

# Vermont Language Assistance Services for Emergency Communications (LASEC) Working Group

Meeting #1 Minutes Tuesday, July 2, 2024 | 3:00-4:00PM via Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:** Eric Forand, Director, Vermont Emergency Management; Mark Bosma, Public Information Officer, Department of Public Safety; Brett Larose, Vermont Emergency Management; Jay Greene, Racial Equity Policy and Research Analyst, Vermont Office of Racial Equity; Alison Segar, Director, Vermont Language Justice Project; Oliver Plavin, Intern, Vermont Office of Racial Equity; Laura Seigel, Director, Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and DeafBlind Services; William Pendelbury, Co Chair, Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Advisory Council; Amber Leventry, Public Health Communication Officer, Vermont Department of Health; Wendy Mays, Executive Director, Vermont Association of Broadcasters; Jay Barton, General Manager, WCAX-TV; Brendan Kinney, Acting President & CEO, Vermont Public; Joe Tymecki, Chief Technology Officer, Vermont Public and ASL interpreters.

- 1) Meeting called to order at 3:05PM.
- 2) Introductions we made
- 3) A review of [Section 23 of S.310/Act 143](#); was led by Eric:
  - a) **Creation:** There is created the Language Assistance Services for Emergency Communications Working Group, consisting of staff at the Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) Division and the Office of Racial Equity, who will collaborate with the Vermont Association of Broadcasters; the Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Advisory Council; organizations that represent language service providers and other relevant stakeholders.
  - b) **Duties:** The Working Group shall:
    - i) develop best practices for the provision of language assistance services in emergency communications during and after all-hazards events as defined in 2 V.S.A. § 2
    - ii) identify geographical areas within the State with the greatest needs for language assistance services during and after all-hazards events
    - iii) analyze and make recommendations on the appropriate uses of technologies for providing these services, including tools such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) and Picture-in-Picture (PIP) techniques and automated language translation services or machine translation.
  - c) **Report:** On or before December 15, 2024, the Working Group shall submit a written report to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.
- 4) Opening remarks were made by Wendy who then invited others to make opening remarks.
  - a) Alison asked if the National Weather Service had been invited to this working group and Laura asked the same thing about the Agency of Natural Resources.
  - b) Opening remarks led to discussions about topics such as Large Language Models, the needs of some of the groups represented and funding deficiencies.
- 5) The discussion returned to establishing the infrastructure for the working group including setting goals, establishing a meeting timeline, sharing documents, etc. Action items before the next meeting include:
  - a) The group agreed to meet consistently at a to be determined time for one hour every other week on a to be determined day of the week. Wendy will email a doodle poll to determine availability.
  - b) Jay Greene asked that everyone read recommended pages from the Office of Racial Equity report before we meet again.
  - c) Eric asked everyone to email Wendy with items to add to the next meeting agenda.
- 6) Meeting Adjourned at 4:04PM