
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature formerly recognized and
2 acknowledged that language is a barrier for those living in
3 Hawaii who have identified themselves as being limited in
4 English proficiency. Consequently, the legislature passed Act
5 90, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006, and amended Act 290 with the
6 passage of Act 201, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012, to ensure that
7 limited English proficient individuals have meaningful access to
8 state-provided and state-funded services in Hawaii. These Acts
9 established the Hawaii office of language access to provide
10 oversight, central coordination, and technical assistance to
11 twenty-six state agencies and more than one hundred state-funded
12 agencies in their implementation of the requirements of Hawaii's
13 language access law.

14 The technical assistance provided to agencies by the office
15 of language access include needs assessments, assistance with
16 language access plans, training of agency staff, work with
17 interpreters and translators, data collection, reporting, and



1 more. The office of language access also conducts periodic
2 compliance monitoring and provides complaint resolution.

3 Furthermore, Act 217, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013, created
4 the statewide language access resource center within the office
5 of language access. The objectives of the statewide language
6 access resource center are laudable but require significant time
7 and resources for planning, coordination, and management. The
8 current staff of the office of language access have been
9 providing their time and expending a tremendous amount of
10 resources to get the statewide language access resource center
11 off the ground-work that was envisioned to be the responsibility
12 of the staff of the statewide language access resource center.
13 However, staff for the statewide language access resource center
14 have yet to be hired.

15 As it currently stands, the office of language access is
16 already understaffed and has been operating with only three
17 authorized full-time equivalent positions since 2013. As a
18 result, the office of language access has not been able to fully
19 perform its statutorily mandated compliance and technical
20 assistance functions. Accordingly, many state agencies have
21 been unable to implement important aspects of their language



1 access plans and many individuals limited in English proficiency
2 in Hawaii continue to lack meaningful access to government
3 services, programs, and activities.

4 The purpose of this Act is to establish two permanent full-
5 time equivalent positions within the office of language access
6 to assist state agencies and state-funded agencies in
7 implementing the requirements of Hawaii's language access law.

8 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for the
11 establishment of two full-time equivalent (2.00 FTE) permanent
12 program specialist positions within the office of language
13 access to assist state agencies and state-funded agencies in
14 implementing the requirements of Hawaii's language access law.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
16 health for the purposes of this Act.

17 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

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INTRODUCED BY: 



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H.B. NO. 1943

Report Title:

Office of Language Access; Program Specialist Positions;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the establishment of two full-time equivalent (2.00 FTE) permanent program specialist positions within the office of language access to assist state agencies and state-funded agencies in implementing the requirements of Hawaii's language access law.

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