



## 94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2005 and 2006

SB0334

Introduced 2/15/2005, by Sen. Martin A. Sandoval

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Access to Governmental Services Act. Requires each constitutional officer, State agency, circuit court clerk, and State program to provide equal access to public services for individuals with limited English proficiency. Provides definitions of "equal access", "limited English proficiency", "oral language services", and "important documents". Reasonable steps to provide equal access to public service includes, but is not limited to: in-house oral language services for individuals with limited English proficiency if the agency or officer has contact at least weekly with individuals with limited English proficiency; translation of important documents ordinarily provided to the public must be provided in any language spoken by at least 3% of the population within the geographic area served by a local office of a State agency, constitutional officer, or county as measured by the U.S. Census; and additional methods necessary to achieve equal access.

LRB094 05047 AJ0 35082 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT  
MAY APPLY

STATE MANDATES  
ACT MAY REQUIRE  
REIMBURSEMENT

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. "Important documents" does not include  
23 applications and examinations related to the licensure,  
24 certification, or registration of businesses and  
25 professionals.

26 Section 10. Language access required.

27 (a) Each State agency, constitutional officer, circuit  
28 court clerk, and State program shall take reasonable steps to  
29 provide equal access to public services for individuals with  
30 limited English proficiency.

31 (b) Reasonable steps to provide equal access to public

1 service include, but are not limited to:

2 (1) In-house oral language services for individuals  
3 with limited English proficiency if contact between a State  
4 agency, constitutional officer, circuit court clerk, or  
5 State program and individuals with limited English  
6 proficiency is on a weekly or more frequent basis.

7 (2) The translation of important documents ordinarily  
8 provided to the public in any language spoken by any  
9 limited English proficient population that constitutes at  
10 least 3% of the overall population within the geographic  
11 area served by a local office of a State agency,  
12 constitutional officer, or county of a circuit court, as  
13 measured by the U.S. Census. Specifically, the following  
14 are important documents to be translated:

15 (A) All circuit court forms, including self-help  
16 forms, and applications and instructions for those  
17 forms and applications.

18 (B) All applications for State benefits, such as  
19 welfare and health care, and instructions for those  
20 applications.

21 (C) All public outreach materials, such as  
22 pamphlets, posters, and other written materials,  
23 produced by State agencies.

24 (3) Any additional methods or means necessary to  
25 achieve equal access to public services.

26 (c) Each State agency, constitutional officer, circuit  
27 court clerk, and State program shall adopt rules regarding the  
28 requirements of this Section at least 6 months prior to the  
29 date that this Act takes effect, or as soon thereafter as  
30 possible.