

English Yiddish Spanish
Italian Chinese Khmer, Cambodian
Russian

L.A. Speaks

Language Diversity and English Proficiency
by Los Angeles County Service Planning Area

Korean German Greek
Polish French
Armenian Serbo-Croatian
Hindi Gujarathi
Laotian Japanese Urdu Thai

Scandinavian languages

Navajo Tagalog
Hmong Persian

Portuguese Vietnamese Hungarian

Hebrew African languages Arabic



ASIANPACIFIC
AMERICAN
LEGAL CENTER
OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



Cyrus Chung Ying Tang
Foundation

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Asian Pacific American Legal Center

The Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California was founded in 1983 and is the largest organization in the country focused on providing multilingual, culturally sensitive legal services, education, and civil rights support to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). APALC's mission is to advocate for civil rights, provide legal services and education, and build coalitions to positively influence and impact AAPIs and to create a more equitable and harmonious society. APALC works on a range of issues affecting AAPIs and immigrants, including workers rights, consumer rights, immigration, citizenship, domestic violence, hate crimes, health care, language access, and voting rights.

APALC is affiliated with the Asian American Justice Center (formerly known as NAPALC) in Washington, D.C.

www.apalc.org

Cyrus Chung Ying Tang Foundation

The Cyrus Chung Ying Tang Foundation's mission is to foster greater understanding and mutual respect between the United States and China through effective investment in community service and cultural exchanges. It is involved in the promotion of education and healthcare for Americans and supports civic activities that enable Asian immigrants to better integrate into American society.

www.tangfoundation.org

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Welcome

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Los Angeles County is home to more immigrants than any other county in the nation.

With over one in three residents born outside the United States, Los Angeles County faces unique challenges in delivering services to a disproportionately limited English proficient (LEP) population. Nearly one in three persons countywide are LEP, or face some difficulty communicating in English that impacts their ability to access critical services delivered only in English. Asian and Latino residents are more likely than other residents to face language barriers; 48% of Latinos and 43% of Asians in Los Angeles County are LEP.

Building on our prior statewide report, *California Speaks*, *L.A. Speaks: Language Diversity and English Proficiency by Los Angeles County Service Planning Area* provides detailed language data for Los Angeles County Service Planning Areas (SPAs), geographic divisions intended to facilitate program planning in the country's largest county.

We hope the data contained in this report support community-based organizations, policy makers, and government officials in their efforts to better understand and address the language barriers facing over 2.5 million limited English proficient persons in Los Angeles County.

We would like to thank the Cyrus Chung Ying Tang Foundation for supporting this report and The California Endowment for supporting the original research that made this report possible.



Stewart Kwoh, Esq.
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Introduction and Findings

Los Angeles County is the largest county in the nation, with one of the most diverse populations in the world.

Nearly one in three residents, or nearly 3.5 million persons, were born outside the United States and a majority of Los Angeles County residents speak a language other than English at home: 38% or 3.3 million speak Spanish and 11% or 925,000 speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language. The large number of newcomers who call Los Angeles County home offers unique social, economic and political opportunities. In a world where everything from business to pop culture is globalized, the county's diversity of cultures and languages is a rich but underutilized asset.

At the same time, this diversity presents challenges. Approximately 2.5 million county residents are limited English proficient (LEP), meaning they speak English less than 'very well.' As a result, many immigrants and refugees face language barriers on a daily basis, hindering their ability to access fundamental necessities such as healthcare, social services, and police protection.

Contrary to popular belief, recent immigrants and refugees want to improve their English and many do over time. However, most come from non-English speaking countries and face significant hurdles in mastering the language. Some adults are not even literate in their native language. In addition, resources to aid newcomers in learning English are often limited or non-existent – for example, there are insufficient English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to meet the growing demand.

Thus, it is no surprise that language barriers have emerged as a major public policy issue for Los Angeles County, especially in the health and social service sectors. In both sectors, effective communication

with a provider is critical to receiving quality care and appropriate services. For example, serious consequences can occur if a LEP patient enters an emergency room but cannot communicate with doctors, nurses or other hospital staff, including the misdiagnosis of conditions, the ordering of incorrect or unnecessary tests, and compromised patient understanding of and adherence to medical advice. In extreme cases, miscommunication has even led to deaths.

Under federal and state laws, LEP persons have a right to language assistance in accessing health and social services programs, including clinics, hospitals, health plans, welfare programs, children's protective services, etc. Such laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which governs all federally-funded programs, and California's Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act, which applies to state and local agencies that serve the public. Other laws promoting language access include the Kopp Act, which requires language assistance in acute care hospitals, and the recently-passed state Senate Bill 853, which requires health plans to provide oral interpretation and translation of written materials.¹

Many policymakers and health care and social service providers in Los Angeles County understand both the legal and moral obligations to make services accessible to LEP persons. However, the size and diversity of our county makes implementation challenging and calls for localized data that allow language assistance to be delivered more strategically. In the context of health, social and children's services, service planning and delivery has been facilitated by dividing the county into eight geographically-defined Service Planning Areas (SPAs): (1) Antelope Valley, (2) San Fernando Valley, (3) San Gabriel Valley, (4) Metro, (5) West, (6) South, (7) East, and (8) South Bay.²

Because SPAs are unique to Los Angeles County, limited data is available by SPA. To assist policymakers and providers in better addressing the health and social service needs of Los Angeles County residents who speak languages other than English, this report uses Census 2000 data to assess language diversity and barriers countywide and by SPA. It provides the following data: (1) persons born outside the United States; (2) primary language spoken at home; and (3) limited English proficiency.

Three key findings can be drawn from these data:

- Nearly 3.5 million Los Angeles County residents, or 36% of its total population, were born outside the United States. In contrast, only 26% of the state's population is foreign-born. Among all racial groups, Asian Americans were most likely to be born outside the United States, followed by Latinos and Pacific Islanders.
- More than half of Los Angeles County residents speak a language other than English at home. The 10 most frequently spoken languages countywide are: English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, Armenian, Vietnamese, Farsi, Japanese and Russian. Five of eight SPAs countywide, including SPAs 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7, are majority non-English speaking.
- Over 2.5 million Los Angeles County residents are limited English proficient. Latino and Asian American communities faced the greatest challenges, with 48% and 43% respectively experiencing some difficulty communicating in English. SPA 3 in the San Gabriel Valley is home to the largest number of LEP persons, while SPA 4 in metro Los Angeles has the highest rate of limited-English proficiency among SPAs.

¹ For more information on federal and California laws and regulations, as well as relevant guidances, standards, etc., which govern interpretation or translation in health care and social services, see Perkins, Jane, Mara Youdelman, and Doreena Wong. 2003. *Ensuring Linguistic Access in Health Care Settings: Legal Rights and Responsibilities*. Los Angeles, CA: National Health Law Program.

² For more information on Los Angeles County SPAs, see <http://lapublichealth.org/spa>.

Findings

Persons Born Outside the U.S.

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Over one in three Los Angeles County residents, or nearly 3.5 million people, were born outside the United States.

While the county's immigrant population is racially and ethnically diverse, over 60% are Latino and 24% are Asian American. Approximately 66% of Asian Americans and 49% of Latinos countywide were foreign-born. In contrast, only 16% of Non-Hispanic Whites and 6% of African Americans were born outside the United States (see Table FB-1).

A majority of several racial subgroups (or ethnic groups), including large Salvadoran, Korean, Armenian, Chinese, and Filipino communities, are foreign-born. Approximately 81% of Taiwanese countywide were born outside the United States (see Table FB-2).

TABLE FB-1: PERSONS BORN OUTSIDE THE U.S. BY RACIAL GROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Rank	Group	Number	Percent
1	Asian	824,416	66
2	Latino	2,085,813	49
3	NHOPI*	13,214	27
4	Am Indian or Alaska Native**	29,674	22
5	Non-Hispanic White	499,036	16
6	African American	61,515	6
	TOTAL POPULATION	3,449,444	36

*Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

**American Indian or Alaska Native.

TABLE FB-2: PERSONS BORN OUTSIDE THE U.S. BY RACIAL SUBGROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Rank	Group	Number	Percent
1	Taiwanese	33,477	81
2	Guatemalan	88,761	79
3	Honduran	17,883	78
4	Iranian	58,737	78
5	Vietnamese	67,972	76
6	Salvadoran	153,054	75
7	Korean	146,196	75
8	Armenian	115,062	75
9	Thai	17,243	72
10	Asian Indian	48,750	71
11	Chinese	260,287	70
12	Chinese NT*	230,334	69
13	Laotian	2,764	67
14	Filipino	198,400	66
15	Cambodian	23,020	65
16	Hmong	237	48
17	Tongan	1,424	47
18	Mexican	1,432,851	46
19	Japanese	41,775	30
20	Samoan	3,702	22

*Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

Findings

Primary Language Spoken at Home

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

A majority of Los Angeles County residents speak a language other than English at home.

While 46% speak English as their primary language, 38% speak Spanish, 11% speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language, and 5% speak some other language. The numbers are remarkable: in Los Angeles County, over 3.3 million people speak Spanish and 925,000 speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language at home.

Table LANG-1 illustrates the depth of Los Angeles County’s linguistic diversity. The 10 most frequently spoken languages countywide are English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, Armenian, Vietnamese, Farsi, Japanese, and Russian.

TABLE LANG-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Primary Language	Number
Speak only English	4,032,614
Spanish or Spanish Creole	3,330,935
Chinese	287,724
Tagalog	195,671
Korean	165,158
Armenian	138,015
Vietnamese	71,664
Persian (Farsi)	68,192
Japanese	59,885
Russian	44,048
French (including Patois, Cajun)	38,952
Arabic	37,148
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	29,117
German	29,002
Other Pacific Islander languages	27,736
Thai	21,624
Italian	21,088
Hebrew	20,962
Other Indic languages	19,450
African languages	15,615
Hindi	13,245
Other Asian languages	12,843
Other Indo-European languages	10,838
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	10,112
Other, unspecified languages	9,344
Gujarathi	9,186
Hungarian	8,238
Urdu	7,759
Serbo-Croatian	7,672
Other West Germanic languages	7,558
Greek	7,455
Polish	6,731
Scandinavian languages	6,498
Other Slavic languages	6,220
Yiddish	5,314
Laotian	3,644
French Creole	2,057
Other Native North American languages	997
Hmong	449
Navajo	336

Findings

Limited English Proficiency — All Persons

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

An individual is considered limited English proficient (LEP) if she or he speaks English less than ‘very well,’ or experiences some difficulty communicating in English.

As of 2000, over 2.5 million people in Los Angeles County were LEP. Of these, over 1.8 million were Latino and 500,000 were Asian American. Countywide, approximately 48% of Latinos and 43% of Asian Americans experience some difficulty communicating in English (see Table LEP-1).

Several racial subgroups had majority LEP populations, including Guatemalans, Hondurans, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Salvadorans, Koreans, Hmong, Cambodians, Thai, Chinese, and Laotians. Other large racial subgroups were near majority LEP, including Armenians and Mexicans (see Table LEP-2).

TABLE LEP-1: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF ALL PERSONS BY RACIAL GROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Group	Number	Percent
1 Latino	1,806,614	48
2 Asian	501,593	43
3 Am Indian or Alaska Native*	26,002	21
4 NHOPI**	8,033	18
5 Non-Hispanic White	222,858	7
6 African American	26,672	3
TOTAL POPULATION	2,542,505	29

*American Indian or Alaska Native.

**Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

TABLE LEP-2: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF ALL PERSONS BY RACIAL SUBGROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Group	Number	Percent
1 Guatemalan	68,208	65
2 Honduran	13,574	64
3 Vietnamese	52,652	63
4 Taiwanese	24,624	63
5 Salvadoran	114,795	61
6 Korean	108,049	59
7 Hmong	245	58
8 Cambodian	18,719	57
9 Thai	12,584	54
10 Chinese	187,218	54
11 Laotian	2,012	53
12 Chinese NT*	165,327	53
13 Armenian	69,548	48
14 Mexican	1,292,399	47
15 Iranian	28,043	39
16 Tongan	902	33
17 Japanese	33,747	25
18 Asian Indian	14,906	23
19 Filipino	64,896	23
20 Samoan	2,803	19

*Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

Findings

Limited English Proficiency — Children

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Contrary to conventional wisdom, many children face language barriers.

Census 2000 data indicate that nearly 438,000, or roughly one-quarter of, Los Angeles County residents 5 to 17 years old were limited English proficient.

Approximately one-third of Latino and one-quarter of Asian American children had some difficulty communicating in English (see Table LEP-3). Rates of limited English proficiency were particularly high among Hmong, Honduran, Vietnamese, Guatemalan, and Cambodian children (see Table LEP-4).

TABLE LEP-3: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PERSONS 5-17 BY RACIAL GROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Group	Number	Percent
1 Latino	362,388	33
2 Asian	51,841	24
3 Am Indian or Alaska Native*	4,855	16
4 NHOPI**	1,484	12
5 Non-Hispanic White	20,527	5
6 African American	5,834	3
TOTAL POPULATION	437,846	23

*American Indian or Alaska Native.

**Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

TABLE LEP-4: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PERSONS 5-17 BY RACIAL SUBGROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Group	Number	Percent
1 Hmong	112	79
2 Honduran	1,910	44
3 Vietnamese	6,681	41
4 Guatemalan	7,980	39
5 Cambodian	4,051	36
6 Mexican	279,559	34
7 Salvadoran	12,776	34
8 Taiwanese	2,130	31
9 Laotian	302	31
10 Chinese	18,772	30
11 Chinese NT*	16,927	30
12 Korean	10,493	30
13 Thai	990	24
14 Armenian	5,840	21
15 Tongan	206	18
16 Iranian	2,098	17
17 Asian Indian	1,774	15
18 Samoan	726	13
19 Japanese	2,202	12
20 Filipino	5,663	10

*Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

Findings

Limited English Proficiency — Working-Age Adults

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Language barriers can be detrimental to working-age adults.

For immigrant workers, English proficiency can mean the difference between employment and health care for an entire family and underemployment without benefits.

Nearly one-third of Los Angeles County's working-age population 18 to 64 years of age, or roughly 1.9 million people, face language barriers that could affect employment outcomes.

Over half of Latino and 45% of Asian working-age adults were LEP (see Table LEP-5), with a high proportion of Guatemalans, Hondurans, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, and Cambodians 18 to 64 years old experiencing some difficulty communicating in English. Of the 19 distinct ethnic groups included in this study, a majority of the working-age adult population in 11, including large Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, and Mexican communities, were LEP (see Table LEP-6).

TABLE LEP-5: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PERSONS 18-64 BY RACIAL GROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Rank	Group	Number	Percent
1	Latino	1,338,421	53
2	Asian	368,699	45
3	Am Indian or Alaska Native*	19,673	23
4	NHOPI**	5,622	19
5	Non-Hispanic White	147,470	7
6	African American	19,182	3
	TOTAL POPULATION	1,862,723	31

*American Indian or Alaska Native.

**Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

TABLE LEP-6: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PERSONS 18-64 BY RACIAL SUBGROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Rank	Group	Number	Percent
1	Guatemalan	57,812	71
2	Honduran	11,409	70
3	Vietnamese	41,156	67
4	Taiwanese	19,705	67
5	Cambodian	13,137	66
6	Salvadoran	96,813	66
7	Korean	83,113	63
8	Thai	10,878	60
9	Laotian	1,638	60
10	Chinese*	136,129	55
11	Chinese NT**	118,435	54
12	Mexican	943,905	52
13	Armenian	47,519	49
14	Hmong	133	47
15	Tongan	603	40
16	Iranian	18,732	37
17	Japanese	22,395	25
18	Asian Indian	11,402	24
19	Filipino	43,616	22
20	Samoan	1,768	20

*Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

Findings

Limited English Proficiency — Seniors

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Language barriers can have serious consequences for seniors, particularly in accessing healthcare and other critical services.

Approximately one in four Los Angeles county residents 65 years and older, or nearly 242,000 seniors, are limited English proficient.

However, rates of limited English proficiency are significantly higher in communities with large foreign-born populations. Approximately 65% of Asian Americans, 57% of Latinos, and 42% of Pacific Islanders 65 years and older experience some difficulty communicating in English (see Table LEP-7). A majority of seniors in all ethnic groups included in this study, except Asian Indians and Japanese, were LEP (see Table LEP-8).

TABLE LEP-7: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PERSONS 65+ BY RACIAL GROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Rank	Group	Number	Percent
1	Asian	81,053	65
2	Latino	105,805	57
3	NHOPI*	927	42
4	Am Indian or Alaska Native**	1,474	18
5	Non-Hispanic White	54,861	10
6	African American	1,656	2
	TOTAL POPULATION	241,936	26

*Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

**American Indian or Alaska Native.

TABLE LEP-8: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF PERSONS 65+ BY RACIAL SUBGROUP, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Rank	Group	Number	Percent
1	Taiwanese	2,789	93
2	Vietnamese	4,815	88
3	Cambodian	1,531	86
4	Salvadoran	5,206	85
5	Iranian	7,213	84
6	Guatemalan	2,416	83
7	Chinese*	32,317	82
8	Chinese NT**	29,965	81
9	Korean	14,443	81
10	Armenian	16,189	78
11	Thai	716	76
12	Tongan	93	76
13	Laotian	72	69
14	Honduran	255	66
15	Samoaan	309	58
16	Mexican	68,935	54
17	Filipino	15,617	54
18	Asian Indian	1,730	49
19	Japanese	9,150	36
20	Hmong	0	N/A

*Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

Findings By Service Planning Area (SPA)

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

In Los Angeles County, Service Planning Areas (SPAs) are geographic divisions intended to facilitate the planning and delivery of health, social and children’s services.

Because SPAs vary considerably on important social and economic indicators, it is not surprising that they also differ with respect to language and English proficiency.

For example, while only 15% of the total population of SPA 1 (Antelope Valley) were foreign-born, a majority of residents in SPA 4 (Metro Los Angeles) were born outside the United States (see Table FB-3).

Five of the eight SPAs are majority non-English speaking (SPAs 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7) and two are majority Spanish speaking (SPAs 6 and 7) (see Table LANG-2). Tagalog is the third most commonly spoken language in three SPAs (SPAs 1, 7, and 8), while 12% of residents in SPA 3 speak Chinese at home.

Limited English proficiency also varies by SPA. While SPA 3 in the San Gabriel Valley is home to the largest number of LEP persons, residents in SPA 4 have the highest rate of limited-English proficiency (see Table LEP-9).

TABLE FB-3: PERSONS BORN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Rank	SPA (AREA)	Number	Percent
1	4 (Metro)	585,230	51
2	7 (East)	485,480	38
3	2 (San Fernando)	725,900	37
4	3 (San Gabriel)	649,770	37
5	6 (South)	347,930	36
6	8 (South Bay / Harbor)	434,500	29
7	5 (West)	172,990	28
8	1 (Antelope Valley)	46,710	15

TABLE LANG-2: PERSONS SPEAKING NON-ENGLISH PRIMARY LANGUAGE BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Rank	SPA (AREA)	Number	Percent
1	4 (Metro)	745,354	70
2	7 (East)	769,755	66
3	6 (South)	500,508	58
4	3 (San Gabriel)	923,558	57
5	2 (San Fernando)	941,565	51
6	8 (South Bay / Harbor)	600,375	43
7	5 (West)	203,230	35
8	1 (Antelope Valley)	74,137	26

TABLE LEP-9: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Rank	SPA (AREA)	Number	Percent
1	4 (Metro)	454,670	43
2	6 (South)	308,720	36
3	7 (East)	396,920	34
4	3 (San Gabriel)	482,300	30
5	2 (San Fernando)	476,670	26
6	8 (South Bay / Harbor)	310,090	22
7	5 (West)	81,150	14
8	1 (Antelope Valley)	31,290	11

Policy Recommendations

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

Los Angeles County policymakers have a responsibility to ensure that our county's language resources are maximized and that language is not an insurmountable barrier for new immigrants and refugees or their families. The following recommendations are intended to be general guidance – Los Angeles County agencies and officials should carefully consult with community leaders, advocates, and others that work on health, social service and children's issues to identify specific policy solutions.

1. Collect and disaggregate data

Demographic data are critical to understanding and responding to the county's language diversity and challenges. While the U.S. Census Bureau produces such data, few agencies collect or report this information. For example, in a national hospital survey, less than 50% of hospitals collected language information from patients.³ At minimum, **Los Angeles County health and social service agencies should:**

- **Collect specific and relevant demographic data for those who receive or are eligible for services**, including but not limited to primary language spoken at home, level of English proficiency and racial/ethnic background. For children's services, data collected should include information on parents or guardians.
- **Update data collection tools to capture accurate information from limited English proficient clients and populations.** This includes translating forms or questionnaires and updating computer or other systems to capture and sort these data.

- **Consistently disaggregate data on language, English proficiency, and other key characteristics** beyond broad racial categories, so that overall numbers by race do not mask the true needs of racial subgroups or ethnic groups. For example, collecting data on 'Asians' as a racial group often overlooks the specific needs of vulnerable populations like former refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

2. Increase interpretation and translation services

With nearly 2.5 million limited English proficient residents from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, Los Angeles County clearly needs culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Although many federal and state laws require interpretation or translation, many Los Angeles residents struggle to access basic services. At minimum, **Los Angeles County health and social service agencies should:**

- **Develop and implement a written policy** addressing how the agency will meet oral and written language needs of clients.
- **Ensure a linguistically diverse workforce** by hiring and retaining both bilingual staff and interpreters. Agencies should also help develop a pipeline to these jobs by participating in programs that encourage students from immigrant families to maintain or develop their native language skills and pursue health care and social service occupations.

- **Educate and train managers and staff** regarding legal requirements promoting language access and how to identify and work with LEP clients. In addition, agencies should train bilingual staff and interpreters on how to properly and effectively provide translation and interpretation services.

- **Translate key documents**, including materials that inform LEP persons about their right to and how to obtain linguistically and culturally appropriate services.

- **Outreach to LEP communities** about their right to linguistically and culturally appropriate services and how to obtain them.

- **Ensure sufficient funds and resources** for providing linguistically and culturally appropriate services. In addition, agencies should work with the state government to obtain reimbursement from the federal government for certain language services.

3. Support opportunities to learn English

Limited English proficient immigrants and refugees understand that learning English facilitates their ability to access important services and enables them to secure jobs with better wages and opportunities for advancement. However, for most immigrants and refugees, mastering the language is difficult. While students in Los Angeles County account for about half of all students enrolled in adult school English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs statewide, the demand for ESL classes remains high countywide, with long waiting lists for many programs.⁴

³ Hasnain-Wynia, Romana, Julie Yonek, Debra Pierce, Ray Kang, and Cynthia Hedges Greising. 2006. *Hospital Language Services for Patients with Limited English Proficiency: Results from a National Survey*. Chicago, IL: Health Research and Education Trust.

⁴ Gonzalez, Arturo. 2007. *California's Commitment to Adult English Learners: Caught Between Funding and Need*. San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California.

Policy Recommendations

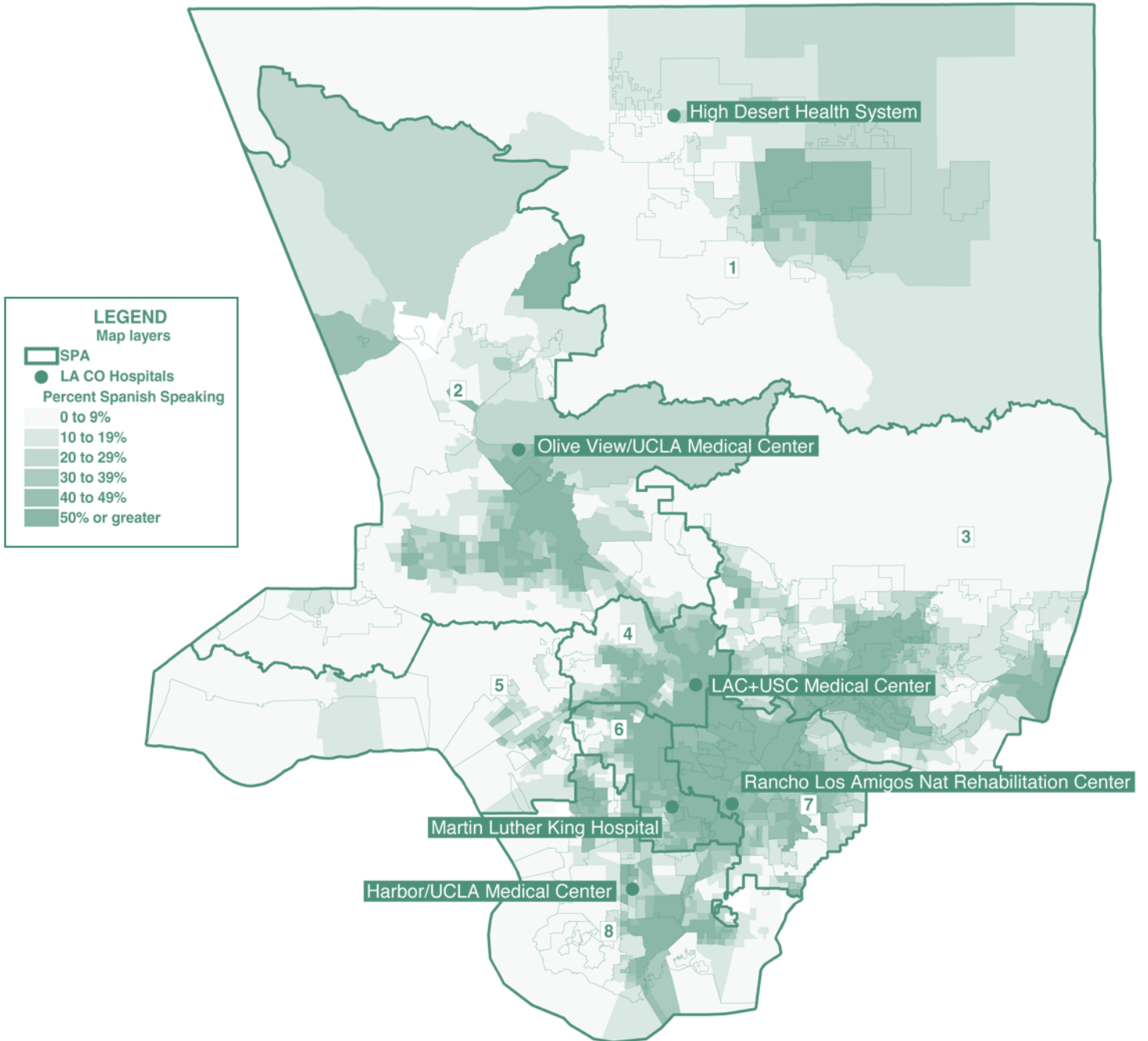
L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

At minimum, **Los Angeles County health and social service agencies should:**

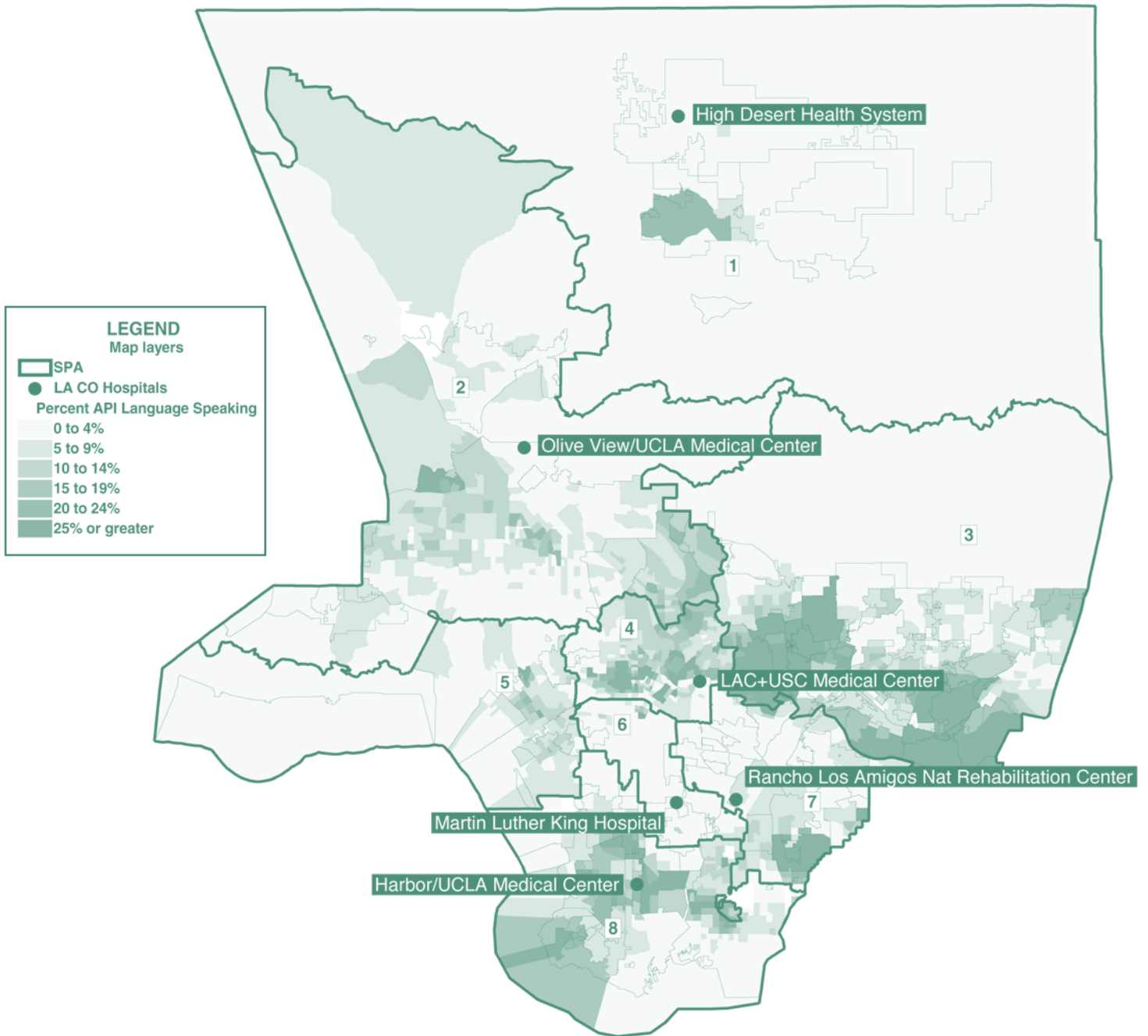
- **Offer programs that teach English to their clients.** Although most ESL programs are tied to adult schools or community colleges, creative programs offered in other contexts can also help newcomers learn English. For example, English courses offered through a community clinic or in conjunction with a children's program may benefit LEP persons who may not have the time or resources to participate in traditional classes.
- Provide information to clients on existing ESL programs, including those at local community colleges, community centers or adult schools.
- Support additional funding and resources for ESL programs, so that additional classes can be offered to meet the demand countywide.

Service Planning Areas

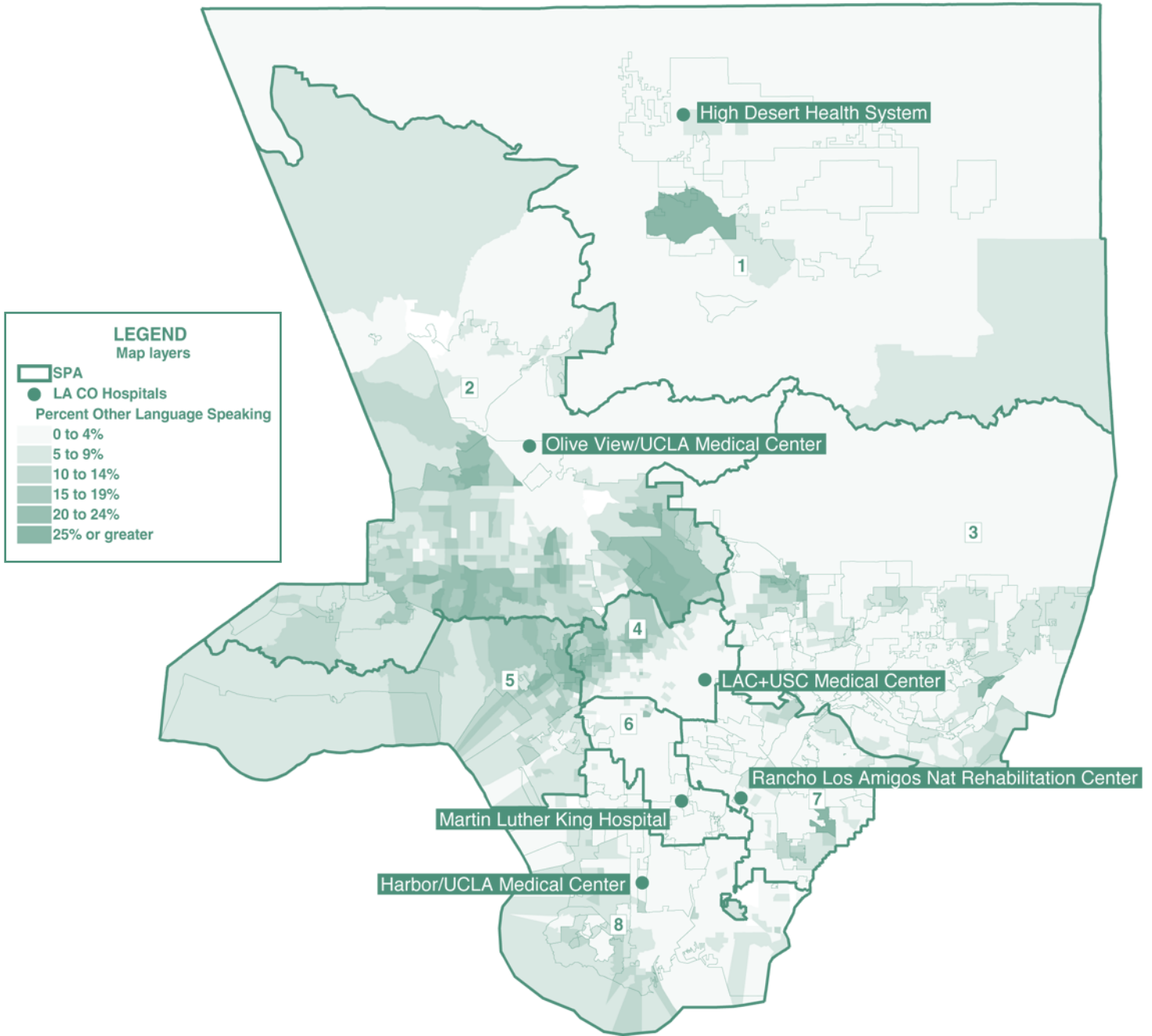
LOS ANGELES COUNTY Service Planning Areas Percent Spanish Speaking Census 2000



LOS ANGELES COUNTY Service Planning Areas Percent Asian or Pacific Islander (API) Language Speaking Census 2000



LOS ANGELES COUNTY Service Planning Areas Percent Other Language Speaking Census 2000



Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 1

Antelope Valley

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA1-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

	Primary Language	Number	Percent
1	English only	206,825	73.6
2	Spanish	60,014	21.4
3	Tagalog	3,150	1.1
4	German	1,152	0.4
5	French	982	0.3
6	Arabic	971	0.3
7	Chinese	763	0.3
8	Korean	637	0.2
9	Other Pacific Islander languages	578	0.2
10	Armenian	517	0.2

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA1-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	44,050	14	540	1	1,370	3
Asian	13,120	4	2,960	24	6,480	49
Asian Indian	1,240	0	340	31	720	58
Cambodian	120	0				
Chinese, NT***	1,310	0	370	31	560	43
Filipino	6,250	2	1,000	17	3,310	53
Hmong	10	0				
Japanese	1,410	0	200	15	310	22
Korean	950	0	420	48	580	61
Vietnamese	820	0	420	56	540	66
Latino	88,900	29	25,480	32	32,090	36
Guatemalan	1,280	0				
Mexican	62,210	20	17,610	32	20,760	33
Salvadoran	3,260	1	1,920	61	2,640	81
NH White****	163,080	53	2,620	2	6,690	4
Armenian	790	0	240	34	430	57
Iranian	410	0	130	34	280	70
SPA1	305,400	100	31,360	11	46,780	15

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 2

San Fernando

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA2-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

	Primary Language	Number	Percent
1	English only	897,120	48.8
2	Spanish	574,574	31.2
3	Armenian	100,393	5.5
4	Tagalog	47,022	2.6
5	Korean	36,604	2.0
6	Persian (Farsi)	28,639	1.6
7	Russian	16,702	0.9
8	Chinese	15,038	0.8
9	Arabic	12,776	0.7
10	Vietnamese	11,401	0.6

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA2-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	
African American	84,790	4	3,410	4	7,580	9
Asian	206,020	10	68,630	35	136,130	66
Asian Indian	20,140	1	3,930	22	13,810	69
Cambodian	1,250	0	630	54	880	70
Chinese, NT***	23,350	1	7,880	36	13,850	59
Filipino	68,950	3	13,860	21	46,590	68
Hmong	50	0				
Japanese	18,330	1	4,060	23	5,480	30
Korean	42,980	2	22,220	55	30,960	72
Vietnamese	13,280	1	7,000	58	9,720	73
Latino	709,230	36	307,490	48	372,210	52
Guatemalan	20,970	1	12,160	56	18,350	88
Mexican	459,270	23	201,250	48	228,210	50
Salvadoran	46,410	2	26,860	58	37,550	81
NH White****	1,003,970	51	101,670	11	214,380	21
Armenian	105,690	5	48,200	48	81,220	77
Iranian	33,040	2	12,580	40	25,470	77
SPA2	1,981,961	100	476,940	26	726,210	37

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 3

San Gabriel

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA3-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

	Primary Language	Number	Percent
1	English only	684,865	42.6
2	Spanish	543,322	33.8
3	Chinese	193,196	12.0
4	Tagalog	39,572	2.5
5	Vietnamese	34,436	2.1
6	Korean	23,046	1.4
7	Japanese	11,113	0.7
8	Armenian	9,252	0.6
9	Arabic	8,668	0.5
10	Other Pacific Islander languages	6,652	0.4

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA3-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	96,330	6	2,580	3	5,590	6
Asian	417,760	24	198,660	51	292,030	70
Asian Indian	14,390	1	3,210	24	9,800	68
Cambodian	4,690	0	2,320	52	3,420	73
Chinese, NT***	208,660	12	113,600	59	150,580	72
Filipino	58,660	3	11,830	21	38,740	66
Hmong	80	0				
Japanese	27,520	2	5,620	21	7,300	27
Korean	26,540	2	13,580	54	19,150	72
Vietnamese	42,110	2	27,050	67	33,610	80
Latino	755,320	44	264,130	39	307,950	41
Guatemalan	6,870	0	3,850	54	5,320	77
Mexican	602,360	35	212,570	39	238,790	40
Salvadoran	14,290	1	8,700	62	11,390	80
NH White****	486,320	28	20,660	4	49,420	10
Armenian	11,890	1	3,880	35	7,590	64
Iranian	3,430	0	1,180	36	2,530	74
SPA3	1,734,254	100	482,310	30	649,780	37

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 4

Metro

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA4-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

	Primary Language	Number	Percent
1	Spanish	519,749	49.0
2	English only	315,969	29.8
3	Korean	54,732	5.2
4	Tagalog	38,622	3.6
5	Chinese	29,613	2.8
6	Armenian	20,968	2.0
7	Russian	18,550	1.7
8	Japanese	7,250	0.7
9	French	6,574	0.6
10	Vietnamese	5,315	0.5

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA4-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	
African American	79,850	7	5,170	7	11,160	14
Asian	187,670	16	92,710	52	138,530	74
Asian Indian	6,060	1	1,340	24	4,550	75
Cambodian	2,570	0	1,660	62	2,120	82
Chinese, NT***	36,120	3	21,080	61	26,930	75
Filipino	51,600	5	13,570	28	37,530	73
Hmong	20	0				
Japanese	12,780	1	3,660	30	4,270	33
Korean	63,250	6	40,220	68	51,250	81
Vietnamese	7,730	1	4,710	67	5,980	77
Latino	620,580	54	318,230	57	363,610	59
Guatemalan	32,590	3	23,060	67	30,540	94
Mexican	364,220	32	184,880	55	203,940	56
Salvadoran	52,890	5	35,550	65	45,010	85
NH White****	268,240	23	44,220	17	81,470	30
Armenian	22,810	2	13,440	62	18,720	82
Iranian	3,840	0	1,650	45	3,260	85
SPA4	1,144,083	100	454,670	43	585,240	51

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 5

West

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA5-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

	Primary Language	Number	Percent
1	English only	381,403	65.2
2	Spanish	82,905	14.2
3	Persian (Farsi)	26,002	4.4
4	Chinese	12,993	2.2
5	Japanese	9,445	1.6
6	French	8,951	1.5
7	Korean	7,644	1.3
8	German	5,051	0.9
9	Tagalog	5,049	0.9
10	Hebrew	4,980	0.9

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA5-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	45,600	7	1,850	4	4,850	11
Asian	76,050	12	20,520	28	44,930	59
Asian Indian	8,430	1	1,110	15	5,690	67
Cambodian	200	0	100	53	110	55
Chinese, NT***	18,990	3	5,390	30	10,810	57
Filipino	10,780	2	1,670	17	6,830	63
Hmong	20	0				
Japanese	18,250	3	6,580	37	7,510	41
Korean	10,050	2	4,630	48	7,230	72
Vietnamese	2,830	0	1,190	47	1,760	62
Latino	98,310	16	36,420	40	48,500	49
Guatemalan	2,260	0				
Mexican	64,530	11	25,100	42	29,500	46
Salvadoran	3,940	1	2,120	55	3,240	82
NH White****	402,770	66	24,170	6	76,610	19
Armenian	2,980	0	800	28	1,680	56
Iranian	27,360	4	9,940	38	21,560	79
SPA5	613,191	100	81,160	14	172,990	28

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 6

South

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA6-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

	Primary Language	Number	Percent
1	Spanish	479,165	55.7
2	English only	359,746	41.8
3	African languages	2,534	0.3
4	Chinese	2,477	0.3
5	Other Pacific Island languages	2,012	0.2
6	Tagalog	1,827	0.2
7	Korean	1,676	0.2
8	French	1,443	0.2
9	Other, unspecified languages	1,161	0.1
10	Japanese	1,146	0.1

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA6-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	
African American	347,710	36	7,030	2	15,940	5
Asian	17,150	2	5,420	34	9,790	57
Asian Indian	2,220	0	670	34	1,270	57
Cambodian	710	0	370	56	480	68
Chinese, NT***	3,190	0	1,250	42	1,970	62
Filipino	3,310	0	830	27	2,030	62
Hmong	20	0				
Japanese	3,180	0	590	19	610	19
Korean	2,260	0	1,040	49	1,530	68
Vietnamese	740	0	380	56	510	69
Latino	570,290	60	294,220	59	320,110	56
Guatemalan	14,970	2	11,100	70	12,240	82
Mexican	403,440	42	211,240	58	223,760	55
Salvadoran	32,790	3	19,660	59	26,610	81
NH White****	29,150	3	1,390	5	2,260	8
Armenian	260	0	120	49	170	65
Iranian	460	0	260	59	390	85
SPA6	955,054	100	308,770	36	348,010	36

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 7

East

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA7-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

	Primary Language	Number	Percent
1	Spanish	663,128	56.5
2	English only	403,573	34.4
3	Tagalog	21,303	1.8
4	Korean	21,010	1.8
5	Chinese	15,811	1.3
6	Vietnamese	4,549	0.4
7	Armenian	4,116	0.4
8	Arabic	4,067	0.3
9	Khmer	3,513	0.3
10	Japanese	3,156	0.3

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA7-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	43,600	3	1,150	3	2,530	6
Asian	113,190	9	39,900	38	71,520	63
Asian Indian	9,070	1	2,250	28	6,260	69
Cambodian	3,580	0	1,930	56	2,510	70
Chinese, NT***	18,070	1	7,430	43	11,370	63
Filipino	33,490	3	6,620	21	21,720	65
Hmong	90	0				
Japanese	10,910	1	1,720	16	2,250	21
Korean	24,160	2	12,800	56	17,180	71
Vietnamese	6,100	0	3,390	59	4,510	74
Latino	876,030	68	343,530	44	387,510	44
Guatemalan	9,510	1	6,610	67	7,110	75
Mexican	701,650	55	275,670	43	303,320	43
Salvadoran	20,230	2	12,050	61	15,760	78
NH White****	261,090	20	11,550	5	23,120	9
Armenian	5,360	0	2,010	40	3,430	64
Iranian	1,170	0	430	39	840	72
SPA7	1,285,210	100	396,960	34	485,570	38

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 8

South

L.A. SPEAKS: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY BY LOS ANGELES COUNTY SERVICE PLANNING AREA

TABLE SPA8-1: PRIMARY LANGUAGE*

Primary Language	Number	Percent
1 English only	783,113	56.6
2 Spanish	408,078	29.5
3 Tagalog	39,126	2.8
4 Korean	19,809	1.4
5 Japanese	19,772	1.4
6 Chinese	17,833	1.3
7 Khmer	17,620	1.3
8 Vietnamese	12,561	0.9
9 Other Pacific Islander languages	9,249	0.7
10 Persian (Farsi)	5,428	0.4

*For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

TABLE SPA8-2: POPULATION, POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS BY RACIAL (SUB)GROUP*

Selected Groups	Population		Limited English Proficient**		Foreign Born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	
African American	257,820	17	4,940	2	12,510	5
Asian	214,060	14	72,800	36	125,010	58
Asian Indian	9,720	1	2,050	24	6,640	68
Cambodian	20,910	1	11,630	58	13,430	64
Chinese, NT***	25,080	2	8,330	36	14,250	57
Filipino	63,670	4	15,520	26	41,650	66
Hmong	450	0	160	63	150	33
Japanese	45,700	3	11,320	26	14,060	31
Korean	24,970	2	13,140	55	18,310	73
Vietnamese	15,470	1	8,510	60	11,340	73
Latino	523,560	35	217,110	47	253,840	48
Guatemalan	11,910	1	8,940	72	11,460	96
Mexican	384,310	26	164,080	47	184,570	48
Salvadoran	13,390	1	7,950	60	10,870	81
NH White****	518,110	35	16,570	3	45,090	9
Armenian	3,140	0	860	29	1,810	58
Iranian	5,780	0	1,870	34	4,400	76
SPA8	1,500,185	100	310,340	22	434,880	29

*Data by racial (sub)group are measured as alone or in combination and include overlap with other racial (sub)groups. All racial (sub)groups not shown. Figures rounded to nearest ten, will not sum to total or 100%.

**For the population 5-years-of-age and older.

***Chinese, non-Taiwanese.

****Non-Hispanic White

Technical note: Percent figures listed under primary language and population should be read as percent of column, or total population. Percent figures listed under limited English proficient and foreign-born should be read as percent of row, or racial group/racial subgroup.

Conducted by the United States Census Bureau, Census 2000 provides information on population and population characteristics, including language, English language ability, and related characteristics, by racial group and racial subgroup (i.e., ethnic group) for a host of geographic areas. Unfortunately, Census 2000 does not provide such characteristics for Los Angeles County Service Planning Areas (SPAs).

This study attempts to address this shortcoming by estimating language, limited English proficiency, nativity, and citizenship in SPAs for each of four racial groups and 13 racial subgroups: African Americans, Asians (including Asian Indian, Cambodian, Chinese non-Taiwanese, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese subgroups), Latinos (including Guatemalan, Mexican, and Salvadoran subgroups), and non-Hispanic Whites (including Armenian and Iranian subgroups).

Because census tracts are the building blocks used to construct SPAs, census tract level estimates of language, limited English proficiency, nativity, and citizenship were produced for each racial group and racial subgroup and aggregated to the SPA level to produce final SPA level estimates.

Census Tract Level Estimation

The challenge in producing SPA level estimates lies in the availability of Census 2000 data on language, limited English proficiency, and related characteristics at the census tract level. Because the Census Bureau suppresses a considerable amount of these data for smaller racial groups and racial subgroups based on data suppression thresholds designed to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of response, data are not available by racial group and racial subgroup for every census tract countywide.

To address this problem, it became necessary to estimate missing census tract level data using statistical models.

Logistic regression models predicting these missing data were developed for each racial group and racial subgroup using available census tract level data on core characteristics (including limited English proficiency, nativity, and citizenship) and other demographic characteristics (including linguistic isolation, median age, average household size, high school completion, per capita income, poverty, and homeownership) for the total population as predictors. Model outcomes were used with available data to estimate missing racial group and racial subgroup population characteristics. Census tract level data were then aggregated to the county level to compare with data available at the larger geographic area. In cases where aggregated and actual county level data were inconsistent, census tract level estimates were adjusted for consistency.

The resulting census tract level data were then aggregated to the SPA level using publicly available 'tract assignment' files, which contain the SPA in which each census tract countywide resides. SPA level estimates were suppressed if (a) they were produced using census tract level estimates that could not be adjusted using county level data, (b) the amount of adjustment necessary to achieve accuracy was excessive, or (c) they captured population characteristic data for a racial group or racial subgroup numbering fewer than 100.

Research Sponsor



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