

## Chapter 656

**(House Bill 981)**

AN ACT concerning

~~Maryland Department of Disabilities~~ **Principal Departments – Individuals With Limited English Proficiency – Access to Public Services**

FOR the purpose of requiring, on or before a certain date, ~~the Department of Disabilities~~ principal departments of the Executive Branch to fully implement certain provisions of law requiring equal access to public services for individuals with limited English proficiency; and generally relating to ~~the Department of Disabilities~~ principal departments of the Executive Branch and equal access to public services for individuals with limited English proficiency.

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

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

**Article – State Government**

10–1103.

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

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

(1) the provision of oral language services for individuals with limited English proficiency, which must be through face-to-face, in-house oral language services if contact between the agency and individuals with limited English proficiency is on a weekly or more frequent basis;

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

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

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

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

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

(i) the Department of Human Services;

(ii) the Maryland Department of Labor;

(iii) the Maryland Department of Health;

(iv) the Department of Juvenile Services; and

(v) the Workers' Compensation Commission;

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

(i) the Department of Aging;

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

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

(iv) the Commission on Civil Rights;

(v) the Department of State Police; and

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

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

(i) the Comptroller of Maryland;

(ii) the Department of Housing and Community Development;

(iii) the Maryland Transit Administration;

(iv) the Department of Natural Resources;

(v) the Maryland State Department of Education;

(vi) the Office of the Attorney General; and

(vii) five independent agencies, boards, or commissions to be determined by the Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General; [and]

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

(i) the Department of Agriculture;

(ii) the Department of Commerce;

(iii) the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(iv) the Department of the Environment; and

(v) five independent agencies, boards, or commissions to be determined by the Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General; ~~AND~~

**(5) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2025, FULL IMPLEMENTATION BY ~~THE DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES~~ EACH PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT LISTED UNDER § 8-201 OF THIS ARTICLE; AND**

**(6) IF A PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT IS CREATED ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2024, THE PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT SHALL COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION BEGINNING 1 YEAR AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH THE PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT IS CREATED.**

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

**Approved by the Governor, May 9, 2024.**