



Language Access

ABOUT MIRC

The Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) is a statewide legal resource center for Michigan's low-income immigrant communities, working to build a thriving Michigan where immigrant communities experience equity and belonging.



**LEGAL
SERVICES**



**SYSTEMIC
ADVOCACY**



**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT &
EDUCATION**

A program of Michigan Statewide Advocacy Services (MSAS)

ABOUT MIRC

IMMIGRATION

- Naturalization
- Relief for survivors of intimate partner violence, victims of crime
- Unaccompanied children
- Residents of Kalamazoo, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties
- Deportation defense

INTAKE

(Tuesday – Thursday)

(734) 239-6863

EMPLOYMENT

(non-citizens)

- Agriculture and farm work
- Unpaid wages
- Employer-provided housing
- Employment discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Labor trafficking

INTAKE

(with Farmworker Legal Services)

(800) 968-4046

CALLS FROM DETENTION: (734) 794-9963

Instructions for this free call are available in each ICE-contracted detention site (and our website)

AGENDA

- About Language Access
- Federal, State, Local Laws
- Michigan's Language Access Law
- Q & A



Elly Jordan, Public Benefits
Support Attorney, Michigan
Poverty Law Program

POLL



Freepik ([Image](#))

ANSWERS

- True or false? If someone does not feel comfortable speaking English, they have to bring their own interpreter to help them when they go to a state agency for services.
 - **False**, new state law and federal laws require meaningful language access at State agencies
- True or false? If someone uses an interpreter provided by a state agency, they will be sent a bill for those services.
 - **False**, services must be offered at no cost to individual



USDA ([Image](#))

ANSWERS

- True or false? State agencies must provide important documents and website tools in language other than English.
 - **True**, all vital documents must be translated into needed languages.
- True or false? When a person goes to a state agency and there is no one available to interpret, there is nothing that can be done and they just have to keep coming back until someone is available.
 - **False**, agencies must provide this resource in most cases, so the user could ask for a supervisor if they are not given access because of their language needs. If necessary, a user can file a complaint if they are not able to meaningfully access services.



Freepik ([Image](#))

LANGUAGE ACCESS KEY CONCEPTS

- **Translation** refers to written content.
- **Interpretation** refers to oral language services.
- Both federal and state governments require language access.
- State and federal agencies must provide language access.
- Federal funding can require language access, even at the state level.
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** refers to those who cannot effectively communicate in English.



Nina Yagual, Amplifier Art ([Image](#))

TITLE VI REQUIREMENTS

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance
- The Title VI regulatory requirements mandate that recipients take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to their programs, services, and activities for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- Agencies receiving federal funding must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services
- Failure to comply with Title VI may result in enforcement action, including the termination of federal funding.



Marion Trikosko, Unsplash ([Image](#))

LAU V. NICHOLS 1974

- Non-English speakers were denied meaningful education
- Language barrier was related to national origin
- Violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964



Unsplash ([Image](#))

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166



Unsplash ([Image](#))

- Executive Order 13166 signed in **2000**
- Grounded in Title VI
- Applies to agencies receiving federal funds and all programs and activities of federal agencies
- Requires meaningful language access for LEP individuals
- Agencies must take "reasonable steps"
 - Must examine services to identify LEP needs
 - Develop a written language access plan
- Michigan's language access laws incorporate this executive order

EXECUTIVE ORDER 14224

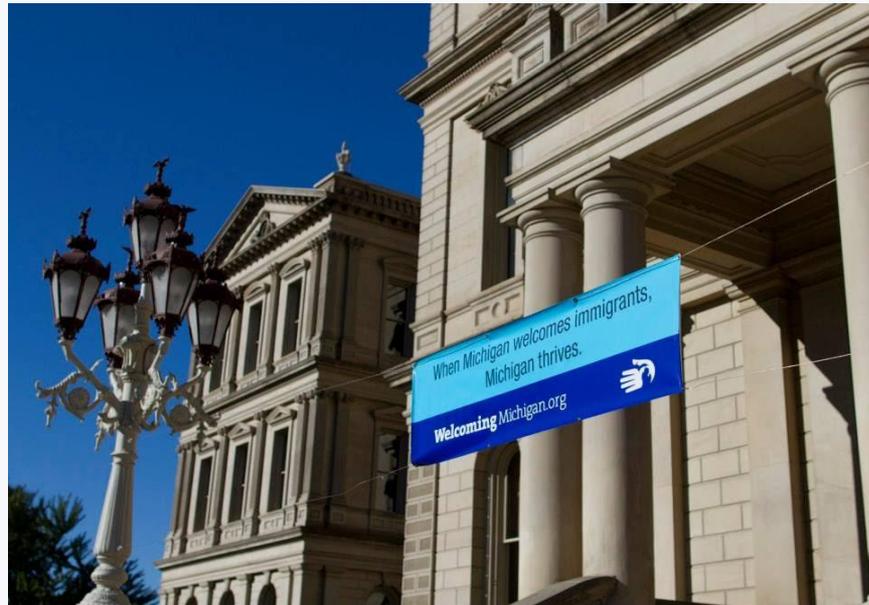


Picryl ([Image](#))

- Executive Order 14224 rescinded EO 13166 on March 1, 2025.
- Order designated English as the official United States language.
- No change to federally provided services is required by order.
- Individual federal agencies may still offer non-English language services.
- No impact on state law.
- Executive Order cannot overrule Supreme Court caselaw such as *Lau*.

MICHIGAN'S NEW LANGUAGE ACCESS LAWS

- In 2023, Michigan passed two laws to improve language access to state services.
- Goal: Bring state services to the level of language access that federal rules require.
- Laws went into effect in February 2024.



Credit: MIRC

MICHIGAN'S NEW LANGUAGE ACCESS LAWS



Unsplash ([Image](#))

Two parts:

- 1) The Coordination Act (MCL 37.11-14) explains how the Office of Global Michigan should organize other state agencies to provide language access.
- 2) The Language Access Act (MCL 37.21-21) details reasonable steps that must be taken by state agencies to provide language access.

WHAT MUST STATE ENTITIES DO?

Provide **meaningful** language access, which means the ability to receive information and to participate in and benefit from public services (MCL 37.21(c))



(Image: Google AI)



DVIDS ([Image](#))

INTERPRETATION

- Oral language services must be provided by qualified individuals in a timely manner.
- Services can be provided face-to-face, in-house, or telephonically.
- Family, friends, and bystanders cannot be used as interpreters except by the LEP person's request.
- The LEP individual *may* choose an interpreter at their own expense, but only if that is the LEP individual's choice.
- Appropriate oral services must be available based on the area served.
- Oral language services must be provided at **no cost** to the individual.

TRANSLATION

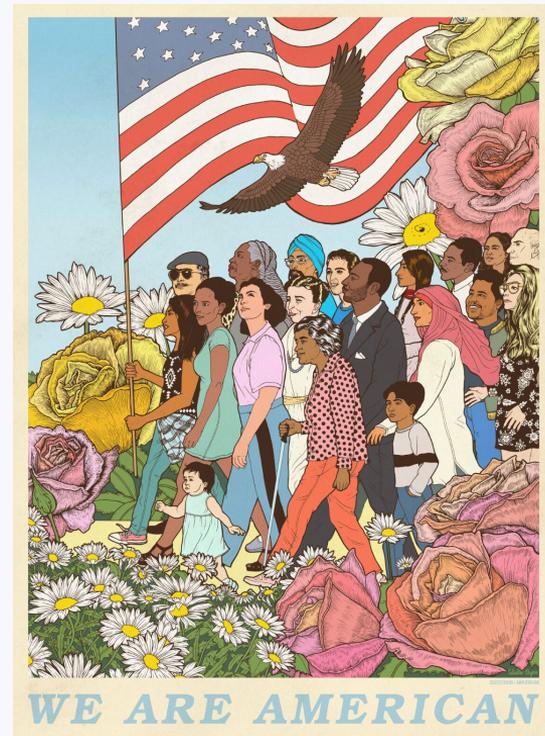
- Vital documents must be translated.
- A vital document provides important information necessary to access services.
- Vital documents include applications, outreach materials, and notices of rights, denials, losses, or decreases in benefits.
- At a **minimum**, translation is required if 500+ people served by a local office speak the language, or if the language group comprises 3% of the population in the area served.



MDHHS ([Image](#))

WHO SHOULD BENEFIT?

- Individuals with "Limited English Proficiency", who cannot understand or express themselves in English due to national origin.
- *Lau v Nichols* involved people of Chinese ancestry, not just those born in China
- Can be combined / overlap with Americans with Disabilities Act and State Laws like Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act



Celeste Byers Amplifier Art ([Image](#))

WHO MUST PROVIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS?



Dwight Burdette ([Image](#))

- "Covered Entities" which includes state departments, agencies, or entities
- State government agencies like Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MCL 37.21(3)(a))
- Smaller divisions, boards, task forces could be considered state entities
- Totality of the circumstances considered: funding, state control, membership, etc.

WHO OVERSEES LANGUAGE ACCESS?

- [Office of Global Michigan coordinates](#) – each department must designate a [Language Access Coordinator](#)

State of Michigan Language Access Coordinators

Show entries Search:

Department/ Agency	Name	Email Address	Phone
Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD)	Ashley Batteen	batteena@michigan.gov	517-290-0041
Attorney General (AG)	Koula Black	Blackk3@michigan.gov	517-335-7626
Civil Rights (MDCR)	Alfredo Hernandez	hernandezza3@michigan.gov	517-249-1731
Civil Service Commission (MCSC)	Kurt Weiss	weissk1@michigan.gov	517-243-3139
Corrections (MDOC)	Tanisha Black	blackt4@michigan.gov	517-388-5449

<http://bit.ly/OGMLANGUAGE>

FILING A FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT

- If an agency doesn't provide meaningful language access, you can file a complaint.
- The complaint should be filed with the federal Office of Civil Rights associated with the agency you are working with.
 - e.g. [Health and Human Services](#)
- Include details about when and where the issue occurred in your complaint.
- The Office for Civil Rights will investigate your complaint, and the agency's federal funding could be impacted.

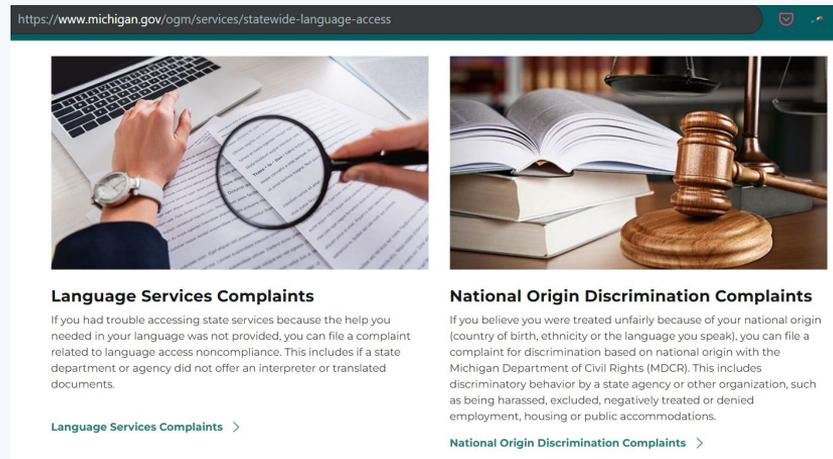


Freepik ([Image](#))

MICHIGAN COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If you or someone you are serving experiences a barrier to access connected with language access through a state agency or something that seems connected to the state, then you can:

- Complain to the Office of Global Michigan regarding customer service problems or poor interpretation or translation experiences: bit.ly/OGMcomplaint
 - *Coming soon, translated forms will have feedback section to provide corrections without a formal complaint.*
- File a complaint with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights via the form online or call 1-800-482-3604: bit.ly/MDCRcomplaintform



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.michigan.gov/ogm/services/statewide-language-access>. The page features two main sections:

- Language Services Complaints**: Accompanied by an image of hands using a magnifying glass over a document. The text states: "If you had trouble accessing state services because the help you needed in your language was not provided, you can file a complaint related to language access noncompliance. This includes if a state department or agency did not offer an interpreter or translated documents." Below the text is a green arrow pointing right.
- National Origin Discrimination Complaints**: Accompanied by an image of a wooden gavel on a stack of books. The text states: "If you believe you were treated unfairly because of your national origin (country of birth, ethnicity or the language you speak), you can file a complaint for discrimination based on national origin with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR). This includes discriminatory behavior by a state agency or other organization, such as being harassed, excluded, negatively treated or denied employment, housing or public accommodations." Below the text is a green arrow pointing right.

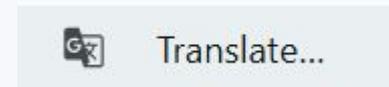
bit.ly/OGMLANGUAGE

TRANSLATE PAGE USING AI IN CHROME BROWSER:



Go to: bit.ly/OGMLANGUAGE

- Click on three dots in top right corner
- Choose "translate"



Fully language accessible landing page coming soon!

English (United States) ▼

State of Michigan Language Access Noncompliance Complaint Form 2025

This form is for individuals who wish to file a complaint because they did not receive appropriate language assistance to access public services from a State of Michigan department or agency, due to their level of proficiency in the English language, as required by the Meaningful Language Access to State Services Act, 2023 PA 241, as amended, MCL 37.21 – 37.24.

* Required

Person filing the complaint *

First and Last Name:

Enter your answer

Today's Date *

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)



Phone Number *

Enter your answer

E-Mail

Enter your answer

OTHER LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICIES

- City or County
- Local law enforcement
- Courts
- Health care facilities



City of Dearborn (MIRC)



Language Services Provided by the Language Access Program:

On-Site Interpretation

Video/Phone Interpretation

Document Interpretation

Request Language Services HERE:

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE REACH OUT TO AMIAH BURNER.

(313) 224-4950

AMIAH.BURNER@DETROITMI.GOV

<https://bit.ly/3TKnESa>

City of Detroit ([Image](#))

LANGUAGE ACCESS IS THE LAW

01 — New state and existing local and federal laws require meaningful language access.

02 — Vital documents must be translated into needed languages.



Freepik ([Image](#))

03 — Services must be offered at no cost to the individual.

04 — File a complaint if you are not able to meaningfully access services.



michiganimmigrant.org

CONTACT US



@MichiganImmigrant



@MichiganImmigrant



@michiganimmigrant.bsky.social



@Michimmigrant

Elinor Jordan
EJordan@MPLP.org

Christine Sauvé
csauve@michiganimmigrant.org



Immigration intake (734) 239-6863



Employment intake (800) 968-4046



(734) 796-9963 for calls from detention (M - F)

Newsletter Sign Up

