



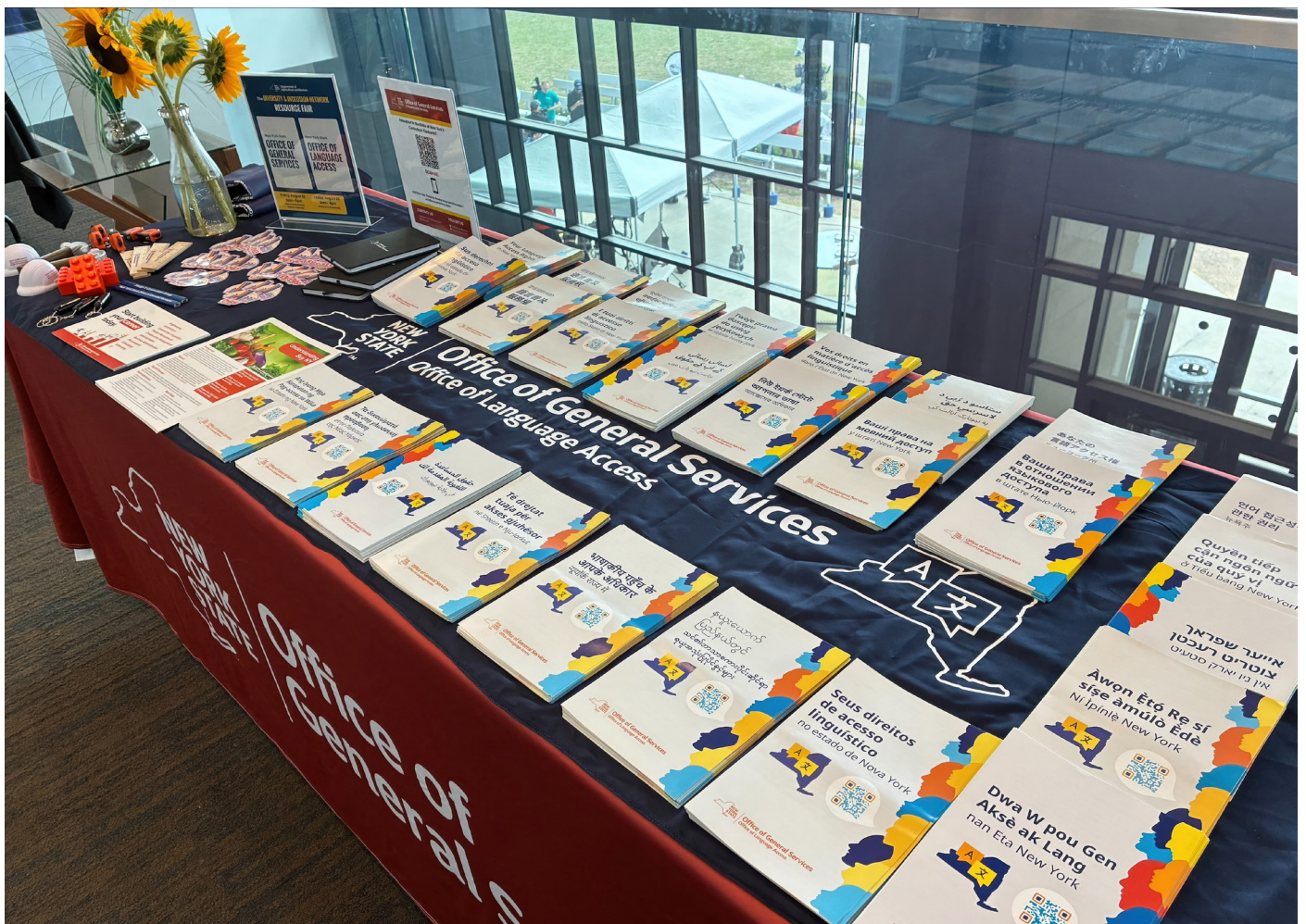
**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS:**

# **OUTREACH PLAN 2026**



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# INTRODUCTION

New Yorkers speak over 800 languages. About 30 percent (5.8 million) of New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home. Of them, around 2.5 million reported to the [United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey](#) that they don't speak, write, or understand English very well and prefer to communicate in languages other than English. These individuals are referred to as having limited English proficiency (LEP).

To ensure all New Yorkers can access government services and benefits, regardless of their English proficiency or preferred language, Governor Kathy Hochul signed New York State's language access policy into law in 2022. [Executive Law Section 202-a](#), also known as the language access law, reaffirms New York State's commitment to ensuring equity for all New Yorkers, particularly at a time when the number of people who prefer to communicate in languages other than English—including newly arrived immigrants—continues to grow.

The law also established the [New York State Office of Language Access](#) (OLA). Housed within the New York State Office of General Services (OGS), OLA provides critical oversight, coordination, and support to state agencies as they fulfill the requirements of the language access law. The creation of this office—the second of its kind in the United States—is another stride in New York State's path toward language justice. It upholds and respects “every individual's fundamental language rights—to be able to communicate, understand, and be understood in the language in which they prefer and feel most articulate and powerful.”<sup>1</sup>

During its first year, OLA conducted a range of assessment activities, including administering the State Language Access Coordinator (LAC) Assessment Survey and meeting with nonprofit organizations that advocate for language access. These efforts helped to establish a strong foundation and inform long-term planning anchored in **four pillars**:

- **Compliance with the Language Access Law**
- **Operational Excellence**
- **Education and Awareness**
- **Community Outreach and Collaborations**



1. American Bar Association, “[Language Justice During COVID-19.](#)” 2020.

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Over the summer of 2023, OLA planned a [statewide listening tour](#), organizing 10 feedback sessions with more than 20 community-based organizations (CBOs) and nonprofit organizations representing each of the state’s 10 regions. From October 2023 through February 2024, OLA hosted seven in-person listening sessions in Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Westchester, and Long Island; two sessions in New York City—one in Harlem and one in Queens; and two virtual sessions. During each session, OLA administered a feedback survey available in 27 languages and heard testimonials to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of New Yorkers who prefer languages other than English. From these sessions, OLA identified opportunities for new initiatives and resources outlined in the [OLA Listening Tour 2023 Report](#). (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for a list of groups OLA worked with to coordinate its feedback sessions and listening tour.)

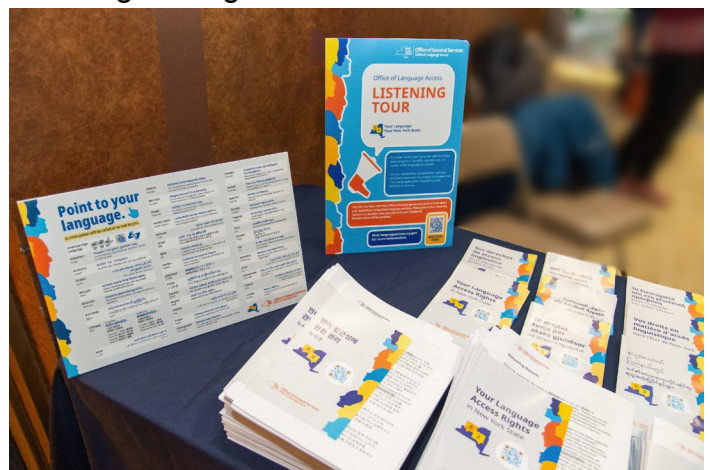
The listening tour highlighted the importance of OLA regularly and directly engaging with New Yorkers who prefer languages other than English and language access advocates. To guide this work, OLA developed the following outreach plan under the **Community Outreach and Collaborations** pillar. This plan will also influence and inform **Education and Awareness** strategies and **Operational Excellence** considerations to further enhance **Compliance with the Language Access Law**.

The goals of this outreach plan are to:

- Build relationships and strengthen trust between OLA and CBOs, nonprofit organizations, advocates, and other government agencies.
- Establish an open channel of communication and streamline the process for gathering community feedback.
- Collaborate and consult closely with CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and advocates to leverage their expertise and networks to further promote the language access law and share available resources with the communities they serve.

To achieve these goals, OLA plans to implement the following strategies:

1. Strengthen Partnerships With Community-Based Organizations, Nonprofit Organizations, and Advocates
2. Strengthen Partnerships With New York State Government Agencies
3. Strengthen Partnerships With Other Government Entities
4. Launch Targeted Public Awareness Initiatives
5. Create and Distribute a Quarterly Language Access Newsletter



# STRATEGIES

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## 1. Strengthen Partnerships With Community-Based Organizations, Nonprofit Organizations, and Advocates

OLA will collaborate with CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and advocates across all 10 regions in New York State, sharing resources such as the New York State Language Dashboard, toolkit materials, such as the “I Speak” cards, “Your Language Access Rights in New York State” brochure in 27 languages, language identification posters, and desktop displays, the Person-First and Identity-First Language Glossary, the OLA resources webpage, and more. OLA will also consult these partners’ expertise and networks to gather feedback.

**a. Community Feedback Sessions:** OLA will host community feedback sessions quarterly for CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and advocates to share new initiatives or resources. These sessions will also help to solicit feedback about ever-changing language needs in communities throughout New York, which will help OLA and state agencies make informed decisions about translating agency vital documents into additional languages. During these sessions, OLA will also share progress on community engagement efforts, updates on collaborations with other government agencies, and upcoming media awareness campaigns. OLA will invite CBOs who are on its listserv to these sessions. To be added to the listserv for future invites, email [LanguageAccess@ogs.ny.gov](mailto:LanguageAccess@ogs.ny.gov).

**b. One-on-One Meetings With CBOs, Nonprofit Organizations, and Advocates:** In addition to the ongoing community feedback sessions, OLA will hold regular one-on-one meetings with CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and advocates to continue building rapport and sharing resources. To request a meeting with OLA, email [LanguageAccess@ogs.ny.gov](mailto:LanguageAccess@ogs.ny.gov).

**c. Community Engagement and Collaboration Resources Webpage:** OLA will continue updating its [webpage of resources for CBOs](#) with relevant materials, resources, and information, maintaining it as a centralized knowledge base for CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and advocates throughout the state.

**d. Community Education Workshops:** OLA will host presentations to inform CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and advocates about New York’s language access law and available resources. To request a workshop for your organization’s community members or staff, email [LanguageAccess@ogs.ny.gov](mailto:LanguageAccess@ogs.ny.gov).

**e. Distribution of OLA Toolkit Materials:** To better understand and support CBO needs, OLA will administer the Questionnaire for Language Access Advocate Organizations. Upon completing the questionnaire, OLA will distribute materials—including the “I Speak” cards, “Your Language Access Rights in New York State” brochures, and language identification tools—to CBOs that express interest in receiving them at no cost. For more information and ordering instructions, visit the [Community Engagement and Collaboration webpage](#).

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**f. Expansion of the Simultaneous Interpretation Kit (SIK) Loan Program:** To strengthen our partnerships and help CBOs build capacity, OLA will loan simultaneous interpretation kits (SIKs) to CBOs whose events meet established criteria. OLA will collect feedback from borrowing organizations to refine and improve the program over time. For more information and requesting instructions, visit the [Community Engagement and Collaboration webpage](#).

**g. Outreach to Faith-Based Organizations:** OLA will expand outreach efforts to faith-based organizations to inform their members about language access. OLA will collaborate with the [New York State Department of State's Office of Faith and Nonprofit Development Services](#) to compile a list of organizations.

**h. Outreach to Rural Communities:** To address the unique language access challenges in rural areas, OLA will partner with CBOs located in these communities and provide support for their language needs.

## 2. Strengthen Partnerships With New York State Government Agencies

OLA will strategize and collaborate with New York State government agencies on outreach material and events.

**a. Collaboration With the Office of the Chief Disability Officer (CDO):** OLA will continue to hold monthly meetings with the [Office of the Chief Disability Officer \(CDO\)](#) to share resources and discuss strategies to improve access to services for New Yorkers whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL), as well as for the broader Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing communities.

**b. Collaboration With the Governor's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI):** OLA will continue to hold meetings every other month with the [Governor's Office of Diversity and Inclusion \(ODI\)](#) to learn more about future outreach opportunities. OLA also submits upcoming OLA events and resources to be featured in ODI's public-facing newsletter.

**c. Collaboration With the New York State Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (WDIAC):** OLA will continue attending Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (WDIAC) quarterly meetings to share updates, events, and resources with diversity and inclusion officers and other council members.

**d. Collaboration With New York State Agencies:** OLA will continue partnering with New York State agencies on outreach initiatives to inform New Yorkers about their language access rights and will continue exploring ways to expand these efforts.

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### 3. Strengthen Partnerships With Other Government Entities

OLA will strategize and collaborate with other government entities on outreach materials and events.

**a. Collaboration With the New York City Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Affairs (MOIA):** OLA will explore ways to co-brand resources—such as a Know Your Rights one-pager or “I Speak” card—with the [New York City Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Affairs \(MOIA\)](#) to convey a unified message that New Yorkers have the right to language access at all state and city agencies. OLA also aims to collaborate on future outreach initiatives, including immigrant rights workshops and IDNYC-related events.

**b. Collaboration With State, County, and City Governments:** OLA collaborates with the Municipal Language Access Network (MLAN), a group of municipal and state government employees who share resources and best practices to improve language access services. OLA will continue meeting with government agencies from other states, counties, and cities to exchange resources, collaborate on presentations and workshops, and participate in national conversations on language access.



### 4. Launch Targeted Public Awareness Initiatives

OLA will continue educating and informing the public about language access through targeted public awareness initiatives, while monitoring public engagement.

**a. Public Outreach for Language Services Feedback:** New Yorkers can provide feedback or file a complaint via a printed or [online form](#), available in English and the top 12 most commonly spoken languages in New York State. To capture more comprehensive and direct feedback on language access services provided by state agencies, OLA is working with the [OGS Data Analytics Office](#) and the [NYS Office of Information Technology Services](#) to optimize this form. Additionally, OLA is collaborating with the [OGS Business Services Center](#) Call Center to create a dedicated phone line, enabling New Yorkers who speak any of the over 200 languages supported by the line to share their experiences. The phone line will supplement the online form and will enhance OLA’s ability to gather feedback from New Yorkers. Once launched, both the form and phone line will be widely promoted to collect complaints, compliments, and suggestions, all of which will be analyzed to improve language services.

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**b. Statewide Media Campaigns:** In 2023, OLA launched the [“As a New Yorker” media awareness campaign](#) in 15 languages to inform New Yorkers of their right to language access when accessing state services and benefits. Since then, OLA has focused on continuing to educate New Yorkers about their right to access government services and benefits in their preferred language. In 2026, OLA will expand these efforts by launching a new statewide media campaign informing New Yorkers on their language access rights, and release the new feedback form and phone line. This campaign will feature creative assets over multiple channels, including digital (social media, streaming video, Google search), radio, print, and out-of-home (billboards, urban panels, subways, bus sides, bus shelters)—ensuring visibility online, in newspapers and magazines, outside neighborhood convenience stores, and more. OLA will also collaborate with local media to spread the message.

**c. Pilot Language Access Certification Program:** As announced in Governor Hochul’s 2024 State of the State book, the [Pilot Language Access Certification Program](#) is designed to enhance language access across state agencies. This program will provide language assessment and interpreter training to state employees who speak a language other than English and wish to apply and further develop their language skills on the job. OLA will host a recognition ceremony for employees who successfully complete the program. Additionally, OLA will spotlight certified staff in newsletters and on its website to promote broader participation and increase public visibility of the state’s growing multilingual workforce.

**d. Commemorative Days:** OLA will continue to observe and celebrate commemorations related to language access—such as International Mother Language Day, Immigrant Heritage Week, National Immigrant Heritage Month, and Language Access Month—to further highlight and promote language services available throughout New York.

## 5. Create and Distribute Quarterly Language Access Newsletter

OLA will create and distribute a quarterly language access newsletter in two phases:

**a. Phase 1 - Internal Newsletter:** This version of the newsletter, targeting New York State Language Access Coordinators (LACs), will share resources, highlight achievements by state agencies providing language services, and offer other relevant updates.

**b. Phase 2 - External Newsletter:** This version of the newsletter, targeting to CBOs, nonprofit organizations, and advocates, will share resources, announce outreach events, highlight upcoming commemorations, and provide other relevant information.

# APPENDIX A:

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List of groups OLA worked with to coordinate its 2023 feedback sessions and listening tour:

- [Arab-American Family Support Center \(AAFSC\)](#)
- [Asian American Federation \(AAF\)](#)
- [Association des Sénégalais d'Amérique \(L'ASA\)](#)
- [Brentwood Public Library](#)
- [Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team \(BILT\)](#)
- [Burmese Community Services, Inc. \(BCS\)](#)
- [Catholic Charities Family and Community Services \(CCFCS\)](#)
- [Centro de Amigos](#)
- [Chinatown Manpower Project \(CMP\)](#)
- [Chinese-American Planning Council \(CPC\)](#)
- [Coalition for Asian American Children and Families \(CACF\)](#)
- [Community Inclusion and Development Alliance \(CIDA\)](#)
- [Empire Justice Center](#)
- [Ibero-American Action League](#)
- [Journey's End Refugee Services \(JERS\)](#)
- [Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York \(KCS\)](#)
- [Legal Services of Central New York \(LSCNY\)](#)
- [Long Beach Latino Civic Association](#)
- [Mary's Place Refugee Outreach](#)
- [Memorial Art Gallery - University of Rochester \(MAG\)](#)
- [Mixteca Organization Inc.](#)
- [Neighbors Link](#)
- [New York Immigration Coalition \(NYIC\)](#)
- [People Inc.'s Deaf Access Services](#)
- [Project READY, Inc.](#)
- [PS 207 Lafayette International Community High School](#)
- [Public Utility Law Project of New York, Inc. \(PULP\)](#)
- [Sinergia, Inc.](#)
- [Spanish Action League of Onondaga County, Inc.](#)
- [Westchester Medical Center Health Network \(WMC Health\)](#)
- [Worker Justice Center of New York \(WJCNY\)](#)



# Office of Language Access

