

***A Framework for Language Access:  
Key Features of U.S.  
State and Local Language Access  
Laws and Policies***

February 8th, 2022



# State and Local Language Access Laws and Policies

- Laws, ordinances, executive orders, and policies intended to comply with federal requirements, ensure access to services for LEP residents, and communicate with the public.
- These laws/policies contain many common features including:
  - Provisions addressing the duties of agencies and their staff to deliver assistance to LEP individuals (Agency Responsibilities).
  - Broader provisions that create administrative capacity across agencies and governments (Policy Administration).
- Administrative infrastructure and governance within agencies and across jurisdictions are key to implementation, fidelity, and durability.



# Language Access Laws and Policies Analyzed in Report

- To be included, laws and policies had to be **legally binding** and **apply to most, if not all, agencies** providing services to the public in a state or local government.
- 45 laws, ordinances, executive orders, and policies from 40 states and localities:
  - States (e.g., California, Hawaii, New York, Washington, D.C.)
  - Counties (e.g., Montgomery County, MD; San Diego County, CA; Multnomah County, OR; Orange County, NC, Suffolk County, NY)
  - Cities and Towns (e.g., Chicago, Chapel Hill, Minneapolis, New York City, San Francisco, Worcester).
- Analysis does not examine efficacy or implementation of policies.



# Features Addressing Agency Responsibilities

- Specific obligations and tasks assigned to departments and agencies within a state, county, or city by language access laws and policies:
  - *Translation of vital documents and websites*
  - *Interpretation and bilingual staff*
  - *Accuracy and quality control measures for language services*
  - *Training of agency staff on how to provide services to LEP individuals*
  - *Public notice of right to language access and availability of interpretation and translation*
  - *Appointment or designation of language access coordinators*
  - *Agency language access plans*
  
- Familiar practices in many state and local contexts.



# Features Addressing Policy Administration

- Policy administration structures **create accountability** for agencies, **provide capacity-building measures**, and establish infrastructure for **centralized planning and coordination** on language access:
  - *Offices or individuals designated to provide oversight*
  - *Advisory councils and technical assistance bodies*
  - *Accountability mechanisms and complaint procedures*
  - *Data systems and population tracking*
  - *Involvement of community members and groups in planning, implementation, and evaluation*
  - *Budgetary planning or allocation for provision of language services*



***Thank you—let's stay in touch!***

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