



Limited English Proficient Individuals in the United States: Number, Share, Growth, and Linguistic Diversity

I. Introduction

The number of US residents who are deemed to be Limited English Proficient (LEP)¹ has increased substantially in recent decades, consistent with the growth in the US foreign-born population.² While many LEP individuals are still attracted to the historic immigrant-destination states of California, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Illinois, significant numbers are opting to settle in nontraditional destinations in the Southeastern, Southwestern, and Northwestern United States.³

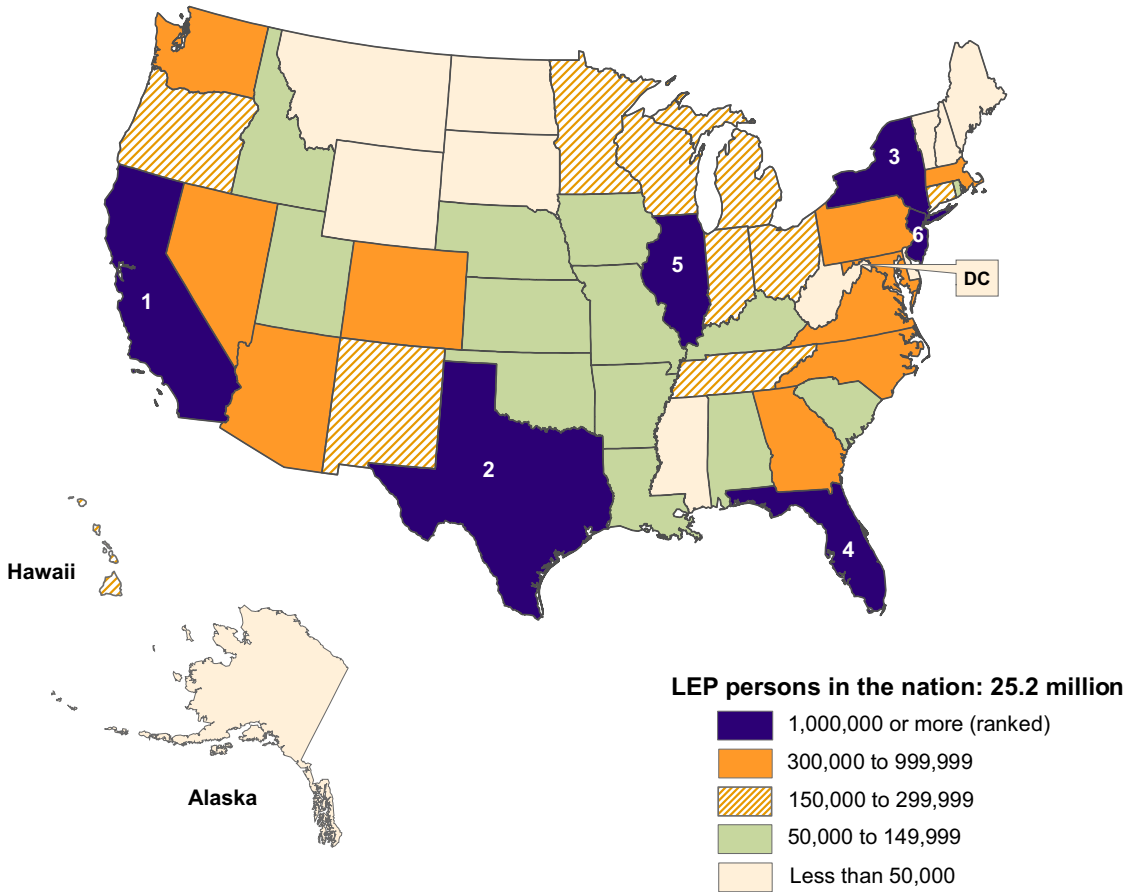
Sustained high rates of immigration and the dispersion of LEP individuals to these new destination states have meant that an increasing number of states and localities must grapple with issues of communication and English language learning. Further, as the LEP population has grown, so has its linguistic diversity. This data brief provides the most up-to-date analysis on the number, share, growth, and linguistic diversity of LEP individuals in the United States.

This information is compiled from US Census Bureau and Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data,⁴ in order to assist the wide array of stakeholders at the national, state, and local levels attempting to understand and address the challenges and opportunities created by language diversity. While this brief focuses on those states with the largest concentration or highest growth rates of LEP populations, two online companion charts include demographic data on number, share, growth, and linguistic diversity of the LEP population in all 50 states.⁵ (See endnotes for information on how to access those online charts.)

II. Number and Share: LEP Individuals Account for 9 Percent of the US Population and Primarily Reside in Six States

In 2010, LEP individuals accounted for 25.2 million, or 9 percent, of the US population over age 5. The highest concentrations of LEP individuals were found in the six traditional immigrant-destination states — California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey (see Map 1).⁶ These states each had 1 million or more LEP residents and together represented 68 percent of the total LEP population.⁷ Ten states with LEP populations between 300,000 and 999,000 accounted for about 18 percent of the total US LEP population. At the other end of the scale, 11 states and the District of Columbia had LEP populations of fewer than 50,000 and amounted to 1 percent of the total US LEP population (see Map 1). In addition to the 25.2 million LEP individuals in the United States, another 2.8 million LEP individuals resided in Puerto Rico in 2010.⁸

Map 1. Number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individuals by State, 2010



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Note: An additional 2.8 million LEP persons resided in Puerto Rico. No information is available on LEP populations in other outlying US territories.

Source: Authors' tabulations from the US Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey (ACS), Table B16001, "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over," available through American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

California had roughly 6.9 million LEP residents in 2010 — the highest number of any state — and accounted for 27 percent of the total US LEP population. Texas had the second-highest share of LEP residents, accounting for 13 percent of the US LEP population (See Table 1).

Table 1. Top States for Number and Share of LEP Residents, 2010

Rank	State	LEP Population (thousands)	Share of Total US LEP Population (percent)
1	California	6,898	27.3
2	Texas	3,359	13.3
3	New York	2,458	9.7
4	Florida	2,112	8.4
5	Illinois	1,158	4.6
6	New Jersey	1,031	4.1

Source: Authors' tabulations from Census Bureau 2010 ACS, Table B16001, "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over," available through American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

While the majority of LEP residents were concentrated in traditional immigrant-destination states, other states had high shares of LEP residents relative to their populations. In 13 states, the share of the state LEP population relative to the total state population met or exceeded the national level (see Table 2). While some of these states did not contribute significantly to the total number of LEP individuals nationwide, LEP individuals were a significant portion of the state population. For example, nearly 12 percent of Hawaii's population had limited English proficiency, as did 9 percent of Rhode Island's population.

Table 2. States Where Share of LEP Residents Meets or Exceeds National Share, 2010

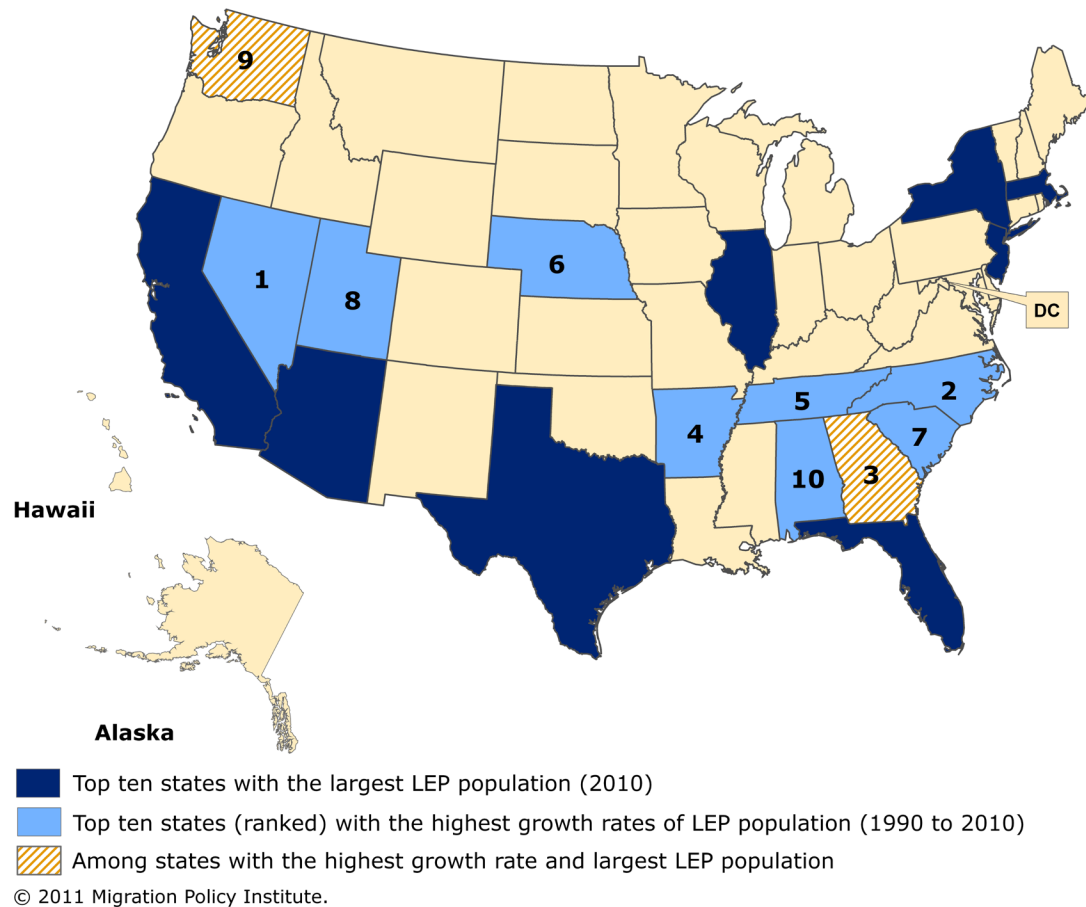
Rank	State	State Population (in thousands)	State LEP Population (in thousands)	Share of State LEP Population to Total State Population (percent)
1	California	34,820	6,898	19.8
2	Texas	23,328	3,359	14.4
3	New York	18,241	2,458	13.5
4	New Jersey	8,263	1,031	12.5
5	Nevada	2,518	310	12.3
6	Florida	17,775	2,112	11.9
7	Hawaii	1,277	150	11.8
8	Arizona	5,958	587	9.9
9	Illinois	12,010	1,158	9.6
10	Rhode Island	996	92	9.2
11	New Mexico	1,922	177	9.2
12	Massachusetts	6,191	547	8.8
13	Connecticut	3,375	293	8.7
		US Population (in thousands)	US LEP Population (in thousands)	Share of US LEP Population to Total US Population (percent)
United States		289,216	25,223	8.7

Source: Authors' tabulations from US Census Bureau 2010 ACS, Table B16001, "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over," available through American FactFinder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

III. Growth: The US LEP Population Increased by 80 Percent from 1990 to 2010

The number of LEP individuals in the United States grew by 80 percent between 1990 and 2010, and the South-eastern and Southwestern United States saw some of the highest growth rates during this time period (see Map 2). However, California and other traditional immigrant-destination states continued to account for the majority of the country's LEP population, although at slower growth rates than the new destination states.

Map 2. Top Ten States with Largest Population or Highest Growth Rate of LEP Individuals, 2010



Source: Authors' tabulations from US Census Bureau 2010 ACS, Table B16001, "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over," available at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>; 1990 Decennial Census, Table 1, "Language Use and English Ability, Persons 5 Years and Over, by State," available at www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/census/table1.txt.

Table 3 examines the actual change in population in new immigrant-destination states that experienced the sharpest growth rates in their LEP populations from 1990 to 2010. For instance, Nevada experienced a 398 percent increase in its LEP population during this time, representing the greatest change in any state (see Map 2). North Carolina and Georgia also saw sharp increases in their LEP populations, with growth of 395 percent and 379 percent, respectively. Further, Georgia and Washington ranked among the top ten states with the largest number of LEP residents and the top ten states with the sharpest growth rate of LEP residents.

Table 3. Top Ten States with the Highest Growth in LEP Population, 1990 to 2010

Rank	State	1990 LEP Population (thousands)	2010 LEP Population (thousands)	Change from 1990 to 2010 (percent)
1	Nevada	62	310	398.2
2	North Carolina	87	430	395.2
3	Georgia	109	522	378.8
4	Arkansas	21	88	311.5
5	Tennessee	46	174	281.4
6	Nebraska	22	76	242.2
7	South Carolina	38	127	237.2
8	Utah	41	137	235.2
9	Washington	165	512	209.7
10	Alabama	36	109	202.1
		1990 US LEP Population (in thousands)	2010 US LEP Population (in thousands)	Change from 1990 to 2010 (percent)
United States		13,983	25,223	80.4

Source: Authors' tabulations from US Census Bureau 2010 ACS, Table B16001, "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over," available at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>; 1990 Decennial Census, Table 1, "Language Use and English Ability, Persons 5 Years and Over, by State," available at www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/census/table1.txt.

Four of the six traditional immigrant-destination states experienced growth rates in their LEP populations below the national average of 80 percent (see Table 4). California, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York were slow-growth states, with New York's LEP population growing by only 39 percent between 1990 and 2010. The remaining traditional immigrant-destination states continued to outpace the national average: Florida's LEP population grew by 120 percent and Texas' LEP population grew by 90 percent.

Table 4. Growth in LEP Population in the Ten States with the Largest Number of LEP Individuals, 2010

Rank	State	1990 LEP Population (thousands)	2010 LEP Population (thousands)	Change from 1990 to 2010 (percent)
1	California	4,423	6,898	56
2	Texas	1,766	3,359	90.2
3	New York	1,766	2,458	39.2
4	Florida	961	2,112	119.7
5	Illinois	658	1,158	76
6	New Jersey	609	1,031	69.3
7	Arizona	276	587	112.9
8	Massachusetts	349	547	56.7
9	Georgia	109	522	378.8
10	Washington	165	512	209.7
		1990 US LEP Population (in thousands)	2010 US LEP Population (in thousands)	Change from 1990 to 2010 (percent)
United States		13,983	25,223	80.4

Source: Authors' tabulations from the US Census Bureau's 2010 ACS (Table B16001. *Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over*) available at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml> and 1990 Decennial Census (Table 1. "Language Use and English Ability, Persons 5 Years and Over, by State") available at www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/census/table1.txt.

IV. Linguistic Concentration: Most LEP Individuals Speak Spanish

Spanish-speaking LEP individuals accounted for 66 percent of the total US LEP population in 2010. The next two languages most commonly spoken were Chinese and Vietnamese, which accounted for 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively.⁹ While the predominance of Spanish eclipses other languages spoken by LEP individuals in terms of share and absolute number, the diversity of other LEP-spoken languages has important implications for government agencies, businesses, and communities in which LEP individuals reside, particularly when vital information (such as in the event of an emergency or natural disaster) must be communicated to all residents.

In 2010, five languages — Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tagalog — were spoken by 79 percent of all LEP individuals (see Table 5). The sixth through tenth most common languages spoken by LEP individuals — Russian, French Creole, Arabic, Portuguese, and African languages — were distributed roughly equally.

Table 5. Top Ten Languages Spoken by LEP Individuals, 2010

Rank	Language	Number (in thousands)	Share
1	Spanish or Spanish Creole	16,524	65.5
2	Chinese	1,548	6.1
3	Vietnamese	836	3.3
4	Korean	635	2.5
5	Tagalog	489	1.9
6	Russian	416	1.7
7	French Creole	323	1.3
8	Arabic	321	1.3
9	Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	277	1.1
10	African languages	276	1.1

Note: In the absence of specific languages listed, this table excludes “other Indic languages” which were among the top ten languages spoken by LEP individuals indicated in the 2010 ACS data. However, African languages are included because there is no separate category in the ACS data that includes at least one African language.

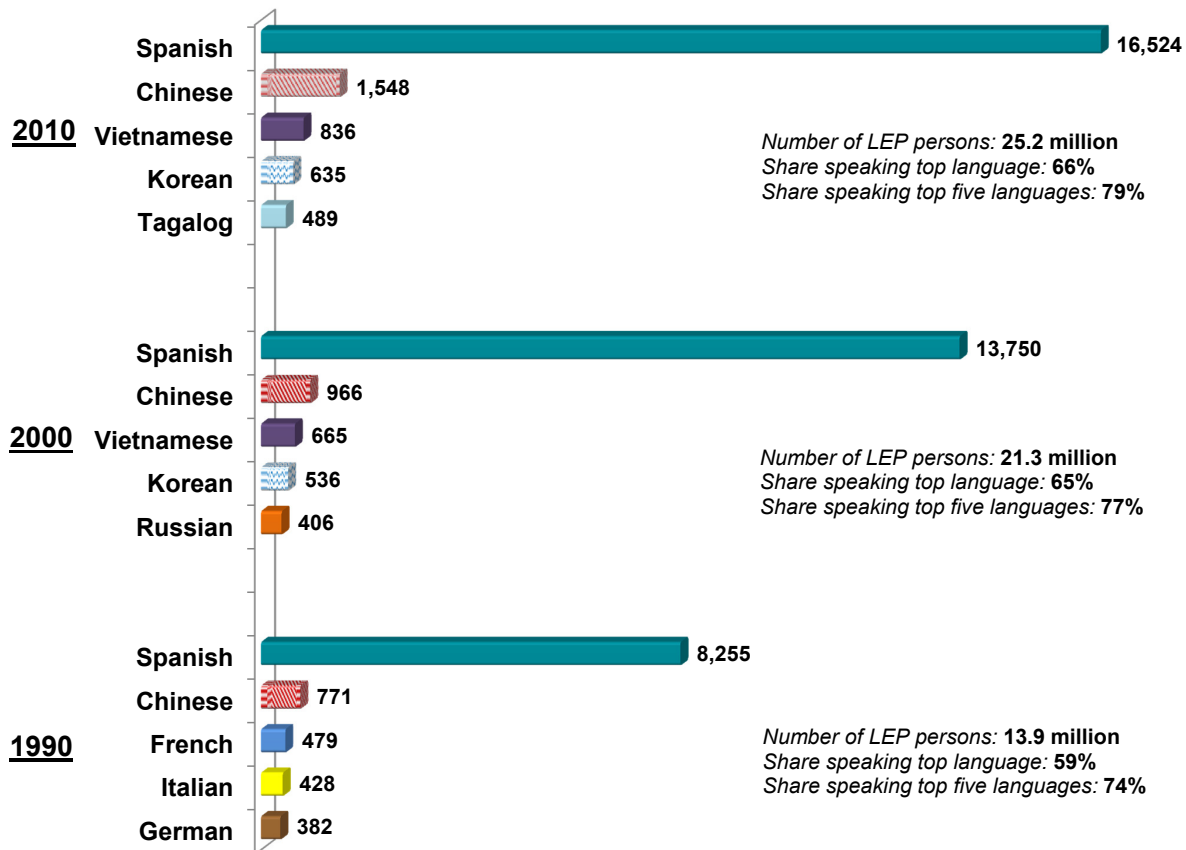
Source: Authors’ tabulations from US Census Bureau 2010 ACS, Table B16001, “Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over,” available through American Fact Finder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

V. Linguistic Changes over Time

The makeup of the top five languages spoken by LEP individuals changed between 1990 and 2010. While Spanish and Chinese held their positions as the top two languages spoken in 1990, 2000, and 2010, the other top languages spoken by LEP individuals have since evolved (see Figure 1).

In 1990, French, Italian, and German were among the top five languages most commonly spoken by LEP individuals. By 2000, these three languages had been replaced by Vietnamese, Korean, and Russian, and by 2010 Russian had been replaced by Tagalog. In fact, by 2010, Italian and German were no longer among the top ten LEP-spoken languages.

Figure 1. Top Five Languages Spoken by LEP Individuals, 1990, 2000, and 2010 (in thousands)*



Notes: *Chinese includes Mandarin and Cantonese; French includes French, Patois, and Cajun; Spanish includes Spanish Creole. Source: Authors' analysis of US Census Bureau 1990 and 2000 Decennial Censuses and 2010 ACS. The 1990 and 2000 data are accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) (Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010), <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>; the 2010 data are accessed through the US Census Bureau's American FactFinder.

VI. Linguistic Diversity: Variation in Languages Spoken at National, State, and Metropolitan-Area Levels

Spanish was the predominant language spoken by LEP individuals at every geographic level analyzed for this data brief (national, state, and metropolitan area). However, the share relative to other top languages spoken by LEP individuals at the state and metropolitan levels varied. Moreover, there was variation in languages spoken at the state and metropolitan-area levels.¹⁰ These dynamics in language diversity are illustrated by Tables 6 and 7, which show the top languages spoken by LEP individuals at the national, state, and metropolitan-area level. Data are presented for the ten states with the largest number of LEP residents, the ten states that experienced the highest growth in LEP residents in between 1990 and 2010, and the largest metropolitan areas of LEP residence in these states.¹¹ The analysis provides a “language diversity profile,” underscoring the complexity of the challenges facing those who seek to address the range of issues associated with language diversity — from overcoming communication barriers to leveraging the vast reservoir of human capital these language skills represent.

Table 6. Top Five Languages Spoken in Ten States and Corresponding Metropolitan Areas With Largest LEP Population, 2009

State / Metro Area	LEP Population (thousands)	Language 1	Share of Language 1	Language 2	Language 3	Language 4	Language 5
United States	25,052	Spanish	65.8	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean	Tagalog
California	6,852	Spanish	67.9	Chinese	Vietnamese	Tagalog	Korean
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	3,078	Spanish	68.3	Chinese	Korean	Vietnamese	Tagalog
Texas	3,310	Spanish	87.4	Vietnamese	Chinese	Korean	African languages
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	936	Spanish	82.1	Vietnamese	Chinese	Urdu	Arabic
New York	2,433	Spanish	50.6	Chinese	Russian	Italian	Korean
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	3,071	Spanish	53.4	Chinese	Russian	Korean	Italian
Florida	2,084	Spanish	76.8	French Creole	Vietnamese	Portuguese	French
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	1,224	Spanish	80.6	French Creole	Portuguese	French	Chinese
Illinois	1,156	Spanish	62.9	Polish	Chinese	Korean	Tagalog
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	1,101	Spanish	63.5	Polish	Chinese	Korean	Tagalog
New Jersey	1,009	Spanish	57.5	Chinese	Portuguese	Korean	Gujarati
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	3,071	Spanish	53.4	Chinese	Russian	Korean	Italian
Arizona	616	Spanish	80.9	Navajo	Chinese	Vietnamese	Arabic
Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ	410	Spanish	82.3	Chinese	Vietnamese	Arabic	Korean
Massachusetts	542	Spanish	38.3	Portuguese	Chinese	Vietnamese	French Creole
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	393	Spanish	37.2	Portuguese	Chinese	French Creole	Vietnamese
Georgia	525	Spanish	68	Korean	Vietnamese	Chinese	African languages
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	375	Spanish	63	Korean	Vietnamese	Chinese	African languages
Washington	497	Spanish	47.3	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean	Russian
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	292	Spanish	30.8	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean	Russian

Notes: Spanish includes Spanish Creole and Portuguese includes Portuguese Creole. The national LEP population here varies slightly from the 2010 LEP population because we use pooled 2008-10 data here.

Source: Authors' tabulations from US Census Bureau 2008-10 ACS, Table B16001, "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over," available through American Fact Finder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

None of the ten states with the largest LEP populations listed in Table 6 had the same state-level language diversity profile as the national level. Not surprisingly, given the size and share of its LEP population relative to the national LEP population, California's language diversity profile most closely matched the national level. Florida had the greatest divergence in terms of top languages spoken, with French Creole, Portuguese, and French (which includes Cajun and Patois) ranking among the top five languages spoken. In states such as Illinois and Massachusetts, which had relatively lower shares of Spanish-speaking LEP residents, the second most commonly spoken languages also varied from the national level. In Illinois, for example, the second most commonly spoken language by LEP residents was Polish, while in Massachusetts, which had the lowest share of Spanish-speaking LEP residents among the ten states listed in Table 6, Portuguese ranked second in LEP-spoken languages.

At the metropolitan-area level, additional diversity was evident. For instance, in Florida, where the top languages spoken already diverged markedly from the national list, there was additional divergence moving from the state to the metropolitan levels. In the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach metropolitan area, Chinese was among the top languages spoken by the area's LEP population, while not even ranking among the top five at the state level. In Texas, the Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown metropolitan area counted Urdu and Arabic as its fourth and fifth most commonly spoken languages by LEP residents, while neither was among the top five state languages.

Spanish was the top language in each of the ten states that experienced the fastest growth in LEP individuals in the past two decades (see Table 7). The share of Spanish-speaking LEP individuals in these states was generally higher than in the states with the largest LEP populations, with the exceptions of Washington and Georgia. However, overall, these new destination states showed greater diversity in the top languages spoken statewide than in states with the largest LEP populations. For example, at the state level, Arkansas counted Laotian and Hmong among the top five languages spoken by LEP residents, while Nebraska and Tennessee counted Arabic and various African languages among their top five languages. At the metropolitan-area level, there was great linguistic diversity in languages other than Spanish spoken by LEP individuals. For example, in the Salt Lake City, Utah, metropolitan area, Serbo-Croatian and African languages were among the top five languages spoken by LEP individuals, whereas Navajo and Korean rounded out the top five at the state level.

Table 7. Top Five Languages Spoken in Top Ten States and Corresponding Metropolitan Areas With Fastest-Growing LEP Population, 2009

State / Metro Area	LEP Population (thousands)	Language 1	Share of Language 1	Language 2	Language 3	Language 4	Language 5
United States	25,052	Spanish	65.8	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean	Tagalog
Nevada	327	Spanish	74.7	Tagalog	Chinese	Korean	African languages
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	274	Spanish	73.2	Tagalog	Chinese	Korean	African languages
North Carolina	433	Spanish	76.9	Vietnamese	Chinese	Korean	Arabic
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	101	Spanish	72.3	Vietnamese	Chinese	Russian	Korean
Georgia	525	Spanish	68	Korean	Vietnamese	Chinese	African languages
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	375	Spanish	63	Korean	Vietnamese	Chinese	African languages
Arkansas	87	Spanish	79.9	Vietnamese	Laotian	Chinese	Hmong
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	41	Spanish	68.4	Chinese	African languages	Vietnamese	Korean
Tennessee	168	Spanish	66.5	Chinese	Arabic	African languages	Korean
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	41	Spanish	68.4	Chinese	African languages	Vietnamese	Korean
Nebraska	76	Spanish	73.7	Vietnamese	African languages	Chinese	Arabic
Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	36	Spanish	74.4	African languages	French	Vietnamese	Chinese
South Carolina	134	Spanish	76.4	Chinese	Vietnamese	French	German
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	101	Spanish	72.3	Vietnamese	Chinese	Russian	Korean
Utah	135	Spanish	73.1	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean	Navajo
Salt Lake City, UT	77	Spanish	68.8	Chinese	Vietnamese	Serbo-Croatian	African languages
Washington	497	Spanish	47.3	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean	Russian
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	292	Spanish	30.8	Chinese	Vietnamese	Korean	Russian
Alabama	106	Spanish	75.7	Chinese	Korean	Vietnamese	German
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	30	Spanish	79.4	Chinese	Vietnamese	Arabic	German

Notes: Spanish includes Spanish Creole and Portuguese includes Portuguese Creole. The national LEP population here varies slightly from the 2010 LEP population because we use pooled 2008-10 data here.

Source: Authors' tabulations from US Census Bureau 2008-10 ACS, Table B16001, "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over," available through the American Fact Finder at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

For LEP Number, Share, and Growth in All 50 States, visit www.migrationinformation.org/integration/LEPPopulationData.xlsx.

For LEP Linguistic Diversity Nationwide, visit www.migrationinformation.org/integration/LEPLinguisticData.xlsx.

VII. Appendix: Approach

To analyze the number, share, and growth of the US LEP population, the authors used historical 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census data as well as the most recent 2010 ACS data from the US Census Bureau. In order to analyze growth, national and state LEP populations in 1990 versus 2010 were compared, although the authors provide data on the national and state LEP population in 2000 in an online companion chart. The 1990s saw unprecedented growth of immigrant populations in nontraditional immigrant states and a comparison from 1990 to 2010 illustrates the magnitude of this growth over the last two decades.¹² In order to analyze top languages spoken by the LEP population at the national level, 2010 ACS data were used; for the trends at the state and metropolitan area-levels, pooled 2008-10 ACS data were used. The pooled data increase the sample size and thus improve estimates of languages spoken by LEP individuals at smaller geographic levels.¹³

Both the 2010 and pooled 2008-10 ACS data report broad groupings of languages in some instances. For example, while three languages spoken by individuals from South Asia — Hindi, Urdu, and Gujarati — are listed individually, other languages spoken in the region, such as Bengali and Punjabi, are grouped together under the category “other Indic languages.” Generally, these language groupings are not included in this analysis because they lack specific information on languages spoken. The exception in this analysis is “African languages,” included because neither the pooled data nor the one-year ACS data disaggregate *any* African languages and therefore this broad grouping is the only representation of this family of languages in the data.¹⁴

The US Census Bureau has previously published supplemental data providing greater detail on languages spoken. These data provide in-depth counts of additional languages to those published in the one-year and pooled data. For example, the Census Bureau disaggregates language groups, such as “African languages” and “other Indic languages,” providing greater specificity to the number of particular language speakers that are otherwise grouped into a broader category. However, at the time of publication of this data brief, the US Census Bureau had not released the more detailed data.¹⁵

Endnotes

- 1 The term Limited English Proficient (LEP) refers to any person age 5 and older who reported speaking English “less than very well,” as classified by the US Census Bureau.
- 2 This data brief uses the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census, as well as pooled 2008-10 and 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) data from the US Census Bureau. As part of the Decennial Census and ACS data collection, each household member is asked to answer three questions related to language use: *Does this person speak a language other than English at home?* If yes, then: *What is this language?* (e.g., Korean, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese) and *How well does this person speak English?* (e.g., not at all, not well, well, very well, less than very well, not at all).
- 3 Aaron Terrazas, “Immigrants in New-Destination States,” *Migration Information Source*, February 2011, www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=826.
- 4 See VII. Appendix: Approach for data used in this brief along with data approach.
- 5 The data are available at: www.migrationinformation.org/integration/LEPPopulationData.xlsx and www.migrationinformation.org/integration/LEPLinguisticData.xlsx.
- 6 These states have highest foreign-born populations. In 2010, the share of foreign-born individuals of all ages in these states was: 27 percent in California; 16 percent in Texas; 22 percent in New York; 19 percent in Florida; 14 percent in Illinois; and 21 percent in New Jersey. Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub, “2010 American Community Survey and Census Data on the Foreign Born By State (State Rankings),” www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/acscensus.cfm.
- 7 The US foreign-born population over age 5 stood at about 40 million in 2010, compared to 19.8 million in 1990. Of that amount, 52 percent had limited English proficiency. MPI Data Hub, “2010 American Community Survey and Census Data on the Foreign Born By State (State Rankings).”
- 8 Analysis restricted to the 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. ACS data for other US insular areas are not available.
- 9 Chinese includes Mandarin, Cantonese, and Chinese. This aggregation is used by the 2010 ACS as well as in the pooled 2008-10 ACS data.
- 10 The metropolitan areas highlighted in this data brief are those with the largest LEP populations, which may not always coincide with the largest metropolitan area in a given state or region in terms of overall population. This data brief uses 2008-10 ACS pooled data for this section.
- 11 Metropolitan areas, as defined by the US Census Bureau, often cross state boundaries.
- 12 For a discussion of demographic changes in the foreign-born population from 1990 onward, see, for example Audrey Singer, *The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2004), www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2004/02demographics_singer/20040301_gateways.pdf.
- 13 The authors used table B16001, “Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over,” available through the US Census Bureau American FactFinder for the one year (2010) and pooled data (2008-10) in this brief. The data are available here: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.
- 14 Data available through the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series provide slightly more disaggregated information on African languages. However, to the extent possible, this brief relies on ACS data so that readers can more easily replicate this information.
- 15 The most recent detailed tables available through the US Census are from pooled 2006-08 data, available here: www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/acs/index.html.

This Data Brief was written by Chhandasi Pandya, Margie McHugh, and Jeanne Batalova. It is a project of MPI’s National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy and its work on language access. More information on language access, including resources on developing language access plans and programs, is available at www.migrationinformation.org/integration/language_portal/.

For questions or to arrange an interview, please contact Michelle Mittelstadt at 202-266-1910 or mmittelstadt@migrationpolicy.org. To obtain permission to reproduce this publication, visit www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copy.php.

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