

N E W S R E L E A S E

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EDD Announces Language Access Officer, New Funds to Boost Multilingual Access

SACRAMENTO – In another major step toward improving services for California's linguistically diverse communities, Andrea Salazar, New York state's former language access coordinator, has joined California's Employment Development Department (EDD) to lead a new Language Access Office. EDD also joined diverse communities across California to announce new grant funding to continue boosting multilingual access to state services.

"Andrea Salazar's exceptional experience as a national leader in multilingual access is another major step toward expanding our services in California's diverse communities," said EDD Director Nancy Farias.

Salazar recently served as New York's statewide coordinator of language access, where she helped boost multilingual programs across dozens of state agencies and departments. She helped codify in law to strengthen the state's language access requirements and convene the first statewide Office of Language Access. She also worked at the New York State Department of Labor where she helped implement minimum wage increases and Paid Family Leave benefit programs.

One of Salazar's first California initiatives is joining with community-based organizations (CBOs) to help launch new outreach activities that boost access to unemployment insurance in communities that primarily speak languages other than English.

"This bold new grant program will help empower our local communities to deliver useful information about California's vital benefit programs," said Salazar. "EDD is deeply committed to serving every Californian, including the one in five Californians who speak languages other than English."

Each of the 11 awarded CBOs will help empower communities in targeted "limited English proficient" (LEP) communities to access EDD services by delivering useful information about eligibility, applications, and rights.

The CBOs will provide related educational services and information in multiple languages, through a variety of outreach methods including in-person activities, telephone, online, or through social and ethnic media, and may include fact sheets, videos, and training presentations.

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The information will cover topics such as in-language procedures for performing work searches, utilizing reemployment services, exercising benefit appeal rights, and lodging official complaints regarding language access. Educational efforts may also include information about EDD's Disability Insurance and Paid Family Leave benefit programs.

Examples of the new outreach efforts that will be supported by these grants include:

- Supporting trained Mixteco translators who help indigenous communities understand the unemployment insurance system and application process
- Launching indigenous language radio ads to raise awareness about benefit programs
- Social media outreach to the deaf and hard of hearing community

Grantee proposals for supportive education and outreach initiatives were selected for funding as part of an effort to maximize coverage for populations throughout the state.

Funding for these grants was provided through discretionary funds made available to Governor Gavin Newsom per initiatives outlined in California's Unemployment Language Opportunity Program, which facilitates education and outreach to targeted LEP communities for them to better access UI and other EDD services and benefits.

The new grant program is administered by the Center at Sierra Health Foundation in partnership with EDD. Additional information about the grants is available in the [Sierra Health Foundation website](#).

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