



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Governor Cuomo Issues Executive Order to Improve Access to State Services for Non-English Speakers

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY October 7, 2011

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Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued an Executive Order requiring state agencies that provide direct public services to offer free interpretation and translation services to members of the public for vital forms and instructions.

Based on census data, the services will be offered in **Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Russian, French, and French Créole.**

Approximately two and a half million New Yorkers do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. This presents potential barriers when trying to access important government benefits or services.

"Our state works for all people, regardless of where you were born or what language you speak," said Governor Cuomo. "We are proud that people from all around the world call New York home, making our state a beacon of diversity and tolerance. This Executive Order ensures that non-English speakers receive equal access to the programs, services, and opportunities offered by their state government."

The Governor's Deputy Secretary for Civil Rights Alphonso David will provide oversight and coordination to agencies to help them implement the provisions of the Executive Order. Agencies will fulfill the requirements of the Executive Order on a rolling basis and must fully comply within one year. The Governor's website will be translated as well.

To ensure that language access services are implemented in a cost effective and efficient manner, the New York State Office of General Services has already negotiated bulk discounts for interpretation and translation services for all state agencies. Additionally, the Spending and Government Efficiency ("SAGE") Commission has incorporated this plan in its streamlining of agencies.

The state agencies that will be affected by the Governor's Executive Order include, but are not limited to: Office for Aging; Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services; Office of Children & Family Services; Department of Correctional Services; Division of Criminal Justice Services; Department of Education; Board of Elections; Empire State Development Corporation; Department of Family Assistance; Department of Health; Division of Housing & Community Renewal; Division of Human Rights; Department of Financial Services; Department of Labor; Department of Motor Vehicles; Department of State; Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Division of Parole; Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence; Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives; Division of State Police; Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance; and Division of Veteran's Affairs.

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