



Hearing Information:

Who: Joint Legislative Hearing on Human Services

When: Monday, January 31 at 9:30AM

Where: Hearing Room B (2nd Fl of LOB)

How to provide written testimony: Written testimony may be submitted without registration by emailing it to wamchair@nyassembly.gov AND financechair@nysenate.gov no later than 5 p.m. on the scheduled date of the hearing.



New York State Legislature
Joint Legislative Budget Hearing - Human Services
Testimony from Susan Malinowski, Manager Communication /Language Access Services, St.
Peter's Health Partners

Thank you to Chair Krueger, and Chair Weinstein for the opportunity to submit testimony to the State Fiscal year 2025 Joint Budget Hearing on Human Services. My name is Susan Malinowski from St. Peter's Health Partners and I am a member of the Statewide Language Access Coalition which is composed of over 50 community-based organizations across the state. Today I submit testimony urging Both Houses to include **\$10 million for language access expansion in the SFY25 Enacted Budget** to develop language services worker cooperatives, and improve access to language services for immigrant New Yorkers.

Our neighbors who communicate using a language other than English should not be disadvantaged. We build a stronger, more resilient New York when we offer the needed support services and education to our non English speaking / reading resettled immigrants and refugees. Wanting only to be safe, to provide for their families, to belong to their adopted home and be treated with dignity, we can make all of this reality by providing a hand up in the form of more language access and education.

We respectfully submit our recommendations to the Governor's SFY 2025 Executive Budget for consideration.

Article VII Policy Proposals:

- **ADD** the Language Access Expansion Act (S.3381-A/A.7235-A) which would direct county agencies to implement a language access plan and expand access to language services to immigrant communities located outside of New York City.

Appropriations:

- **INCREASE** to \$3M the base funding for the New York state Office of Language Access (NYS OLA) to significantly support the office in hiring administrative personnel and ensure successful implementation of the Language Access Statewide law
- **ADD** \$5M to fund the development of learning language services cooperatives in regional areas located outside of New York City to build a pipeline of trained language services professionals, while creating skilled employment and business ownership opportunities for New York's immigrant communities;



- **ADD \$2M** to fund training of community interpreters, conducting a community review of the regional language needs, and identifying a solid cohort of interpreters to participate in the process of developing the cooperatives.

Establishing Language services worker cooperatives in regional areas with high resettlement populations will serve as a hub of access for state and county offices, as they meet demand for professional, high-quality language services in the courts, education, health care, and the private sector. The NYS OLA will be able to use the cooperatives to recruit, train, and dispatch community interpreters agencies and providers. In addition, immigrant communities will benefit from increased language access to immigration legal services and opportunities for skilled employment and business ownership. A greater investment in language access will mean that more people will access services, and build a successful life in New York. If we are truly a state committed to an equitable and just recovery, we should do no less.

Thank you for your attention.

Submitted by:
Susan Malinowski