

# **Department of Telecommunications and Cable**

## **Language Access Plan**

### **I. Introduction**

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

### **II. Purpose**

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

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

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

### **III. Agency Description**

About the Department of Telecommunications and Cable

- Regulates the telecommunications and cable industries in accordance with statutory obligations imposed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the federal government
- Ensures consumers receive high quality communications at just and reasonable rates
- Promotes sustainable competition to increase consumer welfare for all Massachusetts residents
- Maintains and enforces consumer protections, consistent with the public interest, particularly where market forces alone are not sufficient to do so, including investigating and responding to inquiries and complaints from consumers and carriers
- Provides expert input into the development of telecommunications-related policies for the State

**IV. Language Access Plan:**

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

Language Access Plan:

(1) Agency Language Access Coordinator:

Karen Charles, Chief of Staff,  
[karen.charles@state.ma.us](mailto:karen.charles@state.ma.us)

(2) Agency Language Access Needs Assessment:

- a. The Department does not meet or exceed a language threshold greater than 5%. However, the primary second language population we serve is Spanish and Portuguese speakers. We have a full-time staff person who speaks both of these languages. We receive Russian callers who may be in need of translation services. In cases where the Department cannot provide translation services the consumer is referred to the telecommunications or cable provider. Major providers, such as Verizon and Comcast, provide a wide range of interpreter services.
- b. Language Makeup of Client Population  
 Our higher call volume from non-English speakers is Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Asian language groups. None of these groups represent the 5% threshold.

**Table 1: Massachusetts Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations as a percentage of the total population**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (out of total MA population)</b>
Population 18 Years or older	4,853,130	100.00%
Speak Only English	3,944,715	81.28%
Speak a Language Other than English	908,415	18.72%
Total MA LEP Population (people who speak English "Not Well" or "Not at All")	193,785	3.99%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	71,895	1.48%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	39,620	0.82%
Chinese	18,050	0.37%
Russian	8,990	0.19%
Vietnamese	8,990	0.19%
French Creole	6,810	0.14%
Italian	6,525	0.13%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	5,125	0.11%

- c. Points of Contact between Agency and Client Population  
Department's Consumer Division.  
Consumers may call 1-800-392-6066 or fax 617-988-8288.

(3) Language Resources Assessment:

- a. The Department has employees who can speak and serve as interpreters in Portuguese, Spanish, and Amharic & Tigrinya (Languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea).
- b. Community-based resources available to be deployed to assist agency in meeting language access needs. Verizon and Comcast provide language translation services.

(4) Language Service Protocols:

- a. None 5% or greater. Should the Department receive a call from a consumer who prefers to speak to someone in Spanish, they are cued to do so at the prompt on the automated voice system. Other languages are handled as requested. Telephone and Cable providers also provide multi lingual services to their customers. We often use their interpreters or connect callers directly to the designated telephone numbers to address their specific language needs.
- b. Should the Department receive a call from a consumer who prefers to speak to someone in Spanish, they are cued to do so in the automated voice system. Other languages are handled as requested. Telephone and Cable providers also provide multi lingual services to their customers. We often use their interpreters or connect callers directly to the designated telephone numbers to address their specific language needs.

(5) Vital Document Translation:

- a. The Department does not send out any vital documents that need to be translated.
- b. We have two brochures that have been translated into Spanish and applicable forms that are available on the website.

(6) Stakeholder Consultations:

The Department regularly consults with stakeholders for office policy changes, including this language access plan.

(7) Staff Training:

The Consumer Division is the primary taker of Department calls from consumers Staff are provided with training aids that provide commonly used phrases in Spanish to assist callers at a basic level.

(8) Notice to Public.

The Department has worked with sister agencies, Department of Transitional Assistance and the Department of Medical Assistance, to provide Spanish Lifeline brochures and applications. We are in constant with various consumer groups to ensure information is disseminated as appropriate.

(9) Agency Monitoring:

The Department will review and update, on a biannual basis, this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (“ANF”) Administrative Bulletin #16.

(10) Complaints:

The Consumer Division receives complaints that may be escalated to the attention of the Chief of Staff at any time.

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Agency Head  
Date

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Secretary  
Date

## **Language Access Complaint Procedure**

(To be included as an attachment to LAP)

You may file a complaint with the Agency Language Access Coordinator or the Office of Access and Opportunity if you believe you have been denied the benefits of this Plan. You must file your complaint within 6 months of the alleged denial. You must file a written complaint. To file a complaint with the Language Access Coordinator, submit the written complaint to:

Karen Charles  
Chief of Staff  
Department of Telecommunications and Cable  
1000 Washington Street, Suite 820  
Boston, MA 02118  
[Karen.Charles@state.ma.us](mailto:Karen.Charles@state.ma.us)

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

Office of Access and Opportunity  
Executive Office of Administration and Finance  
State House, Room 373  
Boston, MA 02133  
Email Address: [Ronald.Marlow@state.ma.us](mailto:Ronald.Marlow@state.ma.us)