

Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers

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The Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS), a private, nonprofit, community-based agency, has provided a wide range of health and human services to Portuguese speakers and other eastern Massachusetts residents since 1970. The agency in its present form was created on July 1, 1993 from the merger of the Somerville Portuguese Language League (SPAL) and the Cambridge Organization of Portuguese Americans (COPA), two nonprofit agencies serving the Portuguese-speaking community since the early 1970s. The population of Portuguese speakers in the state is estimated at close to 1 million, making Portuguese the second most spoken language in Massachusetts, and more than 200,000 Portuguese speakers live in the Boston area alone.

MAPS' mission is to improve the lives of Portuguese-speaking individuals and families from Massachusetts and help them become contributing, active participants in American society while maintaining strong ethnic identity and a sense of community. From its offices in Cambridge, Somerville, Allston, Dorchester and Lowell, MAPS offers a variety of programs designed to improve this large and growing minority population's access to economic opportunity, housing, health care and social services. MAPS is the only area organization that breaks down barriers for newcomers from Brazil, Cape Verde, Portugal and other Portuguese-speaking countries by providing a wide range of health and human services in a culturally and linguistically competent manner.

MAPS provides direct services as well as promoting unity and empowerment among the diverse Portuguese-speaking communities of Massachusetts. The agency also plays an increasing role in community capacity building and advocacy. Yearly events include our Annual Community Awards Banquet, which is being transformed into a Gala to be held in the spring of 2006; the annual Txuba di Kultura Cape Verdean Cultural Event in Dorchester, which also takes place in the spring; and the Annual Meeting in October in Cambridge.

MAPS has a staff of more than 30 part- and full-time employees and a budget of approximately \$2 million. The agency served approximately 6,000 people in FY 2005, including both direct and indirect services.

For more information, please call (617) 864-7600 or visit the MAPS Website at www.maps-inc.org.