



State of Illinois

Illinois Department of Central Management Services



FY 2025 Bilingual Needs & Bilingual Pay REPORT



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Executive Summary

To determine the prevalence of bilingual employees and language needs, CMS surveyed State agencies as contemplated by the Illinois Personnel Code. The questions underpinning the annual Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay (BNBP) Survey were combined with the Employment Plan Advisory Council surveys. A total of 47 agencies responded to the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Employment Plans/BNBP survey.

To gather additional State workforce information, including bilingual aptitude and demographics, CMS Diversity & Inclusion added questions to the annual Employee Engagement Survey, which provided every employee the opportunity to respond with direct and personalized answers. CMS also provided tools to agencies to survey their staff members to specifically seek information regarding the language aptitude of their employees.

According to U.S. Census data from the 2024 American Community Survey, 24.5% of Illinois residents (up from 24.3% in 2023) are estimated to speak a language other than English at home. The most common language spoken at home other than English is Spanish (stable at 14.1% from 2024).

Of the 47 responding agencies, 29 reported tracking bilingual interactions, though the manner in which interactions were tracked greatly differed. Some methods included: computer software, employee estimations, handwritten notes, spreadsheets, and/or billing of interpreter services.

Nearly half of all responding agencies (23 of 47) have processes in place for considering bilingual designations for new positions in order to address the number of bilingual staff serving Illinois residents. Of the 23 agencies with processes in place, four agencies have a written policy to address the number of bilingual staff required or desired at satellite locations.

Furthermore, of the 7,743 jobs posted in FY25, there were 454 (5.9%) bilingual position postings for which the selected candidate would receive bilingual pay of \$100 per month or 5% of the base salary, whichever was higher. In total, 2,325 State employees received enhanced pay for serving in bilingual positions with the vast majority serving in Spanish language positions (80.3%). The remaining employees received bilingual pay in Manual Communication positions (13.8%), Polish language positions (2.0%), or positions requiring one of the other 10 languages for which State employees are being called to use (3.8%).

The demographic breakdown of employees receiving bilingual pay is heavily Hispanic/Latinx (68.3%). The remaining demographic breakdown indicates that 17.5% of employees receiving bilingual pay are White, 2.5% are African American, 2.0% are Asian American, and 0.2% are Native American.

A full list of agencies and their individual survey responses can be found in the FY25 BNBP Report Appendix, which can also be found at <https://cms.illinois.gov/personnel/dep/bnbp.html>.



Introduction

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the status and progression of State agencies' bilingual needs and resources. This reporting requires that all State agencies provide information regarding the nature of their requests for language assistance by the public. Agencies must also be prepared to successfully ensure access with the appropriate bilingual resources to overcome language barriers when they occur.

CMS is directed by the Illinois Personnel Code, 20 ILCS 415 1 et seq, to oversee the State's bilingual program through the formulation of strategies for language proficiency testing, requiring agencies to annually assess their bilingual programs, and filing an annual report with the General Assembly.

Pursuant to legislative directive, CMS requires each State agency to assess the need for employees with appropriate bilingual capabilities that would allow them to provide services to non-English speaking or culturally distinct persons. Each agency completes a survey designed to solicit data and information necessary for the agency to assess the extent of its need for bilingual employees annually. In the fall of 2025, the combined CMS FY25 Employment Plans/BNBP Survey was conducted and included questions relevant to both the Employment Plan Advisory Councils' Reports and the Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay Report, seeking responses spanning the entire fiscal year – July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

Additionally, for the second year in a row, language aptitude questions were also incorporated into the voluntary Employee Engagement Survey, conducted by CMS from June 27, 2025, until July 18, 2025. A total of 10,596 State employees from across the enterprise completed the survey, down from 10,913 in 2024.

The annual BNBP Report must include the following elements:

- Each agency's needs assessment;
- Number of bilingual job postings;
- Number of bilingual positions filled;
- Number of employees receiving bilingual pay;
- Number of employees receiving bilingual pay for languages other than signing or manual communication;
- Number of Hispanic/Latinx and non-Hispanic/Latinx employees who receive bilingual pay for languages than signing or manual communication.

This FY25 BNBP Report includes all statutory required elements.



Methodology

Implementation of modernized data systems at the State of Illinois has continued throughout FY25. As such, data sources for this report differ slightly than those in previous years. In context of this report, the new data system is referred to as “SuccessFactors.” Other data sources are labelled as needed.

Census data was used to provide an overview of the Illinois population of individuals who speak a language other than English at home. The 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) was used because that is the most recent census data available.

The year-over-year comparison of Personnel Code covered employees (which captures ~90% of the State workforce under the Governor) by demographic group is based on two different data sources: historical data through the first half of FY24 is sourced from PEERS while FY25 data is sourced from SuccessFactors. These two data sources are being used because historical PEERS data is only available through the first half of FY24 and has not yet been fully incorporated into SuccessFactors. The data that is available in SuccessFactors is the best current snapshot of statewide employees by demographic group available.

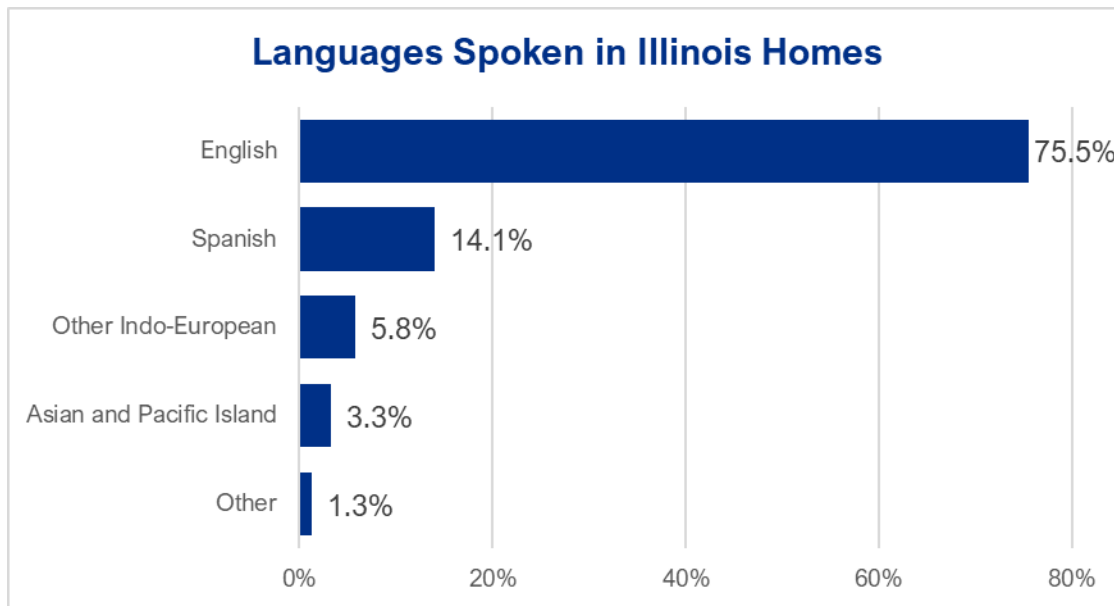
State workforce bilingual needs and pay were measured in part through the annual CMS FY25 Employment Plans/BNBP Survey conducted in the fall of 2025, with responses including data spanning July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. State workforce language aptitude was measured by the Employee Engagement Survey conducted by CMS from June 27, 2025, through July 18, 2025. Representing 20% of the State workforce, a total of 10,596 State employees from across the enterprise completed the Employee Engagement Survey.

CMS worked to source agency responses in all possible segments and charts of this report. All charts in this report include details regarding the data source. Descriptions of data are also included in text to provide additional detail regarding the data source(s).



Languages Spoken in Illinois' Homes

According to U.S. Census data from the 2024 American Community Survey, 24.5% of the people who reside in Illinois (up from 24.3% in 2023) are estimated to speak a language other than English at home. The most common language spoken at home is Spanish at 14.1% of the State population. Of those who spoke a language other than English in the home, 62.2% speak English “very well,” indicating a strong bilingual presence among Illinois households.



Source: 2024 American Community Survey (ACS), Table S1601

Agency Participation and Bilingual Engagement Findings

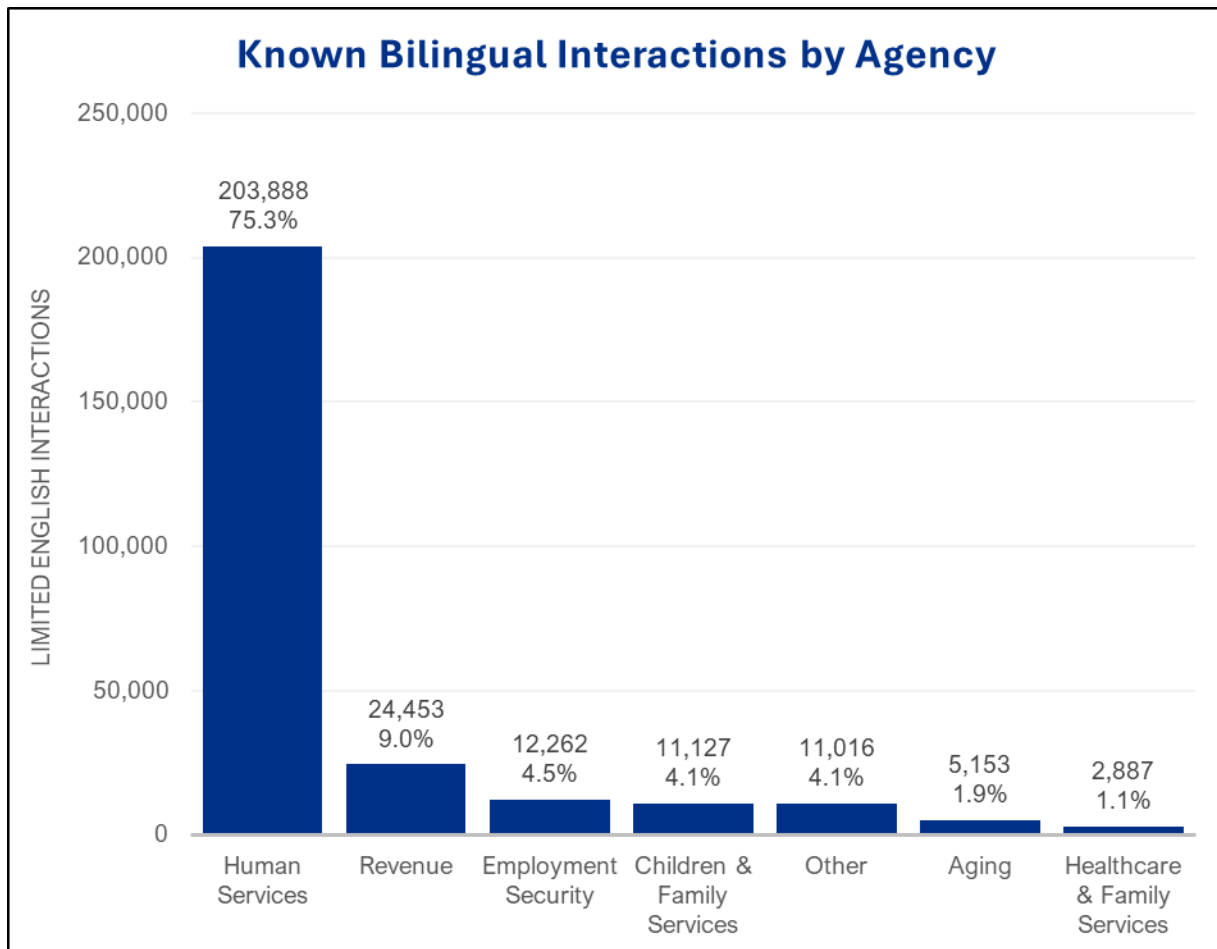
A full list of agencies and their individual survey responses can be found on the FY25 BNP Report Appendix, which can also be found at <https://cms.illinois.gov/personnel/dep/bnbp.html>.



State Agencies' Needs Assessments, Bilingual Interactions

Of the 47 agencies that responded to the survey, 29 track bilingual interactions with the public in various ways. For FY25, agencies reported more than quarter of a million interactions (270,786) in which interpretation or translation was necessary to assist a limited-English speaking client.

The number of bilingual interactions at the six agencies that reported most than 2,000 interactions are reflected below. Bilingual interactions at the remaining 41 agencies are reflected in the "Other" column.



Source: FY25 Employment Plan/BNBP Survey



FY25 Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay Report

Of the 29 agencies that reported interactions with individuals that required interpretation or translation, the top five agencies for each duration category are set out below. Agencies were asked to report the number of interactions that were longer than 15 minutes, but less than an hour; more than an hour, but less than half a day; and half a day or more.

Top Five Agencies for Each Length of Interaction					
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
15-60 Minutes	Human Services (152,916)	Revenue (7,832)	Employment Security (5,162)	Children & Family Services (4,119)	Natural Resources (1,225)
60-240 Minutes	Human Services (48,933)	Healthcare & Family Services (1,530)	Children & Family Services (519)	Natural Resources (438)	Employment Security (343)
240+ Minutes	Children & Family Services (6,600)	Human Services (2,039)	Natural Resources (88)	Deaf and Heard of Hearing Commission (72)	Human Rights (58)

Source: FY25 Employment Plan/BNBP Survey

Agency tracking of bilingual interactions varied across several modes of communication. Email interactions were tracked by 7 agencies, telephone interactions were tracked by 26, and in-person interactions were tracked by 21. These counts are inclusive of agencies tracking multiple types of interactions.

While 18 agencies reported no official mechanisms for agency-wide tracking of bilingual interactions, survey responses indicated that individual employees had submitted examples of bilingual interactions. This was the case for the Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Department of Labor. This presents an opportunity for a centralized system that would allow all agencies and their employees to standardize documentation of bilingual interactions.

In addition to the types of interactions that were tracked, the manner of tracking differs across agencies as well. The most common approach for tracking interactions was computer software (15 agencies) with employee estimates (12 agencies) accounting for the next most common approach.



Bilingual Policies

Recognizing the importance of effectively serving a state population that comprises many limited-English speakers, the FY25 Employment Plans/BNBP Survey again asked agencies about implementation of policies related to language access and bilingual staffing. The FY25 BNBP Survey reveals that additional agencies have incorporated written policies related to language access and bilingual positions and services into their work. Four agencies reported having policies to address the number of bilingual staff, while 38 agencies reported having a process to determine whether their employees had enough linguistic ability to effectively interact with the public.

Policy to Address Number of Bilingual Staff
Central Management Services
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission
Employment Security
Human Services

Source: FY25 Employment Plan/BNBP Survey

Agencies with Processes to Assess Linguistic Ability	
Aging	Human Rights
Agriculture	Human Rights Commission
Arts Council	Human Services
Central Management Services	Insurance
Children and Family Services	Juvenile Justice
Commerce & Economic Opportunity	Labor Relations Board
Commerce Commission	Law Enforcement Training & Standards Board
Commission on Equity and Inclusion	Lottery
Corrections	Natural Resources
Criminal Justice Information Authority	Pollution Control Board
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission	Prisoner Review Board
Educational Labor Relations Board	Property Tax Appeal Board
Emergency Management Agency	Public Health
Employment Security	Racing Board
Environmental Protection Agency	Revenue
Financial and Professional Regulation	State Fire Marshal
Gaming Board	State Retirement Systems
Guardianship & Advocacy Commission	Transportation
Healthcare and Family Services	Workers' Compensation Commission

Source: FY25 Employment Plan/BNBP Survey

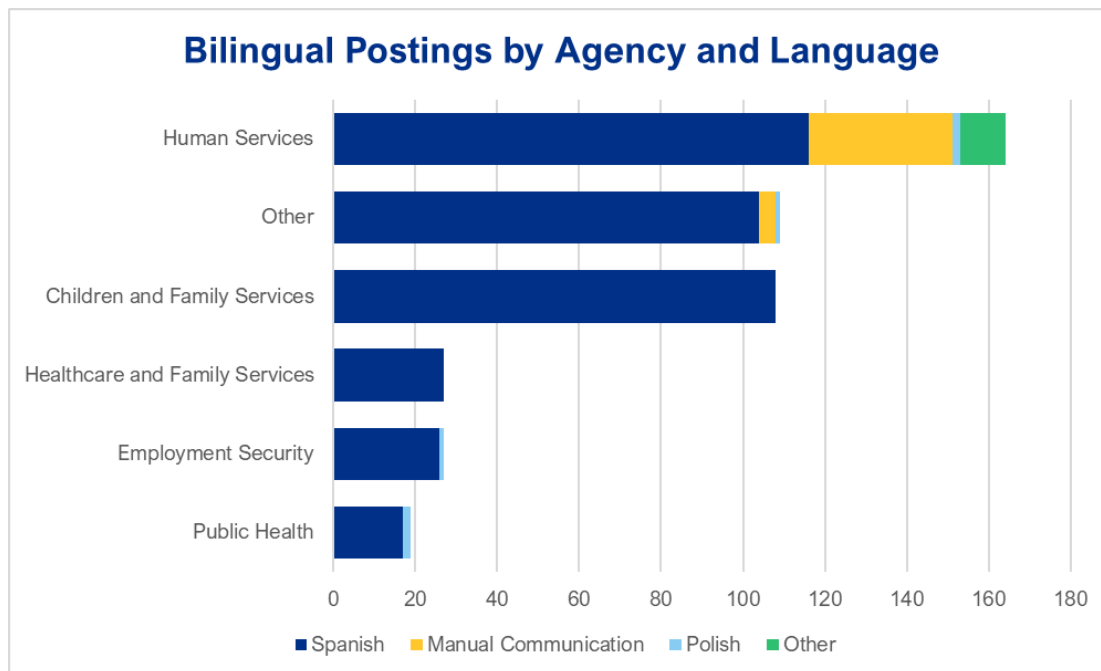


Number of Bilingual Job Postings, Position Review Process, and Bilingual Pay

Bilingual positions are those positions that are established with language skills as a minimum criterion, as those language skills are required to be effective. Bilingual pay, which is negotiated with the State's largest labor partner and incorporated into administrative rule, is currently set at \$100 per month or 5% of an employee's base salary, whichever is higher. Employees not in bilingual positions who have language skills and use those skills in performance of their work are also entitled to enhanced pay for the time they used their skills to perform their job. The data below refers only to bilingual positions and employees receiving bilingual pay because they are employed in a bilingual position.

- 21 agencies combined to post 454 bilingual positions in FY25.
- 87.7% (398 positions) posted bilingual positions required Spanish language skills.
- 8.5% (39 positions) bilingual postings required Manual Communication language skills.
- 1.3% (6 positions) bilingual postings required Polish language skills.
- 0.9% (4 positions) bilingual postings required Arabic language skills.

The Department of Human Services continued to lead the State in the number of bilingual job postings in FY25 accounting for just over one third of all bilingual postings with 164 (36.1%) postings. The Department of Children and Family Services was the second leading creator of postings for bilingual positions accounting for 108 (23.7%) postings. The Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Department of Employment Security followed, with 27 (5.9%) bilingual postings each during FY25.

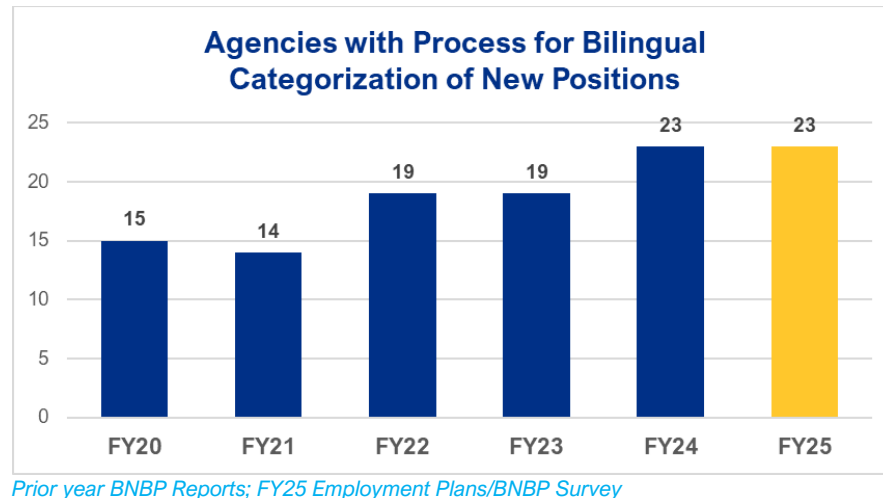


Source: SuccessFactors posting data, 7/1/24 - 6/30/25



State Agencies with Bilingual Position Review Processes

Establishing a role as a bilingual position allows an agency to require the candidate to have satisfactory language skills to be selected and entitles the incumbent to receive bilingual pay. FY25 saw a steady continuation in the number of agencies that reported having a process in place to evaluate whether a new position should be established as a bilingual position.



The 23 agencies with such a process are below.

Agencies with Bilingual Categorization Process	
Agriculture	
Central Management Services	
Commerce Commission	
Council on Developmental Disabilities	
Criminal Justice Information Authority	
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission	
Educational Labor Relations Board	
Employment Security	
Environmental Protection Agency	
Financial and Professional Regulation	
Gaming Board	
Healthcare and Family Services	
Human Rights Commission	
Human Services	
Juvenile Justice	
Law Enforcement Training & Standards Board	

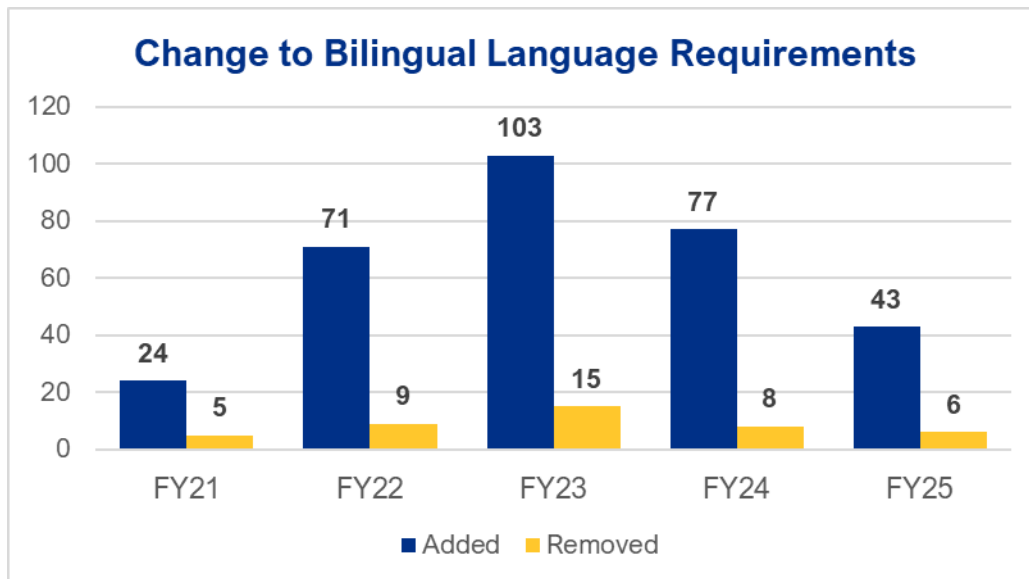


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Agencies with Bilingual Categorization Process
Lottery
Natural Resources
Prisoner Review Board
Public Health
State Fire Marshal
Transportation
Revenue

Source: FY25 Employment Plan/BNBP Survey

In addition to evaluating new positions, agencies have also been evaluating existing positions for propriety of requiring language skills to effectively perform the work. Since FY21, agencies have been adding language requirements to positions much more frequently than removing the requirements. This trend continued in FY25 with fewer instances of bilingual positions being reverted to non-bilingual positions by removal of language requirements.



Source: Prior year BNBP Reports; FY25 Employment Plans/BNBP Survey

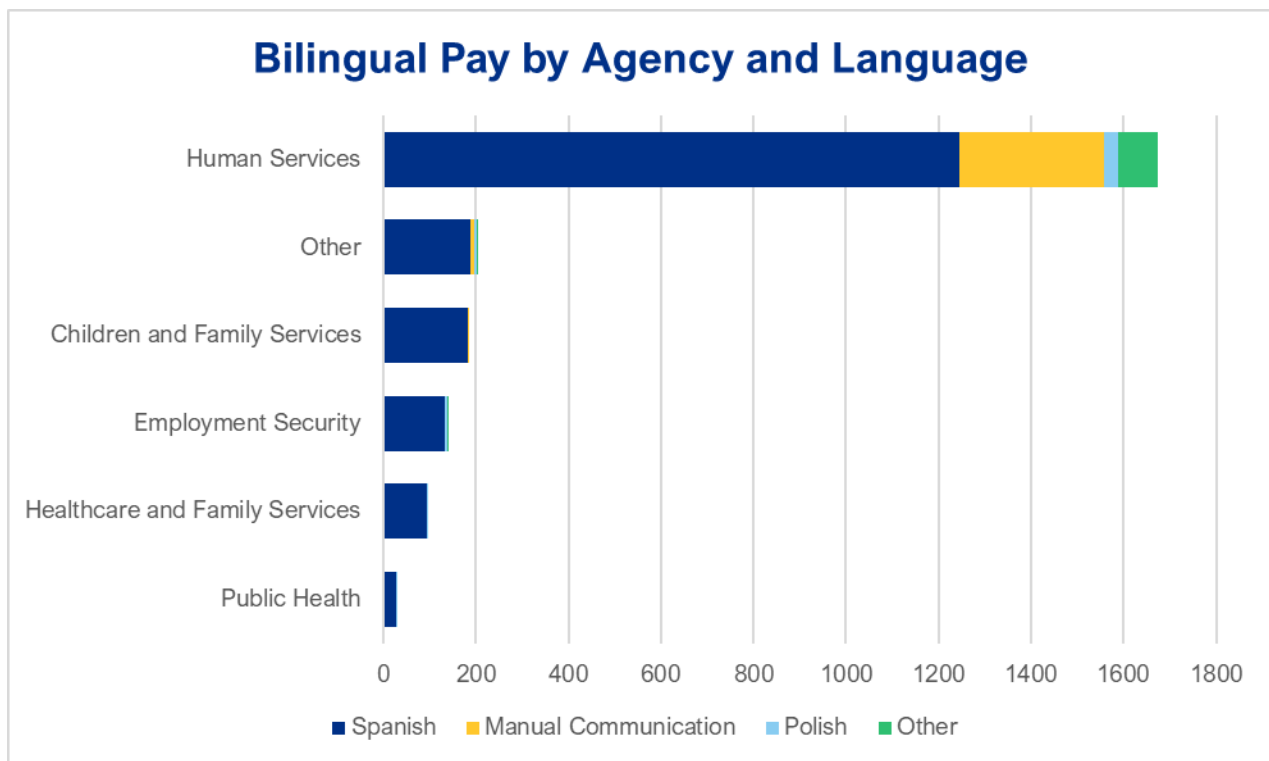


Bilingual Pay by State Agency

According to the findings of the FY25 Bilingual Needs Bilingual Pay Survey, responding agencies reported a total of 437 employees hired into positions designated with the bilingual option.

The Department of Human Services—in addition to creating the most bilingual position postings in FY25—also hired the most people into bilingual positions accounting for 72.8% (318 of 437) of bilingual hires.

This graph below reveals that of the 2,325 in the State receiving bilingual pay, 80.3% (1,868) were employed to use Spanish language skills in serving the people of Illinois. Another 13.8% (321) of bilingual employees were employed to serve individuals using American Sign Language. The remaining 136 employees are divided between Polish (47) and various other languages (89).

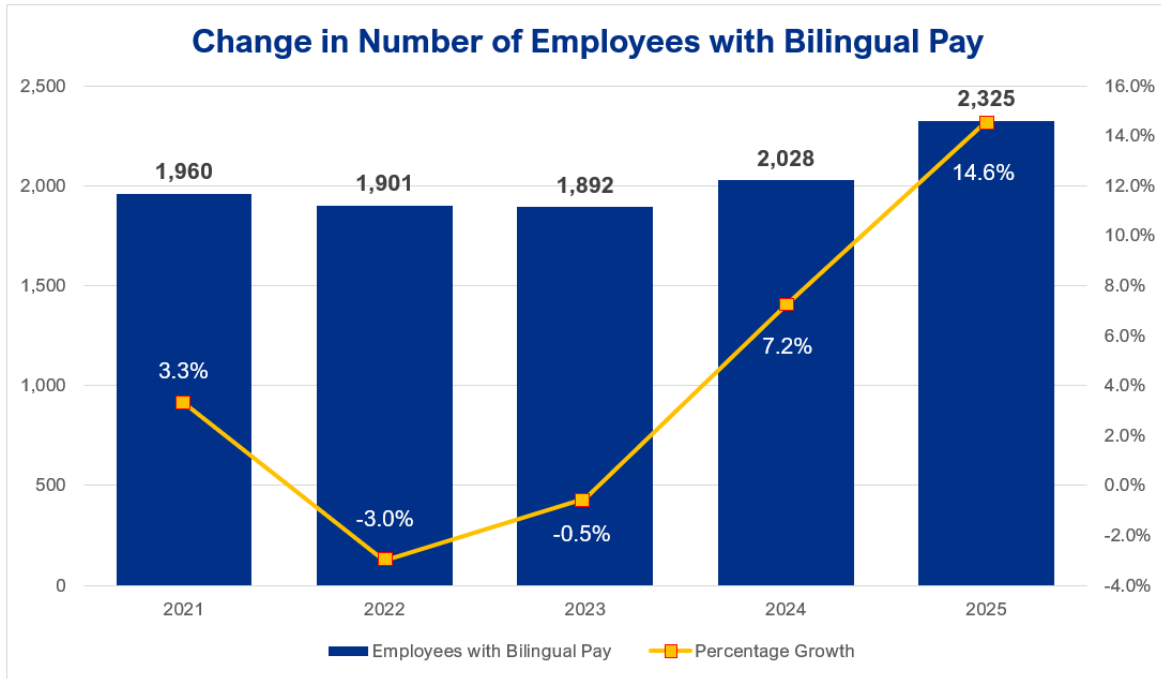


Source: SuccessFactors as of 9/8/25

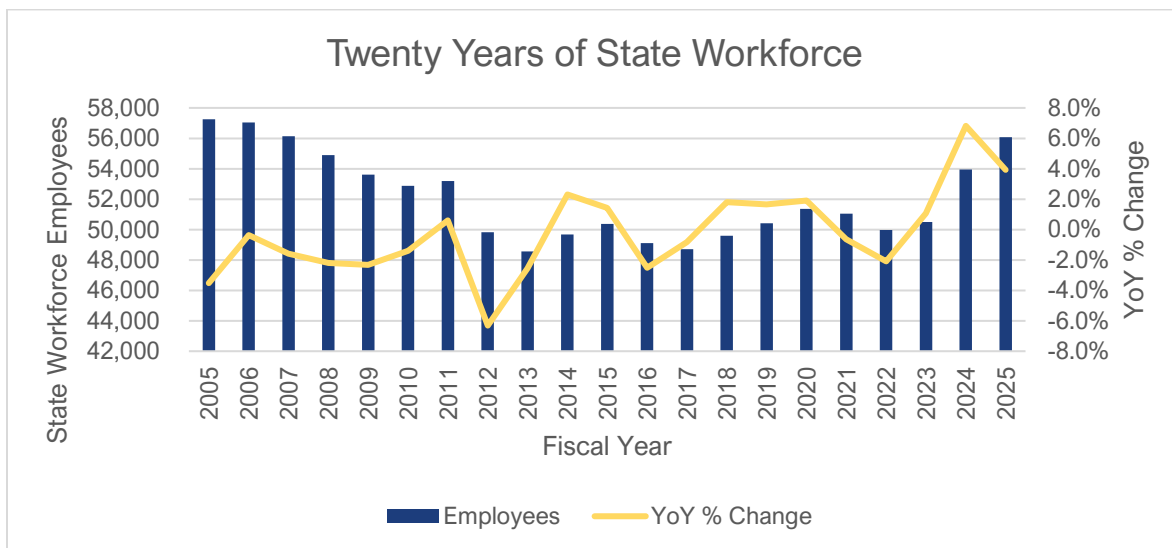


Historic Bilingual Pay

In FY25, the State saw the number of employees receiving bilingual pay grow by the largest percentage in the last five years (14.6%) and at a rate higher than the general workforce growth (3.9%).



Source: Prior year BBNP Reports; PEERS data as of 12/31/23; SuccessFactors as of 9/8/25



Source: PEERS FY14-FY24 effective through December 31, 2023; SuccessFactors effective through FY25



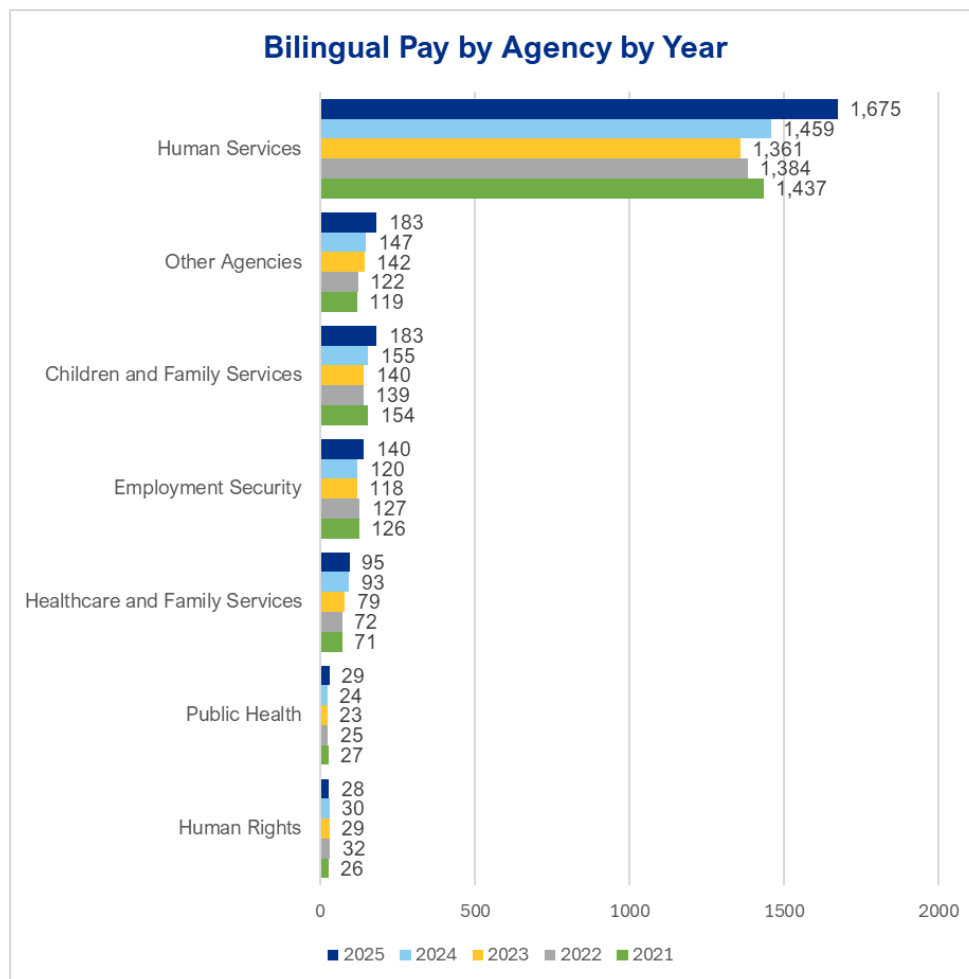
FY25 Bilingual Needs and Bilingual Pay Report

The demographic breakdown of the employees receiving bilingual pay has remained relatively stable over time. The following table illustrates those changes from FY24 to FY25. Due to several factors including responses of “Prefer not to disclose,” “Two or More Races,” “N/A”, and other data collection challenges in FY25, this table does not account for the demographic breakdown of approximately 9% (218 persons) of bilingual pay employees.

Race/Ethnicity	Total	FY25 Percentage	FY24 Percentage
Hispanic/LatinX	1,579	68.0%	73.7%
White	401	17.2%	20.8%
African American	57	2.5%	3.1%
Asian American	46	2.0%	2.3%
American Indian/Alaskan	5	0.2%	0.1%

Source: PEERS as of 12/31/23; SuccessFactors as of 9/8/25

Similarly, the distribution of employees receiving bilingual pay has stayed relatively stable for the last five years. The Department of Human Services remains the State agency with the most staff in bilingual positions accounting for 72.0% (1,675 of 2,325) of the total bilingual categorized State workforce.



Source: Prior year BBNP Reports; SuccessFactors as of 9/8/25



The limited participation rate in the Employee Engagement Survey creates some challenges in drawing statistically significant conclusions about the data extrapolated to the broader workforce. However, the data demonstrates that agencies have exponentially more employees with bilingual aptitudes than those in formal bilingual positions. An example of this can be found when comparing current employees in bilingual positions to the data gathered from the Employee Engagement Survey. In FY25, CMS reports there to be 56,000 State employees with 2,325 (4.2%) in bilingual positions. However, the Employee Engagement Survey reveals that of the 10,596 responding employees, more than 1,940 (18.4%) reported to be proficient in a language other than English.

The leading language proficiencies represented by State employees in the FY25 Employee Engagement Survey were: Spanish (55.6%), American Sign Language (8.4%), French (6.4%), Polish (2.9%), Arabic (2.8%), Mandarin (1.6%), Russian (0.2%), Vietnamese (1.1%), Cantonese (0.9%), and Swahili (0.8%).



Bilingual Pay Findings

The FY25 data supports that agencies continued to find value in language skill requirements for new and existing positions and actively sought to fill bilingual positions. This conclusion is demonstrated by these key metrics:

- The number of employees in bilingual positions **increased by 14.6%** in FY25 outpacing the 3.9% increase in overall State workforce during that same time.
- Bilingual position postings accounted for **5.9%** of all positions (7,743) posted in FY25.
 - A total of 454 bilingual positions were posted by 21 State Agencies
 - Spanish-speaking positions comprised the majority of all postings at 87.7% (398 postings) followed by American Sign Language positions with 8.5% (39 positions)
- The Department of Human Services continued to lead these agency efforts in FY25.
 - 36.1% of all bilingual postings
 - 72.8% of all hires into bilingual positions
 - 72.0% of all employees receiving bilingual pay
- State agencies with a process to determine whether new postings should be categorized as bilingual remained at 23, indicating no change from FY24.
- Bilingual designations were added to 43 position descriptions while only 6 position descriptions were revised to remove a bilingual designation.
- Agencies self-reported 437 bilingual designated positions filled with 119 designated positions vacated. This reveals a **growth ratio of 3.7**—down slightly from 3.9 in FY24.
- Of the 47 responding agencies, nine (19%) reported budgets that included allocations namely to employ a sufficient number of bilingual employees to serve Illinois' culturally diverse population.

Overall, agencies do not appear to have a firm understanding of the linguistic skills of their staff beyond those in bilingual positions. The data from the FY25 Employee Engagement Survey, while from a small, unverified sample size, points to a much larger percentage of employees with linguistic skills than recognized by agencies. Where in FY25, CMS reports 2,325 bilingual coded positions that constitute 4.2% of its workforce, the Employee Engagement Survey provides answers from 20% of its workforce who answered with a 1,944 (18.4%) proficiency in a language other than English.



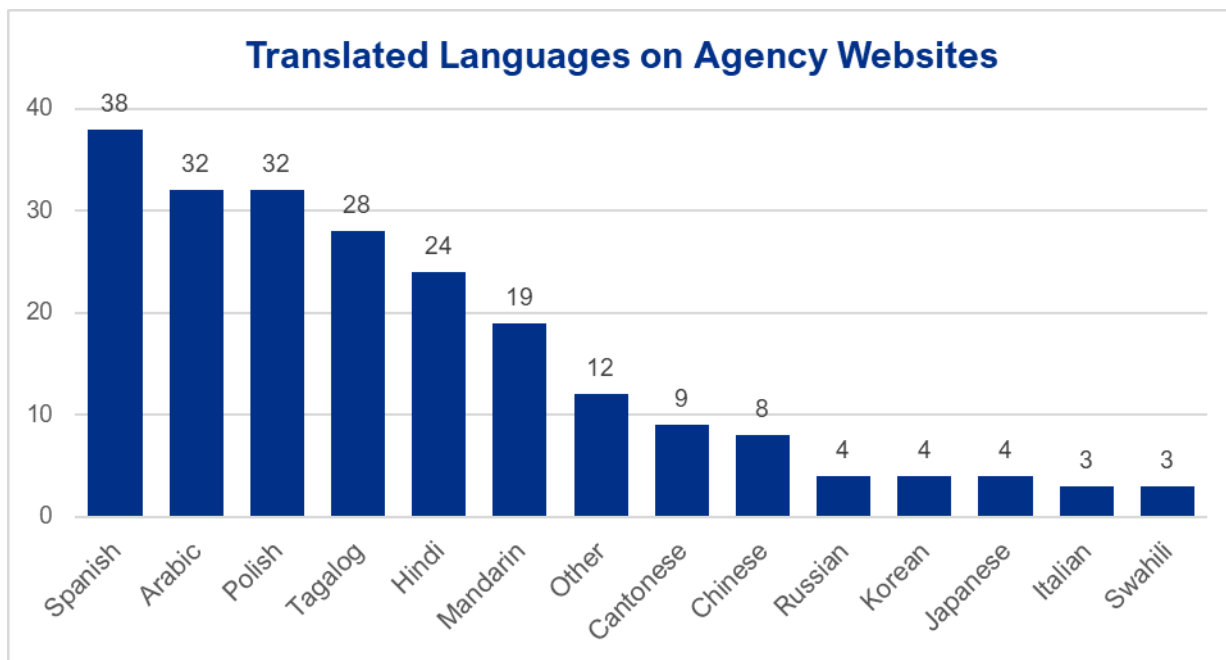
Promoting Awareness of Bilingual Services

The public and agencies serving the public must be aware of the bilingual services available to support any limited-English speaking interaction. State agencies are responsible for ensuring that all public communication tools are fully translated and accessible to all Illinois residents despite any language barrier.

In FY25, State agency responses indicate that 85.1% of agencies have taken steps to increase agency website language accessibility. This is an approximately 7.5% increase from FY24 (40 in FY25 from 37 in FY24) of the number of websites translated into languages other than English.

Of the 47 responding agencies, the three most common languages for website translation were determined to be Spanish, accessible on 38 (80.9%) agency websites, and Polish and Arabic, each accessible on 32 (68.1%) agency websites. These findings are inclusive of agencies translating into multiple languages.

According to findings in the FY25 Bilingual Needs Bilingual Pay Survey, 14.9% (7 of 47) of all responding agencies indicated a lack of website language accessibility beyond English. However, this is a vast improvement over survey responses in FY24 that indicated that 26.5% (13 of 49) of agency websites lacked translation into any language other than English.



Source FY25 Employment Plan/BNBP Survey

Additionally, 6 of the 7 agencies that did not respond or responded that their website was not translated into a language other than English also reported that the agency regularly engages in customer service. Of those 7 agencies, 4 reported interactions requiring interpretation or translation during FY25: Department of Public Health (1,045), Illinois Commerce Commission (629), Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum (425), and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (100).

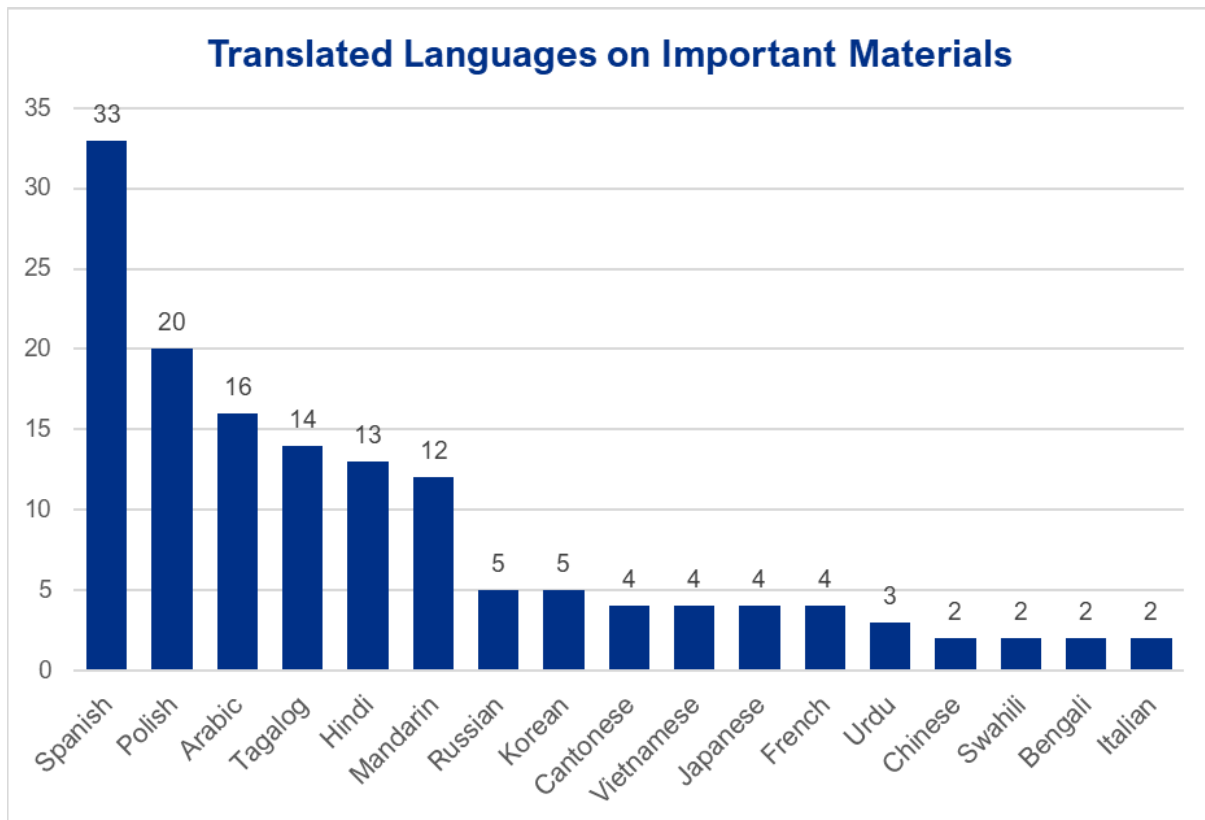


Of the 47 agencies that completed the survey, 22 utilized the State's master contracts provided by CMS and DoIT for translation services. Ten of these agencies also utilized external translation services beyond the existing master contracts.

Survey respondents were also asked about translation of the important materials related to their programs. The results followed a similar trend as the translation of websites, though 13 agencies reported that their program materials were not translated into any language other than English, 6 more than reported English-only websites (7 agencies). Spanish was also the most translated language followed by Polish, Arabic and Tagalog, similar to the website translation findings.

The Department of Employment Security had materials translated into the most languages (16) including Arabic, Cantonese, French, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Vietnamese, Bengali, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, Urdu, and a note that IDES will translate its documents into any language upon request.

Of the 13 agencies that do not have materials in languages other than English, 7 also reported zero limited-English interactions requiring interpretation or translations during FY25.



Source FY25 Employment Plan/BNBP Survey



Review of FY24 Action Items

1. **Continue to Improve Access to State Websites and Important Materials in Additional Languages** – CMS will work with the Department of Innovation and Technology and the 14 agencies that reported websites that were not translated into any language other than English as well as the 18 agencies that reported not translating important materials into any language other than English to improve accessibility of this information to individuals who may have limited English skills.

Update: Through collaboration with the CMS Diversity & Inclusion team, all state agencies were made aware of the need for bilingual materials through the quarterly meetings of the Employment Plan Advisory Councils. These recommendations were also shared with all agency Language Access Coordinators through cohort meetings and individualized coaching sessions with the at the Illinois Office of New Americans.

2. **Align Language Access Work** – CMS Diversity & Inclusion will build out its expert support with the newly established Bilingual Needs/Language Access Statewide Manager position to assist agencies in addressing identified gaps in their bilingual needs.

Update: CMS Diversity & Inclusion and the Illinois Office of New Americans worked collaboratively throughout FY25 to build infrastructure for CMS to support statewide language access needs in a more permanent and fulsome way aligned with recent legislative action. In consultation with - the Director of the Illinois Office of New Americans & Deputy First Assistant to the Deputy Governor, CMS executive staff, the Hispanic Employment Plan Advisory Council - the Bilingual Needs/Language Access Statewide Manager position evolved to the Assistant Deputy Director/Statewide Manager for Language Access role that will be posted in December 2025 for competitive selection. Additionally, CMS Deputy Director for Diversity & Inclusion lent her expertise to existing efforts to build infrastructure and serve all state agencies through their initial reporting, first-year goal setting, check-ins, and trainings. This close coordination is aimed to strengthen the transition of enterprise-wide language access work from the Illinois Office of New Americans to CMS by the end of FY26.

3. **Employee Engagement Survey** – CMS will work with agencies to better utilize internal tools to understand the linguistic skills their employees hold, to encourage equitable and consistent use of bilingual pay, and to support agencies' efforts to better engage with their bilingual staff.

Update: CMS Bureau of Personnel chaired FY25 efforts to build a statewide guide for assessing bilingual aptitude. Supported by CMS Diversity & Inclusion's in-house experts and leveraging sister agency expertise as well as quality needs of workforce bilingualism, this tool was introduced and executed through the enterprise in FY25. Initiating with the Spanish language, this tool allows for a standardized assessment to be led during the interview process in positions that are coded as bilingual.



FY26 Action Items

1. **Aligning Illinois State Statute Mandate Deliverables.** Legislation changes in the last three years have prompted support for language access and bilingual workforce equity. These statutes allow for the historic Bilingual Needs & Bilingual Pay legislation to be supported by complimented and updated guidelines. CMS will work to update the Personnel Code that will guide in how the Diversity & Inclusion team may best meet the deliverables for each state statute.
2. **Increase Capacity and Capacity with Key Stakeholders.** CMS Diversity & Inclusion will continue to work on the alignment and transition of all agency Language Access Coordinators, their annual goals, and reports through the hiring of the Assistant Deputy Director for Diversity & Inclusion and Statewide Manager for Language Access. Foundational to success, this person will build infrastructure for connecting with legislation author(s), Employment Plan Advisory Councils, and CMS Bureau of Personnel to identify metrics that can match their vision to the practicality of the work and its needs as noted by sister agency experts.
3. **Identify and Build Systems to Streamline Annual Language Access, Bilingual Pay and Bilingual Needs Surveys and Reporting.** CMS Diversity & Inclusion's Assistant Deputy Director position will be posted in FY26. This Senior Public Service Administrator will be responsible for supporting mandated efforts on statewide language access, bilingual needs, and bilingual pay. The person in this role will have the opportunity to identify ways to leverage new cohort models, streamline surveys, curate assessments, and agency-specific data. This will better support agencies, increase efficiency, and data reliability while preventing duplication of efforts.



Conclusion

CMS continues to strive for equity in representation and in building an inclusive workplace. An example of these efforts is the revamping of this annual report and goals to ensure increased collaboration, leveraging of existing resources and collective growth. To do so, all State agencies will receive a copy of these goals and be given the opportunity to join quarterly meetings of the four Employment Plan Advisory Councils through CMS invitations and facilitation.

Future reports will measure what recommendations from councils were received and implemented by each agency.

A full list of agency responses to the web based FY25 Employment Plans/BNBP Survey can be found online at: <https://cms.illinois.gov/personnel/dep/bnbp.html>.

Contact Information

Patricia Santoyo-Marin
Deputy Director, Diversity & Inclusion Illinois
Department of Central Management Services

Patricia.Santoyo-Marin@Illinois.gov

