

The Need for Language Access in COVID-19 Hot Spots

There are over 16.5 million Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons in the 30 metropolitan¹ areas with the most confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The percentage of LEP speakers is higher in the COVID-19 hot spots – e.g., a total of 12.1% for the top 30 metropolitan areas – than for the US as a whole (8.3% LEP).

By language spoken at home, the largest language access needs are as follows:

Language Spoken at Home	LEP Persons (Aged 5 and UP) in Top 30 COVID-19 MSAs	COVID-19 Hot Spot MSAs with Largest Populations of Specified LEP Speakers
Spanish	9,506,558	Los Angeles, New York, Miami
Chinese	1,359,283	New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco
Vietnamese	510,724	Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas
Korean	428,269	Los Angeles, New York, Washington DC
Tagalog	289,269	Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York
Arabic	283,622	New York, Detroit, Los Angeles
Russian	274,546	New York, Los Angeles, Chicago
Haitian	255,317	Miami, New York, Boston
Portuguese	213,582	Boston, New York, Miami
Polish	166,786	Chicago, New York, Detroit
French	156,570	New York, Miami, Washington DC
Bengali	130,742	New York, Detroit, Philadelphia

Data Source: US Census, 2018 1-year American Community Survey

By Top-30 COVID-19 Hot Spots with the highest percentage of LEP speakers, the largest language access needs by MSAs with the highest concentrations of LEP population are as follows:

MSA	% LEP	Top 5 Language Needs by LEP Population
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL MSA	23.5%	1. Spanish 2. Haitian 3. Portuguese 4. French 5. Chinese
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA MSA	22.0%	1. Spanish 2. Chinese

¹ As of 1/22/21, the 30 MSAs with the most confirmed COVID-19 cases are: 1. New York City, 2. Los Angeles, 3. Chicago, 4. Dallas, 5. Miami, 6. Riverside, 7. Phoenix, 8. Houston, 9. Atlanta, 10. Philadelphia, 11. DC, 12. Boston, 13. Twin Cities, 14. Detroit, 15. St. Louis, 16. San Diego, 17. Nashville, 18. Las Vegas, 19. Denver, 20. San Francisco, 21. Charlotte, 22. Tampa, 23. San Antonio, 24. Indianapolis, 25. Orlando, 26. Cincinnati, 27. Milwaukee, 28. Columbus, 29. Kansas City, 30. Baltimore; per <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html>.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Vietnamese 4. Korean 5. Tagalog
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX MSA	17.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Vietnamese 3. Chinese 4. Arabic 5. Urdu
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA MSA	16.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Chinese 3. Russian 4. Korean 5. Bengali
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA	15.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Chinese 3. Tagalog 4. Vietnamese 5. Korean
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA MSA	15.2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Chinese 3. Tagalog 4. Vietnamese 5. Korean
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	13.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Vietnamese 3. Chinese 4. Korean 5. Arabic
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI MSA	10.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Polish 3. Chinese 4. Arabic 5. Tagalog
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	10.5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Chinese 3. Korean 4. Vietnamese 5. Amharic, Somali or other Afro-Asiatic Language
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH MSA	9.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spanish 2. Chinese 3. Portuguese 4. Haitian 5. Vietnamese