

**Article - State Government****SUBTITLE 11. ~~LANGUAGE ACCESS~~ EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.**

10-1101.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT THE INABILITY TO SPEAK, UNDERSTAND, OR READ THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS A BARRIER THAT PREVENTS ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES PROVIDED BY STATE DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, AND PROGRAMS, AND THAT THE PUBLIC SERVICES AVAILABLE THROUGH THESE ENTITIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE WELFARE OF MARYLAND RESIDENTS. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE THAT STATE DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, AND PROGRAMS SHALL PROVIDE EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES ~~TO PERSONS~~ FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

10-1102.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) "EQUAL ACCESS" MEANS TO BE INFORMED OF, PARTICIPATE IN, AND BENEFIT FROM PUBLIC SERVICES OFFERED BY A STATE DEPARTMENT, AGENCY, OR PROGRAM, AT A LEVEL EQUAL TO ENGLISH PROFICIENT ~~PERSONS~~ INDIVIDUALS.

~~(C) "FORMS AND DOCUMENTS" MEANS ALL APPLICATIONS, OR INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS, NOTICES, AND COMPLAINT FORMS OFFERED BY STATE DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, AND PROGRAMS.~~

~~(D)~~ (C) "LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY" MEANS THE INABILITY TO ADEQUATELY UNDERSTAND OR EXPRESS ONESELF IN THE SPOKEN OR WRITTEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

(D) "ORAL LANGUAGE SERVICES" INCLUDES VARIOUS METHODS TO PROVIDE VERBAL INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION SUCH AS STAFF INTERPRETERS, BILINGUAL STAFF, TELEPHONE INTERPRETER PROGRAMS, AND PRIVATE INTERPRETER PROGRAMS.

(E) "PROGRAM" MEANS ALL OF THE OPERATIONS OF A STATE DEPARTMENT, STATE AGENCY, OR ANY OTHER INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE STATE.

(F) (1) "VITAL DOCUMENTS" MEANS ALL APPLICATIONS, OR INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS, NOTICES, AND COMPLAINT FORMS OFFERED BY STATE DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, AND PROGRAMS.

(2) "VITAL DOCUMENTS" DOES NOT INCLUDE APPLICATIONS AND EXAMINATIONS RELATED TO THE LICENSURE, CERTIFICATION, OR REGISTRATION UNDER THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ARTICLE, BUSINESS OCCUPATIONS AND PROFESSIONS ARTICLE, AND BUSINESS REGULATION ARTICLE WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE OR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING, AND REGULATION.