

2023 ASAP JEDI SUMMIT: Creating Equity Through Language Justice



Office of
Language Access

Office of Addiction
Services and Supports

Panelists

- Carmelita Cruz, NYS OASAS, Executive Equity Officer, Office of Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI)
- Margarita Larios, Executive Director, NYS Office of Language Access
- Jannette Rondo, NYS OASAS, Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Office of Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI)



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Program

- Background for Office of Language Access
- Background for Office of Addiction Services and Supports
- Moderated discussion
- Q&A



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Office of General Services
Office of Language Access

Language Access: Key Concepts



- **Language access** means providing services—like interpretation and translation—to bridge the communication between people who speak different languages.
- **Interpretation:** Rendering a spoken or signed message into another spoken or signed language.
- **Translation:** Rendering a written text from one language to another in writing
- Both look to **maintain the register and meaning** of the source language.

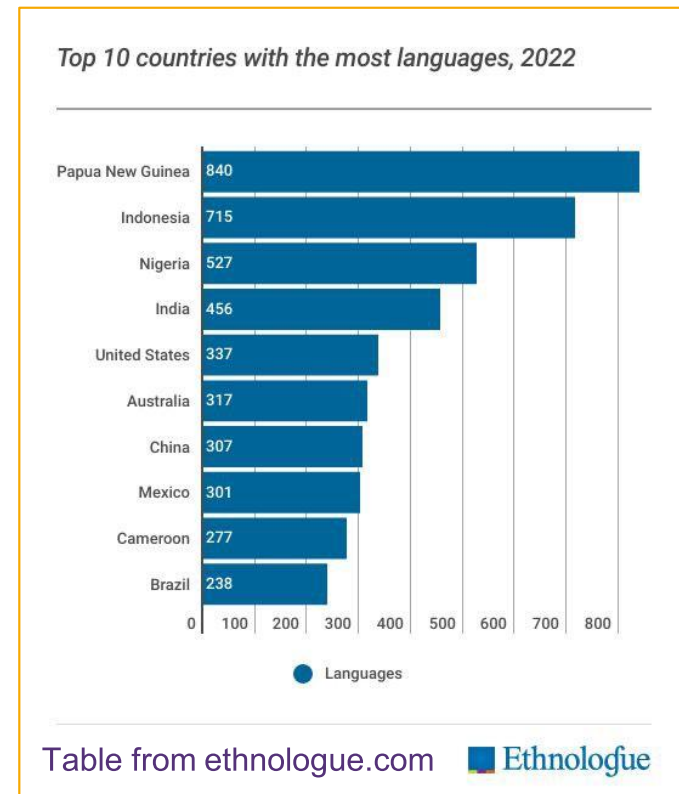


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Background: Global

- The **United States** ranks **5th** in the list of countries with most languages (337)
- While **English** has the most speakers around the world, only **25%** are native speakers
- In perspective: **Mandarin** has almost three times the number of native speakers



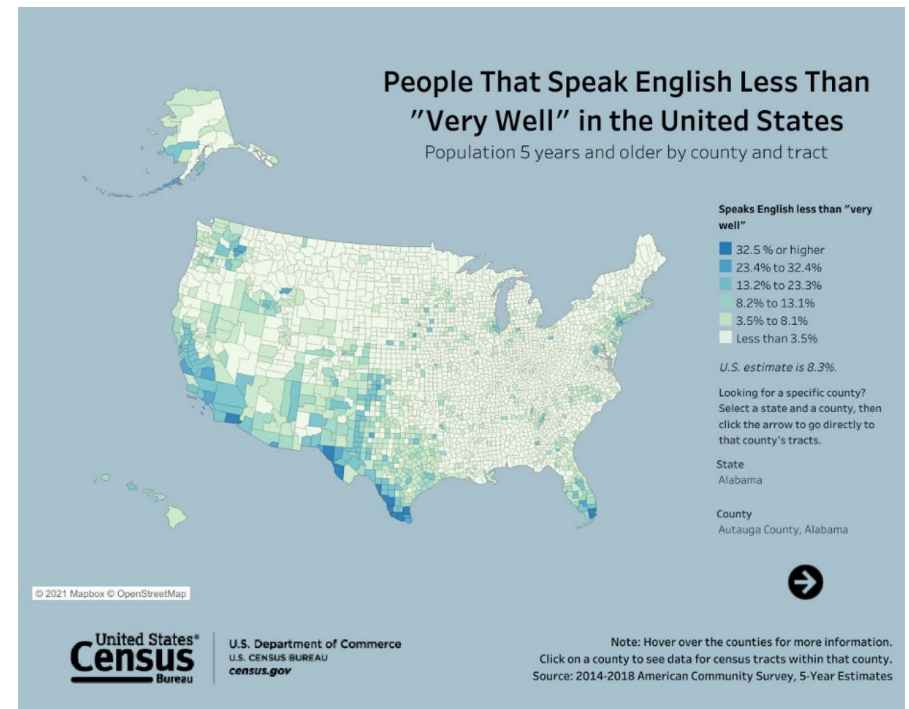
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Background: US

Across the United States:

- **22%** of people speak a **language other than English** at home¹
- **8.2%** speak English “**less than very well**”¹
- **Over 200 established living languages**, including:
 - 197 indigenous languages
 - 34 non-indigenous,² which include **American Sign Language (ASL)**.



Map of United States from US Census Bureau

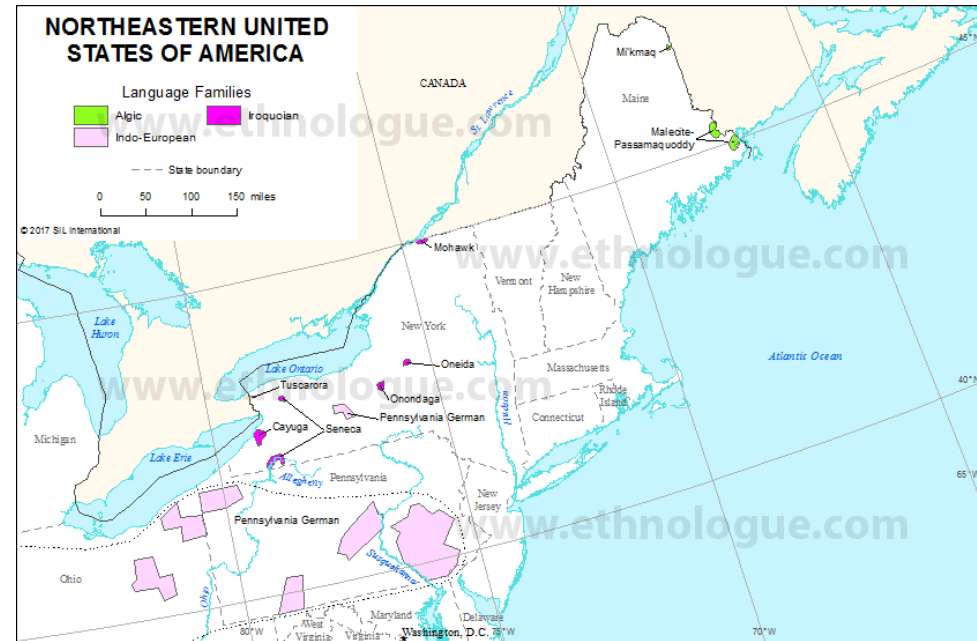


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Background: New York State

- Over **30%** of people speak a language **other than English at home**¹
- English is not the primary language for many New Yorkers: **2.5 million don't read, speak, write or understand English very well**¹ (also called *limited English proficiency* or LEP).



Map of Northeastern US from ethnologue.com



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Importance in Prevention, Treatment, Harm Reduction & Recovery Programs

- Language poses potential **barriers to accessing important programs and services**, including addiction services offered by the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS).
- Lack of meaningful language services poses **serious risks** to people with LEP, whose social risk factors intersect with other facets of their identity that may also pose barriers to access care.
- Having **culturally and linguistically responsive services and communications** when providing addiction services is paramount to ensure people understand their provider's plan for services and can be empowered to make decisions toward **better outcomes**.



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Brief Language Access Timeline

Federal	1964: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
	1974: Supreme Court interprets Title VI to include meaningful access to persons with LEP
	2000: Federal Executive Order 13166
	2002: US Department of Justice issues Policy Guidance Document
New York State	2011: Executive Order 26, New York's first statewide language access policy
	2021: Executive Order 26.1 expands NYS language policy
	2022: Governor Hochul expands and codifies into law NYS language access policy



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New York State's Language Access Law

- In April 2022, Governor Hochul signed the 2022-23 fiscal year Enacted Budget, establishing the statewide language access law (Executive Law Section 202-a) and creating the Office of Language Access (OLA).
- Executive Law Section 202-a, in effect since July 2022, replaced the State's prior language access policy.
- This new law requires all State agencies that interact with the public to provide **interpretation services in any language**—including ASL—with respect to the provision of agency services or benefits, and to **translate vital agency documents into the top 12** most-commonly spoken non-English languages among LEP New Yorkers based on Census data.



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New York State's Language Access Law *(continued)*

- Agencies may also choose to add up to **four additional languages** for translation in consultation with the Office of Language Access and according to criteria set out in the law.
- The law also requires covered agencies to **designate a Language Access Coordinator (LAC) and to publish a Language Access Plan (LAP)** at least every two years.
- **Top 12 Languages spoken by New Yorkers with limited English Proficiency:** Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese), French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Urdu and Yiddish.



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About the Office of Language Access

- Launched in October 2022.
- Housed within the Office of General Services, which also supports New York's language access law by maintaining the State contracts through which agencies can access vendors that provide interpretation and translation services.
- The Office of Language Access provides **critical support, guidance, oversight and coordination** across 45 New York State executive agencies to ensure that the statewide language access law is implemented efficiently and effectively.



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Work in Progress

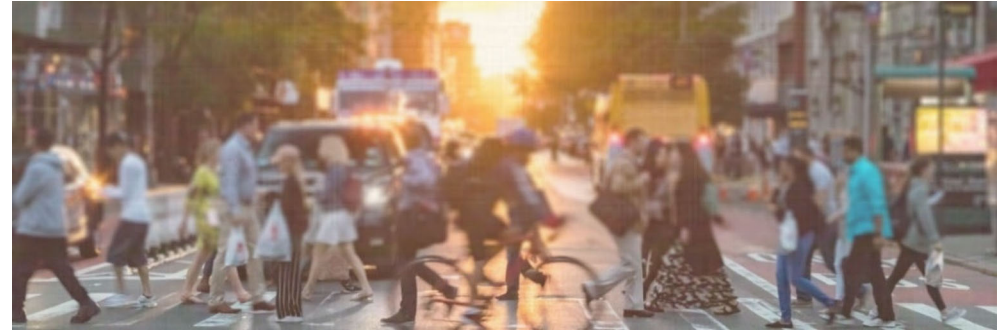
- Raising awareness, including creation of collateral related to New Yorkers' language access rights.
- Developing tools and resources to assist agency LACs, like dashboard of data from American Community Survey and State Education Department.
- Strengthening infrastructure and enhancing existing resources, like Sharepoint site functionality to streamline communication.
- Strategic planning... and much more on our **path to language justice**.



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Language Justice



Our goal is language justice: “an evolving framework based on the notion of respecting 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.”¹



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Thank you

- For more information, please visit **LanguageAccess.ny.gov**.
- For questions, email LanguageAccess@ogs.ny.gov



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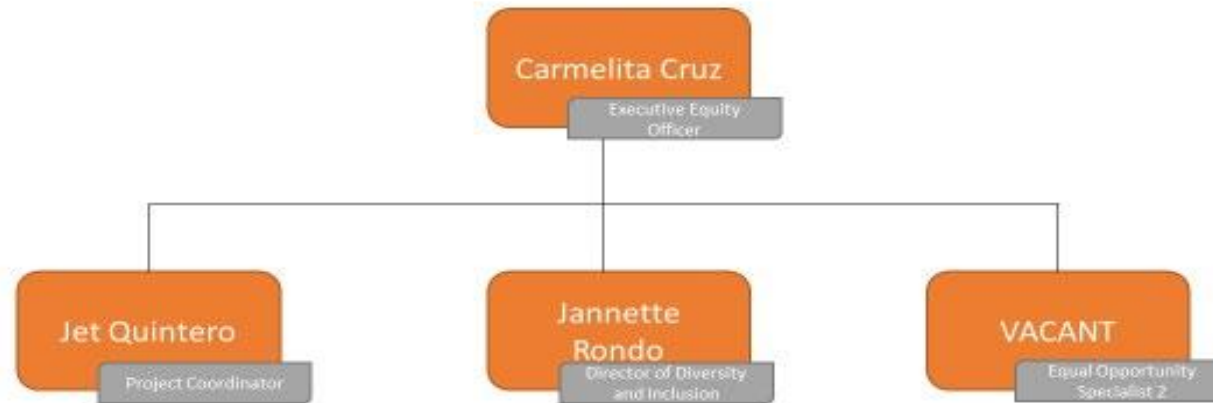
OASAS. Every Step of the Way.



**Office of Addiction
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Who are we?

JEDI Organizational Chart



Purpose of the JEDI Office

- Examine policies, practices and develop goals using an equity lens and to implement change that is anti-racist, trauma-informed, LGBTQI+ affirming and centered on the integration of equitable practices and the inclusion of all
- Believe in the principles of equity, value the intersectionality of our staff and the people we serve and commit to collaborating and being guided by culturally specific community partners, dismantling oppressive systems, policies and practices and instituting strategies that center marginalized communities, especially BIPOC



Efforts to Date/In Progress

External

- Language Access LSB & Plan
- LGBTQI+ LSB Updates
- BHSAC Treatment Equity Council
- Leadership Development Institute
- Language and Stigma

Internal

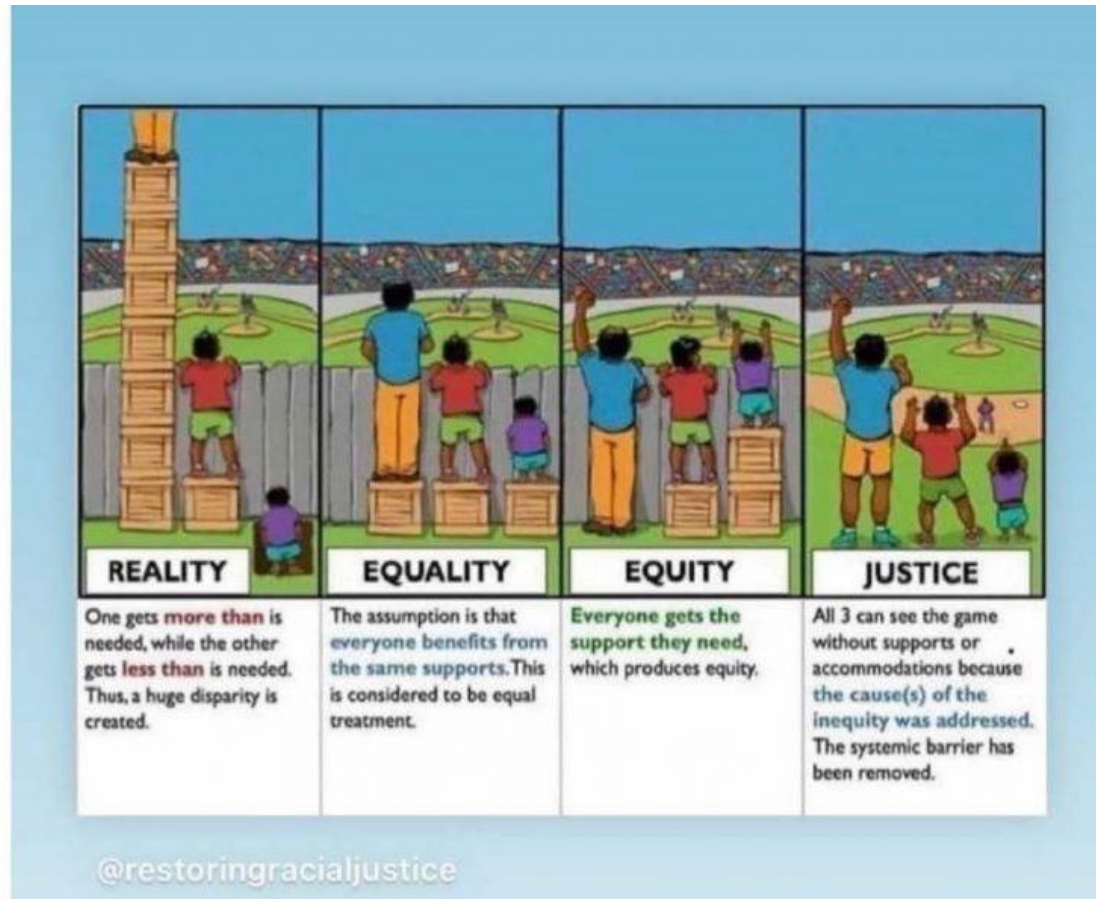
- Internal JEDI Advisory Council
- Equity Assessment
- Monthly Recognition Activities
- Staff appreciation events (summer gathering, holiday parties)



Language and Stigma

Addressing the vocabulary and language of substance use disorder in a way that is affirming, respectful, harm reduction oriented and person centered impacts the care provided and the care received





Language Access at OASAS ATCs

- Vendor Deficiency Reports
- Annual Monitoring Reports
- Language Access Plans
- OASAS Complaint Forms and Mailbox
- OASAS webpage
- Language Access Materials and Training



Language Access Local Services Bulletin

- Federal and State Requirements
- Interpretation
- Translation
- Reimbursement
- Language Access Officer and Plan
- Resources



Language Access Officer & Plan

- Identifying a Language Access Officer
- Developing a Language Access Plan
 - Program area/region population
 - Population served by program
 - Marketing
 - Funding/resource support
 - Staff training
 - Quality assurance



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