

SENATE BILL NO. 1637

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR LEWIS.

6315S.02I

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 209, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to communication access services.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 209, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto
2 one new section, to be known as section 209.247, to read as
3 follows:

209.247. 1. As used in this section, the following
2 terms mean:

3 (1) "Commission", the Missouri commission for the deaf
4 and hard of hearing;

5 (2) "Communication access services", shall include,
6 but not be limited to, the following:

7 (a) Qualified interpreters, as described in section
8 209.285;

9 (b) Communication access realtime translation services;

10 (c) Notetakers, visual or Braille boards, and visual
11 video services;

12 (d) Open and closed captioning services;

13 (e) Environmental access support for the deaf-blind
14 and those with low vision; and

15 (f) Any other effective method of making aurally
16 delivered and printed information available to individuals
17 who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing;

18 (3) "Communication access service provider", an
19 individual who is trained to offer a communication access
20 service to communicate aurally delivered and printed
21 information to individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard
22 of hearing.

23 2. The commission shall establish a statewide
24 communication access services program to improve compliance
25 with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act for
26 agencies and businesses by coordinating resources, filling
27 service gaps, and assisting with costs related to
28 accommodations. The commission shall:

29 (1) Develop and maintain a statewide registry of
30 communication access service providers, organized by region,
31 including rural and urban areas;

32 (2) Create a process for communication access service
33 providers to apply for placement on the registry;

34 (3) Establish minimum standards for training,
35 equipment, and technology;

36 (4) Maintain an informational website accessible by
37 businesses, agencies, and individuals who are deaf, deaf-
38 blind, or hard of hearing regarding resources and available
39 programming;

40 (5) Provide consultation, training, and technical
41 assistance to aid state and local agencies to be in
42 compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act;

43 (6) Provide information regarding available resources
44 to assist with compliance costs and to support potential
45 communication access service providers in underserved areas;

46 (7) Conduct outreach activities for urban or rural
47 residents and communication access service providers to
48 expand awareness and capacity in underserved areas;

49 (8) Subject to appropriation, administer scholarships
50 for professional development, internships, and certification
51 testing;

52 (9) Subject to appropriation and pursuant to rules
53 promulgated under this section, administer and finance
54 requests for communication access services between agencies
55 and businesses and individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or
56 hard of hearing;

57 (10) Hire a program manager to serve at the pleasure
58 of the director of the commission. The program manager
59 shall have a background and experience in communication
60 access services. The salary for the program manager shall
61 be paid out of the fund established in subsection 3 of this
62 section; and

63 (11) Submit an annual report to the governor and the
64 general assembly that includes information on communication
65 access service utilization, registry effectiveness, funding
66 outcomes, and recommendations for improvement.

67 3. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury
68 the "Communication Access Services Fund", which shall
69 consist of moneys appropriated to the fund and any gifts,
70 donations, grants, and bequests from individuals, private
71 organizations, foundations, or other sources for the purpose
72 of administering the program established in this section.
73 The state treasurer shall be the custodian of the fund. In
74 accordance with sections 30.170 and 30.180, the state
75 treasurer may approve disbursements. The fund shall be a
76 dedicated fund and, upon appropriation, moneys in the fund
77 shall be used by the commission for the salary of the
78 program manager, distribution of financial assistance for
79 communication access services, and distribution of
80 scholarships under this section.

81 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080
82 to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end
83 of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the
84 general revenue fund.

85 (3) The state treasurer shall invest moneys in the
86 fund in the same manner as other funds are invested. Any
87 interest and moneys earned on such investments shall be
88 credited to the fund.

89 4. The commission shall promulgate rules to implement
90 the provisions of this section, including the process for
91 distributing scholarships under subdivision (8) of
92 subsection 2 of this section and determining eligibility for
93 financial assistance under subdivision (9) of subsection 2
94 of this section. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that
95 term is defined in section 536.010, that is created under
96 the authority delegated in this section shall become
97 effective only if it complies with and is subject to all of
98 the provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section
99 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and
100 if any of the powers vested with the general assembly
101 pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective
102 date, or to disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently
103 held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking
104 authority and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28,
105 2026, shall be invalid and void.

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