

Language Access Conference 2024

Make all voices heard: creating a culture of language inclusivity and belonging

Massachusetts is home to many people and communities who make up the richness and diversity of a multilingual population spanning many cultures. We are the tenth most linguistically diverse state in the country, and 20% of Massachusetts' total population is deaf or hard of hearing. Just two years ago, 1 in 10 Massachusetts residents spoke a primary language other than English. That number has risen to 1 in 4 residents—above the national average of 21.6%. Legislatures in linguistically diverse states have passed state language access statutes to ensure all residents' needs are met, regardless of the language they speak. Our state currently has the unique opportunity to make all voices heard and create a culture of language inclusivity for all those who are better served in a language other than English.

Clear and accurate communication is critical for our collective community to not only survive, but thrive. The stability, growth, and success of our state rests on all of us to welcome and embrace the diversity of languages and cultures in Massachusetts. It is imperative we provide access by removing barriers for those who communicate in a language other than English. Most importantly, we must ensure all residents of our Commonwealth feel a sense of belonging and inclusion to freely express themselves linguistically and culturally.

Join this program to hear seasoned panelists talk about how to reach beyond language access toward language inclusivity.

Agenda

- Featured Speaker: Commissioner Opeoluwa Sotonwa of the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Presented in Sign Language with English Translation)
- Basics of Language Access Law
- Rights of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Transcreation: A Tool for Language and Cultural Inclusivity
- Workshops! Your Choice of Best Practices for Assessing English Learners in Education or Best Practices for Working with Interpreters to Ensure Culturally Responsive Communication
- Advancing Language Rights for Indigenous Migrant Communities: the Case of the Maya Diaspora (Presented in Spanish with English Translation)
- Language Access Legislative Update

Faculty

Iris E. Coloma-Gaines, Esq., *Statewide Language Access Attorney, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston, Chair*

Virginia Benzan, Esq., *Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Boston*

Caitlin Parton, Esq., *Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Boston*

Diana I. Santiago, Esq., *Massachusetts Advocates for Children, Boston*

Opeoluwa Sotonwa, *Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Boston*



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Dates & Location

Register at www.mcle.org

LIVE WEBCAST

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

9:00 am–3:30 pm

Program # 2240217WBC

REBROADCAST

Thursday, May 9, 2024

9:00 am–3:30 pm

Program # 2240217RB1

REBROADCAST

Friday, May 17, 2024

9:00 am–3:30 pm

Program # 2240217RB2

ON DEMAND WEBCAST

View after Friday, May 17, 2024

Program # 2240217WBA

Tuition *(includes written materials)*

- \$35
- **FREE** for MCLE OnlinePass Subscribers

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Materials

- E-materials link emailed upon registration
- Transcript & videorecording emailed 2 weeks post-program

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