

Language Access at DCYF: Profile of non-English languages spoken by Washington families

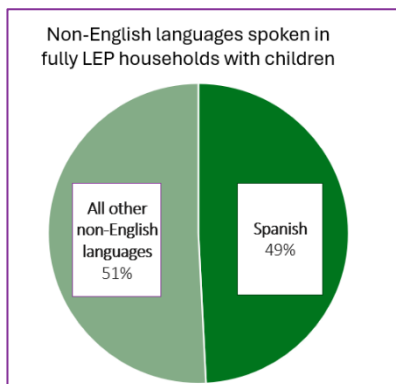
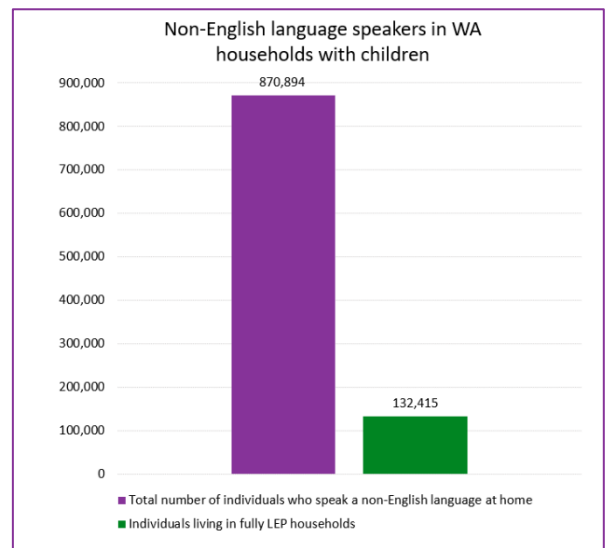
Statewide population estimates from the American Community Survey can help us to better understand and meet the language access (LA) needs of Washington state's families.

Limited English Proficient (LEP)

LEP is a federal designation used for individuals who self-identify as speaking English less than "very well." Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, all programs receiving federal funding are required to provide Language Access (LA) services to LEP individuals and families. For more information about these services at DCYF, refer to the **Language Access Plan** at <https://dcyf.wa.gov/language-access>.

"Fully LEP Households"

A fully LEP household has no member over the age of 14 who speaks English "very well." This group presents the clearest need for LA services. However, given the sensitive and complex nature of many DCYF communications, individuals may still need LA services even if they have proficient English speakers in their household. It is also against DCYF policy for teenagers to provide translation or interpretation for their family members. Because of these factors, **the true scope of the need for LA likely extends well beyond households in which all adult members self-identify as LEP.**



Spanish is the most prevalent non-English

language spoken in WA, both statewide and within all 6 DCYF Regions.

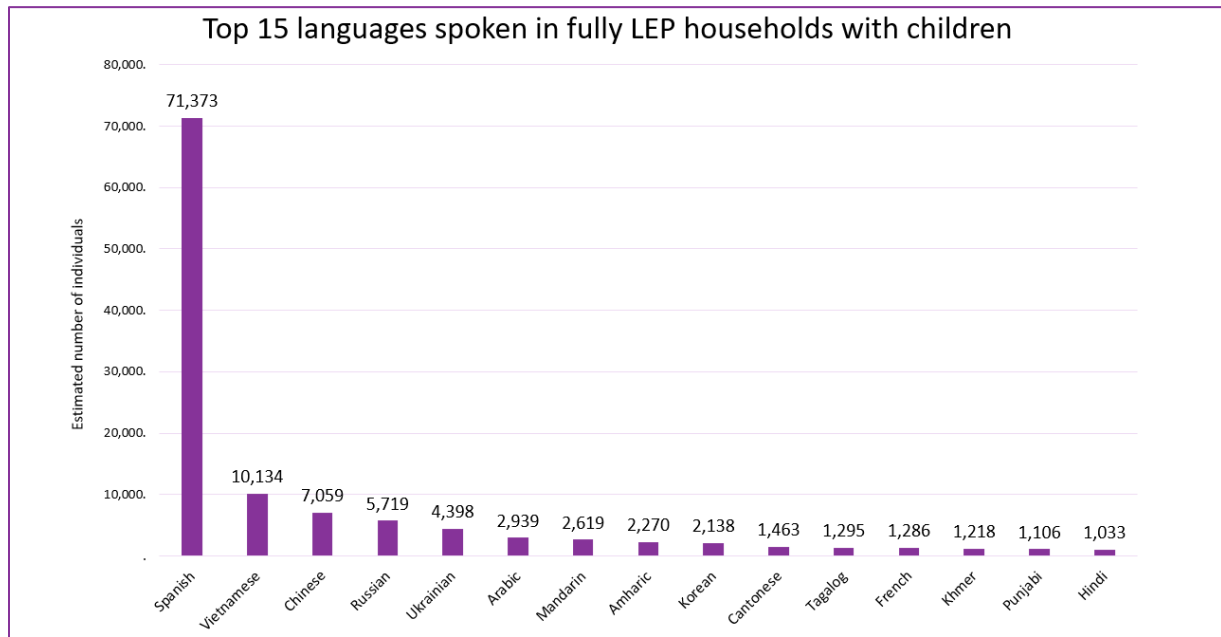
Out of Washingtonians living in households with children, about **428,422 (11.7%) speak Spanish at home**. Out of these, about **71,373 live in fully LEP households**, representing almost half of Washingtonians living in fully LEP households.

For Washingtonians who identified as American Indian / Alaska Native, more than 19,000 individuals lived in households where a language other than English was spoken, and about 3,000 of these were in fully LEP households. **Spanish speakers**

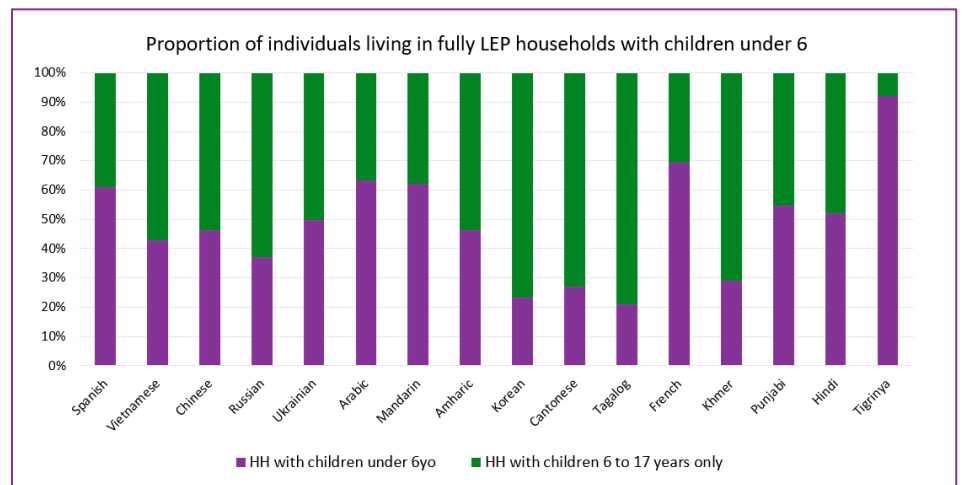
accounted for almost 90% of American Indian / Alaska Native individuals in fully LEP households.



After Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese are the next most common spoken languages in WA households where no member over 14 years old speaks English “very well.”



Given DCYF’s role in WA’s Early Learning systems, families with young children are a population of special interest. This graph shows all language groups with 1,000 or more estimated speakers, split to show the proportion of each group made up of individuals living in households with children under 6.



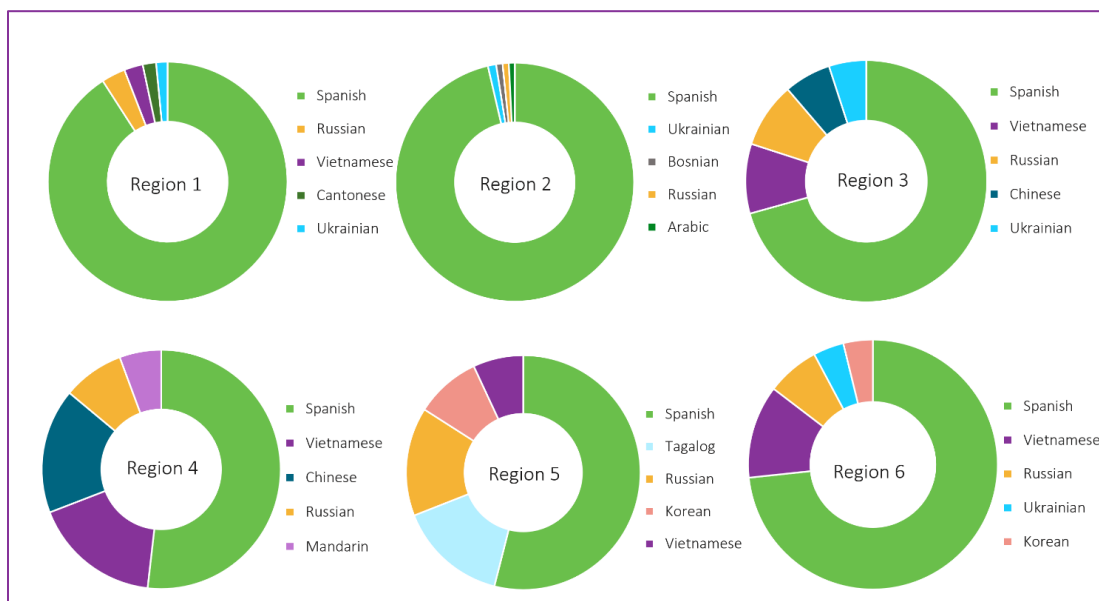
Among the approximately 71,373 individuals living in fully LEP households with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, Spanish-speakers accounted for 65% of individuals (about 46,500 people).

In 2022, an annual household income of 200% of the Federal Poverty Level was about \$55,000 for a family of four. This table shows all language groups that had more than 800 speakers. Given the multiple stressors these families face, DCYF should be especially aware of how to best support their LA needs.

Language	Estimated number of individuals
Spanish	46,500
Russian	3,378
Ukrainian	2,543
Vietnamese	2,315
Arabic	2,205
Chinese	1,523
French	994
Tigrinya	974
Somali	813

Washington's population characteristics vary across the state, and as a result, different DCYF regional offices may experience different LA needs.

The following graphic displays the top five language groups in each DCYF region and provides an overview of differences in population patterns between the regions. These languages all appear in the statewide top 15 graphic shown above, except for Bosnian (Region 2, < 200 estimated speakers). For a map of the DCYF regional structure, visit https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/COMM_0008.pdf.



The Safe Harbor Provision

This federal recommendation was developed by the Department of Justice to provide evidence of compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. It specifies that written translations of vital documents should be available for all language groups that constitute 1,000 people, or 5% of the population, eligible to be served (whichever is less). It is difficult to assess the current LA needs of the DCYF population, and this is an ongoing area of study. Since all Washington families are eligible for DCYF programs and services, one step toward ensuring LA for DCYF's diverse population is making translations available for all languages with more than 1,000 estimated speakers living in households with children.

Where does this data come from?

The American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) is a representative dataset that the U.S. Census Bureau makes available for research purposes. This brief shows estimated numbers of individuals living in Washington households with children and youth birth to 17, based on data collected annually between 2018 and 2022. For more information on the ACS, visit <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year Public Use Microdata Samples*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/access.html>.

