

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 2360 (Arambula)
As Amended May 18, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

This bill expands existing requirements for a state agency to write in plain language and requires each state agency to create and implement a plain language policy.

Major Provisions

- 1) Provides each state agency shall write each document that it produces after January 1, 2027, either digitally or in print, in plain language, avoiding technical terms as much as possible, and using a coherent and easily readable style.
- 2) Provides to implement this measure, a state agency may use standards created by the Office of Data and Innovation that identify how a state agency incorporates plain language principles and practices.
- 3) Provides within existing personnel and resources, the head of each state agency shall do all of the following:
 - a) Designate one or more senior officials within the state agency to oversee state agency implementation of this measure.
 - b) Communicate the requirements of this measure to the employees of the state agency.
 - c) Establish a process for overseeing the ongoing compliance of the state agency with the requirements of this measure.
- 4) Defines "Plain language" to mean language that is clear and easily understood by the intended audience, avoids unnecessary legal or technical jargon, and uses words, sentences, and structures that facilitate comprehension and accessibility for common literacy levels, including individuals with disabilities or limited English proficiency.
- 5) Defines "State agency" to mean each department, commission, office, or other administrative agency of state government.
- 6) Defines "State agency document" to mean any publicly available instruction, form, license, communication, regulation, manual, memorandum, or any other written communication that is necessary to carry out the state agency's responsibilities under the law.

COMMENTS

Background.

California law (Government Code Section 6219) requires all state government departments and agencies to use plain and straightforward language in their written documents. This means avoiding technical terms when possible and ensuring that documents are coherent and easy to read. The law applies to various types of documents, including contracts, forms, licenses, announcements, regulations, manuals, and memos needed for the agency's duties.

The Office of Data and Innovation (ODI) created California's statewide plain language equity standard. ODI offers an online course for state employees titled "Introduction to Plain Language for the Public Sector." This course provides a foundational overview of plain language and its role in effective government communication. Participants learn about:

- 1) The principles of plain language
- 2) The benefits of using plain language, including its impact on equity
- 3) How to create products and services that align with California's plain language standard

The course also includes hands-on opportunities for participants to practice writing in plain language.

This bill expands current law by requiring state agencies to do more than simply post a plain-language policy online. Beginning January 1, 2027, every state agency must ensure that all documents it produces, whether digital or printed, are written in plain language. This includes minimizing technical jargon, using clear and coherent wording, and presenting information in a way that is easy for the public to read and understand.

Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act. The Act (California Government Code Section 7290 et. Seq.) was signed into law in 1973, to eliminate language barriers that preclude people of our State, who either because they do not speak or write English or because their primary language is other than English, from having equal access to public services. This Act mandates that State and local agencies directly involved in the furnishing of information or the rendering of services to the public must in specifically prescribed situations employ a sufficient number of qualified bilingual persons in public contact positions to ensure the provision of information and services to the public in the language of the non-English speaking people.

The Act further mandates that every State and local agency that serves a substantial number of non-English speaking people, and provides materials in English explaining services, shall also provide the same type of materials in any non-English language spoken by a substantial number of the public served by the agency.

According to the Author

According to the author's office, "Plain language ensures that everyone, including those with cognitive disabilities, limited literacy, or language barriers, can easily find, understand, and use information to meet their needs. If it's not accessible, it's not acceptable. AB 2360 improves access and equity by ensuring state communications are clear, consistent, and written in plain language, so all Californians can better understand the laws that affect their lives and participate more fully in government."

Arguments in Support

The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) writes, "Californians deserve clear, accessible communication from their government. Yet many residents struggle to understand state forms, instructions, and program information. This lack of clarity limits access to essential services, reduces public trust, and creates inequitable barriers – particularly for individuals with cognitive disabilities, limited literacy, or those who speak a language other than English. Plain language is not merely communications improvement—it is a matter of equity and access. When government information is clear, more Californians can participate fully in

programs designed to support them. It also reduces administrative costs, increases compliance, and strengthens public trust."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, "Initial costs of an unknown, but potentially significant amount, in excess of \$150,000, across state agencies to utilize plain language practices in newly produced documents (General Fund (GF) or special fund). The magnitude of costs depends on the existing processes each state agency already has to effectuate the state's existing plain language standard.

Additionally, cost pressures of an unknown, but likely significant amount, to each state agency to designate existing personnel to implement the plain language policy, including compliance efforts (GF or special fund).

Potential costs of an unknown amount to the Office of Data and Innovation (ODI) to develop additional tools to further support adoption of plain language principles and practices (GF)."

VOTES

ASM GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION: 22-0-0

YES: Blanca Rubio, Davies, Alvarez, Berman, Bryan, Carrillo, Dixon, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Gipson, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Pacheco, Ramos, Michelle Rodriguez, Solache, Soria, Ta, Valencia, Wallis

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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