

1 S.243

2 An act relating to distributing funds to the Vermont Language Justice
3 Project

4 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

5 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

6 The General Assembly finds that:

7 (1) Vermont ranks sixth per capita in refugee resettlement;

8 (2) the Governor has recognized the important role immigrants play in
9 Vermont's economy;

10 (3) when health information is available in only one language and only
11 in written format, it creates barriers that lead to confusion;

12 (4) the Vermont Language Justice Project's videos fill a critical gap in
13 patient education, particularly for families with limited English proficiency;

14 (5) the Vermont Language Justice Project has created and distributed
15 videos pertaining to COVID-19 and COVID-19 testing; the importance of
16 immunizations and how immunizations work; Mpox; preventing mosquito and
17 tick bites; and safety during flood events, hot and cold weather, cyanobacteria
18 outbreaks, wildfires, and more;

19 (6) the Vermont Language Justice Project's videos are made in 10 to 21
20 of the languages commonly spoken in Vermont and in collaboration with the
21 Vermont Department of Health;

1 (7) the Vermont Language Justice Project is usually able to respond to a
2 crisis within 24 hours with information in multiple languages and in multiple
3 formats, such as written translations, audio files, and videos; and

4 (8) in January 2025, the Vermont Language Justice Project’s grant from
5 the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention abruptly ended, leaving it
6 to be funded solely through donations from individuals and foundations and
7 through fee-for-service work.

8 Sec. 2. VERMONT LANGUAGE JUSTICE PROJECT

9 In fiscal year 2027, the Office of Racial Equity may contract with the
10 Vermont Language Justice Project to prepare informational materials at the
11 request of State agencies and departments, as needed, to assist Vermonters who
12 speak languages other than English in the event of a disease outbreak, natural
13 disaster, or other public health emergency, including ongoing personal and
14 public health information. The Department of Buildings and General Services
15 shall assist the Vermont Language Justice Project as it navigates the process to
16 become added to the State’s list of approved contractors.

17 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

18 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.