedures for Written, Telephonic, Virtual and In-person Translation:

Procurement Process:

DESE has established contracts for written, telephonic, virtual and in-person translation. Each office is responsible for budgeting for these services and establishing a work order for the services.

Folders have been set up for the two awarded vendors: Fox Translation (written, telephonic and virtual) and Language Bridge (Live in-person). The forms are in the Procurement folder on Sharepoint. In the vendors respective folders, you will find a draft work order, a draft amendment work order and the vendors response, which includes a list of languages and prices. Please be sure to use these work orders when setting up an encumbrance. Most information has been prefilled. You will be responsible for adding in the missing information prior to sending to the vendor for signature.

QUOTES:

- Fox Translation please send an email to Dina at dina@foxtranslation.com or to the direct portal at referrals@foxtranslation.com for a quote. For those of you who submitted your information earlier to be set up in the vendors portal website for automatic quotes, please continue to follow that process. If you need access to the portal, please email Dina.

- Language Bridge has a portal available (that once set up with a login) for automatic bookings and quote for **Live In-person Interpretation ONLY.**
- If you would like to access this portal send an email to Julia Dubinchik at infolb@lbridge.com, requesting access.

WORK ORDER: To streamline the procurement process, offices can set up work orders to have the funds encumbered and then funds will be drawn down as services are needed. This eliminates the need to establish a work order each time for services. If you are interested in setting up this process, complete the work order and send it to the vendor for signature, then have the unit manager sign and lastly forwarded it to your procurement liaison for processing.

INVOICING: Every unit will have their own work order for FY24 Every work order will be identified by the unit code in which will be contained in the encumbrance #. For services provided by Fox Translation, the written and verbal services (both virtual and telephonic) are on separate commodity lines and therefore, the funding will be needed to be split, as necessary. Invoices must include which comm line and acct line # they will be paid from. It is important to properly reconcile this information. Language Bridge will only have one commodity line and therefore all the funding encumbered will be under interpretation.

Questions? Contact your office procurement specialist or Victor Mota, Senior Project Planner, Commissioner's Office, victor.c.mota@mass.gov

Procedure to Access Services after work order is in place:

Written Translation: Fox Translation Services

- To request translation services, send an email to dina@foxtranslation.com or via secure portal at referrals@foxtranslation.com
- Word, PDF, Publisher, and PPT formats are accepted.
    - If other formats are needed, DTP services are available at an additional hourly rate (to be included in the quote as applicable).
- When requesting translation, please note language(s) needed, any special instructions, and time frame (if needed sooner than standard 3-4 business day turnaround). If a certain dialect is needed, particularly in Spanish, please note that in the request as well.
- A project manager will review the request, prepare a quote (if requested), and email it to you for approval. Upon receipt of approval, the document(s) will be assigned to the appropriate translator(s).
- Once completed, the translated files will be returned to the original requester.

Telephonic Translation Services: Fox Translation Services

- This service can be set up for an office and the PIN shared with members of the team or set-up for an individual.
- To establish an account to access telephonic services email dina@foxtranslation.com.
- You will receive an activation email to set up your account and establish a PIN.

Virtual Interpretation Services: Fox Translation

- To utilize Video Remote Interpretation services for prescheduled interpreters for meetings, townhalls, IEP meetings, webinars etc., send an email to Bella at izabella@foxtranslation.com and Martha at martha@foxtranslation.com and they will coordinate the team needed to handle your event.

- Please note that ASL services are available.

Live In-person Interpretation: Language Bridge

- To schedule live in-person interpretation contact Language Bridge to establish access to their portal for automatic bookings and quotes.
- Send an email to Julia Dubinchik at infolb@lbridge.com, requesting access.

Correspondence

The generic statement below could be included with initial correspondence to constituents and as necessary thereafter. It could also be included below the signature line on automatic replies from general email inboxes. If you are already using your own customized statement or tagline notice, you could continue to use your own.

This document contains important information. Please have it translated immediately.	Questo documento contiene informazioni importanti. La preghiamo di tradurlo inmediatamente.	ເອກະສານສະບັບນີ້ ບັນຈຸຂໍ້ມູນອັນສຳຄັນ. ກະລຸນາເອົາເອກະສານສະບັບນີ້ໄປແປຢ່າງບໍ່ລໍຊ້າ.
В данном документе содержится важная информация. Вам необходимо срочно сделать перевод документа.	Este documento contém informações importantes. Por favor, traduzi-lo imediatamente.	ឯកសារនេះមានទូរព័ត៌មានដ៏សំខាន់ ។ សូមបកប្រែវាជាបន្ទាន់ ។
Este documento contiene información importante. Por favor, consiga una traducción inmediatamente.	此文件含有重要信息。請立即找人翻譯。	
تحتوي هذه الوثيقة على معلومات هامة. يرجى ترجمتها فورًا.	본 문서에는 중요한 정보가 포함되어 있습니다. 본 문서를 즉시 번역하도록 하십시오.	Ce document contient des informations importantes. Veuillez le faire traduire au plus tôt.
Docikman sa gen enfòmasyon enpòtan. Tanpri fè yon moun tradwi l touswit.	Tài liệu này có chứa thông tin quan trọng. Vui lòng dịch tài liệu này ngay.	

i. **Web Content**

The current translated documents that are appropriate for placement on the DESE website are posted at http://www.doe.mass.edu/. As additional documents appropriate for posting are translated, they will be placed on the website. The DESE website also includes Google Translate, which provides the ability to translate all website content.

ii. **Multilingual Staff at DESE**

DESE is committed to hiring and retaining multilingual staff for all positions, but especially for public-facing staff and staff who answer the agency's hotlines.

iii. **Interpreter Services for Walk-in Constituents**

While the preference is to provide direct service to LEP constituents in their primary language, DESE staff also have access to telephonic language service provided by Fox Translation Services that includes over 380+ languages.

- This service can be set up for an office and the PIN shared with members of the team or set-up for an individual.
- To establish an account to access telephonic services email dina@foxtranslation.com.
- You will receive an activation email to set up your account and establish a PIN.

To identify the primary language of a walk-in constituent, DESE staff will use a Language Identification Flashcard. The card states "I speak" in 38 languages and can be used to identify the language spoken by LEP

constituents accessing services provided by DESE.

iv. Hotline & General Phone Lines

DESE has a contract in place with Fox Translation for accessing telephonic and virtual translation services.

Telephonic Translation Services: Fox Translation Services

- This service can be set up for an office and the PIN shared with members of the team or set-up for an individual.
- To establish an account to access telephonic services email dina@foxtranslation.com.
- You will receive an activation email to set up your account and establish a PIN.

Virtual Interpretation Services: Fox Translation

- To utilize Video Remote Interpretation services for prescheduled interpreters for meetings, townhalls, IEP meetings, webinars etc., send an email to Bella at izabella@foxtranslation.com and Martha at martha@foxtranslation.com and they will coordinate the team needed to handle your event.
- Please note that ASL services are available.

Interpretation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Meetings and Events

When registering attendees for office presentations or events, you should provide an option for attendees to request interpretation and/or CART. Additionally, a partner organization hosting the event might request that our office provide interpretation when scheduling and confirming the event.

The DESE provides interpretation and/or CART for the deaf and hard of hearing when requested. Review these First Time Use Instructions from the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) to familiarize yourself with the different kinds of interpretation that could be requested.

MCDHH provides a Statewide Interpreter and CART Referral Service. Interpreters should be requested from the MCDHH. Interpreter and CART services are subject to availability, as such requests should be made as early as possible but not less than two (2) weeks prior to a meeting or event. Most events will require two ASL Interpreters.

Request interpreters and/or CART Requesters should be prepared to provide:

1. The requester's name, telephone number and organization
2. Date and time an interpreter/transliterator/CART provider is needed and the anticipated length of the assignment
3. Address of the assignment including additional specifics necessary for finding the location (i.e., the name or number of the building, floor, room, etc.)
4. The type of request and the format of the request (i.e., platform lecture, staff meeting, virtual meeting, etc.)
5. Other identifying information associated with the assignment such as the number of a seminar listing and the trainer's name and contact information (i.e., phone #, email, etc.)
6. The number of participants expected. (MCDHH needs to know who the participants are i.e., will the Governor be there?)
7. Equipment the format will use, such as microphones, overhead projector, video, etc.

8. Names of all participants needing interpreter services and their preferred mode of communication (ASL, PSE, Oral transliteration, CART).
9. Names of those specifically requesting CART services. List of CART equipment needed from the Commission (projector, microphone, etc.)
10. Name and telephone numbers of the contact person at the assignment (the "on-site contact person." Often requesters are not at the event/meeting. Interpreters need the name of an on-site contact to ask for when they arrive).
11. "Payer" or "billing" information: the name, address, and telephone numbers of the person responsible for paying for the interpreter. (Requests cannot be processed without confirmed billing information.)

Once an intake is complete, requesters are informed of the job number for their request. This job number confirms that a request has been made and should be used for tracking.

- **A request may require multiple interpreters** depending on the duration and intensity of the assignment.
- **There is a two-hour minimum charge for each interpreter and CART request.** Assignments are billed for a minimum of 2 hours of a provider's time (as an "appearance fee") or however long the assignment takes, whichever is greater. State paid jobs follow a formula for travel time and mileage reimbursement that is available from MCDHH upon request.
    - **Freelance interpreters and CART providers bill payers directly.**
- **Requesters are notified as soon as the request is filled and no later than their request's "notification date".** The request's "notification date," is negotiable but can be as short as two (2) business days before the assignment date.
- **Requesters must notify MCDHH of changes ASAP, e.g.,** location, consumers served, date, time, or billing information. Such changes often trigger the need to start the referral process over again and in the case of cancelled requests, may have financial implications for the requester/payer.
- **Requesters must cancel filled requests *with more than two full business days' notice in order to avoid being billed for the service.*** If cancellation occurs with less than two full business days notice, payers will be charged for the time booked.
- **To make a request to cancel for interpreting or CART services**, please go to this link, **https://www.mass.gov/forms/request-to-cancel-interpreting-cart-services**, and fill out the details. The details on the form must be filled before sending out, including Order number.

It is possible to request interpreters from multiple organizations. In such cases, you should make time ***prior to the event*** for the interpreters to connect.

b. **Staff Training**

The Language Access Plan (LAP) will be:

a. Posted internally for all employees. [SharePoint Link]
b. Incorporated into the orientation for new employees.
c. Presented to management so they are fully aware of and understand the LAP, in order to reinforce the plan's importance and ensure its implementation by staff.
d. Presented to DESE staff having contact with the public, so such staff is trained to work effectively with LEP constituents and telephone interpreters. At a minimum this will include staff in the offices of educator licensure, office of language acquisition, public school monitoring and the office or problem resolution systems.

VI. Monitoring

DESE 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 knows and understands the LAP document and is 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, 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 agency's effectiveness and performance in ensuring meaningful access for LEP individuals.