

2026 SESSION

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1 **HOUSE BILL NO. 1009**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 14, 2026

4 A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 2.2-213.6 and 2.2-604.3, relating to
5 administration of government; language access equity; report.

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7 _____
8 Committee Referral Pending
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10 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

11 **1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding sections numbered 2.2-213.6 and 2.2-604.3 as
12 follows:**

13 **§ 2.2-213.6. Secretary to develop language access policy; report.**

14 A. The Secretary shall have the following duties related to language access equity in the Commonwealth:

15 1. Establish criteria for the procurement of language interpretation and translation services by state
16 agencies. Such criteria shall also include metrics to be used to ensure accurate interpretation and
17 translation.

18 2. Establish a policy to determine qualifications of and compensation for state employees who are
19 multilingual and are required as part of their job to provide interpretation, translation, or other bilingual
20 skills at least once a month.

21 B. In order to carry out the duties outlined in subsection A, the Secretary shall:

22 1. Establish and maintain a model language access policy for use by all public-facing state agencies, as
23 that term is defined in § 2.2-604.3;

24 2. Develop and update, as needed, a glossary of common terms used by public-facing state agencies and
25 translated into at least 10 of the most frequently spoken non-English languages in the Commonwealth;

26 3. Work with the language access coordinator in each public-facing state agency to track the progress
27 being made by the agency in ensuring language access for the public;

28 4. Recommend policy changes, review relevant provisions of the Code of Virginia, and identify funding
29 and resources in order to meet the needs of individuals with language access needs, including languages of
30 lesser diffusion; and

31 5. Submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1 of each year
32 covering the previous fiscal year. The report shall be made available for public review and comment no later
33 than October 1 of each year, and all comments received from the public shall be included in the report when
34 submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly.

35 C. For purposes of this section, "languages of lesser diffusion" means any language spoken by a small
36 number of people within a limited geographic area.

37 **§ 2.2-604.3. Language access policy; language access coordinator.**

38 A. For purposes of this section:

39 "Meaningfully accessible" or "to meaningfully access" means language assistance that results in
40 accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to non-English speakers or persons with disabilities
41 and that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior compared with programs, services, or activities
42 provided to English-proficient or non-disabled individuals.

43 "Person with a disability" means the same as that term is defined in § 51.5-40.1.

44 "Public-facing state agency" or "agency" means the (i) Department of Agriculture and Consumer
45 Services, (ii) Department of Corrections, (iii) Department of Education, (iv) Department of Elections, (v)
46 Department of Emergency Management, (vi) Department of General Services, (vii) Department of Health,
47 (viii) Department of Health Professions, (ix) Department of Housing and Community Development, (x)
48 Department of Human Resource Management, (xi) Department of Labor and Industry, (xii) Department of
49 Medical Assistance Services, (xiii) Department of Mental Health and Behavioral Services, (xiv) Department
50 of Motor Vehicles, (xv) Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity, (xvi) Department of Social
51 Services, (xvii) Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Law, (xviii) Virginia Employment Commission,
52 and (xix) Virginia Information Technologies Agency.

53 B. It shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to ensure that the programs, services, and activities that
54 each public-facing state agency normally provides in English be meaningfully accessible to and available for
55 participation in by non-English speakers and persons with disabilities. Each public-facing state agency shall
56 adopt a language access policy to implement the Commonwealth's policy.

57 C. The head of each public-facing state agency shall designate an employee, who may be an existing
58 employee, to serve as the agency's language access coordinator. The language access coordinator shall be

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59 *responsible for developing and implementing the agency's language access policy and preparing an annual*
60 *language access report for the agency by the end of each fiscal year.*

61 *D. The annual language access report required pursuant to subsection C shall:*

62 *1. Address key policies and steps undertaken by the agency in the preceding fiscal year to ensure that*
63 *individuals with limited English proficiency or a disability that affects communication are able to*
64 *meaningfully access the agency's programs, services, and activities for which they are eligible;*

65 *2. Identify any applicable federal and state laws or guidance related to language access that applies to*
66 *the services and programs provided by the agency and describe the steps the agency has taken to comply with*
67 *such laws or guidance;*

68 *3. Compile and analyze data on the language access needs of the agency, including the major languages*
69 *used by the individuals served by the agency, and the number of individuals with language access needs that*
70 *were served during the year, organized by each major language identified and by any disability present that*
71 *affects communication;*

72 *4. Identify and describe each strategy the agency has employed to ensure the provision of agency services*
73 *in a culturally competent manner to any individual who has language access needs, including strategies to (i)*
74 *recruit and hire bilingual staff; (ii) hire or contract with interpreters and translators; and (iii) translate*
75 *information in public-facing offices, agency websites, and web-based and hard-copy forms, pamphlets, or*
76 *other materials about agency services;*

77 *5. Describe how the agency informs the public about language access rights, the procedures to obtain*
78 *language access services, and the mechanisms in place for an individual to request in advance such services*
79 *for any meeting, test, hearing, or other event or interaction sponsored by the agency;*

80 *6. Describe the training and resources the agency provides to local agency offices and public-facing staff*
81 *to assist them with meeting language access needs;*

82 *7. Identify each step the agency is taking to monitor and evaluate the delivery of language access*
83 *services;*

84 *8. Describe the agency's grievance or complaint process regarding language access services and identify*
85 *the number of complaints the agency received and a description of how each complaint was resolved; and*

86 *9. Identify any needed changes to the agency's language access policy.*

87 *2. That the language access policy required to be adopted by each public-facing state agency pursuant*
88 *to § 2.2-604.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, shall be adopted by November 1, 2026, and*
89 *shall be updated each year thereafter.*