

1 AN ACT concerning access to governmental services.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Access
5 to Governmental Services Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions.

7 "Equal access" means to be informed of, participate in, and
8 benefit from public services offered by a State agency, circuit
9 court, constitutional office, or a State program at a level
10 equal to individuals who do not have limited English
11 proficiency.

12 "Limited English proficiency" means the inability to
13 adequately understand or express oneself in the spoken or
14 written English language.

15 "Oral language services" includes various methods to
16 provide verbal information and interpretations, such as staff
17 interpreters, bilingual staff, telephone interpreter programs,
18 and private interpreter programs.

19 "Important documents" means application or informational
20 materials, websites, notices, and complaint forms offered by
21 State agencies, constitutional officers, circuit court clerks,
22 and State programs, as defined by rule by the appropriate State
23 agency, constitutional officer, circuit court clerk, or State
24 program. "Important documents" does not include applications
25 and examinations related to the licensure, certification, or
26 registration of businesses and professionals.

27 "State program" means any program administered by a State
28 agency, but does not include any program administered, in whole
29 or in part, by a unit of local government or a school district,
30 regardless of whether State funds are expended under the
31 program.

32 "Sufficient number of qualified bilingual persons in

1 public contact positions" means the number of qualified
2 bilingual persons required in order to provide the same level
3 of service to non-English-speaking persons as is available to
4 English-speaking persons seeking the same service.

5 Section 10. Language access required.

6 (a) Each State agency, constitutional officer, circuit
7 court clerk, and State program shall take reasonable steps to
8 provide equal access to public services for individuals with
9 limited English proficiency.

10 (b) Reasonable steps to provide equal access to public
11 services include, but are not limited to:

12 (1) Having a sufficient number of qualified bilingual
13 persons in public contact positions or as interpreters to
14 assist persons in public contact positions in providing
15 services to individuals with limited English proficiency
16 where there is documented substantial need due to contact
17 between a State agency, constitutional officer, circuit
18 court clerk, or State program and individuals with limited
19 English proficiency.

20 (2) Translating important documents ordinarily
21 provided to the public into any language spoken by any
22 limited English proficient population that constitutes at
23 least 3% of the overall population of the State as measured
24 by the U.S. Census.

25 (c) Each State agency, constitutional officer, circuit
26 court clerk, and State program shall adopt rules regarding the
27 requirements of this Section not less than 6 months after the
28 date that this Act takes effect, or as soon thereafter as
29 possible.

30 (d) The Illinois Human Rights Commission shall implement a
31 process to address disputes arising under this Act, including,
32 but not limited to, disputes concerning the interpretation of
33 "important documents" and "sufficient number of qualified
34 bilingual persons in public contact positions", not less than 6
35 months after the date that this Act takes effect, or as soon

1 thereafter as possible.