

# HOUSE BILL 981

O3, P1

4lr1467

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By: **Delegates Martinez and Pena–Melnyk**  
Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2024  
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Department of Disabilities – Individuals With Limited English**  
3 **Proficiency – Access to Public Services**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring, on or before a certain date, the Department of Disabilities to  
5 fully implement certain provisions of law requiring equal access to public services  
6 for individuals with limited English proficiency; and generally relating to the  
7 Department of Disabilities and equal access to public services for individuals with  
8 limited English proficiency.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
10 Article – State Government  
11 Section 10–1103  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – State Government**

17 10–1103.

18 (a) Each State department, agency, or program listed or identified under  
19 subsection (c) of this section shall take reasonable steps to provide equal access to public  
20 services for individuals with limited English proficiency.

21 (b) Reasonable steps to provide equal access to public services include:

22 (1) the provision of oral language services for individuals with limited  
23 English proficiency, which must be through face–to–face, in–house oral language services

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 if contact between the agency and individuals with limited English proficiency is on a  
2 weekly or more frequent basis;

3 (2) (i) the translation of vital documents ordinarily provided to the  
4 public into any language spoken by any limited English proficient population that  
5 constitutes 3% of the overall population within the geographic area served by a local office  
6 of a State program as measured by the United States Census; and

7 (ii) the provision of vital documents translated under item (i) of this  
8 item on a statewide basis to any local office as necessary; and

9 (3) any additional methods or means necessary to achieve equal access to  
10 public services.

11 (c) The provisions of this section shall be fully implemented according to the  
12 following schedule:

13 (1) on or before July 1, 2003, full implementation by:

14 (i) the Department of Human Services;

15 (ii) the Maryland Department of Labor;

16 (iii) the Maryland Department of Health;

17 (iv) the Department of Juvenile Services; and

18 (v) the Workers' Compensation Commission;

19 (2) on or before July 1, 2004, full implementation by:

20 (i) the Department of Aging;

21 (ii) the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services;

22 (iii) the Department of Transportation, not including the Maryland  
23 Transit Administration;

24 (iv) the Commission on Civil Rights;

25 (v) the Department of State Police; and

26 (vi) five independent agencies, boards, or commissions, to be  
27 determined by the Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Office of the  
28 Attorney General;

29 (3) on or before July 1, 2005, full implementation by:

- 1 (i) the Comptroller of Maryland;
- 2 (ii) the Department of Housing and Community Development;
- 3 (iii) the Maryland Transit Administration;
- 4 (iv) the Department of Natural Resources;
- 5 (v) the Maryland State Department of Education;
- 6 (vi) the Office of the Attorney General; and
- 7 (vii) five independent agencies, boards, or commissions to be  
8 determined by the Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Office of the  
9 Attorney General; [and]

10 (4) on or before July 1, 2006, full implementation by:

- 11 (i) the Department of Agriculture;
- 12 (ii) the Department of Commerce;
- 13 (iii) the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- 14 (iv) the Department of the Environment; and
- 15 (v) five independent agencies, boards, or commissions to be  
16 determined by the Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Office of the  
17 Attorney General; AND

18 (5) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2025, FULL IMPLEMENTATION BY THE  
19 DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES.

20 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
21 October 1, 2024.