

**First Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

PREAMENDED

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 25-0556.01 Rebecca Bayetti x4348

HOUSE BILL 25-1153

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Velasco and Joseph,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

(None),

House Committees

State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs
Appropriations

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING A STATEWIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS ASSESSMENT**
102 **COVERING PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS, AND, IN CONNECTION**
103 **THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill requires the department of personnel (department), in collaboration with the office of new Americans, to conduct or contract to conduct a statewide language access assessment (assessment). The assessment covers all principal departments except the department of state, the department of the treasury, and the department of law (principal

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

departments). The assessment must identify:

- The needs of principal departments to meet the language access standards outlined in the language access universal policy, including requests for guidance, training, and technical assistance;
- Relevant language access materials from principal departments, including language access plans, position descriptions related to language access, procedures related to language access, and technical assistance or training materials;
- Information on current language services contracts, expenditures, and funding sources related to language access;
- The public-facing responsibilities of principal departments, including designating which principal departments and their subcontractors do and do not have frequent contact with linguistically diverse individuals; and
- Other covered entities that may be subject to the standards outlined in the language access universal policy.

The department may enter into an agreement with a third-party entity to conduct all or part of the assessment. The third-party entity must have demonstrated expertise in working with state governments on language access initiatives, such as developing language access policies or plans.

At the conclusion of the assessment and not later than December 31, 2026, the department, the office of new Americans, or the third-party entity is required to create a report covering the findings of the assessment and recommendations concerning:

- Improving efficiency, increasing quality of service, reducing cost, avoiding duplicative work, building on existing best practices, and minimizing administrative burden with respect to the provision of linguistically accessible government services and programs to linguistically diverse individuals;
- Addressing gaps and improving meaningful service through changes to language access services, practices, and procedures;
- Evaluating potential technological options for increasing language access, such as artificial intelligence; and
- Determining what infrastructure is needed to ensure full and sustainable implementation of the standards outlined in the language access universal policy.

The department must include a summary of the report and assessment in its January 2027 presentation to legislative oversight committees required by the "State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent (SMART) Government Act".

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 24-30-105 as
3 follows:

4 **24-30-105. Statewide language access assessment - report -**
5 **legislative declaration - definitions. (1) Legislative declaration.** THE
6 GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

7 (a) ALMOST NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND COLORADANS SPEAK A
8 LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH, WITH THE TOP FIVE LANGUAGES BEING
9 SPANISH, CHINESE, VIETNAMESE, GERMAN, AND RUSSIAN, AND MORE
10 THAN THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND COLORADANS FACE LINGUISTIC
11 BARRIERS TO ACCESSING STATE GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS;

12 (b) PROVIDING LANGUAGE ACCESS FOR STATE GOVERNMENT
13 SERVICES AND PROGRAMS IS KEY TO IMPROVING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS
14 AND SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF
15 IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES INTO COLORADO'S CIVIC, ECONOMIC,
16 AND SOCIAL LIFE;

17 (c) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS IN THE
18 COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT TO WORK
19 ADMINISTRATIVELY, IN CONCERT WITH THE **APPROPRIATE** OFFICE OF THE
20 DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL, TO ESTABLISH AN INTERIM LANGUAGE
21 ACCESS WORKING GROUP MADE UP OF THE PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS OF
22 THE STATE;

23 (d) ONCE ESTABLISHED, THE INTERIM LANGUAGE ACCESS WORKING
24 GROUP WILL WORK TO DRAFT A STATEWIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY FOR
25 THE CONSIDERATION OF THE GOVERNOR;

26 (e) UPON APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT POLICY BY THE GOVERNOR, A

1 LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL POLICY WILL BE ADOPTED AND PUBLISHED
2 BY THE DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF
3 PERSONNEL; ■

4 (f) THE LANGUAGE ACCESS ASSESSMENT CREATED IN THIS SECTION
5 WILL ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL
6 POLICY IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF MULTILINGUAL COLORADANS AND WILL
7 ASSESS THE READINESS OF PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS TO MEET THE
8 STATEWIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS STANDARDS; AND

9 (g) UPON COMPLETION OF THE ASSESSMENT AND NOT LATER THAN
10 DECEMBER 31, 2026, THE INTERIM LANGUAGE ACCESS WORKING GROUP
11 WILL DISSOLVE AND TRANSITION TO A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
12 MAINTAINED BY THE APPROPRIATE OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
13 PERSONNEL. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL
14 WILL WORK TO ENSURE REPRESENTATION IN THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
15 FROM LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER COMMUNITY
16 MEMBERS WITH PROFESSIONAL OR LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH LANGUAGE
17 ACCESS INITIATIVES AND FROM ACROSS STATE AGENCIES, WHILE LIMITING
18 TOTAL PARTICIPATION TO TWENTY PEOPLE. THE ONGOING WORK OF THE
19 LANGUAGE ACCESS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE WILL BE INFORMED BY THE
20 WORK OF THE INTERIM LANGUAGE ACCESS WORKING GROUP AND WILL
21 FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTING THE LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL POLICY
22 WITH ONGOING OBSERVATION OF BEST PRACTICES IN THE PRINCIPAL
23 DEPARTMENTS.

24 (2) **Definitions.** AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT
25 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

26 (a) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL
27 CREATED IN SECTION 24-1-128.

1 (b) "EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
2 THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL.

3 (c) "LANGUAGE ACCESS ASSESSMENT" OR "ASSESSMENT" MEANS
4 THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT ON LANGUAGE ACCESS READINESS REQUIRED
5 BY SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION.

6 (d) "LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL POLICY" MEANS THE
7 STATEWIDE POLICY STANDARDS FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS IDENTIFIED BY
8 THE INTERIM LANGUAGE ACCESS WORKING GROUP INITIATED BY THE
9 OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS AND THE DEPARTMENT IN 2025.

10 (e) "LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS" MEANS INDIVIDUALS
11 SEEKING TO ACCESS STATE GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN THE LANGUAGE OF
12 THEIR CHOICE WHO MAY HAVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY THAT
13 REQUIRES LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN CERTAIN CONTEXTS. "LINGUISTICALLY
14 DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS" INCLUDES INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH
15 PROFICIENCY AS PROVIDED BY TITLE VI OF THE "CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF
16 1964," 42 U.S.C. SEC. 2000D ET SEQ.; FEDERAL EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166,
17 "IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH
18 PROFICIENCY," AS PUBLISHED IN 65 FED. REG. 50121 (AUGUST 11, 2000);
19 ■ ■ AND OTHER FEDERAL ANTI-DISCRIMINATION STATUTES.

20 (f) "OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS" MEANS THE COLORADO OFFICE
21 OF NEW AMERICANS CREATED IN SECTION 8-3.7-103.

22 (g) "OTHER COVERED ENTITY" MEANS A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE
23 ENTITY THAT RECEIVES STATE FUNDING OR CONTRACTS TO ADMINISTER
24 PROGRAMS OR SERVICES FOR THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING RECEIVING STATE
25 FUNDING THROUGH GRANTS, PURCHASE-OF-SERVICE CONTRACTS, OR ANY
26 OTHER ARRANGEMENT BY WHICH THE STATE PROVIDES OR OTHERWISE
27 MAKES AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF MONEY TO A PERSON FOR

1 THE PURPOSE OF RENDERING SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC.

2 (h) "PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT" MEANS A PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT
3 LISTED IN SECTION 24-1-110; EXCEPT THAT "PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT"
4 DOES NOT INCLUDE THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE DEPARTMENT OF THE
5 TREASURY, OR THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW.

6 (i) "THIRD-PARTY ENTITY" MEANS AN ENTITY THAT HAS ENTERED
7 INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT ALL OR PART
8 OF THE LANGUAGE ACCESS ASSESSMENT.

9 (3) **Statewide language access assessment.** (a) THE EXECUTIVE
10 DIRECTOR, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS, SHALL
11 ASSESS OR CONTRACT FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF THE READINESS OF
12 PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS TO MEET THE LANGUAGE ACCESS STANDARDS
13 OUTLINED IN THE LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL POLICY. IN ADDITION TO
14 ANY AREA OF ASSESSMENT DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE EXECUTIVE
15 DIRECTOR, THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS, OR THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY,
16 THE ASSESSMENT MUST IDENTIFY:

17 (I) THE NEEDS OF PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS TO MEET THE
18 STANDARDS OUTLINED IN THE LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL POLICY,
19 INCLUDING REQUESTS FOR GUIDANCE, TRAINING, AND TECHNICAL
20 ASSISTANCE;

21 (II) RELEVANT LANGUAGE ACCESS MATERIALS FROM PRINCIPAL
22 DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING LANGUAGE ACCESS PLANS, POSITION
23 DESCRIPTIONS RELATED TO LANGUAGE ACCESS, PROCEDURES RELATED TO
24 LANGUAGE ACCESS, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR TRAINING
25 MATERIALS;

26 (III) INFORMATION ON CURRENT LANGUAGE SERVICES CONTRACTS,
27 EXPENDITURES, AND FUNDING SOURCES RELATED TO LANGUAGE ACCESS;

1 (IV) THE PUBLIC-FACING RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPAL
2 DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING DESIGNATING WHICH PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS
3 AND THEIR SUBCONTRACTORS DO AND DO NOT HAVE FREQUENT CONTACT
4 WITH LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS; AND

5 (V) OTHER COVERED ENTITIES THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE
6 STANDARDS OUTLINED IN THE LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL POLICY.

7 (b) A PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE ANY
8 NONCONFIDENTIAL DATA AND NON-PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE
9 INFORMATION THAT IS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE ASSESSMENT, AS
10 AVAILABLE, UPON REQUEST OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR THE
11 THIRD-PARTY ENTITY.

12 (c)(I) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MAY ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT
13 WITH ONE OR MORE THIRD-PARTY ENTITIES TO CONDUCT ALL OR PART OF
14 THE ASSESSMENT.

15 (II) A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY THAT ENTERS INTO AN AGREEMENT
16 WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO CONDUCT ALL OR PART OF THE
17 ASSESSMENT MUST HAVE DEMONSTRATED EXPERTISE IN WORKING WITH
18 STATE GOVERNMENTS ON LANGUAGE ACCESS INITIATIVES, SUCH AS
19 DEVELOPING LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICIES OR PLANS.

20 (III) THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY MAY BE FROM OUTSIDE COLORADO.

21 (4) **Report.** (a) AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE ASSESSMENT AND
22 NOT LATER THAN DECEMBER 31, 2026, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE
23 OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS, OR THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY, AS
24 APPROPRIATE, SHALL CREATE A REPORT SUMMARIZING THE FINDINGS AND
25 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS
26 CONCERNING:

27 (I) IMPROVING EFFICIENCY, INCREASING QUALITY OF SERVICE,

1 REDUCING COST, AVOIDING DUPLICATIVE WORK, BUILDING ON EXISTING
2 BEST PRACTICES, AND MINIMIZING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN WITH
3 RESPECT TO THE PROVISION OF LINGUISTICALLY ACCESSIBLE GOVERNMENT
4 SERVICES AND PROGRAMS TO LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS;

5 (II) ADDRESSING GAPS AND IMPROVING MEANINGFUL SERVICE
6 THROUGH CHANGES TO LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES, PRACTICES, AND
7 PROCEDURES;

8 (III) EVALUATING POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL OPTIONS FOR
9 INCREASING LANGUAGE ACCESS, SUCH AS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE; AND

10 (IV) DETERMINING WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE IS NEEDED TO ENSURE
11 FULL AND SUSTAINABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS OUTLINED
12 IN THE LANGUAGE ACCESS UNIVERSAL POLICY.

13 (b) THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE
14 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS THAT DOES NOT EXCEED TWO PAGES.
15 THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY MUST BE WRITTEN IN PLAIN LANGUAGE AND
16 MUST BE AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH AND THE OTHER FIVE MOST COMMONLY
17 SPOKEN LANGUAGES IN THE STATE BY POPULATION OF LINGUISTICALLY
18 DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS.

19 (c) (I) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHALL MAKE THE REPORT ON THE
20 ASSESSMENT PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE.

21 (II) THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS SHALL
22 MAKE THE REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON THE
23 OFFICE'S WEBSITE.

24 (III) UPON REQUEST, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR THE DIRECTOR
25 OF THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS SHALL PROVIDE A COPY OF THE REPORT
26 IN ANY REQUESTED LANGUAGE.

27 (d) IN JANUARY 2027, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL INCLUDE, AS PART

1 OF ITS PRESENTATION DURING ITS "SMART ACT" HEARING REQUIRED BY
2 SECTION 2-7-203, A SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THE
3 REPORT REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION (4) CONCERNING THE LANGUAGE
4 ACCESS ASSESSMENT.

5 **SECTION 2. Appropriation.** For the 2025-26 state fiscal year,
6 \$100,000 is appropriated to the department of personnel for use by the
7 Colorado equity office. This appropriation is from the general fund. To
8 implement this act, the office may use this appropriation for personal
9 services. Any money appropriated in this section not expended prior to
10 July 1, 2026, is further appropriated to the office through December 31,
11 2026, for the same purpose.

12 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,
13 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
14 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for
15 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
16 institutions.