

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

Revision Effective July 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) nurtures the connection between people and nature by protecting and enhancing our shared natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Our infrastructure connects people to the landscapes and recreational facilities we care for – strengthening our communities and economy. We’re committed to stewarding a park system where all residents and visitors can relax, reflect, and feel a sense of belonging in our open spaces and public lands.

This commitment is inclusive of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals. An LEP person is someone who cannot speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that allows them to interact effectively with DCR’s staff. Each person maintains the right to self-identify as an LEP individual.

DCR has updated this Language Access Plan (LAP), which outlines ongoing and planned efforts to provide language services and to reduce barriers for LEP individuals. DCR will review and update this LAP at least every two years or more often if needed to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to outline how DCR can continue to improve upon providing meaningful access to programs, services, and activities for LEP individuals in a fair and timely manner.

The objectives of this LAP are to:

- Improve access to and quality of programs, services, and activities, for LEP individuals;
- Reduce disparities and delays in the provision of programs, services, and activities to LEP individuals; and
- Streamline training and resources for staff to increase effectiveness and ensure public satisfaction.

III. POLICY

It is DCR’s policy to provide meaningful access to programs, services, and activities to LEP individuals so that they do not experience burdens, delays, or reduced quality of service due to language barriers.

Equitable Access Standard

LEP individuals contacting DCR by phone, in person, or via video shall be offered professional interpretation services as promptly as possible, and generally within a reasonable time frame comparable to services provided in English.

Staff must utilize approved over-the-phone or video interpretation services without delay.

Written responses to LEP individuals shall be provided within a reasonable time frame comparable to services provided to English-speaking individuals. Translated written materials shall be clear, accurate, and culturally appropriate.

IV. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all divisions and offices within DCR.

V. ROLE

DCR's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all. Caring for our state's public lands and the infrastructure that supports them takes both scale and collaboration. Our staff maintain parkways, parks, forests, and recreational facilities; protect public safety; manage critical water resources; and work with municipalities and private landowners to care for their natural assets.

As one of the largest and most diverse state park systems in the country, DCR plays a vital role in connecting residents and visitors to the outdoors. Our public lands and the infrastructure that supports them improve public health, strengthen communities and support the economy.

To ensure these benefits are accessible to all, DCR is committed to providing meaningful access to programs, services, and activities to LEP individuals. Through inclusive communication and equitable access to our resources, we're working to create a more welcoming, resilient Massachusetts – where everyone can enjoy our shared spaces and feel a true sense of belonging.

DCR's focus is:

- Improving outdoor recreational opportunities and natural resource conservation;
- Restoring and improving our facilities;
- Expanding public involvement in carrying out DCR's mission; and
- Establishing first-rate management systems and practices.

DCR Direct Services Programs

Recreation: Programs and activities for the public at campgrounds, multi-use trails, swimming pools, beaches (salt and freshwater), skating rinks, spray decks, ball fields, hard courts, picnic areas, and playgrounds.

Universal Access: Provides accessibility to parks and programs for people of all abilities through year-round adaptive recreation programming and specialized recreation equipment to use at beaches and skating rinks.

Ranger and Interpretive Services: Promotes environmental education, natural and cultural resource interpretation, and awareness and enforcement of regulations at DCR properties and the State House. Ranger Services is also responsible for issuing parking tickets and collecting fees.

Forest Fire Control: Prevents, detects, and suppresses forest fires on public and private lands.

Forestry: Protects and manages forests, watersheds, and landscapes on public lands and regulates certain forestry activities on private lands.

Administrative Offices and Headquarters: Provides access to information on employment, responses to Requests for Responses (RFRs) & Requests for Proposals (RFPs), special use permits, campground reservations, as well as accommodating various units that operate the parks system, including forestry, recreation, engineering, and planning.

The health and happiness of people across Massachusetts depend on the accessibility and quality of our green infrastructure—our natural resources, recreational facilities, and great historic landscapes. DCR continues to improve the vital connection between people and nature. The LAP provides an opportunity to make this a reality for all individuals that interact with DCR.

VI. LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

This LAP shall be fully implemented, subject to the availability of fiscal resources. It represents the agency's commitment to ensuring that all residents of Massachusetts can readily access its services, programs, activities, and materials.

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 individuals.

Language Access Coordinator

Dr. Monika Roy, Senior Director of Environmental Justice, at monika.roy@mass.gov, will serve as DCR's Language Access Coordinator and be responsible for developing and implementing DCR's Language Access Plan.

The role of the Language Access Coordinator includes the following:

- Conducting staff training;
- Assisting with the procurement of language assistance services;
- Periodically, or at least every two years, reassessing and updating the LAP to reflect updated information on relevant LEP populations;
- Consulting with stakeholders; and
- Participating in EEA's Language Access Working Group.

Language Access Definitions

Translation: Means the process of converting written text from a source language into an equivalent written text in a target language as fully and as accurately as possible while maintaining the style, tone, and intent of the text and while considering differences of culture and dialect.

Interpretation: Means the act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then faithfully orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning. For individuals with certain disabilities that affect communication, this can include understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed communication in the source language and faithfully

conveying that information into a spoken, captioned, or signed target language while retaining that same meaning.

Language Access for Public Outreach and Engagement

As a baseline language access measure, DCR will provide translated public meeting notices in the five most commonly spoken languages in the Commonwealth. Other languages may be provided upon request. Translated public meeting notices will include key meeting information, including the meeting title, date, time, location or virtual access information, a brief description of the meeting purpose, instructions for requesting interpretation or other language access services, and information on how to submit public comments where applicable.

For other types of outreach and engagement for DCR programs, services, and activities, which may include policy and/or project development grants, collaborative programs, partnership activities, volunteer opportunities, public notices, advisories, general community information campaigns, DCR should identify and provide appropriate language access measures in languages identified by the most recently available ACS data and DESE data as provided in the "Languages Spoken in Massachusetts" map, considering the following as a starting point for determining the relevant geographic area: (i) a radius of five miles for projects with air-related impacts, and (ii) a radius of one mile for projects with other environmental impacts, unless DCR determines that a different geographic area better reflects the affected community or anticipated audience. DCR should also determine the appropriate languages through prior public engagement history, community partner stakeholder input, requests received, the nature and importance of the meeting or activity, anticipated audience, available funding, staffing capacity, vendor availability, and operational feasibility.

DCR will prioritize expanded translation and live interpretation for statewide initiatives involving significant public impact, public health or safety, major changes to public access or services, formal public hearings, or demonstrated language access need. Language access measures may include translated notices, translated key materials, multilingual web content, interpreter services, translated comment instructions, and/or other reasonable measures. DCR will make reasonable efforts to provide additional language access services in any language timely requested or otherwise determined by DCR to be necessary to ensure meaningful access. All language access activities will be contingent upon available funding, staffing capacity, vendor availability, and operational feasibility.

Document Translation

In addition to English, DCR will take reasonable steps to maintain widely applicable publications and key public-facing materials in the five most commonly spoken languages in the Commonwealth, as identified by the most recent available ACS data and DESE data as provided in the "Languages Spoken in Massachusetts" map.

If a DCR publication or other material is not readily available in a language that would be needed for an LEP individual, that material can be requested to be translated by accessing DCR's webpage titled [Request Translation or Interpretation Services for DCR Documents or Events](#). This webpage contains a form for requesting the translation, whereafter the request

will be handled by the Language Access Coordinator. The document translation request form can also be accessed through [DCR's Environmental Justice webpage](#).

Live Interpretation

Live interpretation services may be organized in advance or be utilized in the moment via the following options:

- **Language interpretation for public meetings, events, or other programming:** This service can be requested through DCR's webpage titled [Request Translation or Interpretation Services for DCR Documents or Events](#). This is the same form noted above that can be used for document translation requests. Requests will be sent to the Language Access Coordinator for processing. Fulfilling these requests is subject to amount of time the request is made in advance of the event, the availability of interpreters, and funding.
- **American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation:** This service is available upon request. When requested, DCR will work with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) through [their request page](#) to secure interpreters for the event.
- **On demand language interpretation:** DCR's Community Relations team fields calls Monday through Friday 9am-5pm at (617) 626-1250 from members of the public who want to provide input or ask a question. For LEP individuals, the Community Relations team will call in interpreters through DCR's vendor (currently [Baystate Interpreters](#)) to support.
- **Language access requests related to a disability, medical condition, or need for a reasonable accommodation to access programming or services:** For language access support related to these needs, DCR will work with the agency's ADA Coordinator to address the request:

Moneesha Dasgupta
DEI Manager & ADA Coordinator
(617)645-0358
Email: Moneesha.Dasgupta2@mass.gov

DCR Alerts

DCR issues numerous alerts weekly related to same-day or unanticipated road or site closures, public health, or public safety information. DCR is working to integrate the alerts into Mass.gov so that these alerts may be translated using the site's built-in language translation feature. Additionally, staff are being trained to format alerts in ways that make the message easier for LEP individuals to correctly interpret key points. For example, dates and times should be written in a #:## AM/PM format. So "7/9 at 1" would be written as "Thursday July 9th at 1:00 PM" to ensure that any readers who are not from the U.S. are not reading the date as September 7th and those from cultures that more often use military time can understand if the hour is in the afternoon or morning. Additionally, the full text allows a user to potentially put the phrase into a translation app or website to receive the correct response regardless of their device or app regional settings.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools for Language Access

DCR currently does not use AI or other digital services for its document translation needs. However, DCR is open to thoughtfully exploring how AI-driven solutions might support our efforts to broaden language accessibility and complement human expertise. Any use of AI tools in the future will be guided by our commitment to accuracy and the needs of the Commonwealth residents we serve.

Web Content

All Mass.gov webpages can be auto-translated under “Select Language” at the top of the screen. DCR is integrating at the top of webpage-based forms, alerts, and other content pages “Please note: all Mass.gov sites (including this form) can be auto-translated under “Select Language” at the top of the screen” to alert individuals of this functionality.

ADA and Section 508 Compliance

DCR is committed to ensuring that its digital content and online services are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act applies to all services, programs, and activities provided by state and local governments, including those offered online and through mobile applications. In alignment with Title II and the Commonwealth's Enterprise Digital Accessibility Policy, DCR's digital content, including websites, electronic documents, multimedia, and social media, must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.1 Level A and Level AA as the minimum technical standard for accessibility. Additionally, electronic documents and communications must adhere to guidance and testing requirements as directed in the Commonwealth's Enterprise Digital Accessibility Policy.

The Enterprise Digital Accessibility Policy requires that DCR ensure employees complete required and role-specific digital accessibility training, and that accessibility be incorporated into project planning requirements for application development. DCR's digital accessibility obligations extend to third-party vendors as well: web and mobile applications, web content, and supplemental instructional or documentation materials provided through a vendor or contracted third party must also comply with WCAG version 2.1 Levels A and AA. DCR will incorporate accessibility requirements into procurements and contracts accordingly.

For the purposes of this policy, “accessibility” means that a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability, in an equally effective and integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use and with the same level of security and privacy. DCR will work in accordance with the Commonwealth's Accessibility Center for Consulting, Education and Support Services (ACCESS) and the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) to ensure ongoing compliance and continuous improvement of DCR's digital assets.

Multilingual Staff at DCR

DCR supports hiring and retaining multilingual staff for all positions, especially for public-facing staff and for the agency's community relations team.

Staff Training

The Language Access Plan (LAP) will be:

- Posted internally for all employees;
- Incorporated into the orientation for new employees;
- 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; and
- Presented to DCR staff having contact with the public, so such staff is trained to work effectively with LEP individuals and over-the-phone interpreters.

Monitoring

DCR will review and update its Language Access Plan at least every two years or more frequently, as needed.

Each review will consider the following:

- Whether there have been any significant changes in the prevalence of languages spoken in Massachusetts;
- Whether the staff knows and understands the LAP document and is comfortable using the services described within;
- Whether additional documents require translation;
- Identification of any issues or problems related to serving LEP individuals which may have emerged during the past year; and
- 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:

- Analyzing current and previous data on language assistance usage, including languages served;
- 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
- 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.

DCR's Language Access Coordinator shall attend quarterly meetings hosted by the Executive Office of Energy and Environment Affairs' designated Secretariat Language Access Coordinator to assess the implementation of this plan.

If you have any issues or questions regarding the implementation of this Language Access Plan, please reach out to the Governor's Office of Access and Opportunity at

eduardo.morenomendez@mass.gov or govcommunityaffairs@mass.gov. You may also reach out to DCR's Language Access Coordinator, Dr. Monika Roy, at monika.roy@mass.gov.