

ENGLISH ACQUISITION: THE STATE OF THE UNION

A 2013 UPDATE OF
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE TRENDS

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English Acquisition: The State of the Union
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Table of Contents

Introduction	5	Nebraska.....	63
Glossary and Definitions	8	Nevada.....	65
Alabaka	9	New Hampshire.....	67
Alaska	11	New Jersey	69
Arizona	13	New Mexico	71
Arkansas	15	New York	73
California	17	North Carolina.....	75
Colorado.....	19	North Dakota.....	77
Connecticut.....	21	Ohio	79
Delaware	23	Oklahoma.....	81
District of Columbia	25	Oregon	83
Florida.....	27	Pennsylvania.....	85
Georgia.....	29	Rhode Island.....	87
Hawaii.....	31	South Carolina	89
Idaho.....	33	South Dakota	91
Illinois.....	35	Tennessee	93
Indiana.....	37	Texas	95
Iowa	39	Utah	97
Kansas.....	41	Vermont	99
Kentucky.....	43	Virginia	101
Louisiana	45	Washington	103
Maine.....	47	West Virginia.....	105
Maryland.....	49	Wisconsin.....	107
Massachusetts.....	51	Wyoming	109
Michigan	53	Sources.....	112
Minnesota	55	Appendix A.....	113
Mississippi	57	Appendix B.....	114
Missouri	59	Appendix C	115
Montana.....	61		

English Acquisition: The State of the Union

Introduction

In generations past, newcomers immigrating to the United States of America knew that assimilating and learning English was the key to success here. Despite the lack of federal government programs to assist them in that effort, immigrants generally made the effort to learn America's common language.

Now, however, despite federal government actions aimed at helping ease immigrants' transition to life in the United States, fewer and fewer new immigrants are learning the English language. In fact, an examination of state-by-state populations of limited English proficient individuals shows that, from 1980 to 2010, there has been a clear and steady increase in the number of United States residents who are unable to speak English at more than a basic level.

Studies have consistently shown that an immigrant's income increases dramatically upon learning the English language. On top of that, an English proficient individual is more likely to have health care, more likely to have a better job, and is more likely to face daily life in the United States without language barriers. Individual states, and the federal government, would be wise to encourage non-English speakers to recognize the doors that can open to them upon learning the English language.

Unfortunately, as limited English proficiency rates continue to rise, sometimes at extreme and unprecedented rates, the American Dream is becoming a harder reality for many residents to achieve.

Methodology

In 2008, the U.S. English Foundation embarked on this comprehensive project to examine the growth in limited English proficiency, determine what is fueling these meteoric rises and develop conclusions on where these rates are headed given current conditions. Upon the release of the latest Census data in 2010, the U.S. English Foundation has updated this briefing on a state-by-state basis to provide an up-to-date and thorough analysis of the present and recent past, focusing on five major demographic points.

Limited English Proficiency, 1980 – 2010 – Using U.S. Census Bureau data from 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010, we report on the changes in the portion of each state's population that is limited English proficient. The Census Bureau defines limited English proficiency as speaking a language other than English at home and speaking English 'less than very well.'

Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025—In 1995, the U.S. Census Bureau made a series of projections for the Hispanic population of each state for the years 2000, 2005, 2015 and 2025. While the Hispanic population is not the sole component of limited English proficiency in the United States, Hispanics make up the largest share of the limited English proficient in almost every state. Examining this growth gives us an excellent proxy for how the picture of limited English proficiency in the state has changed from just a decade ago. We compare the actual values from 2000, 2005 and 2010 to the forecasts and predict how future projections will match up.

Prevalence of Foreign Languages—Using U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2011 American Community Survey and the 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-year Estimates, we analyze the population of each state that speaks a language other than English at home. Our examination of the six largest linguistic groups in the state helps identify the groups most likely to become linguistically isolated, especially in cases where a single language group makes up a majority of the non-English speakers in a state.

Non-English Proficiency by Age—We examine the severely limited English proficient population of each state to determine how the lack of English fluency may affect the state economically in future years. By grouping those who speak English “not well” or “not at all” into *school age* (ages 5-17), *working age* (ages 18-64) and *senior citizen* (age 65 and older) for the years 1990, 2000 and 2010, we can better understand the implications for today and make predictions for tomorrow.

Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken—While anyone can be severely limited English proficient, a linguistic analysis of those who speak English “not well” or “not at all” demonstrates that this phenomenon is often concentrated among specific groups of language speakers. Using data from the 2010 Census, we examine English proficiency among speakers of four groupings of languages spoken by the majority of today’s immigrants—Spanish, other Indo-European, Asian & Pacific Island and ‘other.’ By separating the groups that are gaining English proficiency from those that are not, we can tailor recommendations for future efforts to encourage English learning.

Summary

Between 1980 and 2010, there have been significant demographic changes nationwide, leading to a great majority of states facing increasing rates of limited English proficiency among residents. Increases in the limited English proficiency of children and working age adults, prominent in many states, are especially daunting, as these populations are the current and future employees who will contribute to a state’s productivity and economy.

Unless states take measures now to prevent further increases in their limited English proficient populations, a domino effect could ripple across the country, lowering state productivity and creating linguistic divisions among different language groups. This briefing is intended to serve as a resource that demonstrates both the need for English learning programs and the risks of not targeting them at the appropriate populations.

Our nation’s motto is *E Pluribus Unum*, “out of many, one.” English as our common language is the one factor that has the ability to unite all residents of the United States, despite our differences, and make our country one.

Glossary & Definitions

Abbreviations

- LEP Limited English Proficient
- SLEP Severely Limited English Proficient

English Proficiency Definitions

- Limited English Proficient: Speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English less than “very well”
- Severely Limited English Proficient: Speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English “not well” or “not at all”

Age Group Definitions

- School age Population between the ages of 5 and 17
- Working age adults Population between the ages of 18 and 64
- Senior citizens Population age 65 and older

Linguistic Groups (as defined by the Census)

- *Spanish*: includes Spanish, Spanish Creole, and Ladino.
- *Other Indo-European languages*: includes most languages of Europe and the Indic languages of India. These include the Germanic languages, such as German, Yiddish, and Dutch; the Scandinavian languages, such as Swedish and Norwegian; the Romance languages, such as French, Italian, and Portuguese; the Slavic languages, such as Russian, Polish, and Serbo-Croatian; the Indic languages, such as Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Urdu; Celtic languages; Greek; Baltic languages; and Iranian languages.
- *Asian & Pacific Island languages*: includes Chinese; Korean; Japanese; Vietnamese; Hmong; Khmer; Lao; Thai; Tagalog or Pilipino; the Dravidian languages of India, such as Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam; and other languages of Asia and the Pacific, including the Philippine, Polynesian, and Micronesian languages.
- *Other languages*: includes Uralic languages, such as Hungarian; the Semitic languages, such as Arabic and Hebrew; languages of Africa; native North American languages, including the American Indian and Alaska native languages; and indigenous languages of Central and South America.

Language Notes

All language-related population figures in this document refer to the population of the state age 5 and older. All of the language-related data in this report is derived from U.S. Census information as released by the U.S. Census Bureau. Language use and English fluency statistics were collected through the Census “long form” distributed to one-in-six households in 2010, and through the American Community Survey conducted annually.

In both cases, recipients of the Census form were asked to indicate whether each member of the household, age five and older, spoke English at home. If English was not specified as the language spoken at home, respondents were asked to list the language spoken at home by each person, and his or her ability to speak English. English proficiency was self-reported on a four grade scale: very well, well, not well, or not at all.

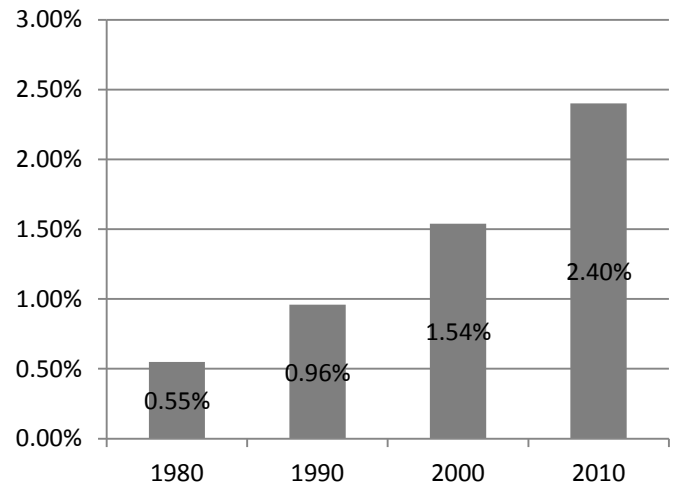
The Census terms all who speak a language other than English at home and speak English less than “very well” as limited English proficient, based on information learned from the English Language Proficiency Survey of 1982.

Alabama

Capital: Montgomery
2010 Population: 4,785,298
Joined Union: Dec. 14, 1819

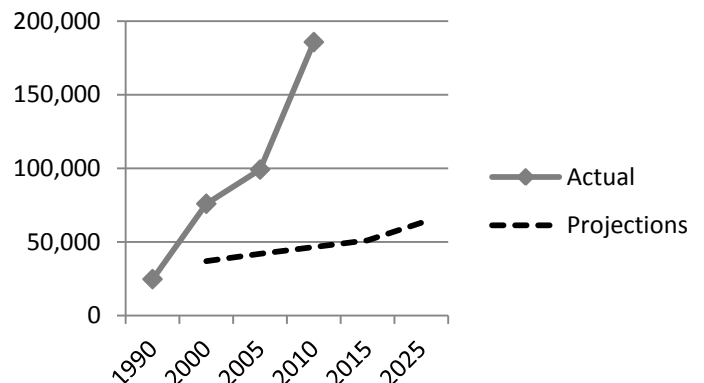
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Between 1980 and 2010, the limited English proficient (LEP) population in Alabama grew more than five times over, from 19,628 in 1980 to 108,823 in 2010. While the Yellowhammer State had the lowest LEP rate in the nation in 1980, it jumped to 39th place in 2010, with 2.4% of the state's residents being counted as limited English proficient. The LEP population has nearly doubled in each consecutive Census, growing from 19,628 in 1980 to 36,018 in 1990 to 63,917 in 2000 to 108,823 in 2010.



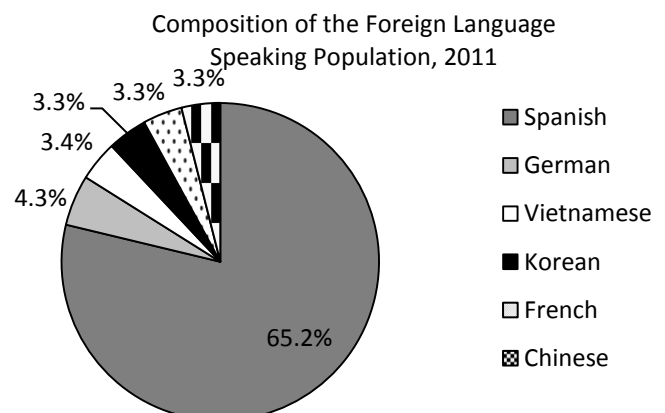
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Alabama far surpassed Census projections by the year 2000, with a projected population of 37,000 and an actual population of 75,830. By 2010, the Hispanic population jumped to 185,602—already more than double the Census Bureau's 63,000 projection for the year 2025.



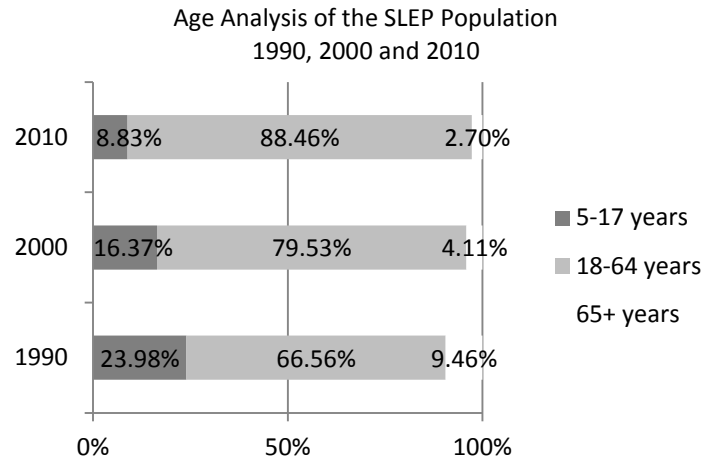
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

An overwhelming majority (94.8%) of Alabama residents speak English at home, with the majority of foreign language speakers fluent in Spanish. More than 153,000 residents (65.2% of foreign language speakers) use Spanish at home. Just over 10,000 residents spoke German, the second most widely used foreign language in Alabama. Speakers of Vietnamese, Korean, French and Chinese each accounted for less than 5% of the state's foreign language speaking population.



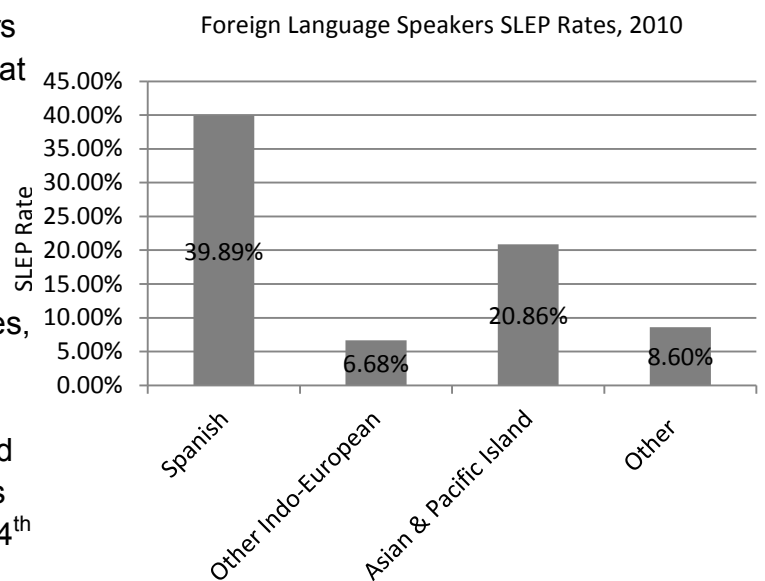
Non-English Proficiency by Age

As the numbers of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children and seniors have been cut nearly in half over the past decade, the number of SLEP adults in Alabama has continued to rise. Even so, Alabama ranks 27th nationwide in terms of SLEP adults, 26th in SLEP children, and 42nd in terms of residents aged 65 and older who are only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” The number of Yellowhammer State residents who are considered severely limited English proficient includes 6,254 children, 62,626 adults and 1,914 senior citizens.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

With 39.89% of Alabama’s Spanish speakers only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” this group ranks the highest among the 50 states plus the District of Columbia. A total of 60,957 individuals were severely limited English proficient (SLEP), out of the state’s 152,831 total Spanish speakers. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages, with a SLEP rate of 20.86%, rank 20th nationwide. The much lower SLEP rates of other Indo-European language speakers and speakers of uncategorized ‘other’ languages place significantly lower, at 38th place and 34th place, respectively.

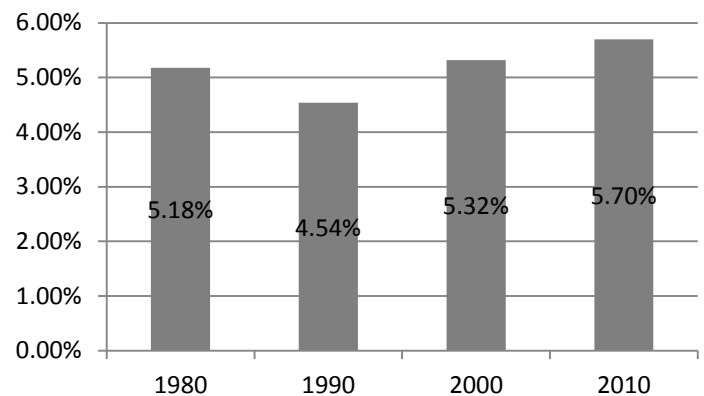


Conclusion

Alabama faces several growing challenges with regard to its non-English speaking population. With a rapidly growing limited English proficient population, Hispanic population growth already more than double the Census Bureau’s 2025 projections, and an increasing number of severely limited English proficient adults, the Yellowhammer State now has a strong need to develop and implement English language learning programs. Alabama should consider targeting programs specifically at the growing Spanish speaking population to prevent a more daunting situation in the future.

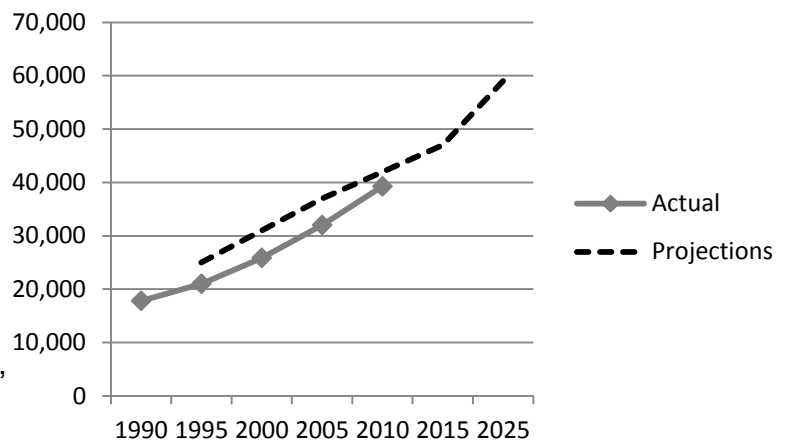
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Alaska's limited English proficient (LEP) population more than doubled from 1980 to 2010, rising from 18,812 to 37,760. While there has been a steady increase in the percentage of LEP residents, Alaska's LEP rate of growth has slowed in comparison to other states. In 1980, the Last Frontier ranked as the 12th highest LEP population, but in 2010, it settled to 20th place.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

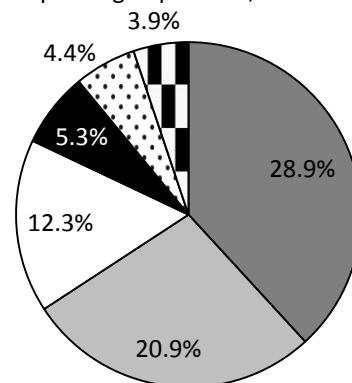
Alaska's Hispanic population has steadily increased over the past 20 years, yet it has still managed to remain below the Census Bureau's projections. In 1990, the Last Frontier was home to 17,803 Hispanic individuals. By 2000, this number had increased to 25,852, and in 2010 the count had grown to 39,249. Census Bureau projections called for a Hispanic population of 31,000 in the year 2000, 37,000 by 2005, 47,000 by 2015 and 59,000 by the year 2025.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 80% of Alaska's population speaks English at home. Among the state's foreign language speakers, a majority (32,144 residents) speak Native North American languages. Spanish speakers (23,264 residents) also account for a good percentage of the Last Frontier's foreign language speakers, followed by speakers of Tagalog (13,718 residents). Accounting for 5% or less of non-English speakers are residents who use other Pacific Island languages, Russian and Korean.

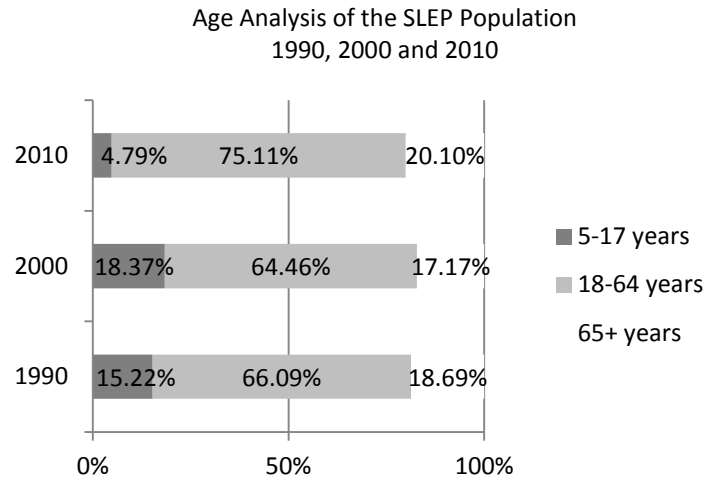
Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



- Native North American Languages
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Other Pacific Island Languages
- Russian
- Korean

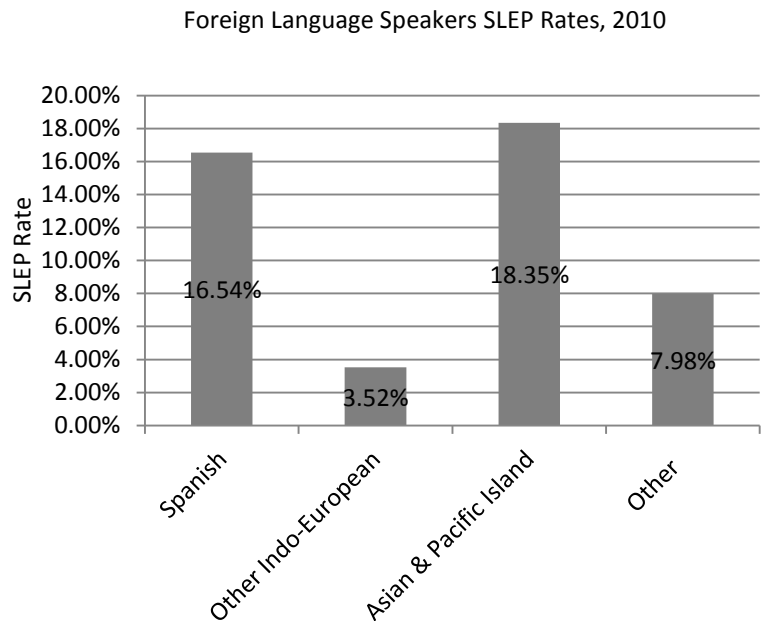
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The number of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children in Alaska dropped drastically in recent years, falling from over 18% in 2000 to just 4.79% in 2010, placing the Last Frontier State at number 46 on the nationwide list of SLEP residents aged 5 to 17 years old. The number of adults and seniors struggling to learn English has continued to grow, with 10,214 adults aged 18-64 years and 2,733 seniors aged 65 and above speaking English “not well” or “not at all.” This places them slightly higher on the nationwide list by age group, ranking in at numbers 42 and 36, respectively.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Despite 16.54% of Alaska’s Spanish speaking population being severely limited English proficient (SLEP), this rate still ranked low compared to other states, placing 44th with 3,631 of the state’s 21,950 Spanish speaking residents only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” An even higher number of the Last Frontier State’s speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages are SLEP, ranking that group 29th among other states. Meanwhile, speakers of other Indo-European languages and other uncategorized languages placed lower, coming in 46th and 38th, respectively.

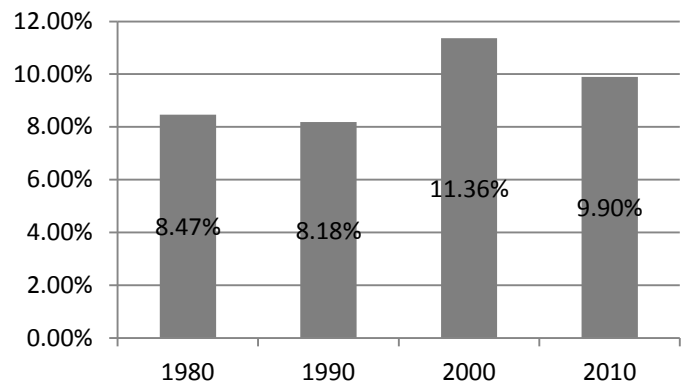


Conclusion

Alaska, where Official English was passed in 1998, is one of few states where language trends show immigrants are making strides with regard to English language usage, compared to other states. The Last Frontier State’s limited English proficient rate has slowed, despite significant gains in other states. The Hispanic population has continued to increase, yet remains below Census Bureau projections. The number of non-English proficient adults and seniors has continued to rise, yet still ranks at the bottom of nationwide rankings. Even with these positive signs, however, nearly 20% of Alaska residents speak a language other than English at home. It will be important for the state to continue to ensure that these residents, especially speakers of other Native North American languages, have access to English learning opportunities.

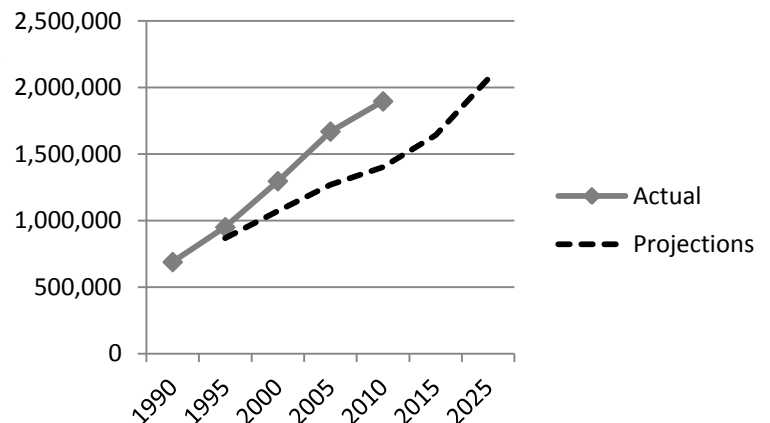
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Arizona's limited English proficient (LEP) population more than doubled from 1980 to 2010, growing from 212,315 to 587,298. Due to an overall increase in population in the Grand Canyon State, the LEP rate of the population as a whole dropped from 2000 to 2010. This is despite an increase of more than 40,000 LEP residents during that period. Over the past 30 years, Arizona has consistently remained in the top ten in terms of states with the highest LEP rates, ranking 8th in 2010.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

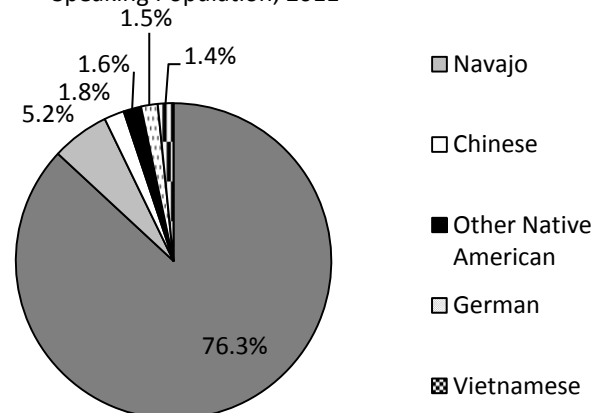
The Hispanic population in Arizona has grown at a rate that has surpassed Census projections. The Census Bureau had projected a Hispanic population of 1,641,000 in 2015—a number the Grand Canyon State had already surpassed by 2005, with 1,668,524 Hispanic residents. With its 2010 Count of 1,895,149, Arizona remains on track to hit the Census 2025 projection of 2,065,000 Hispanic residents.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

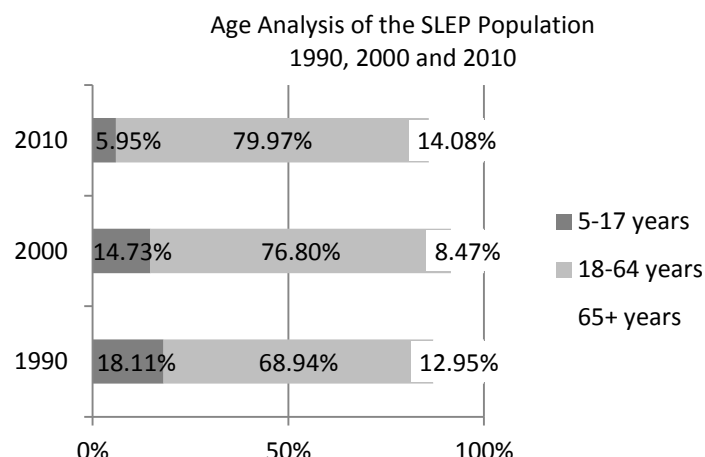
Of the nearly 6 million Grand Canyon State residents, close to 27% of the population (1.6 million residents) speaks a language other than English at home. More than 1.2 million of them speak Spanish, comprising more than 75% of the state's foreign language speaking population. With significantly lower rates of use, Navajo, Chinese, other Native American languages, German and Vietnamese round out the top foreign languages spoken in Arizona. Despite the small percentage ranking, each of these language groups has at least 20,000 speakers in Arizona, indicating a large number of foreign language speakers residing in the state.

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



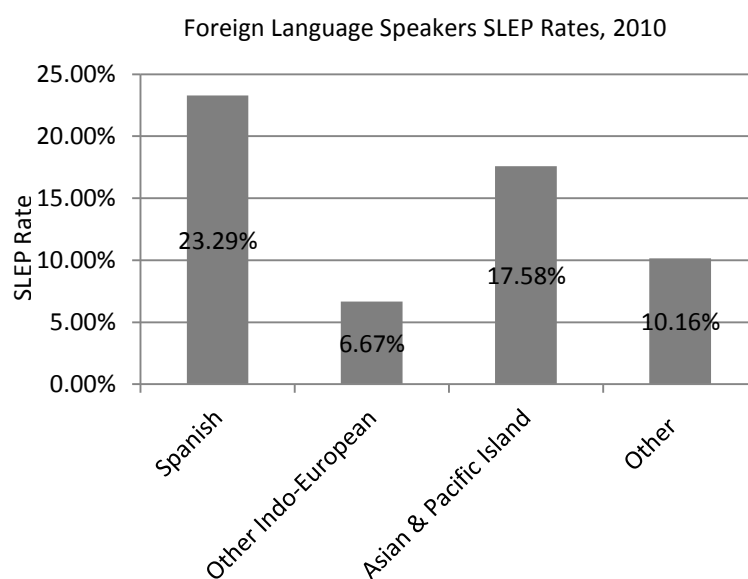
Non-English Proficiency by Age

In all three age groups, Arizona ranks in the top ten nationwide when it comes to severe limited English proficiency (SLEP)—with children aged 5-17 placing 8th, adults aged 18-64 coming in 7th and residents 65 and older ranking 8th. With 19,379 school aged children speaking English “not well” or “not at all,” the percentage of 5 to 17 year olds in Arizona struggling to speak English has dropped by more than half since 2000. With 260,494 SLEP adults and 45,847 SLEP seniors, both of these categories have seen an increase in recent years.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Nearly a quarter of Arizona’s Spanish speaking population is only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” Even so, the Grand Canyon State only ranks 34th compared to other states when it comes to the severe limited English proficient (SLEP) rate of its Spanish speakers. In fact, among all foreign language speaking residents in Arizona, speakers of uncategorized ‘other’ languages have the highest SLEP ranking, placing 27th among similar speakers in other states. Meanwhile, speakers of other Indo-European languages place 39th and speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages place 35th nationwide.



Conclusion

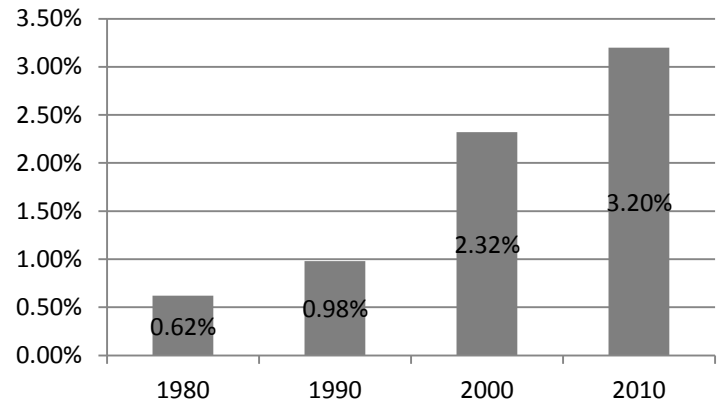
As a border state, Arizona has long faced above average limited English proficiency rates. More than a quarter of the state’s residents speak a language other than English at home, and children, adults and senior citizens all rank in the top ten nationwide in severe limited English proficiency. It is obvious that the Grand Canyon State still faces a strong need for English language initiatives. While the state government sends a strong message about the importance of English by only offering driver’s license exams in English, Arizona’s 152 spoken languages make the further encouragement of English language learning a necessary priority.

Arkansas

Capital: Little Rock
2010 Population: 2,921,606
Joined Union: June 15, 1836

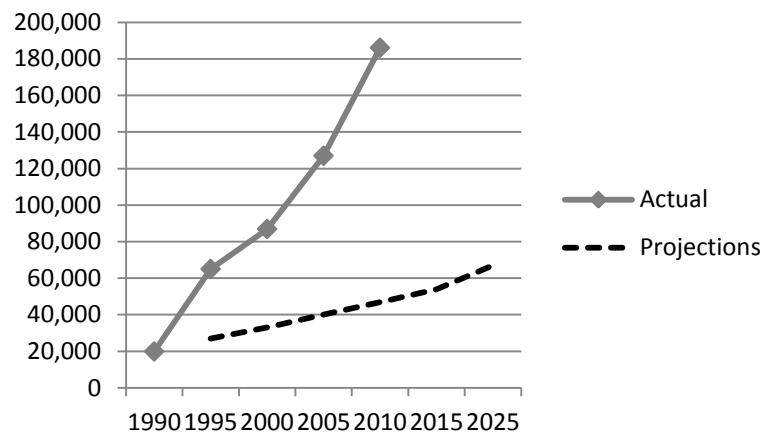
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Arkansas represents one of several states whose limited English proficient (LEP) population has ballooned in recent years. Rising from 13,069 in 1980 to 87,993 in 2010, the Natural State also made a dramatic jump on the list of LEP percentages by state. Once a state with the 4th lowest LEP rates in the nation, Arkansas in 2010 had jumped to number 32.



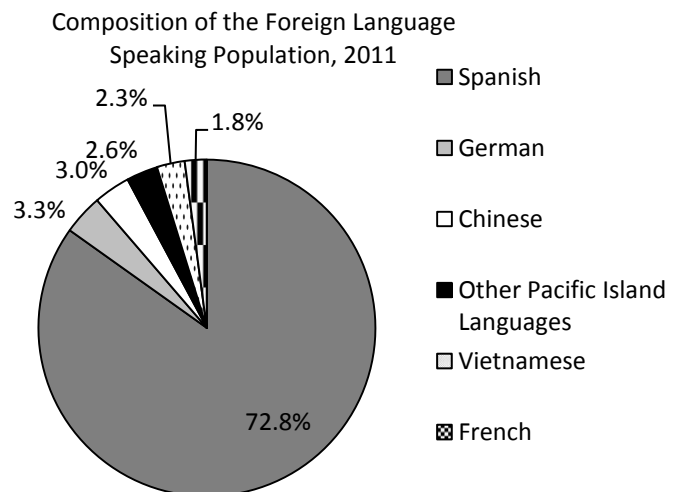
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

By 2010, the Hispanic population in Arkansas already surpassed Census Bureau projections for the year 2025, nearly three times over. In 2010, the Natural State was home to 186,050 Hispanic residents, compared to the projected 2025 number of 67,000. With only 19,876 Hispanic residents in 1990, this population jumped to 86,866 in 2000 and then 126,932 in 2005.



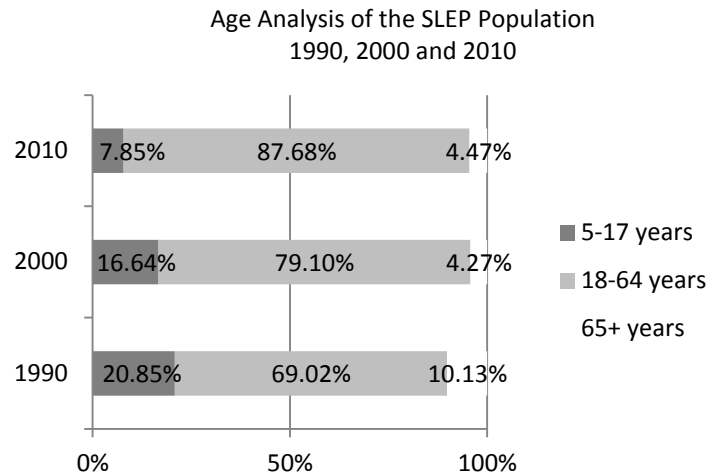
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 90% of Arkansas residents speak English at home. Of the state's foreign language speakers, close to 75% (149,088 residents) use Spanish. Just over 6,600 residents speak German, 6,146 speak Chinese, and 5,387 speak other Pacific Island languages. Fewer than 5,000 residents speak Vietnamese and French, even though these two groups still rank among the six most widely used foreign languages in the Natural State.



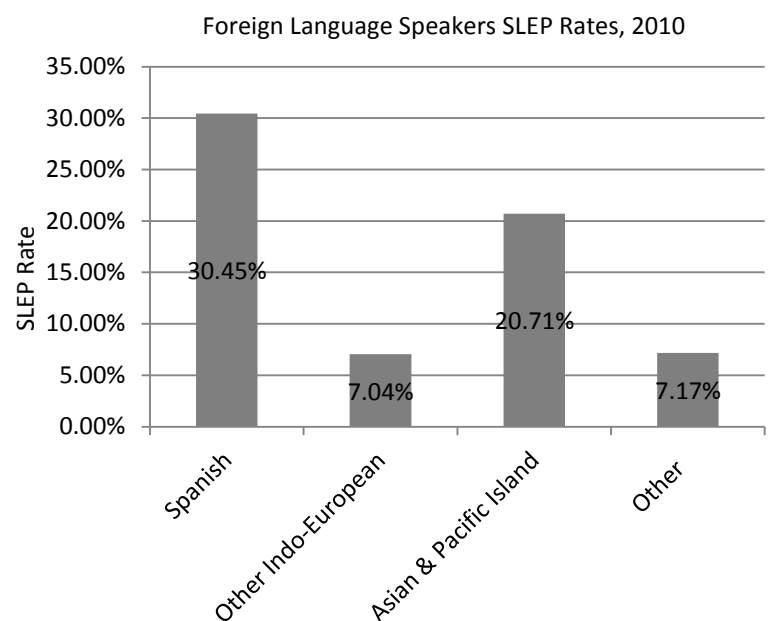
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The working age population comprised more than 87% of the severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population of Arkansas in 2010, with 42,656 residents between the ages of 18 and 64 only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” Despite this high rate, Natural State adults placed 33rd nationwide in SLEP rankings by age group. With 3,817 children ages 5 to 17 facing severe limited English proficiency, this group still ranks in the middle of the pack nationwide at 32, as do the 2,174 SLEP residents above age 65, at number 40.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

More than 30% of Arkansas’ Spanish speakers are considered severely limited English proficient (SLEP), meaning they are only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” This rate places them with the 5th highest ranking nationwide. The rest of the Natural State’s foreign language speakers placed lower, with speakers of other Indo-European languages ranking 35th, speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages ranking 22nd and speakers of other uncategorized languages placing 43rd nationwide, compared with similar language groups in other states.



Conclusion

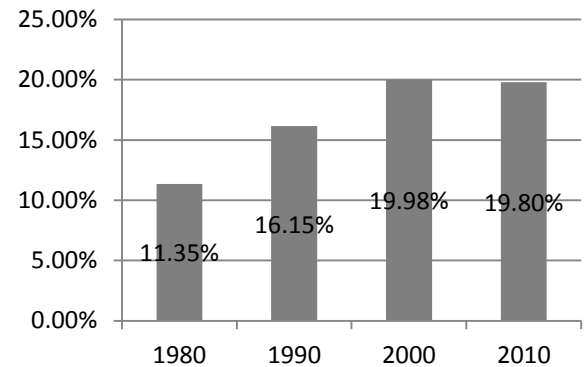
In recent years, limited English proficiency has skyrocketed in Arkansas, showing an urgent need for English learning programs that encourage assimilation among immigrants. The Hispanic population in Arkansas has already surpassed Census projections for the year 2025, showing that Spanish speakers are only growing in numbers. Furthermore, with over 30% of Spanish speaking residents considered severely limited English proficient, the state should focus on developing English learning programs specifically among the Spanish speaking community. Programs should also be targeted at the working age population, which is also facing a growing number of severely limited English proficient residents.

California

Capital: Sacramento
2010 Population: 37,349,363
Joined Union: September 9, 1850

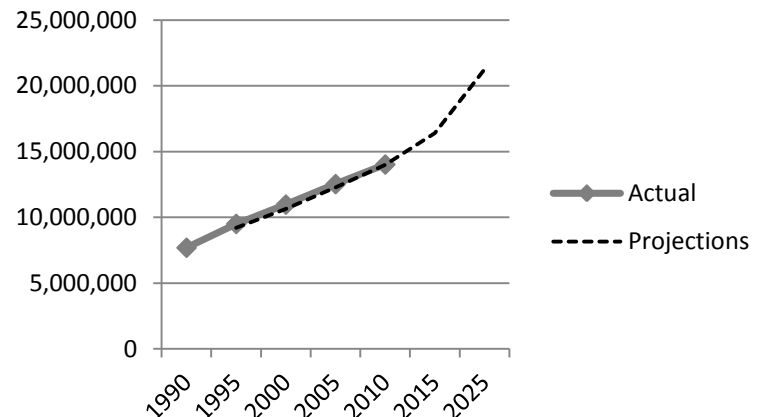
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

California has long topped the list of states with the highest limited English proficient (LEP) populations. In 1980 it placed third, and in each Census since, it has held the number one spot. The Golden State has also seen nearly triple the growth in its number of LEP residents—jumping from 2,493,681 residents in 1980 to 6,898,367 residents today. With a constant increase in the state's overall population, the LEP rate must be growing at an equal rate in order to maintain its above 19% limited English proficient rate.



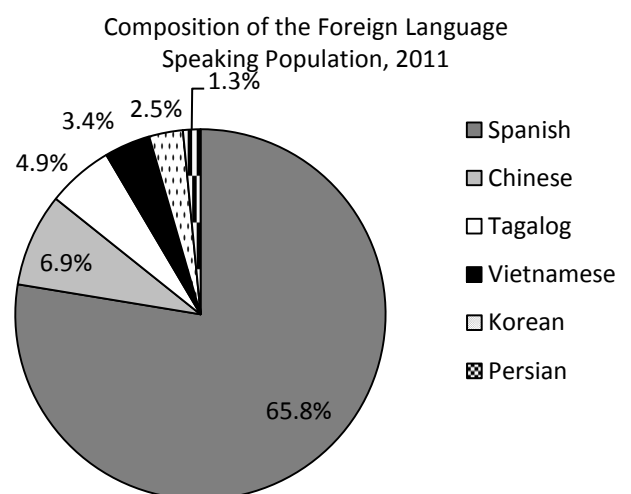
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

By the year 2000, California's Hispanic population already surpassed the Census Bureau's projections by more than a quarter of a million people, boasting 10,966,556 Hispanic residents compared to the projected 10,647,000. With an average 10-year increase of 3 to 4 million, the Golden State's Hispanic population reached 14,013,719 in 2010 and is on track to surpass the 2015 projected population of 16,411,000.



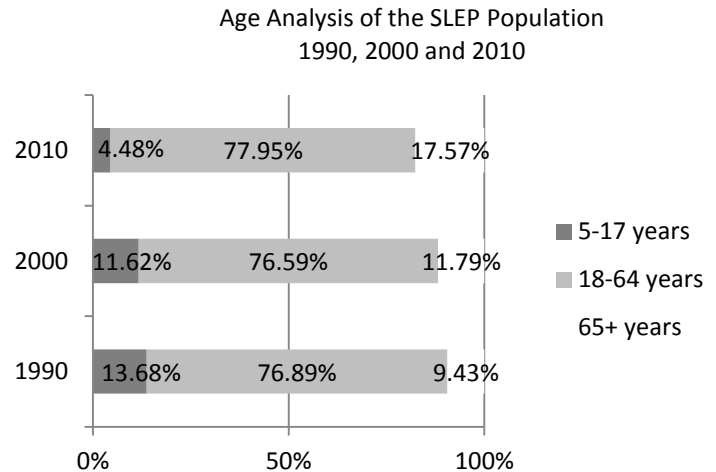
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Only 56.3% of California's population speaks English at home, one of the lowest rates in the nation. Of the remaining foreign language speakers, more than 65% speak Spanish—accounting for 10.1 million residents and nearly a third of the Golden State's total population. More than 1 million California residents speak Chinese (6.9% of foreign language speakers), while 755,064 residents speak Tagalog. Rounding out the most widely spoken languages in California are Vietnamese, Korean and Persian, each accounting for less than 3% of the state's foreign language speakers.



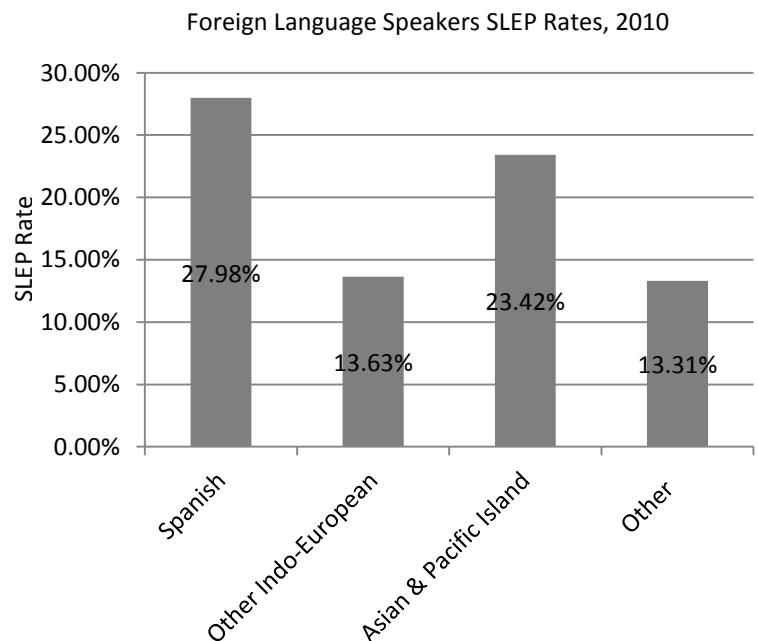
Non-English Proficiency by Age

California tops the nationwide rankings for severe limited English proficient (SLEP) residents across the board, with all three age groups placing first in rankings among all states. With 17.57% of California's SLEP population consisting of residents aged 65 and older, 676,136 seniors were only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all." The 172,358 SLEP children account for 4.48% of the state's severely limited English proficient individuals, while more than 2.9 million adults aged 18 to 64 years old account for the remaining 77.95%.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Among the four language categories, California's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) populations all placed in the top 16 nationwide. With 201,869 of the state's nearly 1.5 million speakers of other Indo-European languages and 786,437 of nearly 3.4 million speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages only able to speak English less than "not well" or "not at all," these groups both placed 10th nationwide compared to similar language groups in other states. Spanish speakers missed the top 10, placing 13th, while speakers of uncategorized 'other' languages placed even lower, at 16th.



Conclusion

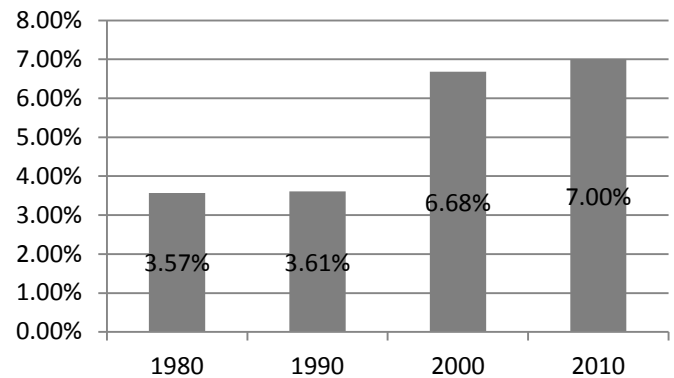
California is, by far, the state with the largest population of non-English proficient residents. While the California Constitution has recognized Official English since 1986, it has widely gone unenforced. For example, the state currently administers driver's license exams in 32 different languages. With the Golden State ranking first in the nation for its limited English proficient population, and with the nation's lowest rate of English speakers (only 56% of residents speak English at home), steps should be taken immediately to prevent further linguistic divisions across the state. California's children, adults and senior citizens all place highest nationwide in severe limited English proficiency, highlighting the need for across-the-board programs to target all age and language groups.

Colorado

Capital: Denver
2010 Population: 5,049,071
Joined Union: Aug. 1, 1876

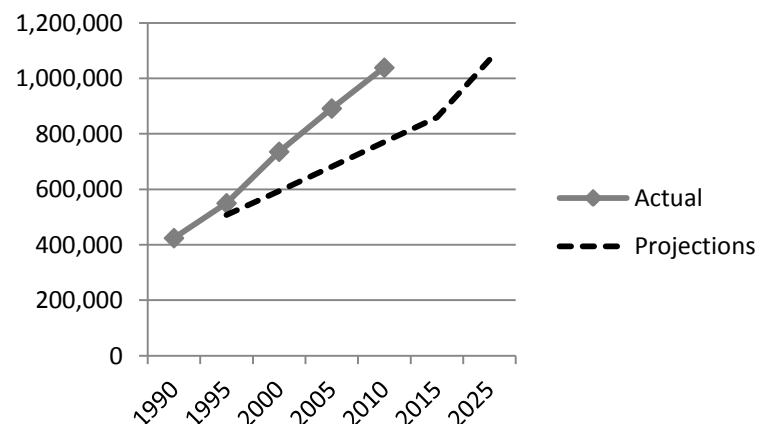
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Colorado's limited English proficient (LEP) population more than tripled from 1980 to 2010, rising from 95,509 to 327,870 residents during that period. In addition to the LEP rate doubling from 1980 to 2010, the Centennial State also remains in the top 20 among states with the highest rates of limited English proficiency, ranking in 2010 at number 15.



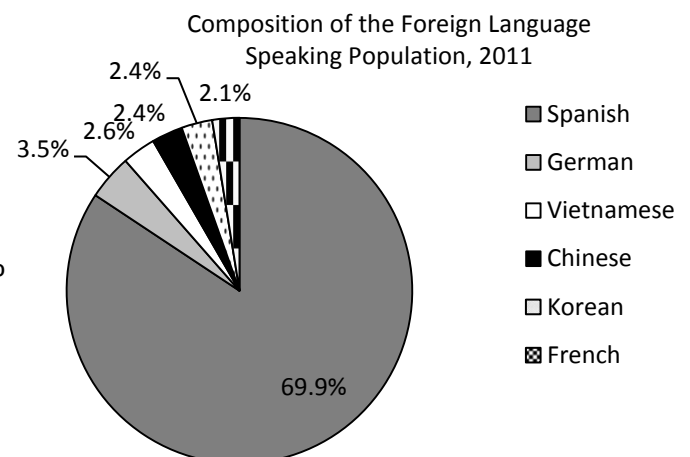
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

By the year 2000, Colorado's Hispanic population had already surpassed the Census Bureau's projection of 594,000 for that year, with its count of 735,601 Hispanic residents. In fact, the Census Bureau projected that by 2025, the Centennial State would have 1,067,000 Hispanic residents. In 2010, the actual population was already only 30,000 below that projection, with a count of 1,038,687.



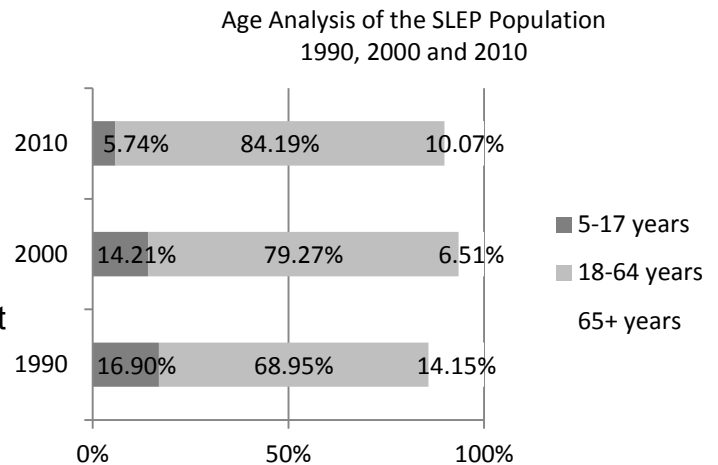
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Nearly 83% of Colorado residents speak English at home, leaving just over 16% of the population classified as foreign language speakers. Of those, nearly 70% (558,763 residents) speak Spanish. Close to 30,000 residents speak German, while just over 20,000 speak Vietnamese. Despite accounting for less than 3% of foreign language speakers statewide, Chinese, Korean and French are also among the most widely used foreign languages spoken in Colorado, with 19,224, 18,935 and 16,965 residents, respectively.



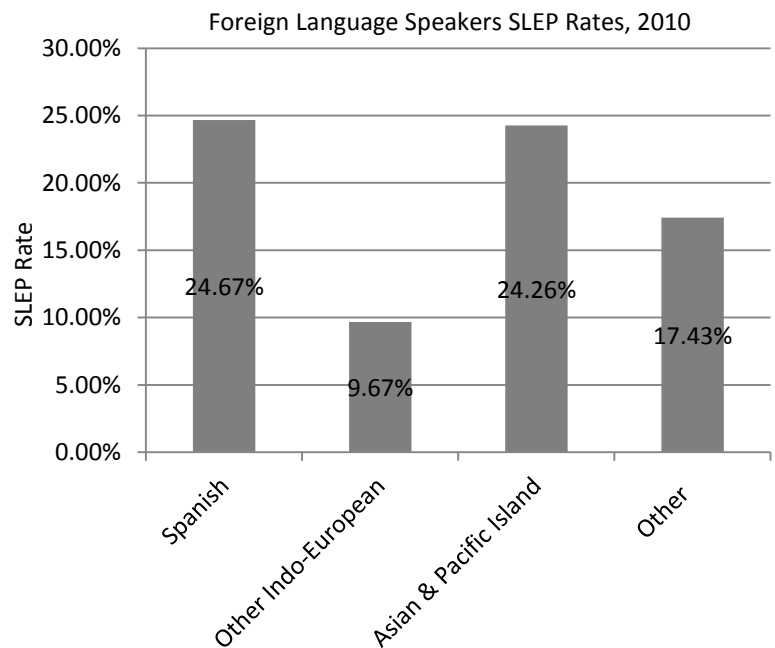
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With 10,316 children aged 5 to 17 (5.74% of Colorado's severely limited English proficient population) and 18,101 seniors aged 65 and above (10.07% of SLEP residents) unable to speak English well, these demographics place 18th in respective age group rankings. With a recent six point jump in the number of adults aged 18 to 64 who can only speak English "not well" or "not at all," Colorado's SLEP adults just miss the top ten nationwide, ranking in at number 14 with 151,365 SLEP adult residents.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

The severe limited English proficient population (SLEP) in Colorado ranks in the top 10 nationwide among speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages and 'other' uncategorized languages, with these groups placing 7th and 9th, respectively. Among speakers of other Indo-European languages, only 10,278 residents were only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," placing them lower on the nationwide rankings in 21st. Spanish speakers, despite a nearly 25% SLEP rate, placed even lower nationwide in the 31st spot.



Conclusion

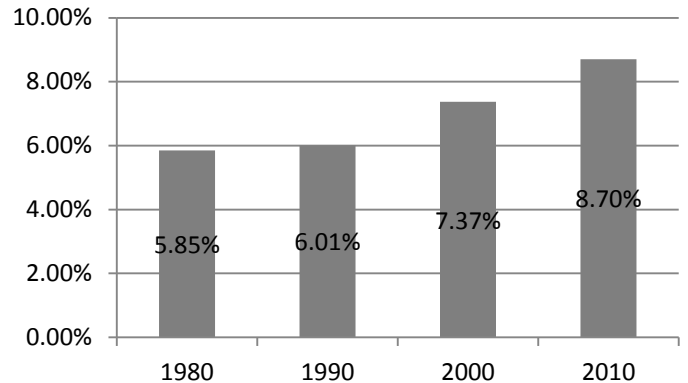
While Colorado did not originally face language assimilation problems among its immigrants, in recent years, programs to encourage English learning in the Centennial State have fallen short. With only 83% of residents speaking English at home, Colorado needs to develop and implement such programs immediately, or risk further linguistic divisions across the state. Language programs should focus on teaching English across the wide spectrum of Colorado residents, as the number of severely limited English proficient residents is especially high among speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages and 'other' uncategorized languages.

Connecticut

Capital: Hartford
2010 Population: 3,577,073
Joined Union: Jan. 9, 1788

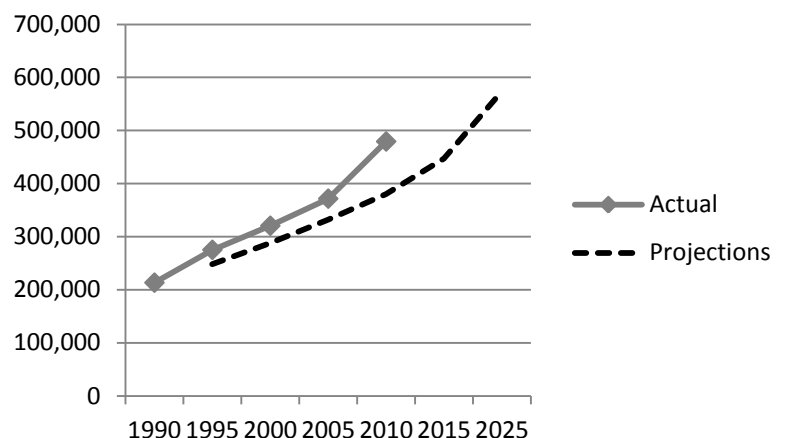
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Connecticut's limited English proficient (LEP) population has grown by more than 50,000 in each of the past two Census measurements. With 184,018 LEP residents in 1990 and 234,799 in 2000, the Constitution State's LEP population reached 292,562 in 2010. Despite this increase, the rapid rise in LEP rates in other states has allowed Connecticut to fall from its 10th place ranking in 1980 to its current rank of 13th.



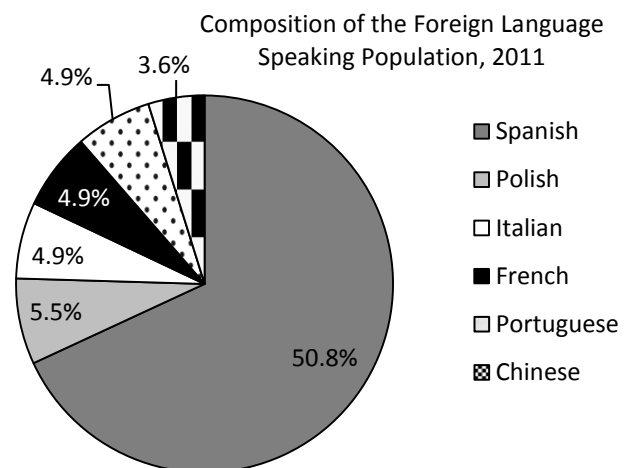
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

Since the year 2000, Connecticut's Hispanic population has constantly surpassed the Census Bureau's projections, with 320,323 Hispanic residents that year compared to the projected 288,000. By 2010, the Constitution State's Hispanic population had already surpassed the Census Bureau's 2015 projection of 447,000, with 479,087 Hispanic residents.



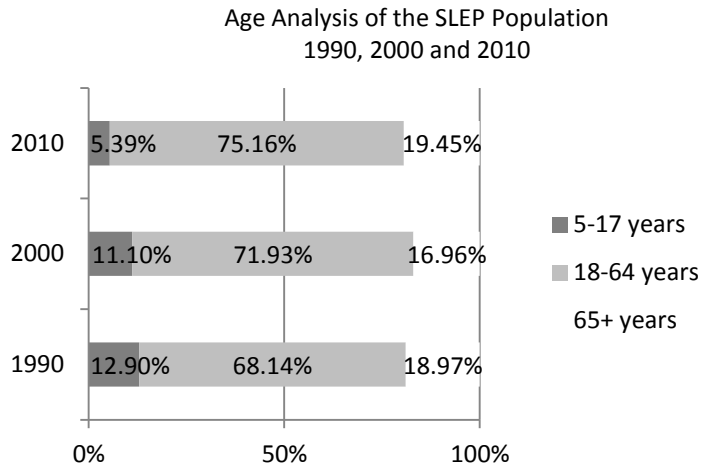
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 75% of Connecticut residents speak English at home. Of the state's foreign language speakers, more than half speak Spanish, with 367,816 residents (10.8% of the state's overall population) using it at home. Polish is the second most widely used language in the Constitution State, with close to 40,000 residents speaking it at home. Italian, French and Portuguese are each spoken by just over 35,000 Connecticut residents, while 26,080 residents speak Chinese.



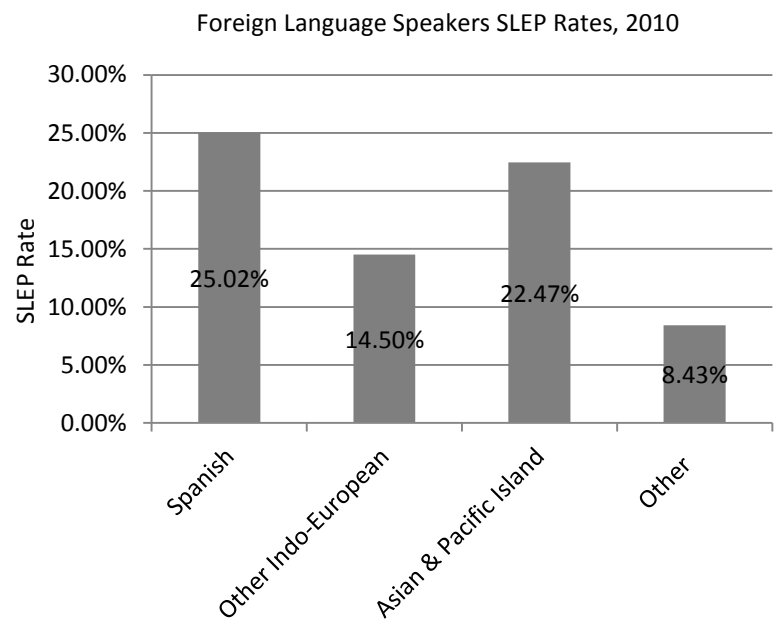
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With 28,403 Connecticut seniors aged 65 and above only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” this group ranks the 11th highest in terms of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) seniors nationwide. With a significant decrease in the number of SLEP children from 2000 to 2010, this demographic ranks at number 24 on the nationwide list, while the number of Connecticut adults aged 18 to 64 who can only speak English “not well” or “not at all” rose to 109,739 residents, ranking 17th nationwide among that age category.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Despite having the highest percentage of severe limited English proficient (SLEP) residents in the state, Connecticut's Spanish speakers ranked low on SLEP rankings in comparison with other states, placing at number 30. The Constitution State's SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages ranked 7th nationwide and SLEP Asian & Pacific Island speakers fell slightly lower at 15th. Connecticut's speakers of 'other' uncategorized languages ranked lowest among the state's foreign language groups, placing 35th compared to 'other' language speakers in other states.



Conclusion

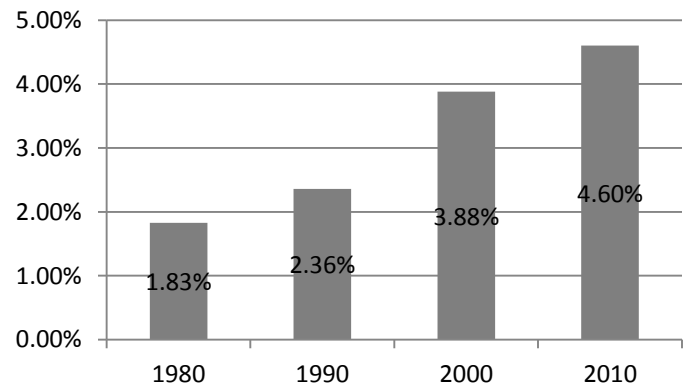
The number of limited English proficient residents in Connecticut has continued to grow in recent years. Thus, the need for English learning programs has also increased, especially among senior citizens aged 65 and above, whose non-English proficiency rates rank 11th highest nationwide. While nearly half of the state's foreign language speakers speak Spanish, the rising severe limited English proficiency rates among speakers of other Indo-European languages ranks 7th nationwide, showing a need for English learning programs across all language groups.

Delaware

Capital: Dover
2010 Population: 899,769
Joined Union: Dec. 7, 1787

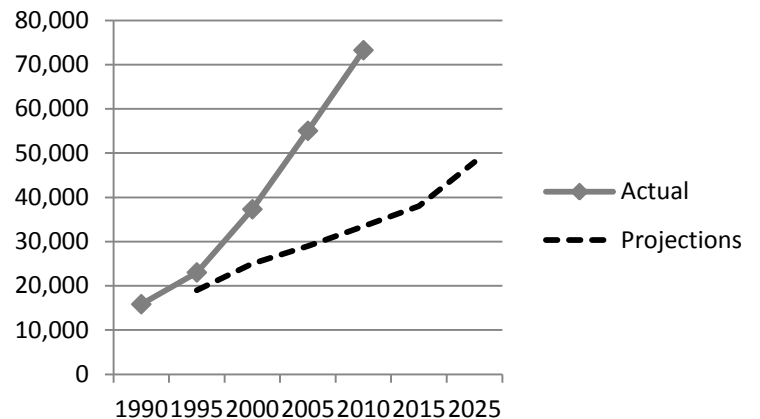
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Delaware's limited English proficient (LEP) population has nearly quadrupled in the period from 1980 to 2010, rising from 10,146 to 38,929 during that time. The First State's LEP rate has grown steadily, leading to its rise from 32nd place nationally in 1980 to its current spot at number 24.



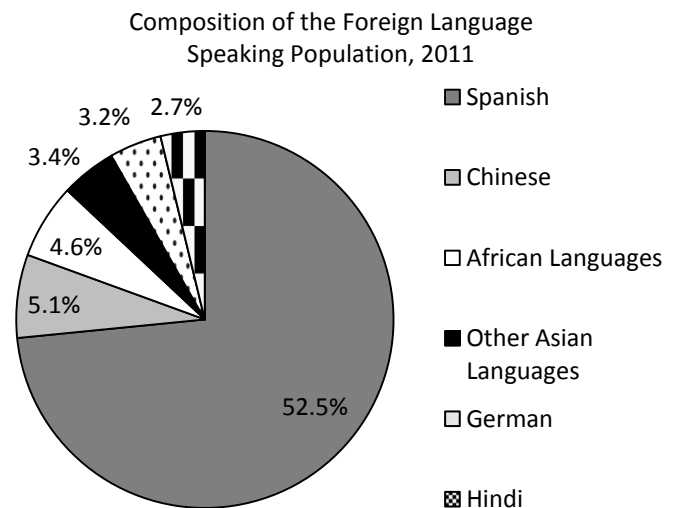
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Delaware has spiked far above the Census Bureau's projected population estimate. In 2000, there were 37,277 Hispanics residing in the First State, already surpassing the Census Bureau's projections of 25,000. By 2010, that number had risen to 73,221, already more than 20,000 above the Census Bureau's estimate of 48,000 Hispanic residents for the year 2025.



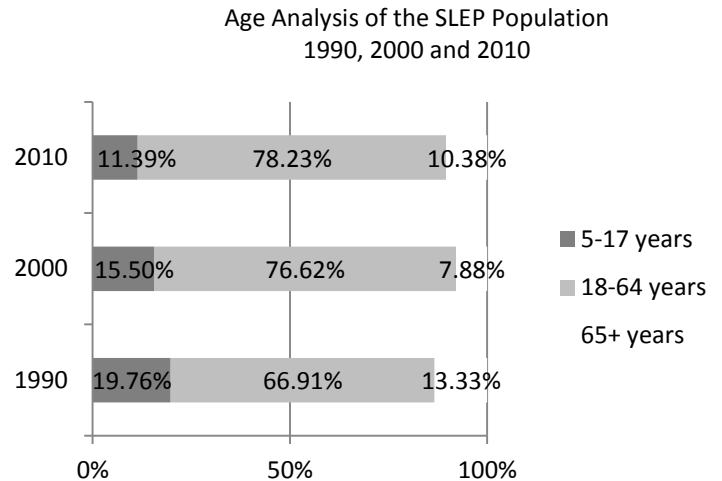
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 50% of foreign language speakers in Delaware (60,762 residents) speak Spanish at home, accounting for just over 7% of the state's total population. Close to 6,000 residents speak Chinese, while just over 5,300 residents speak African languages. Rounding out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in the First State are other Asian languages (spoken by 3,943 residents), German (spoken by 3,679 residents) and Hindi (spoken by 3,139 residents).



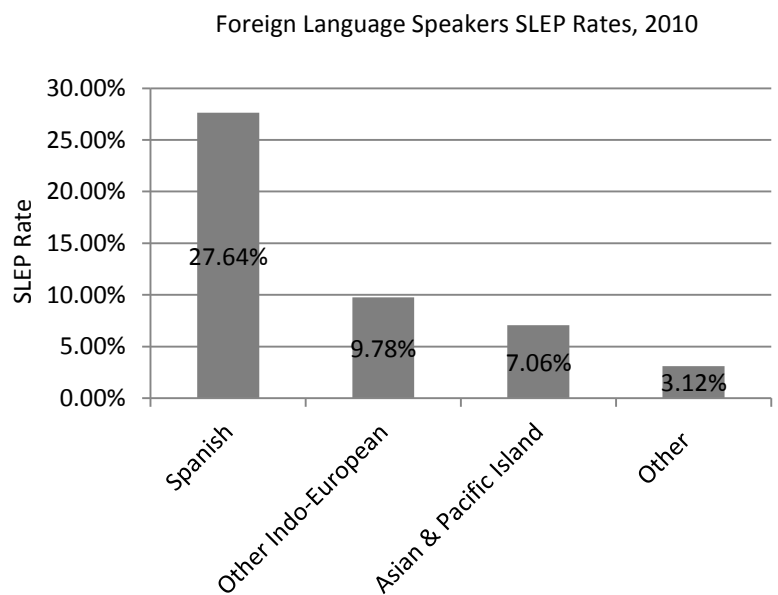
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With 2,238 children, 15,373 adults and 2,039 seniors unable to speak English well, Delaware's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) numbers have continued to rise over the past twenty years. Despite the increase, the number of First State residents who are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all" remains low on the nationwide rankings by age group. Children aged 5 to 17 years old place 40th, while adults aged 18 to 64 years old and seniors aged 65 and above both rank 41st in their respective age categories.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

With nearly 28% of Delaware's Spanish speakers unable to speak English better than "not well" or "not at all," this group places 15th on the nationwide list of severe limited English proficient (SLEP) Spanish speakers. Speakers of other Indo-European languages also placed in the top 20 nationwide, ranking 19th with a SLEP rate of nearly 10%. The First State's speakers of 'other' uncategorized languages and Asian & Pacific Island languages were among the lowest in the nation, with these groups ranking 48th and 49th, respectively.



Conclusion

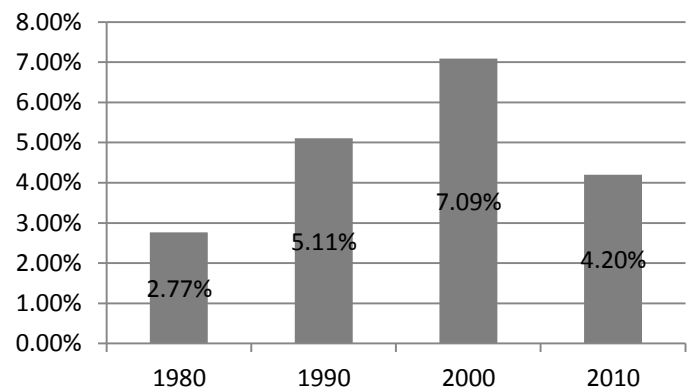
Delaware is in need of English language learning programs targeted at its growing Spanish speaking population. While the number of limited English proficient individuals has gradually increased throughout the years, the state's Hispanic population has skyrocketed, already surpassing Census Bureau projections for the year 2025. Spanish speakers account for more than half of the state's foreign language speakers. This group also ranks 15th nationwide for its number of severely limited English proficient residents, demonstrating the crucial need for programs that encourage this population to learn English. Speakers of other Indo-European languages also have a high population of severely limited English proficient residents, so providing English learning programs for this group should also become a priority.

District of Columbia

Capital: N/A
2010 Population: 604,453
Joined Union: N/A

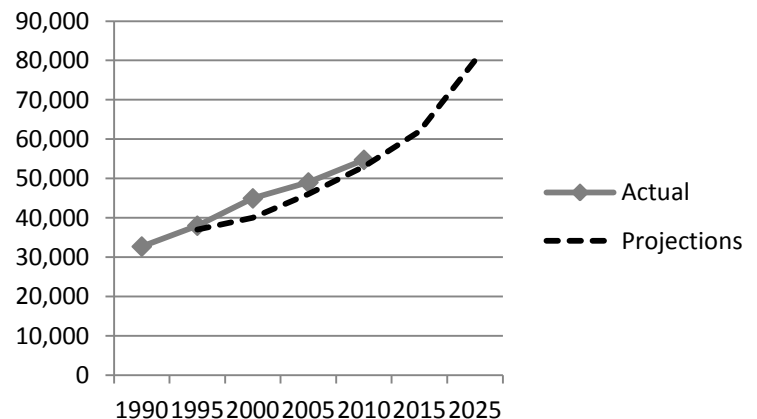
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

After more than doubling from 1980 to 2000, the District of Columbia's limited English proficient (LEP) population dropped by 2010. The move helped lower its rank on a state-by-state LEP rate scale from 20th in 1980 to its current spot at 26th. While its 2010 LEP rate of 23,730 is a decrease from 2000's 38,236, the current number is still significantly higher than the 1980 LEP count of 16,574 residents.



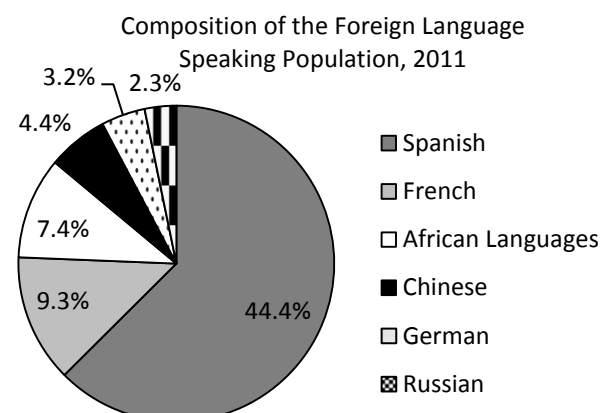
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in the District of Columbia has been above Census Bureau projections since the year 2000, but looks to be on track to fall below the estimated population for the year 2025. In 2000, the District of Columbia had gained just over 14,000 Hispanic residents from the previous Census, for a total of 44,953 individuals, compared to the projected 40,000. In 2010, that number had risen to 54,749. Should growth continue at the same rate, the District may remain below the 62,000 Hispanics projected for 2015 and the 80,000 projected for 2025.



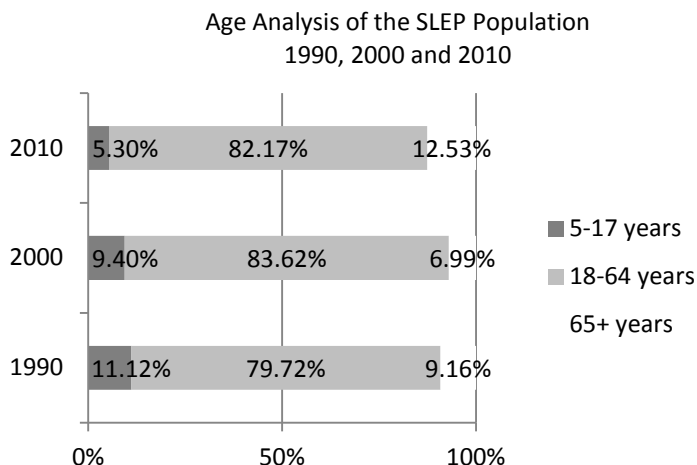
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Nearly half (44%) of foreign language speakers in the District of Columbia are Spanish speakers, with 38,897 residents classifying themselves as such. French, the second most widely used foreign language in the District, is spoken by 8,119 residents. African languages are spoken by just over 6,000 residents, accounting for 7.4% of foreign language speakers. Rounding out the top 6 foreign languages in the District of Columbia are Chinese, German and Russian, each with fewer than 4,000 residents speaking them at home.



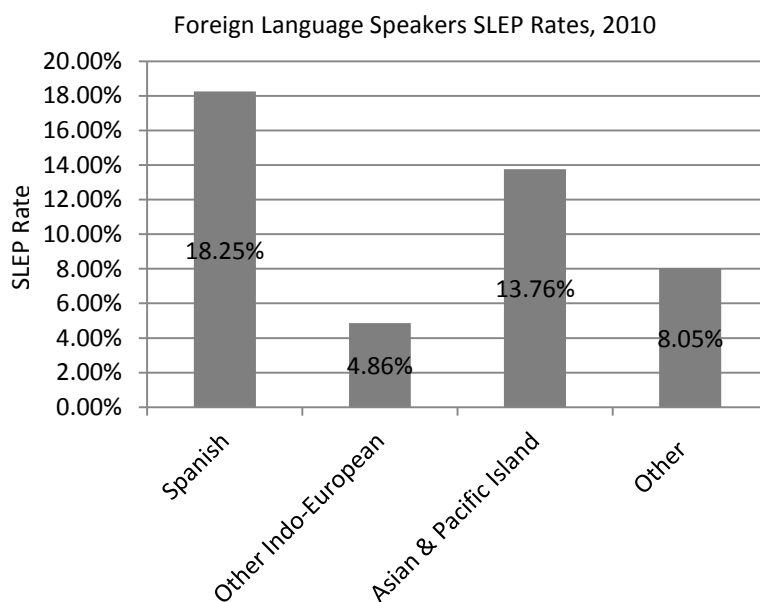
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The District of Columbia saw a slight decline in the percentage of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults aged 18 to 64 between 2000 and 2010, falling just over 1.5%. Children aged 5-17, with a SLEP population of 559, also saw a shrinking percentage, while the number of seniors has nearly doubled between 2000 and 2010. Despite that increase, D.C. remains among the lowest ranked SLEP areas in the United States, ranking 43rd for adults 18 to 64 years old, 44th for seniors aged 65 and above, and 47th for children aged 5 to 17 years old.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

The percentages of severe limited English proficient (SLEP) residents in the District of Columbia rank low on nationwide comparisons in all four language categories. With the lowest SLEP rate within the District of Columbia, speakers of other Indo-European languages placed 42nd compared to similar groups in other states, as did the District's Spanish speakers with their 18.25% SLEP rate. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed slightly lower at 43rd nationally, while speakers of 'other' languages who could speak English only "not well" or "not at all" placed 37th.



Conclusion

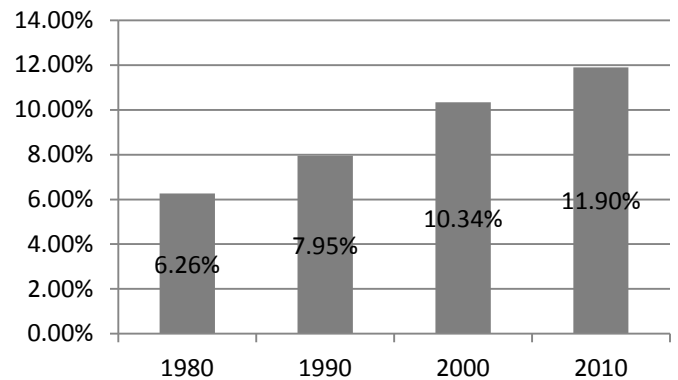
The limited English proficient population within the District of Columbia has fluctuated over the past thirty years, likely due to the transient nature of its residents and the concentrated international population. Spanish speakers account for nearly half of the District's foreign language speakers, and it would be wise to focus English learning programs on this population. While the fluctuation in limited English proficient speakers in this area is likely to continue, ensuring that there are programs available for non-English speakers to learn America's common language is crucial to maintaining unity within our nation's capital.

Florida

Capital: Tallahassee
2010 Population: 18,843,326
Joined Union: March 3, 1845

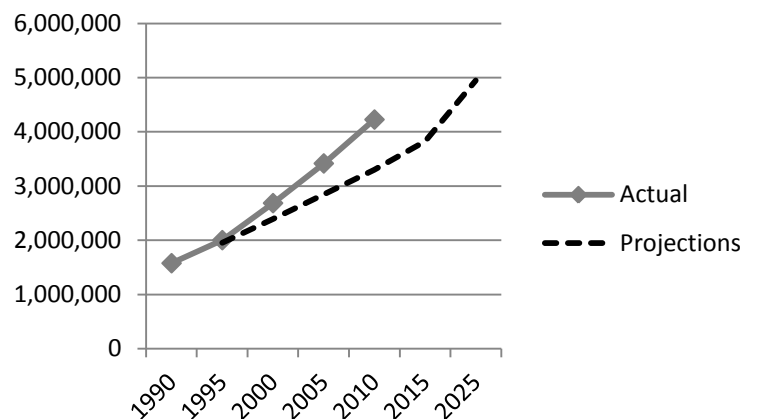
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Florida's limited English proficient (LEP) population has shown a consistent rise over the years, nearly doubling from 1980 to 2010. In fact, the number of LEP individuals in Florida more than tripled, rising from 574,701 to 2,112,083 during that period. The Sunshine State, which placed ninth on the state-by-state LEP rankings in 1980, jumped to 6th place in 2010.



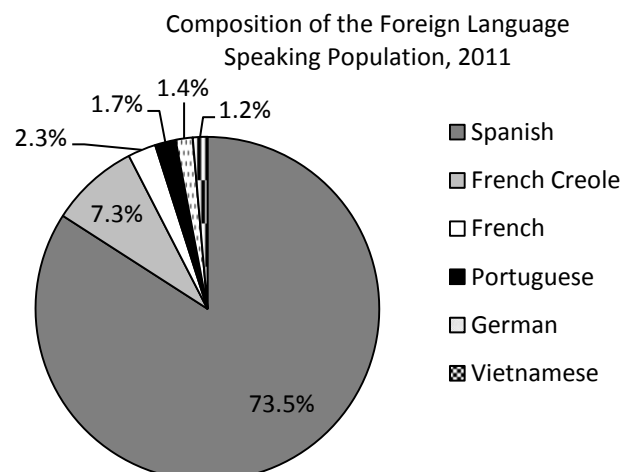
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

In 2010, Florida's 4,223,806 Hispanic residents had already far surpassed the Census Bureau's 2015 projection of 3,828,000. Even as far back as 2000, the Hispanic population count was also above projections, with 2,682,715 Hispanic residents that year, compared to the projected 2,390,000. With a Hispanic population increase of 1 million from 1990 to 2000 and nearly 2 million from 2000 to 2010, Florida will surpass the Census Bureau's 2025 projection of 4,944,000 Hispanic residents far before that calendar year.



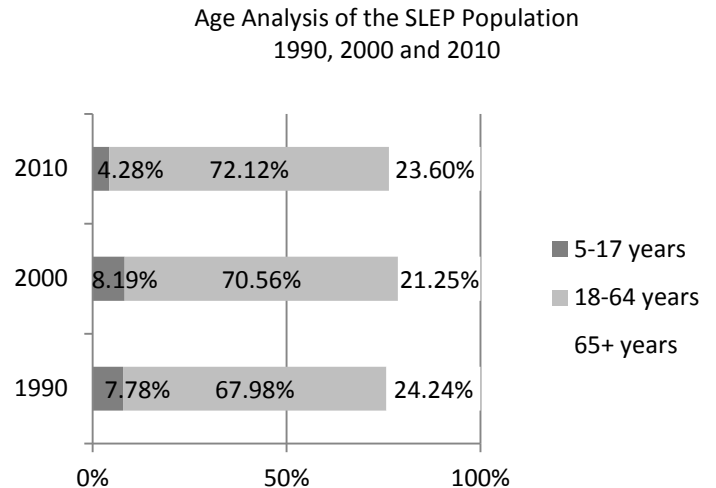
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Nearly three-quarters of Florida residents who speak a language other than English at home are Spanish speakers, with 3,646,758 Sunshine State residents, or just over 20% of the state's population, categorizing themselves as such. French Creole and French are also widely spoken in Florida, with 362,045 and 116,405 residents speaking those languages, respectively. Portuguese, German and Vietnamese are less popular in comparison, although each language is used at home by at least 60,000 residents.



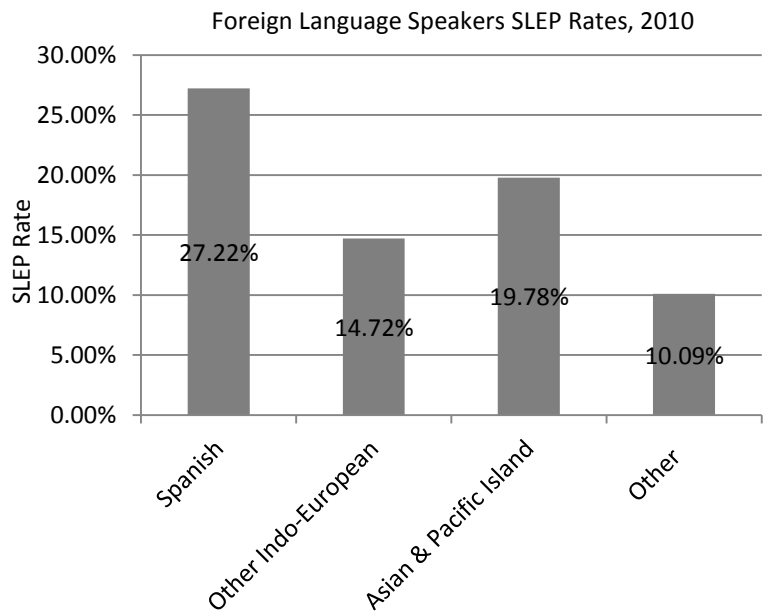
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The number of Florida's children, adults and seniors who are severely limited English proficient (SLEP) place these groups near the top of nationwide rankings. In 2010, despite a drop in the number of SLEP children aged 5 to 17, the Sunshine State still had 50,109 children falling into this category, ranking them 4th nationwide. With 844,941 adults aged 18 to 64 considered SLEP, this group also ranked 4th nationwide; while the 276,558 SLEP seniors ranked even higher, coming in 3rd among severely limited English proficient populations 65 and older nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

With 140,796 of Florida's 956,318 speakers of other Indo-European languages only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group placed 6th highest compared to similar groups in other states. The Sunshine State's Spanish speakers rounded out the top 20, with a 27% severe limited English proficient (SLEP) rate. Meanwhile, Florida's SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island and 'other' languages ranked in the middle of the nationwide list, placing 26th and 28th, with 51,112 and 8,764 SLEP residents, respectively.



Conclusion

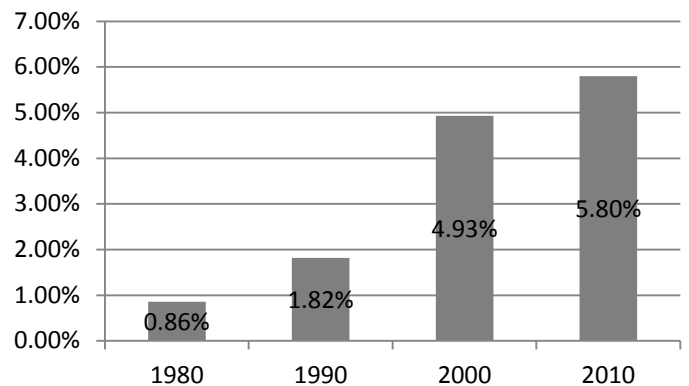
Florida is widely known for having a large Spanish speaking population, with nearly three-quarters of the state's foreign language speakers falling into this category. Unfortunately, it seems the Sunshine State's English learning programs are not meeting the demand of non-English speaking residents. The state's limited English proficient population jumped to more than 2.1 million in 2010, and the severe limited English proficiency rates for children, adults and seniors were all near the top in nationwide rankings. To prevent further linguistic divisions among residents, Florida should focus on the creation of additional English learning programs, especially those targeted at speakers of Spanish and other Indo-European languages.

Georgia

Capital: Atlanta
2010 Population: 9,712,587
Joined Union: Jan. 2, 1788

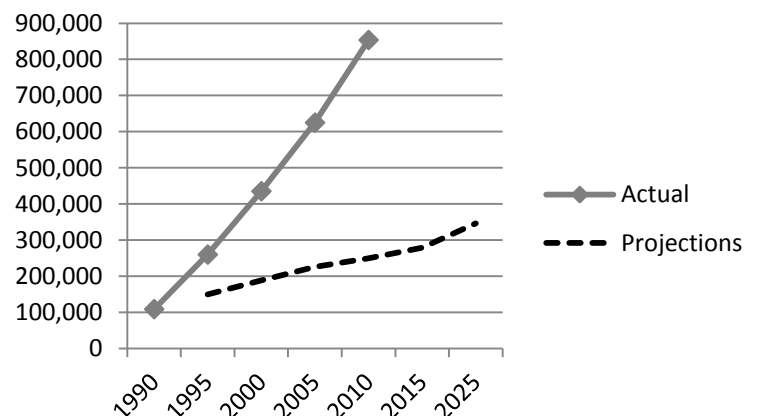
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Georgia's limited English proficient (LEP) population jumped nearly twelve times over from 1980 to 2010. At 43,560 in 1980, the number of LEP individuals grew to 522,100 in 2010. Once at the bottom of the state by state LEP rate list, at number 43 in 1980, by 2010 the Peach State had risen to the top 20, fitting in at spot 18.



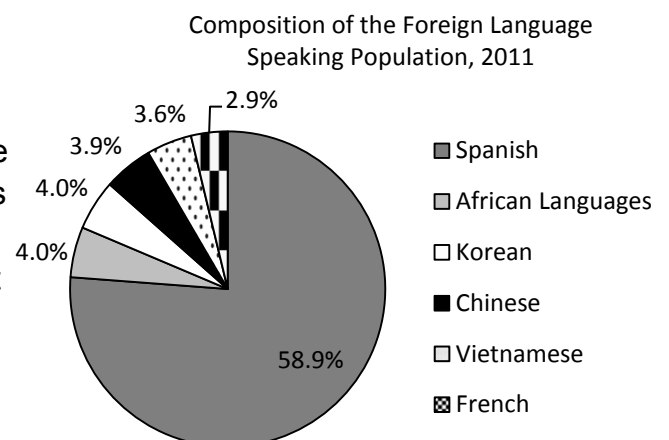
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Georgia made a considerable jump from 108,922 in 1990 to 435,227 in 2000. It then continued to rise to 625,028 in 2005 and again to 853,689 in 2010. Census Bureau projections for the Peach State, however, were significantly lower—with the government agency predicting an estimated 189,000 in 2000, 226,000 in 2005 and 346,000 in 2025. As of the latest Census, Georgia's Hispanic population has already more than doubled the projection for the year 2025.



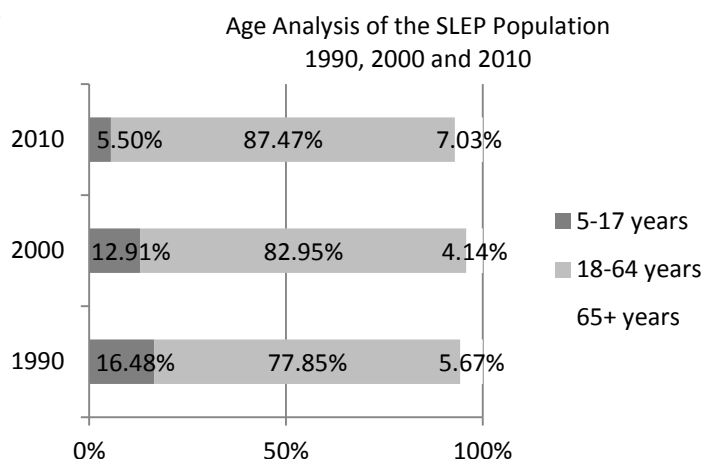
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Nearly 60% of foreign language speakers in Georgia speak Spanish, with 715,127 residents speaking it at home. While speakers of other foreign languages account for a smaller percentage of residents, they still represent significant numbers of those who call the Peach State home. Speakers of African languages, Korean and Chinese account for 49,093, 48,764 and 47,953 residents, respectively. Rounding out the most widely used foreign languages in Georgia are Vietnamese and French, each with more than 35,000 residents speaking the language at home.



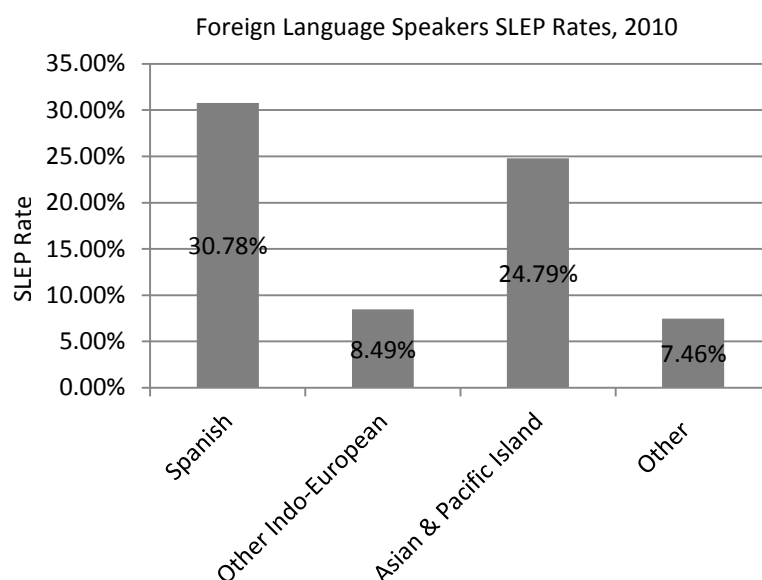
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The percentage of adults comprising Georgia's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population has consistently risen over the past twenty years, growing ten points. In 2010, with 251,011 SLEP adults aged 18 to 64 accounting for just over 87% of this population, Georgia ranked 8th on the nationwide rankings for this age group. Despite a drop in the percentage of SLEP children between 2000 and 2010, the Peach State still ranked 11th with 15,787 SLEP residents ages 5 to 17. The 20,186 seniors ranked slightly lower at 17th place nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Georgia's severe limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranks in the top five nationwide among Spanish and Asian & Pacific Island speakers. With 216,348 of the state's 702,834 Spanish speakers unable to speak English more than "not well" or "not at all," and 46,590 of the state's 187,957 Asian & Pacific Island language speakers facing the same language struggles, these groups both placed 4th nationally. The SLEP rate for speakers of other Indo-European languages ranked 26th, while SLEP speakers of 'other' languages placed the Peach State 42nd.

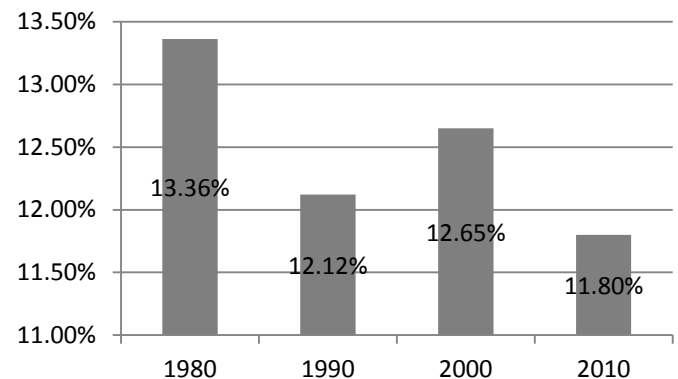


Conclusion

Georgia's limited English proficient population has skyrocketed over the past thirty years, so much so that the state is no longer meeting the needs of its non-English speaking residents. An immediate focus should be on the state's Spanish speaking population, which accounts for close to 60% of foreign language speakers and is already twice the Census projections for the year 2025. Attention also needs to be paid to the growing general foreign language speaking population, with an increasing number of severely limited English proficient adults and SLEP Asian & Pacific Island speakers placing in the top five nationwide. Georgia, once facing minimal linguistic issues, is now in dire need of English learning classes to prevent non-English speakers from facing further challenges.

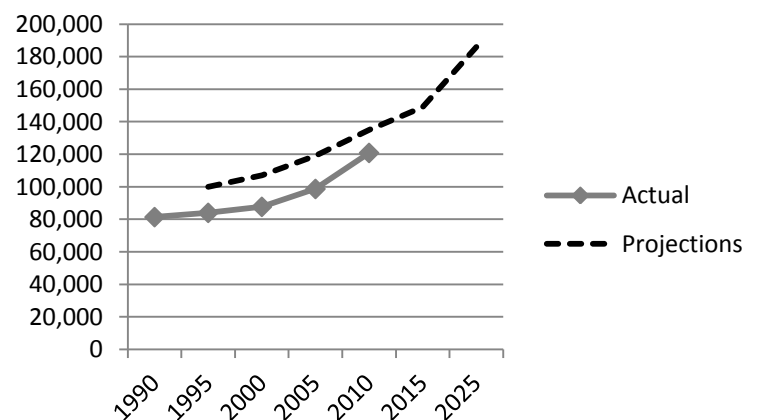
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

While Hawaii's limited English proficient (LEP) rate has dropped just over two percentage points in the past thirty years, the LEP population itself has risen, from 118,617 in 1980 to 150,488 in 2010. But thanks to growth in the Aloha State's overall population, Hawaii dropped on the LEP state-by-state rankings, falling from number two in 1980 to the number seven spot in 2010.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

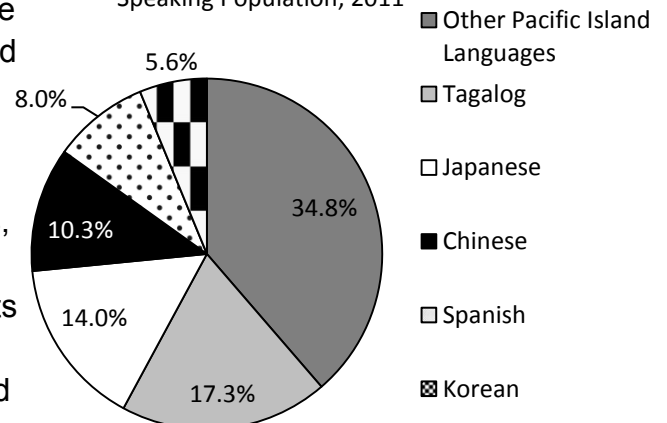
Hawaii is one of the few states whose Hispanic population has consistently remained below Census Bureau projections. Projected to have 107,000 Hispanic residents in the year 2000, the Aloha State was actually home to 87,699. Expected to have 119,000 in 2005, in reality, only 98,699 resided there. And with a 2010 Hispanic population of 120,842, Hawaii still looks to be on track to fall at or below the 2015 projected population of 149,000.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

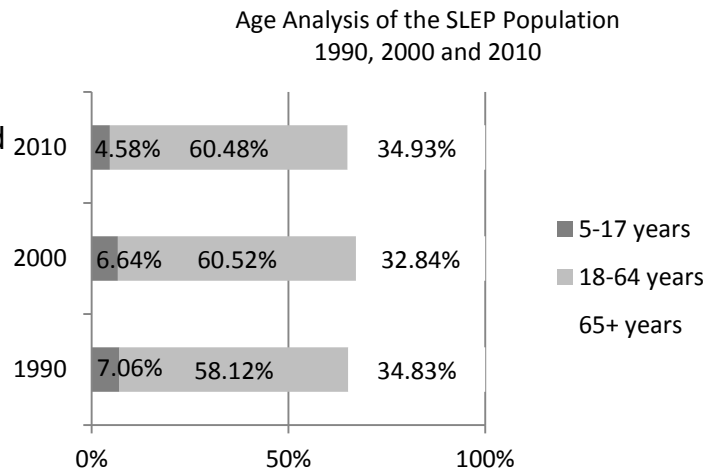
A quarter of Hawaiian residents speak a language other than English at home, but the Aloha State is one of very few where Spanish is not the most widely used foreign language. Rather, a majority (112,701 residents) of foreign language speakers use other Pacific Island languages. Tagalog, Japanese and Chinese are the next most popular foreign languages, each accounting for more than 10% of foreign language speakers. Just over 25,000 Hawaii residents speak Spanish at home, ranking the state's Spanish speaking population 5th, while Korean speakers round out the top 6 foreign languages used in Hawaii, with 18,055 speakers.

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



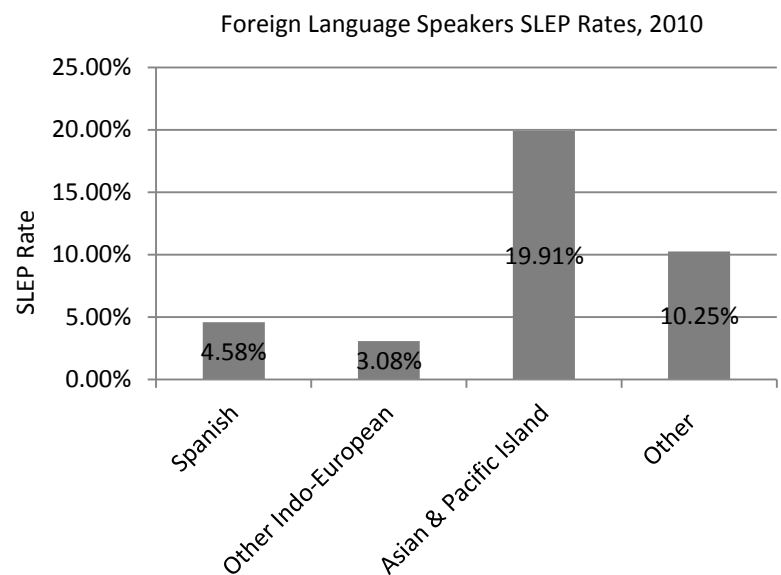
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With 20,200 seniors accounting for 34.93% of Hawaii's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents, this age group ranks 16th nationwide among SLEP speakers aged 65 and older. The percentage of adults in Hawaii aged 18 to 64 who are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all" has remained fairly consistent over the past twenty years, as has the percentage of children aged 5 to 17 years old. With 34,973 adult residents and 2,651 children falling into the SLEP category, Hawaii ranked 38th nationwide in both of these age groups.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Compared to other states, Hawaii's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranks low in all four language categories. Despite close to a fifth of speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages being SLEP, this group ranked 25th nationwide. With the second highest percentage of SLEP residents statewide, speakers of 'other' languages ranked 26th. Meanwhile, with only 1,197 of the Aloha State's 26,129 Spanish speakers considered severely limited English proficient, this group ranked 48th, just above other Indo-European language speakers, who placed 49th.



Conclusion

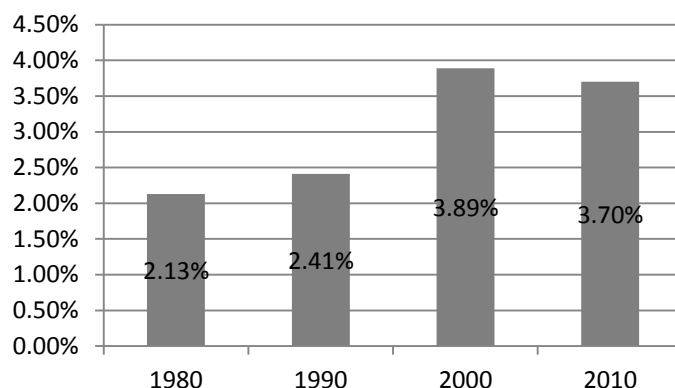
Hawaii, where Official English passed in 1978, is one of the few states with a significant foreign language speaking population that is not facing challenges encouraging these residents to acquire English proficiency. With more than 80% of the Aloha State's non-English speakers using Asian & Pacific Island languages, this group ranks low in severe limited English proficiency. Because of these low LEP rates and low placement on nationwide rankings, Hawaii has the time to create English learning programs for its residents without the immediacy many other states are facing.

Idaho

Capital: Boise
2010 Population: 1,571,450
Joined Union: July 3, 1890

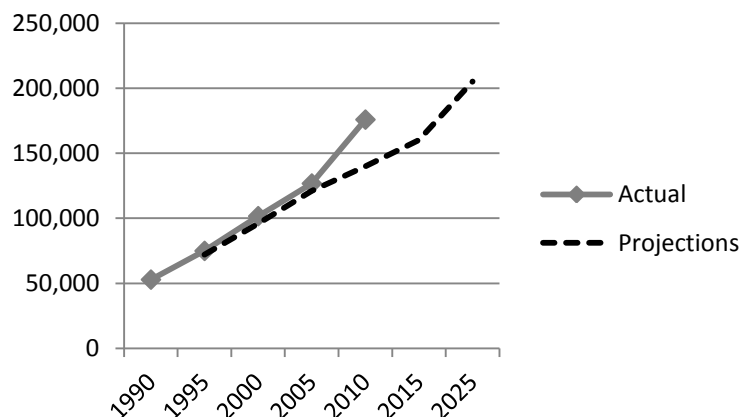
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Idaho's limited English proficient (LEP) population has nearly tripled over the past thirty years. At 18,116 in 1980, the number of LEP individuals had risen to 53,763 in 2010. Even so, the Gem State has remained on steady ground in a state by state LEP rate comparison. Ranking in at number 27 in 1980, it had dropped to number 29 in 2010.



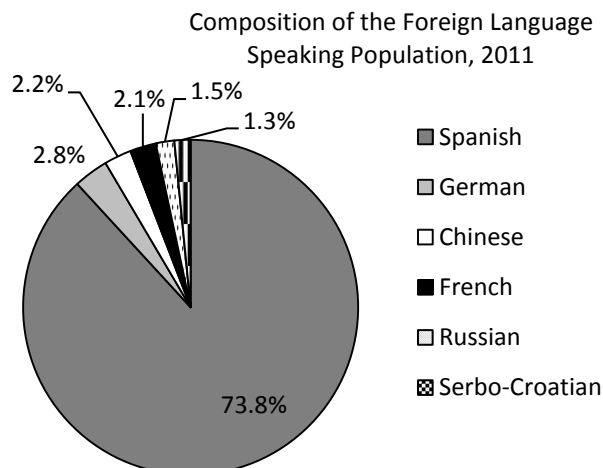
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

Idaho's Hispanic population, until 2010, more or less fell in line with Census Bureau projections. In 1990, the Gem State had a Hispanic population of 52,927. By 2000, it had grown to 101,690, by 2005 it had reached 126,785, and in 2010, the Hispanic population was 175,901. The Census Bureau had projected a Hispanic population of 96,000 in 2000—only 5,000 below the actual count. By 2015, the Census projected a count of 160,000—which has already been surpassed by the 2010 Census count.



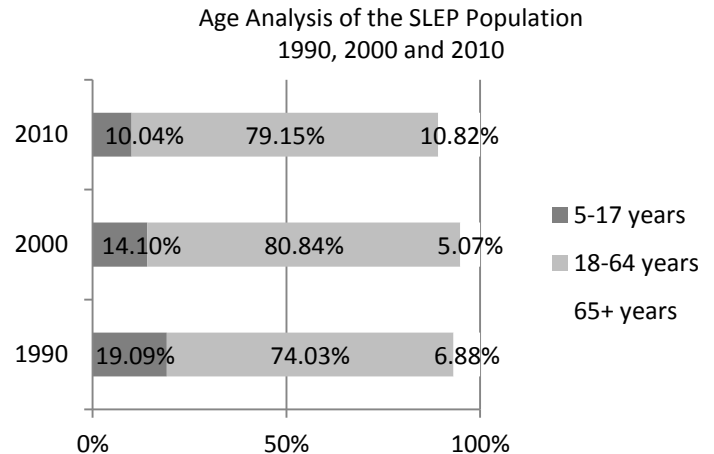
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Close to 90% of Gem State residents speak English at home. But of the state's 152,712 foreign language speakers, nearly three-quarters (112,653 residents) speak Spanish. German is the second most widely used foreign language with 4,243 residents using it at home, followed by Chinese and French, each with just over 3,200 speakers. Russian and Serbo-Croatian account for only 1.5% and 1.3% of Idaho's foreign language speaking population, but are still spoken by enough residents to round out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in the state.



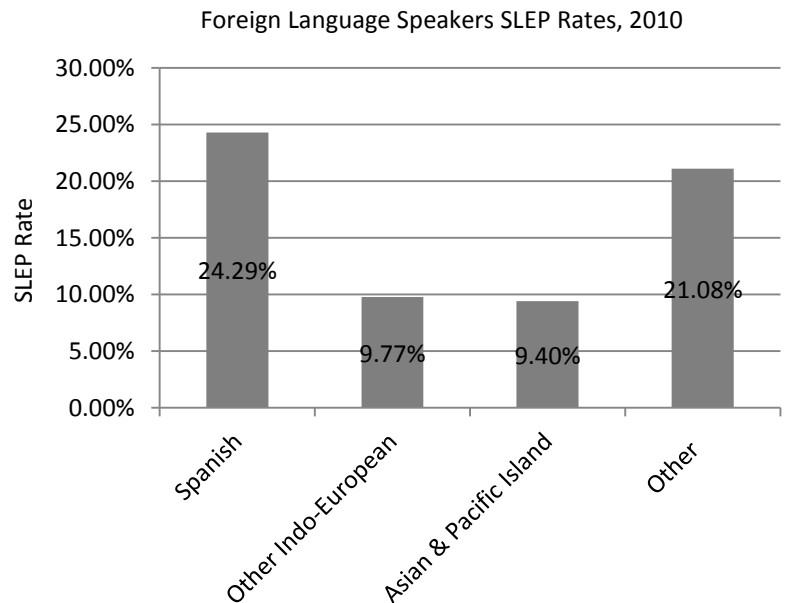
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The percentage of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults in Idaho has remained steady over the past twenty years, falling to 39th place nationwide in 2010, due to the 25,355 SLEP residents aged 18 to 64 years old. Gem State children aged 5 to 17 placed slightly higher at spot 37, despite a decline in their percentage, because of the 3,216 SLEP residents in this age group. Meanwhile, the percentage of Idaho seniors who are SLEP doubled between 2000 and 2010, ranking this age group 34th compared to others aged 65 and over nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

The severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population of Idaho covers the spectrum of SLEP speakers nationwide. The Gem State's 27,954 speakers of 'other' languages who are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all" rank 4th highest nationwide, accounting for 21.08% of all speakers of other languages. Meanwhile, the 9.40% of SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages place low on the list in 48th place. SLEP speakers of Spanish and other Indo-European languages fall in between, placing 32nd and 20th, respectively.

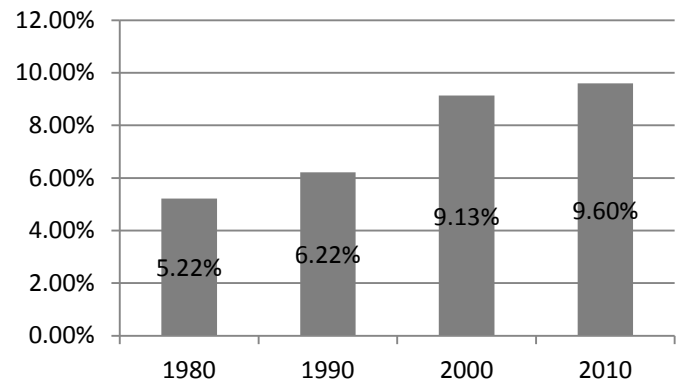


Conclusion

Idaho faces an ongoing need to target English learning programs across its population of foreign language speakers. Three-quarters of the Gem State's foreign language speakers use Spanish, and the state's Hispanic population has already surpassed 2015 estimates. Nearly a quarter of Spanish speakers residing in Idaho are severely limited English proficient, showing a need for English learning programs among this group to prevent further linguistic divisions. Priority should also be placed on targeting English programs at speakers of 'other' foreign languages, as this group's severe limited English proficient rate ranks among the top 5 nationwide.

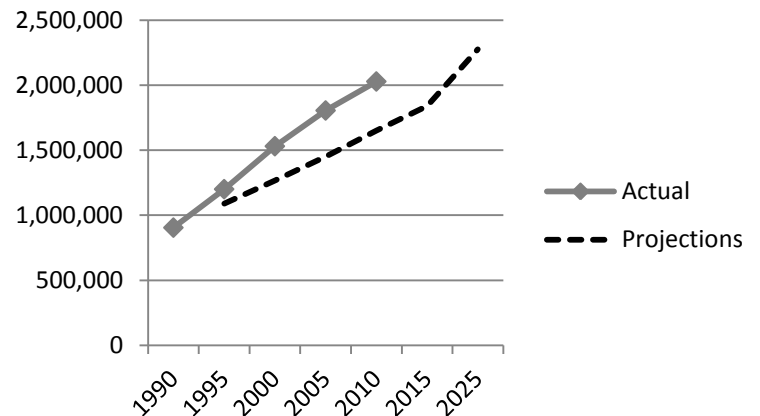
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

The limited English proficient (LEP) population in Illinois has doubled from 1980 to 2010. During that period, the number of limited English proficient individuals living in the Prairie State rose from 552,000 to 1,157,741. At the same time, Illinois has remained among the states with the highest limited English proficient population—holding the 11th spot for the highest LEP population in 1980 and jumping to the 9th spot in 2010.



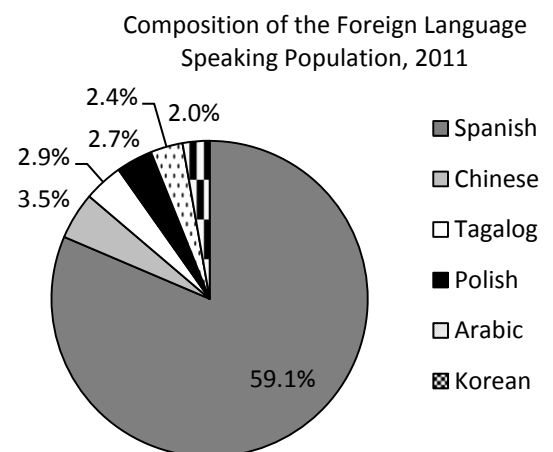
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Illinois has long surpassed Census Bureau projections. Estimated to have a Hispanic population of 1,267,000 in 2000, the Prairie State was already home to 1,530,262 Hispanic residents by that time. By 2005, the number of Hispanic residents was projected to grow to 1,450,000, but the actual Census count showed 1,804,619. In 2010, the Hispanic population count of 2,027,578 fell only 200,000 residents short of the 2025 projection.



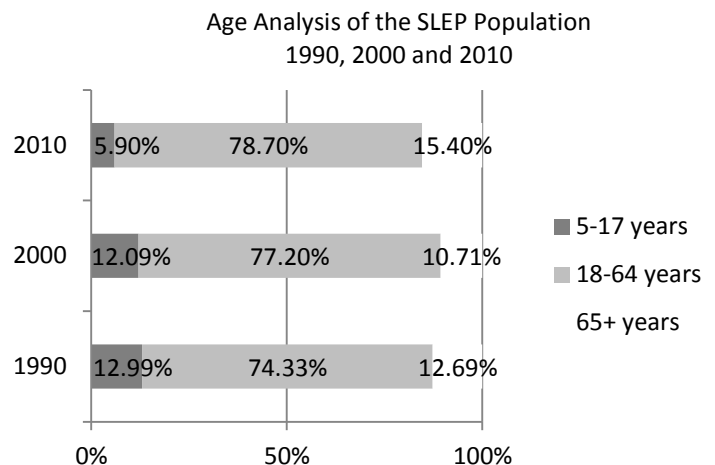
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Nearly 60% of foreign language speakers in Illinois speak Spanish, with the 1,614,022 residents who use it accounting for more than 13% of the state's overall population. Nearly 100,000 residents speak Chinese, making it the second most widely used foreign language in Illinois. Tagalog and Polish are spoken by 78,550 and 73,370 Prairie State residents, respectively, accounting for 2.9% and 2.7% of the state's foreign language speakers. Rounding out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages are Arabic (spoken by 65,938 residents) and Korean (spoken by 54,163 residents).



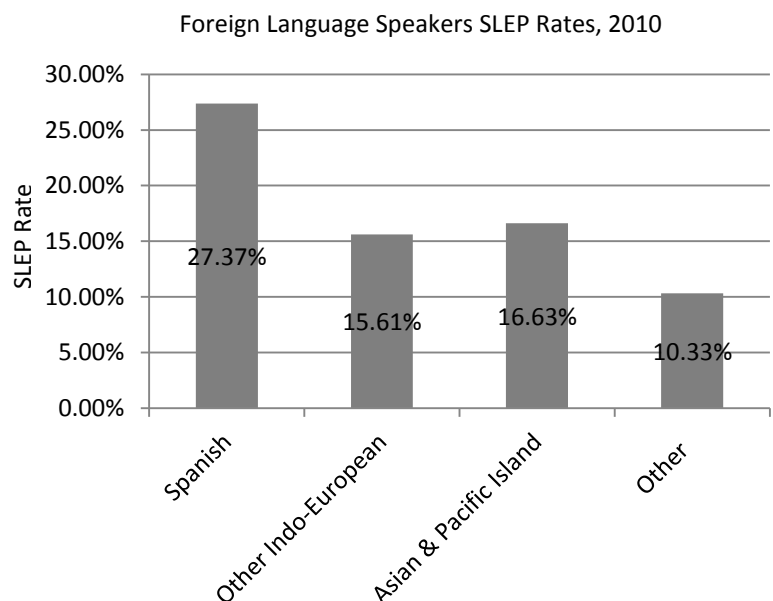
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Illinois ranks in the top ten among states with the highest numbers of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents. With 467,610 adults only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” this age group places 5th nationwide, as do the 35,091 SLEP children aged 5 to 17 years old. While the number of SLEP seniors in the Prairie State rose five points from 2000 to 2010, with 91,531 residents aged 65 and above accounting for 15.4% of the state’s SLEP population in 2010, this group fell slightly lower on nationwide rankings, placing at number 6.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Illinois speakers of other Indo-European languages have the 2nd lowest rate of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents statewide, compared to other language groups. But with 15.61% of individuals unable to speak English better than “not well” or “not at all,” this group placed 4th highest nationally among that language group. The Prairie State’s SLEP Spanish speakers placed 18th, while speakers of ‘other’ languages ranked 24th and the number of SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed lowest, at 37th, compared to like language speakers in other states.

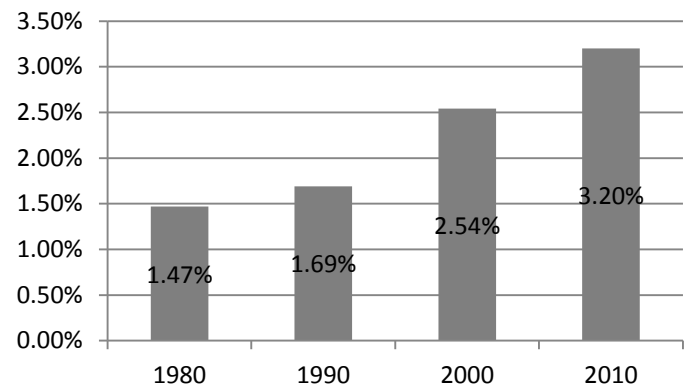


Conclusion

Illinois has long faced high rates of limited English proficiency. Also alarming is the fact that this population doubled over the past thirty years, reaching more than 1.1 million in 2010 and ranking 11th highest nationwide. While only a quarter of foreign language speakers in the Prairie State speak other Indo-European languages, this group faces an urgent need for English learning programs, with its rate of severely limited English proficient speakers ranking fourth highest nationally. Across the spectrum, the severely limited English proficient population of Illinois’ children, adults and senior citizens all place in the top six nationally, showing that action must be taken now to ensure the assimilation of the state’s foreign language speakers.

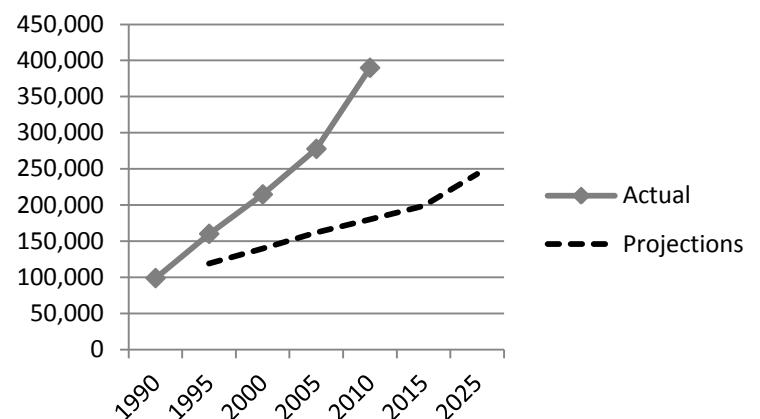
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Indiana's limited English proficient (LEP) population has steadily climbed over the past thirty years, jumping from 74,549 in 1980 to 191,352 in 2010. But the higher growth in LEP individuals post-1990 caused the Hoosier State to jump from number 40 in 1980 to 30 in 2010.



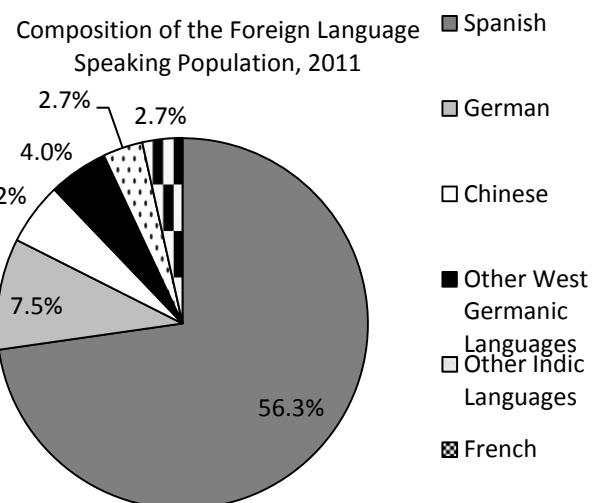
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Indiana has remained far above Census Bureau projections since 2000. With 214,536 Hispanic residents at the turn of the millennium, the Hoosier State already surpassed Census estimates by more than 60,000. By 2010, the 389,707 Hispanics calling Indiana home already exceeded the 2025 Census projections—by nearly 150,000.



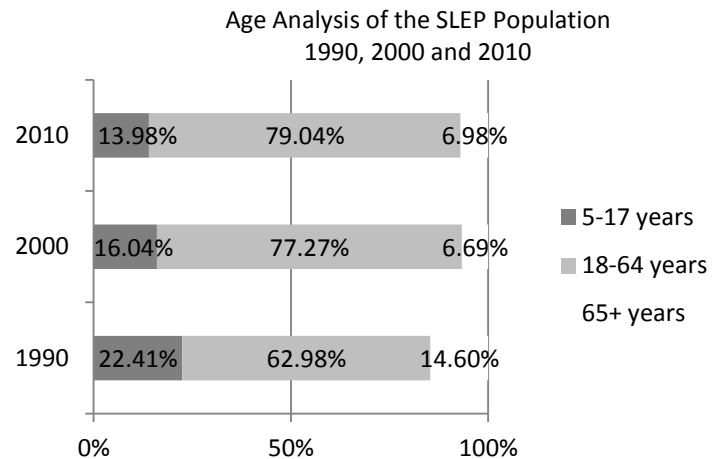
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 90% of Indiana's population speaks English at home, leaving only about 8% who consider themselves foreign language speakers. Among those, more than 56% are Spanish speakers, accounting for 282,516 residents. German is the second most widely spoken foreign language in the Hoosier State, with 37,569 residents using it at home. Chinese and other West Germanic languages are each spoken by about 20,000 Indiana residents, each accounting for just over 4% of the state's foreign languages speakers. Other Indic Languages and French round out the most widely used foreign languages, with about 13,500 speakers each.



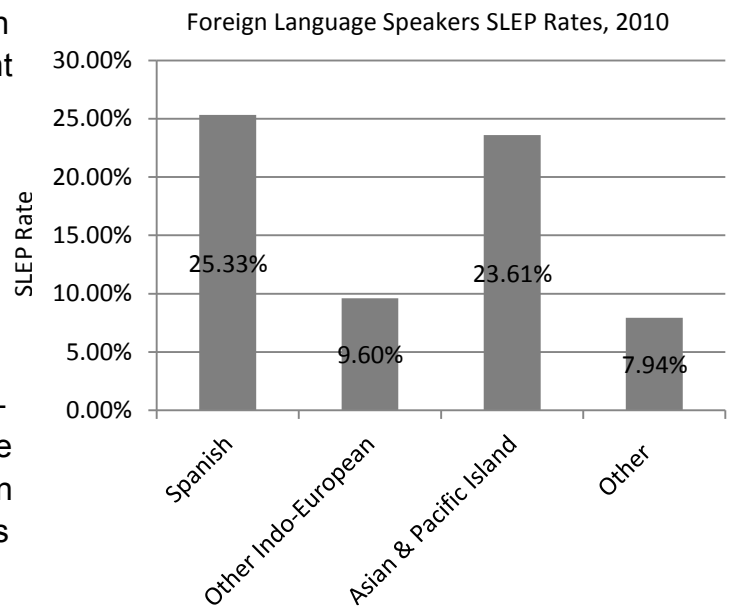
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Indiana's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population consists primarily of adults aged 18 to 64 years old, a group that has seen a slight rise from 2000 to 2010. But Hoosier State children aged 5 to 17 years old, even with a 2% drop during that period, still placed highest of the three age groups of SLEP residents in Indiana in nationwide rankings, coming in 13th. Adults placed at number 23, while seniors aged 65 and above, despite a slight increase from the previous Census, were 28th.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Despite more than a quarter of Indiana's Spanish speakers being severely limited English proficient (SLEP), this group ranked 27th nationwide compared to Spanish speakers in other states. With 13,995 of Indiana's 59,282 speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages considered SLEP, this group ranks highest among Indiana's four foreign language groups in nationwide rankings, in the 8th spot compared to SLEP speakers in other states. Speakers of other Indo-European languages rank in 22nd place, while the number of speakers of 'other' languages who can only speak English "not well" or "not at all" places at 39th nationally.

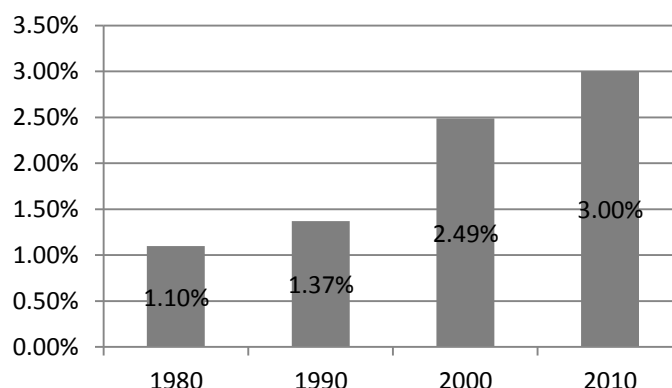


Conclusion

Despite the fact that 92% of Indiana residents spoke English at home in 2010, the state's limited English proficient population has steadily grown over the years, and this trend seems on track to continue. The number of severely limited English proficient adults rose from 2000 to 2010, indicating a need for English learning programs targeted at this age group. The Hoosier State's Hispanic population in 2010 already exceeded 2025 projections, leaving Spanish speakers to account for 55% of the state's foreign language speakers. With nearly a quarter of Indiana's speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages struggling with English proficiency, this group ranked in the top ten nationwide. To prevent further language divisions, Indiana needs to make English learning a priority across the board for its foreign language speaking population.

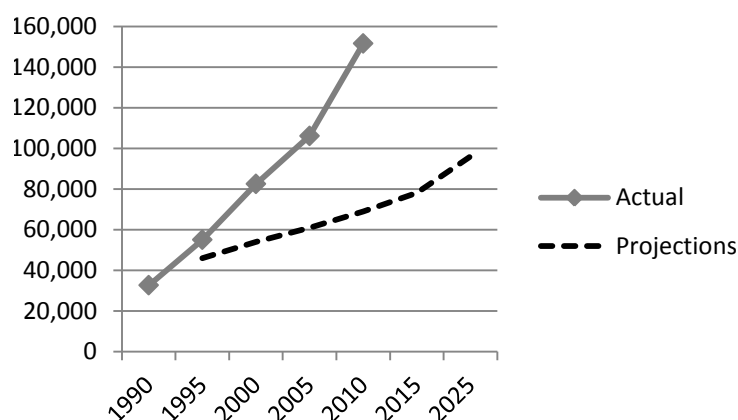
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Iowa's limited English proficient (LEP) population has nearly tripled over the past thirty years, rising from 29,681 in 1980 to 86,175 in 2010. The Hawkeye State also made a significant jump on the state LEP ranking list. Previously at number 41 in 1980, in 2010 it had risen to number 35.



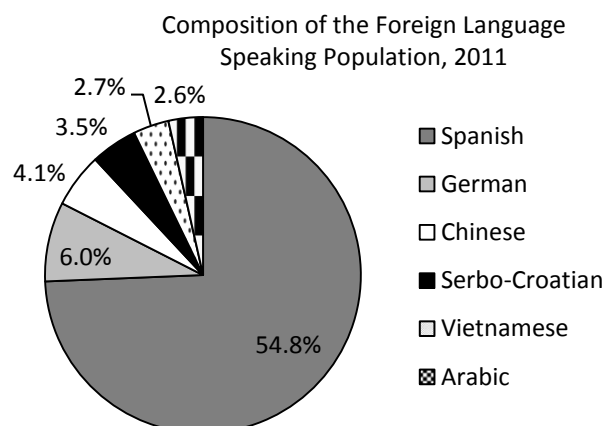
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Iowa has remained above Census Bureau projections and has been steadily increasing over the past thirty years. At 32,647 in 1990, 82,473 in 2000, 106,052 in 2005 and 151,544 in 2010, the number of Hispanic residents living in the Hawkeye State has long surpassed the estimates provided by the Census Bureau. Projected to have 54,000 Hispanic residents in 2000, 61,000 in 2005, 78,000 in 2015 and 96,000 in 2025, actual population counts showed Iowa surpassing these predictions by the year 2005.



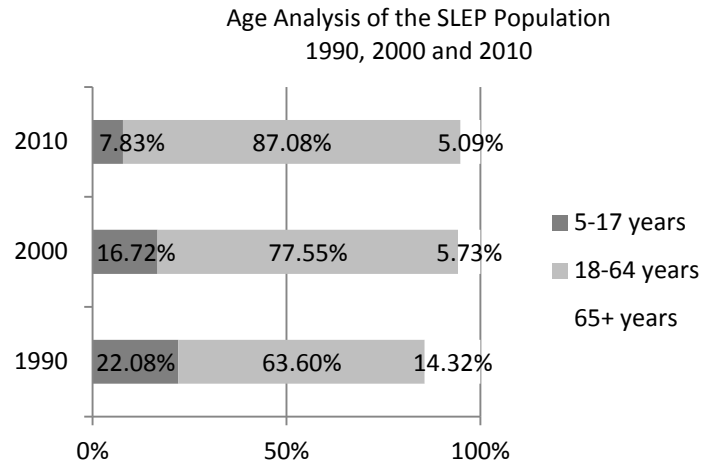
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Of Iowa's 208,066 foreign language speakers, nearly 55% (113,951 residents) are Spanish speakers. In a distant second are the 12,395 speakers of German, accounting for 6% of foreign language speakers in the Hawkeye State. More than 8,600 residents speak Chinese, while 7,364 speak Serbo-Croatian. Rounding out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in Iowa are Vietnamese and Arabic, each accounting for less than 3% of the state's foreign language speakers, with 5,660 and 5,442 residents using them at home, respectively.



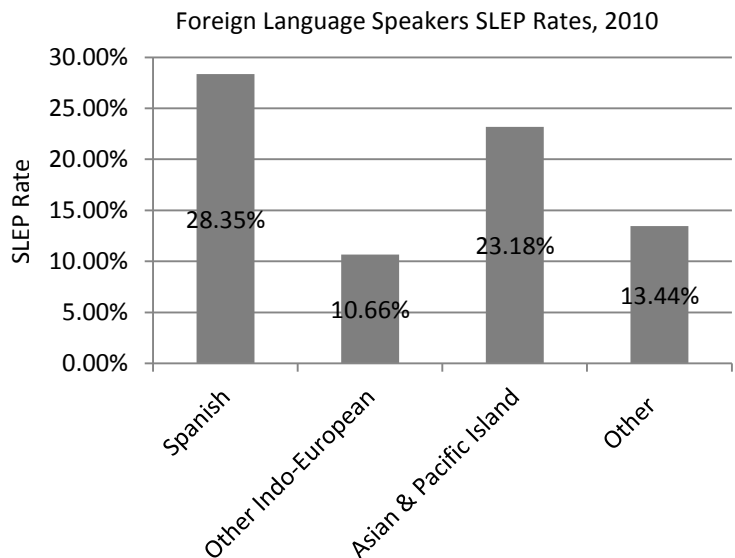
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Iowa's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population consists mainly of adults aged 18 to 64 years old, with this group experiencing a 10% increase from 2000 to 2010. Accounting for 87.08% of the state's SLEP speakers, Iowa adults land near the top of nationwide rankings, placing 5th compared to adults SLEP rates in other states. With 3,726 children and 2,423 seniors only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," residents aged 5 to 17 placed in the middle of nationwide rankings in 27th and residents aged 65 and above placed near the bottom in 48th.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

The severe limited English proficiency (SLEP) rate for all four language groups in Iowa rank in the top 20 nationwide when compared to SLEP rates in other states. With nearly a third of Spanish speakers unable to speak English better than "not well" or "not at all," this group just missed the top ten, placing 11th nationally. With 8,141 of the state's 35,120 speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages considered SLEP, this group ranked 12th. With 13.44% of 'other' language speakers and 10.66% of other Indo-European language speakers considered SLEP, these groups placed 15th and 16th, respectively.

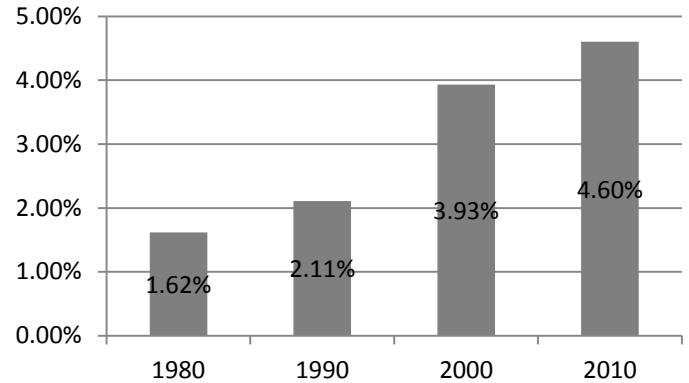


Conclusion

As the severe limited English proficient population of Iowa now tops nationwide rate rankings in all four language categories, Iowa should take note and make it a priority to encourage assimilation and English language learning opportunities among residents of all backgrounds. With Hispanics comprising a majority of the state's foreign language speakers and with this population steadily increasing, Iowa should ensure that Spanish speaking residents in particular have additional opportunities for English learning, or risk facing further linguistic divisions.

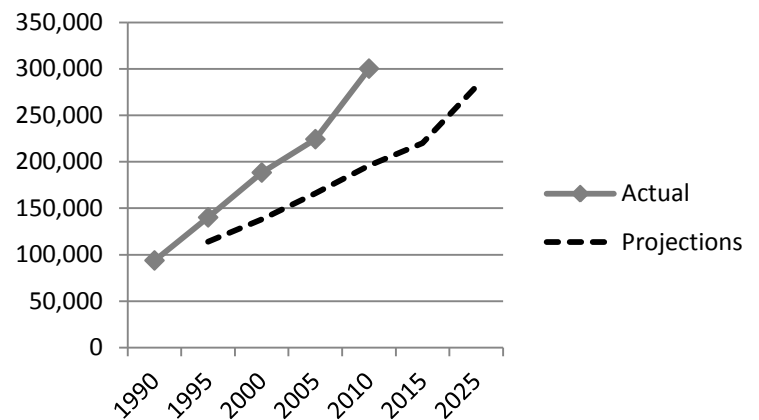
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

The limited English proficient (LEP) rate in Kansas has more than tripled in the period between 1980 and 2010. Thirty years ago, 35,374 Sunflower State residents were classified as LEP. By 2010, that number had jumped to 122,528. Previously in the middle of the state LEP rankings at number 36 in 1980, by 2010 Kansas just missed the top 20, ranking 23rd among all states.



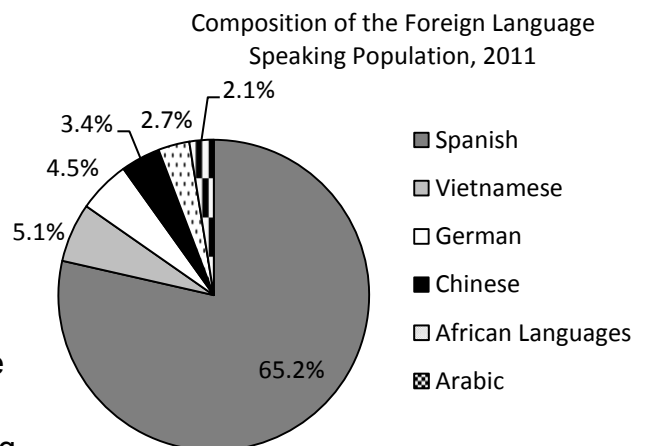
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

Census Bureau estimates predicted that Kansas would be home to 220,000 Hispanics in the year 2015 and 281,000 by 2025. In reality, these numbers were reached in 2005 and 2010, respectively. With a Hispanic population of 93,670 in 1990, it nearly doubled to 188,252 in 2000. By 2010, the number of Hispanic residents in Kansas was 300,042—already far surpassing the Census Bureau’s projections for fifteen years down the road.



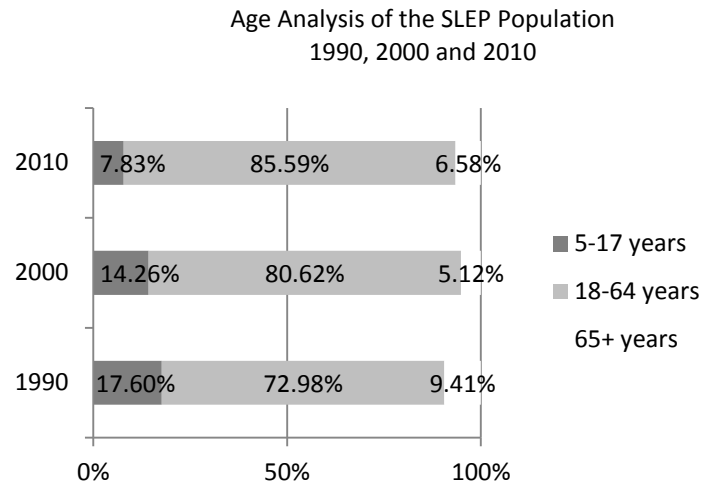
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Of the 304,111 Kansas residents who speak a language other than English at home, 65% are Spanish speakers, with 198,239 residents classifying themselves as such. Residents who speak Vietnamese, German and Chinese also account for a sizeable group, with 15,486, 13,736 and 10,268 residents speaking each language, respectively. Accounting for only 2.7% and 2.1% of the Sunflower State’s foreign language speakers, residents who use African languages and Arabic were slight fewer, with 8,143 speaking African languages and 6,469 speaking Arabic.



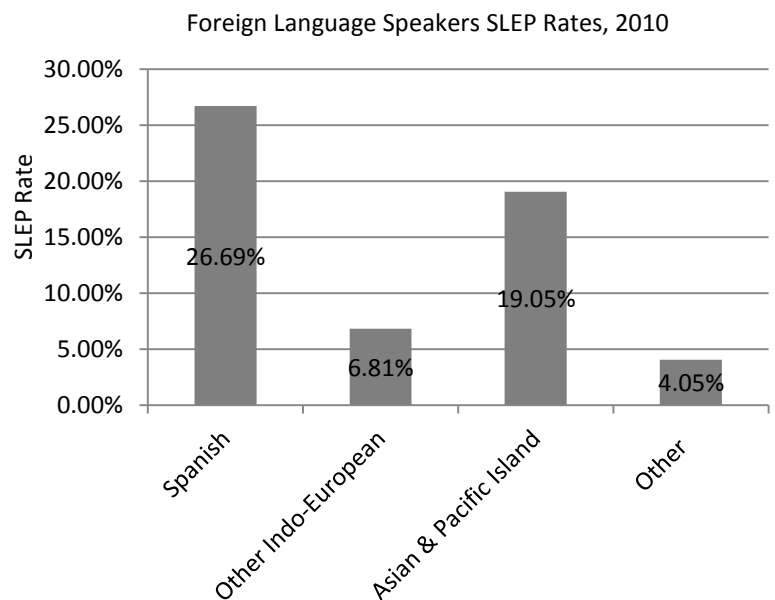
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The 53,982 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults in Kansas account for more than 85% of the state's SLEP population—continuing a steady increase that began in 1990. Even so, this abundance of 18 to 64 year olds who can only speak English “not well” or “not at all” still ranks the Sunflower State low on the nationwide list within that age group, in 30th place. Children aged 5 to 17 years old, accounting for 4,935 residents, ranked slightly higher in 29th; while the state's 4,147 seniors aged 65 and above ranked slightly lower in 33rd place nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

While the percentage of Kansas' severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population varies by language spoken, none of the four groups placed in the top 20 nationwide. Spanish speakers just miss the top 20 list, with 51,014 SLEP residents accounting for 26.69% of all Spanish speakers statewide. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages place 27th, and speakers of other Indo-European languages place 37th. With only 485 severely limited English proficient speakers of 'other' uncategorized languages, this group placed lowest statewide, ranking 45th compared to similar SLEP populations in other states.



Conclusion

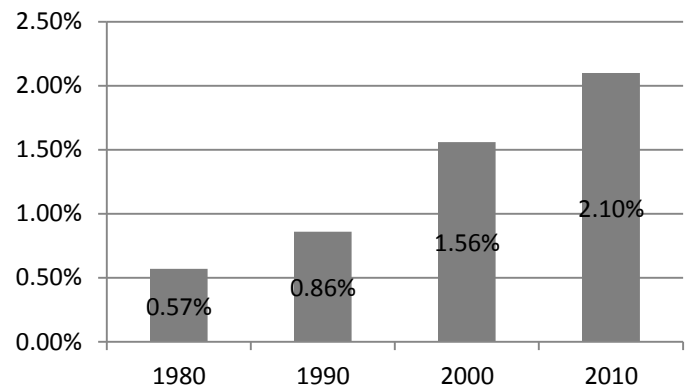
Kansas does not currently appear to have the same pressing need to expand English language learning programs that many other states are facing. Even so, with a growing percentage of severely limited English proficient working age adults, Kansas should keep a close eye on its foreign language speaking population to ensure it is provided with adequate opportunities to learn English. With a majority of foreign language speakers consisting of Hispanics, Kansas should also ensure that this population is assimilating at a pace to prevent increased limited English proficiency rates. In 2010, Spanish speakers just missed the top 20 list for their severe limited English proficient population, and this should serve as a signal that Kansas may soon need to target English language learning programs at certain groups of residents.

Kentucky

Capital: Frankfort
2010 Population: 4,346,266
Joined Union: June 1, 1792

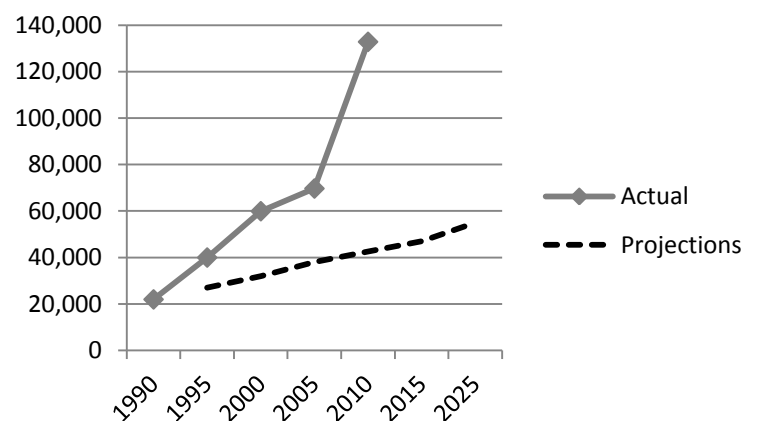
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Kentucky's limited English proficient (LEP) population more than quadrupled between 1980 and 2010. The Bluegrass State, with 19,285 LEP residents in 1980, grew to become home to 84,776 LEP residents in 2010. Placing as the state with the second lowest LEP rate in 1980, this rise in the limited English proficient population bumped Kentucky to the 43rd spot in 2010.



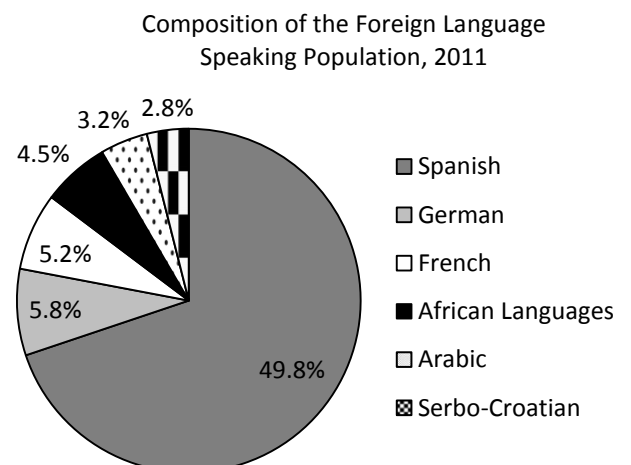
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

By the year 2000, Kentucky's Hispanic population already exceeded Census Bureau projections, boasting 59,939 Hispanic residents, compared to the 2025 estimate of 55,000. In fact, the number of Hispanics in the Bluegrass State in 2010 is more than double what the Census Bureau projected for the year 2025, at a count of 132,836. With only 21,984 Hispanic residents in 1990, that number skyrocketed to 132,836 in 2010.



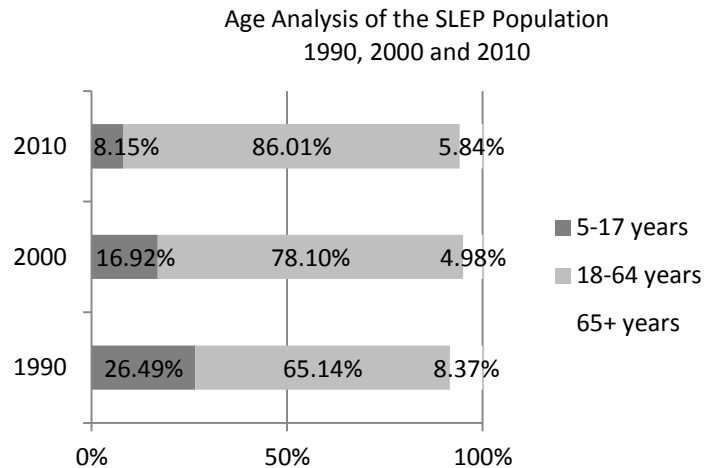
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Of the 197,131 Kentucky residents who speak a language other than English at home, close to half of them speak Spanish, tallying in with a count of 98,243 residents. Speakers of German and French each account for just over 5% of the state's foreign language speakers, with 11,354 and 10,310 residents speaking those languages, respectively. The 8,782 Bluegrass State residents who speak African languages make up 4.5% of the state's foreign language speakers. Rounding out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in Kentucky are Arabic and Serbo-Croatian, with 6,216 and 5,520 residents speaking these languages, respectively.



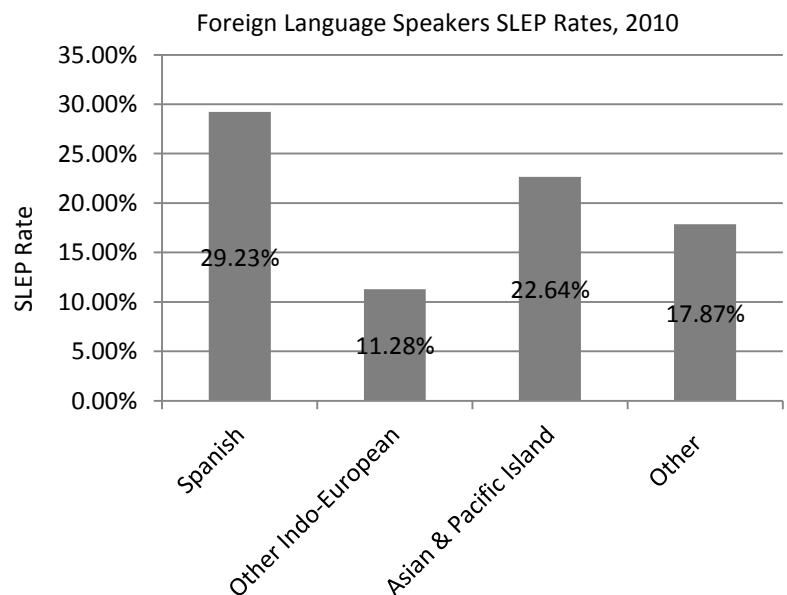
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Despite a more than 20% jump in the percentage of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults in Kentucky from 1990 to 2010, the 38,266 non-English speakers aged 18 to 64 in 2010 placed the Bluegrass State low on the nationwide list of SLEP adults, taking 36th place. The 3,625 children accounting for 8.15% of the state's SLEP population placed 34th nationwide, while the 2,597 seniors aged 65 and above, at 5.84% of the state's SLEP speakers, placed even lower on the list, at number 38 nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Kentucky's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population is so high that all four language groups rank in the top 15 nationwide for the percentage of SLEP residents. With 17.87% of speakers of 'other' languages unable to speak English better than "not well" or "not at all," this group ranked 7th highest nationwide. Nearly a third, or 29,516, Bluegrass State Spanish speakers were considered SLEP, ranking 8th nationwide. Meanwhile, speakers of other Indo-European languages and Asian & Pacific Island languages ranked slightly lower, placing 13th and 14th, respectively.



Conclusion

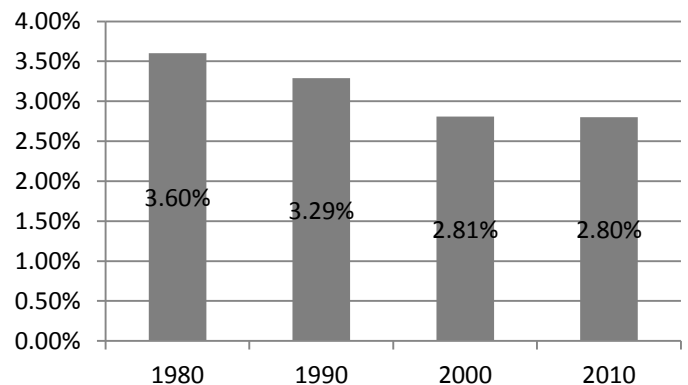
Kentucky's foreign language speakers have faced growing limited English proficiency (LEP) over the past thirty years, with that LEP population quadrupling from 1980 to 2010. And with a majority of them consisting of Spanish speakers, the state should consider expanding opportunities for these residents to learn English. Of special concern should be the growing percentage of severely limited English proficient working aged adults, which has jumped more than 20% since 1990. Continued limited English proficiency among this group is likely to have negative consequences on the state's economy in the long term.

Louisiana

Capital: Baton Rouge
2010 Population: 4,544,228
Joined Union: Apr. 30, 1812

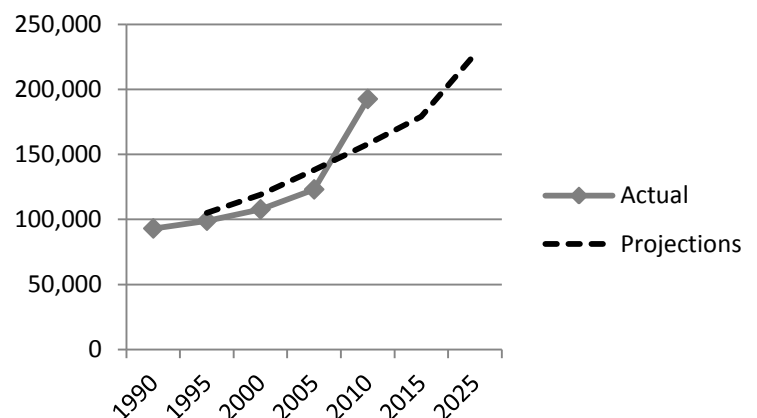
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Louisiana's limited English proficient (LEP) population has been one of the few to continuously drop throughout the years. In 1980, the Pelican State was home to the 15th highest LEP rate in the nation. Yet by 2010, it fell to 38th, with a total LEP population of 119,852. While this was a slight rise from 2000's 116,907 number, it still remains significantly lower than the 138,255 LEP residents living in Louisiana in 1980.



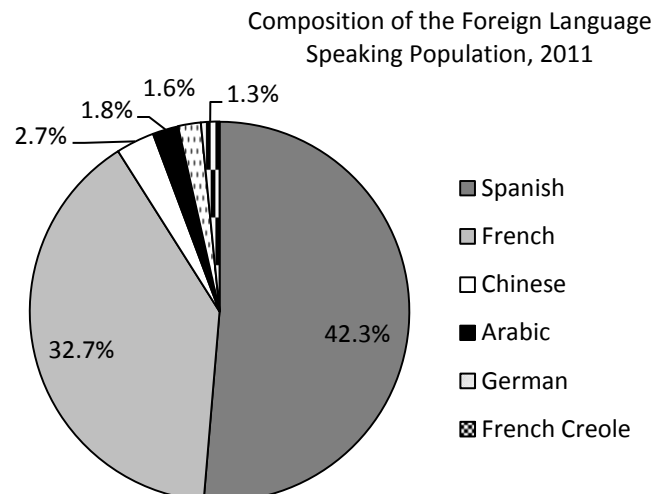
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Louisiana remained below Census Bureau projections until 2010, when it jumped to 192,560—surpassing Census estimates for the year 2015. Before the jump, the Pelican State remained an average of 10,000 below projections: in 2000, for example, the population was 107,738 compared to the projected 119,000 Hispanic residents.



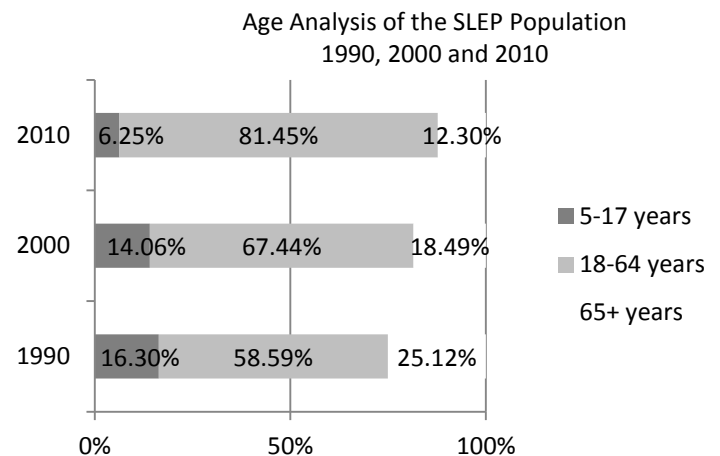
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 370,000 Louisiana residents speak a language other than English at home. Of these foreign language speakers, most speak Spanish (157,240 residents) or French (121,800 residents), with these groups accounting for nearly 75% of foreign language speakers statewide. Despite only representing less than 3% each of Louisiana's foreign language speaking population, Arabic, German and French Creole speakers still account for a good number of residents. More than 6,500 residents speak Arabic, 6,069 speak German and 4,927 residents speak French Creole.



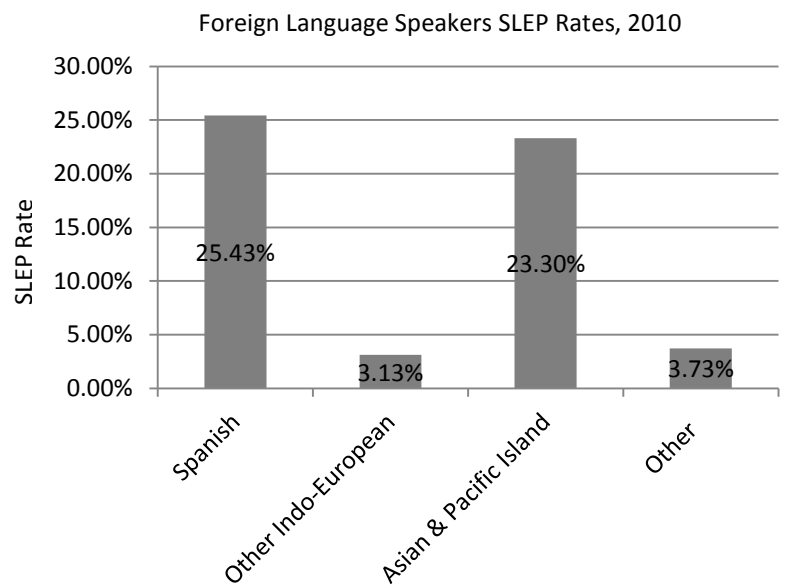
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The percentage of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults in Louisiana grew more than 20% between 1990 and 2010, with 44,765 adults aged 18 to 64 only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” This count leaves the Pelican State in the middle of the pack nationwide in terms of SLEP adults, placing 32nd. Louisiana’s 3,436 SLEP children, despite a drastic drop in the past decade, fell nearby at 36th nationwide. Meanwhile, the 6,759 SLEP seniors ranked 27th on the state rankings by age group.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Louisiana’s severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population varies greatly, depending on the language spoken. The percentage of SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages and ‘other’ uncategorized languages place low nationally at 48th and 46th, respectively. SLEP Spanish speakers, accounting for just over a quarter of the state’s Spanish speaking population, rank 26th nationwide, while the 11,736 SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages just miss placing in the top 10 nationwide, ranking number 11 with a SLEP rate of 23.30%.

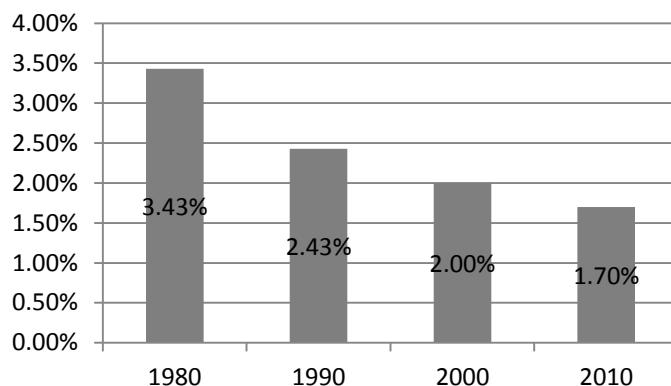


Conclusion

Louisiana is one of the few states to see a constant decline in its limited English proficient population. Even so, the state has seen minor changes in recent years that point to possible trouble on the horizon when it comes to the assimilation of Louisiana’s foreign language speakers. Of most concern is the number of severely limited English proficient speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages, which place in the top ten nationwide. While Louisiana should ensure that this group in particular has adequate access to English learning programs, it should also take a close look at these opportunities among working age adults, who have seen a nearly 15% increase in severe limited English proficiency just in the past ten years alone. Close monitoring and a plan to expand English learning programs now could save Louisiana further divisions down the road.

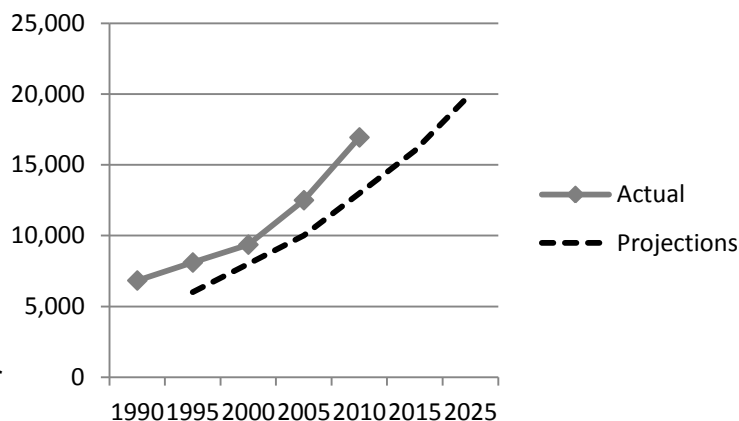
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Between 1980 and 2010, Maine's limited English proficient (LEP) population dropped from 35,853 to 20,898. The Pine Tree State has shown a gradual decline in its limited English proficient population, which has in turn led to its 2010 spot as the state with the 5th lowest LEP rate, down from the 17th highest in 1980.



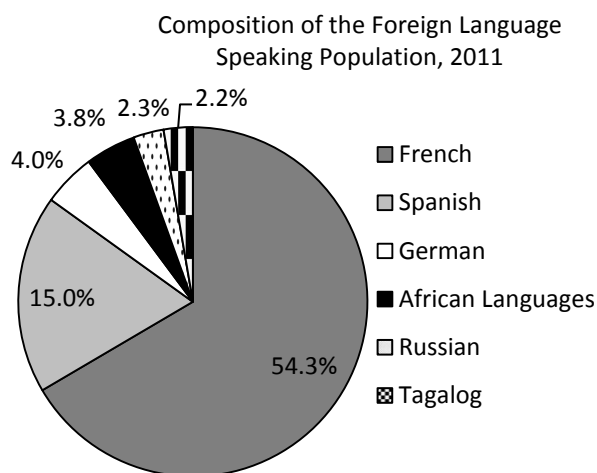
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

Since 1990, Maine's Hispanic population has remained above Census Bureau projections. Projected to have 6,000 Hispanic residents in 1995, the Pine Tree State had already reached that number by 1990 with 6,829 Hispanic residents. By 2000, 8,000 Hispanics were expected—yet the Census count showed 9,360 Hispanics calling Maine home. But in 2010, Maine's Hispanic population surpassed projections for the year 2015 by just over 900 residents—with 16,935 Hispanics residing there.



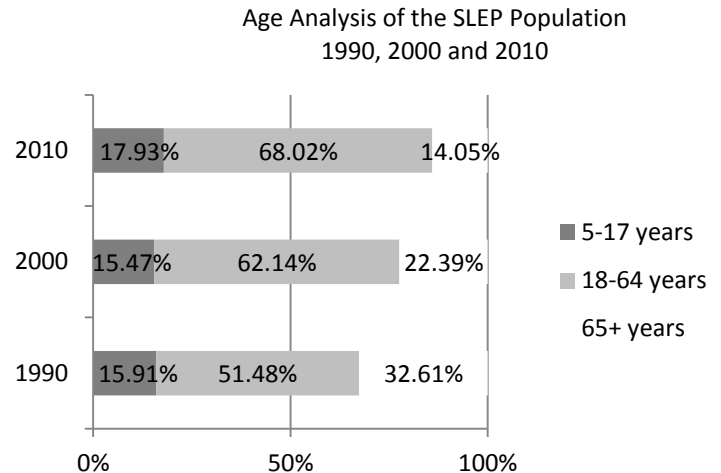
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Maine has a low number of foreign language speaking residents compared to other states, and is also one of the few states where Spanish is not the most widely spoken foreign language. With more than 45,000 French speaking residents, this group accounts for more than 54% of the Pine Tree State's foreign language speakers. Spanish is second, with 12,569 residents speaking it at home. With less than 3,500 residents speaking German and African languages, these groups still place 3rd and 4th. Meanwhile, Russian and Tagalog speakers comprise 2.3% and 2.2% of the state's foreign language speaking population, respectively.



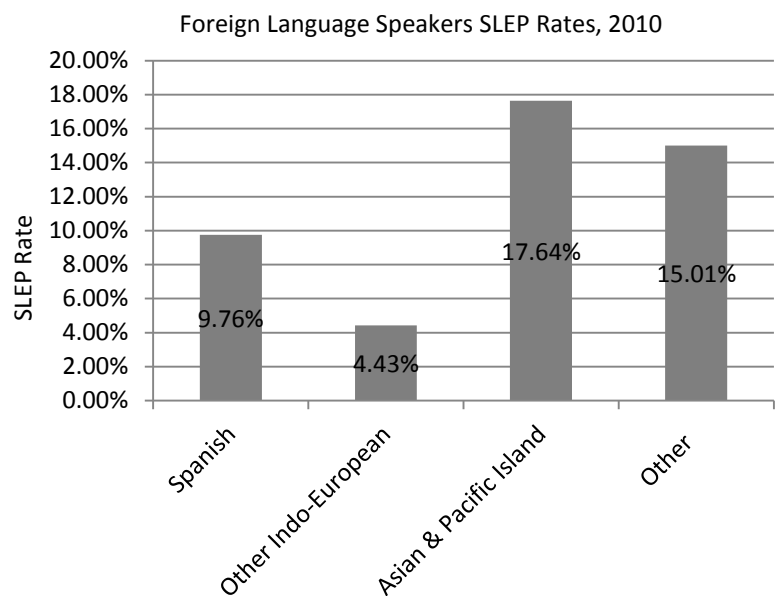
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Maine is among the lowest ranking states in terms of its severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population. With 4,199 adults aged 18 to 64 accounting for 68.02% of the state's residents who can only speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group placed 47th nationwide. With a tally of 867 SLEP seniors in 2010, this group has continued its decline, falling by more than half since 1990 and now placing 45th on the nationwide list. SLEP children in the Pine Tree State placed 43rd nationwide, with a count of 1,107 in 2010.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Maine's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population, for the most part, falls low on nationwide rankings. But with 1,132 SLEP residents out of the state's 7,542 overall speakers of 'other' uncategorized languages, this group ranks 12th nationwide. Despite a higher percentage of SLEP residents, speakers of Asian & Pacific Island residents placed 34th compared to similar language groups in other states. Spanish speakers and speakers of other Indo-European languages both ranked even lower on the national rankings, placing 46th and 43rd, respectively.



Conclusion

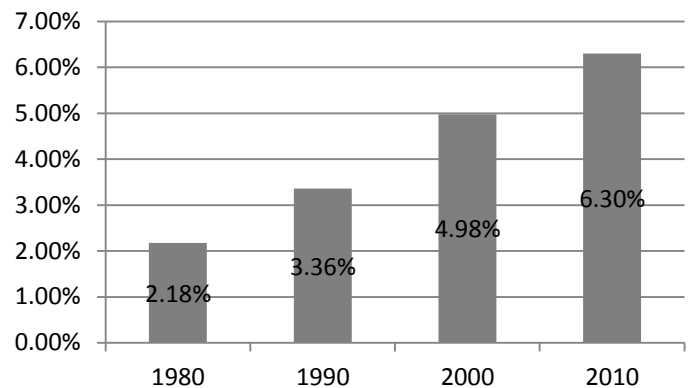
Maine's non-English speakers seem to be assimilating quite well, as the state's limited English proficient population has continued to drop over the past thirty years. The Pine Tree State even has one of the nation's lowest rates of severe limited English proficiency (SLEP), with children, working aged adults and senior citizens all placing in the bottom ten nationwide. While these are both promising signs, Maine does rank among the highest SLEP states thanks to its percentage of severely limited English proficient speakers of 'other' languages. This should signal to the state a need to ensure that all foreign language speakers are aware of and have access to programs to help them learn English.

Maryland

Capital: Annapolis
2010 Population: 5,785,982
Joined Union: Apr. 28, 1788

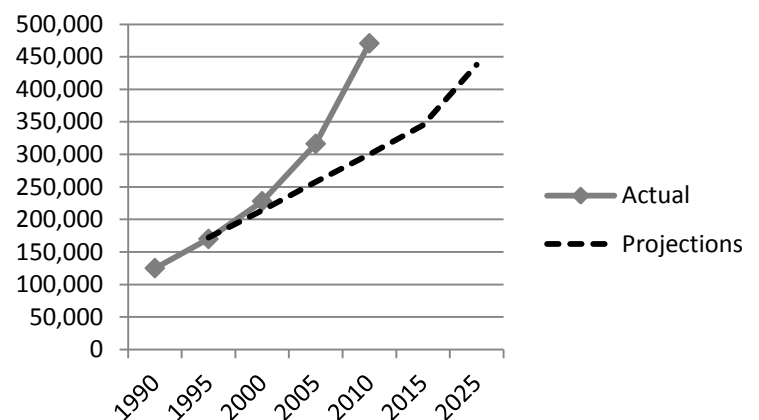
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Between 1980 and 2010, Maryland jumped ten spots to become the state with the 16th highest limited English proficient (LEP) rate in the nation. With only 86,097 limited English proficient residents in 1980, the Old Line State nearly quadrupled this number by 2010, calling itself home to 342,931 LEP individuals.



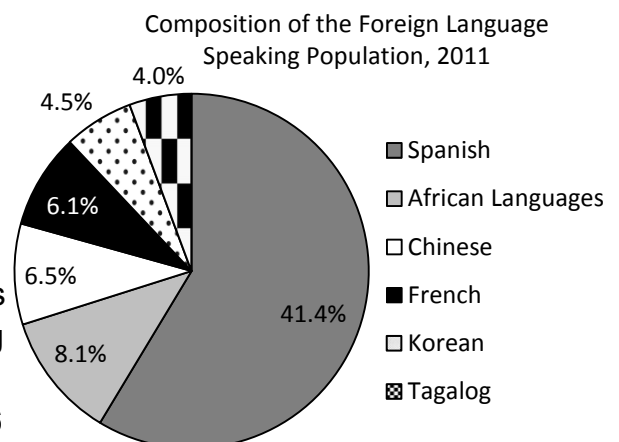
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

In 2000, Maryland's Hispanic population of 227,916 for the first time surpassed Census Bureau projections, which had been estimated to be 214,000 by the new millennium. That rate rose again in 2005 to 316,257 residents, compared to the projected 258,000. In 2010, the Old Line State surpassed projections for the year 2025—with 470,632 Hispanics calling it home, compared to the estimated 328,000 for 2025.



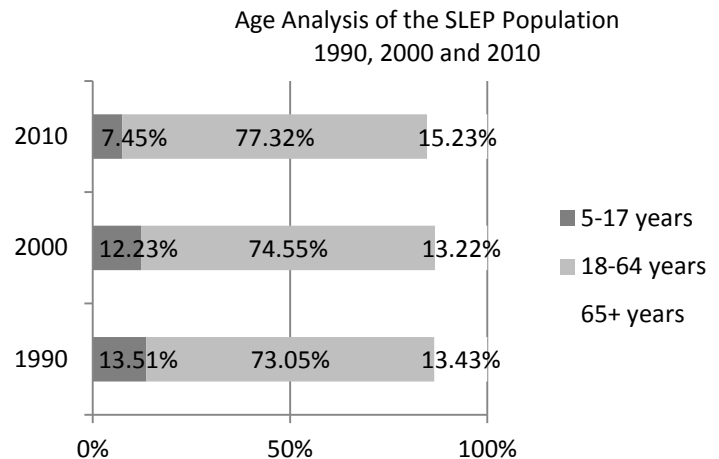
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Close to 1 million Maryland residents speak a language other than English at home, with 914,110 residents falling into this foreign language speaking category. Speakers of African languages account for 8.1% of foreign language speakers, with 74,395 residents speaking these languages. Speakers of Chinese and French are the next most popular spoken in the Old Line State. Nearly 60,000 residents speak Chinese and 55,680 speak French, accounting for 6.5% and 6.1% of foreign language speakers, respectively. Korean and Tagalog round out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in the Old Line State, with 40,923 and 36,612 residents using them at home.



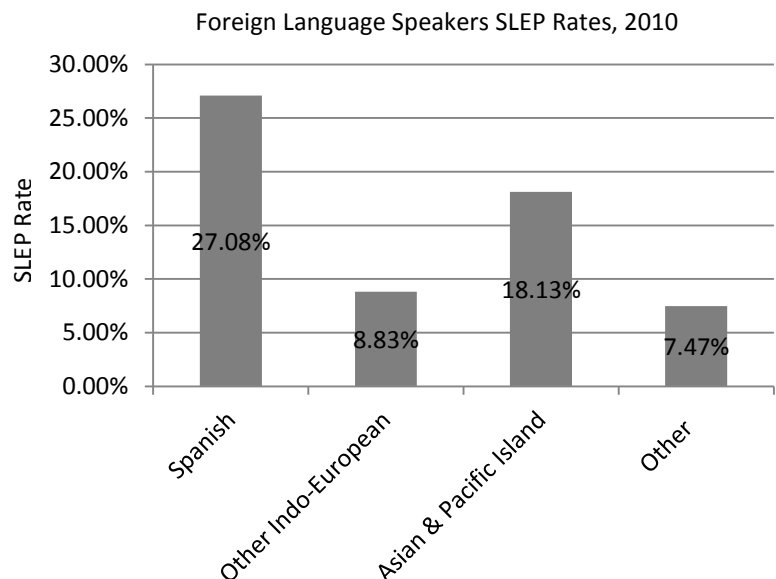
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Maryland's 24,558 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) seniors just missed the nationwide top ten, placing 13th among residents aged 65 and older who could only speak English "not well" or "not at all." With a count of 124,643 SLEP adults aged 18 to 64, Old Line State adults accounted for 77.32% of the state's SLEP population and placed slightly lower on the nationwide rankings by age group, coming in 16th. Children, with a SLEP count of 12,010 individuals aged 5 to 17, also placed 16th nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Close to a third of Maryland's Spanish speakers are considered severely limited English proficient (SLEP), with 96,209 of the state's 355,323 Spanish speakers falling into this category. As a result, this group placed 21st nationwide compared to similar groups in other states. Other language groups placed the Old Line State lower in the rankings, with speakers of other Indo-European languages placing 25th, speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placing 30th and speakers of 'other' languages placing 41st, with a SLEP rate of only 7.47%.



Conclusion

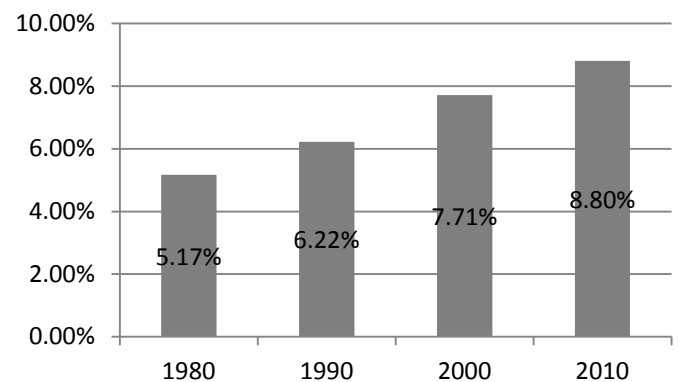
The number of limited English proficient residents in Maryland has continuously grown over the past thirty years, in 2010 becoming the 16th highest in the nation. This is a sign that the state should begin to take notice of its changing population. Maryland's foreign language speaking population is fairly evenly divided among language groups, and the state faces a growing numbers of working aged adults and senior citizens who are considered severely limited English proficient. The Old Line State now needs to ensure that it is providing enough English learning opportunities to meet the needs of its foreign language speaking population, or risk worsening statistics and a possible negative influence on productivity and the state's economy.

Massachusetts

Capital: Boston
2010 Population: 6,557,254
Joined Union: Feb. 6, 1788

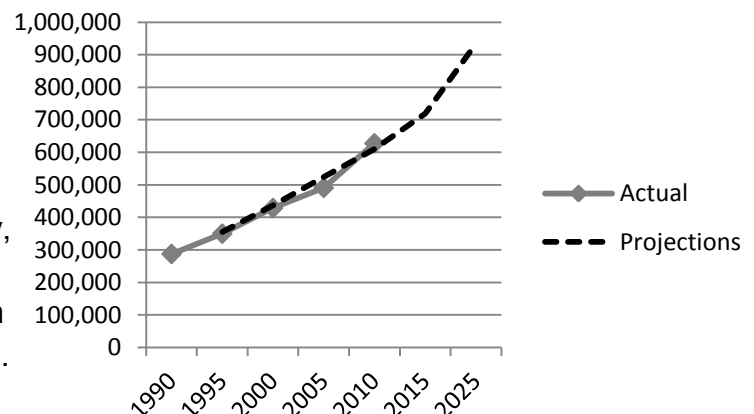
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Massachusetts has long been among the top 15 states with the highest limited English proficient (LEP) rates. In 1980, it placed 13th and by 2010 it rose one spot to 12th. The Bay State, home to 279,084 LEP residents in 1980, has since nearly doubled this population. In 2010, it was home to more than half a million LEP individuals, with 546,663 residents considering themselves limited English proficient.



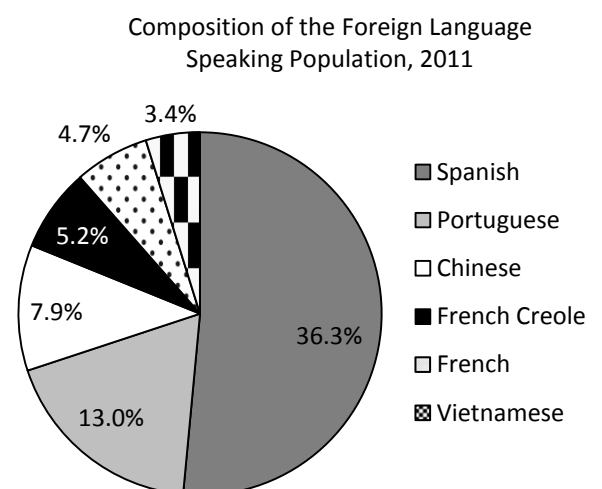
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

Massachusetts is one of the few states that has consistently remained below Census Bureau projections regarding its Hispanic population. The Census Bureau estimated that the Bay State would be home to 355,000 Hispanics in 1995; 437,000 in 2000; 524,000 in 2005; 719,000 in 2015 and 934,000 by 2025. In reality, the Hispanic population stood at 287,549 in 1990. It made a large jump, reaching 428,729 in 2000, but then steadied, hitting 490,839 in 2005. By 2010, Massachusetts was home to 627,654 residents—but still below projections.



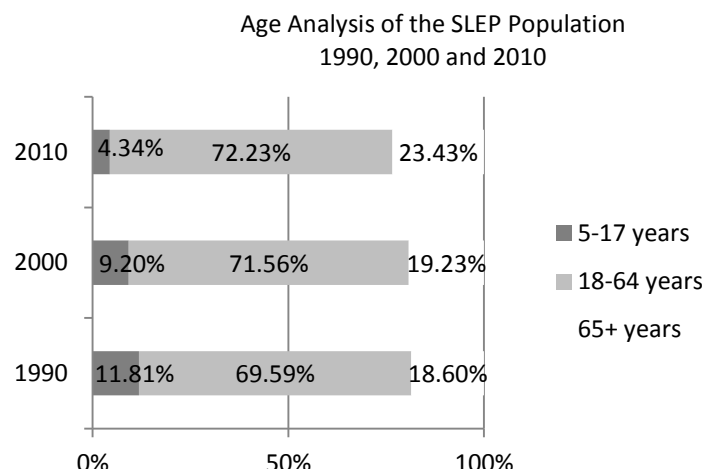
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Nearly a quarter of Massachusetts residents speak a language other than English at home. Of those, nearly half a million speak Spanish, accounting for 8% of the state's overall population. More than 178,000 residents speak Portuguese, with this group accounting for 13% of foreign language speakers in the Bay State. Just under 8% of foreign language speakers (108,917 residents) use Chinese at home. Meanwhile, speakers of French Creole, French and Vietnamese round out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in Massachusetts. Just over 71,000 residents speak French Creole, 64,861 speak French and 47,053 speak Vietnamese.



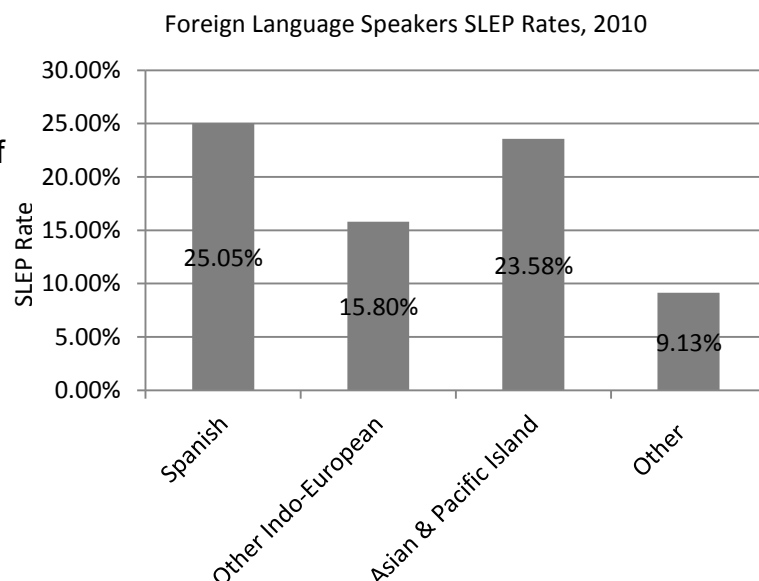
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With 63,277 seniors aged 65 and above only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” this age group ranks Massachusetts the 7th highest among all states, accounting for 23.43% of the state’s severe limited English proficient (SLEP) population. The Bay State’s 195,027 SLEP adults aged 18 to 64 placed 11th nationwide, accounting for 72.23% of the state’s SLEP population; while the 11,717 SLEP children aged 5 to 17 placed slightly lower at 17th nationwide by age group.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Two of Massachusetts’ language groups placed in the top 10 nationwide due to the high populations of individuals who are severely limited English proficient (SLEP). With 87,726 of the state’s 555,058 speakers of other Indo-European languages and 54,386 of the state’s 230,616 speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” these groups rank 2nd and 9th nationwide, respectively. Despite 25.05% of the Bay State’s Spanish speakers being SLEP, this group ranked 29th, while the 9.13% of SLEP speakers of ‘other’ languages ranked lowest, in 33rd place.

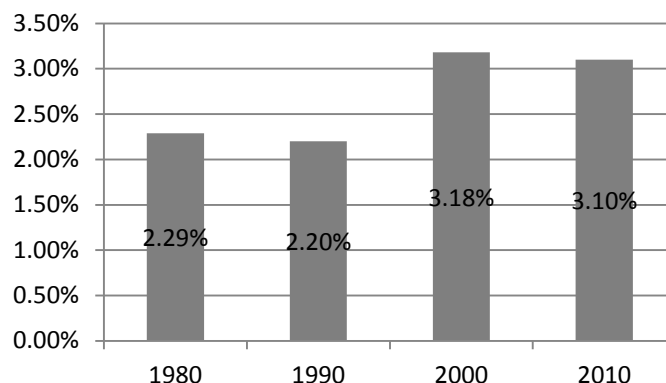


Conclusion

Massachusetts has long struggled with helping its foreign language speaking population assimilate. In recent years, the problem has worsened, as the state now places 12th highest compared to other states due to its high population of limited English proficient individuals. Nearly a quarter of Massachusetts residents speak a language other than English at home, indicating that the state must immediately expand opportunities for foreign language speakers to learn English. With speakers of other Indo-European and Asian & Pacific Island languages placing among the nation’s highest severe limited English proficient, a special focus should be on targeting English learning programs at these groups.

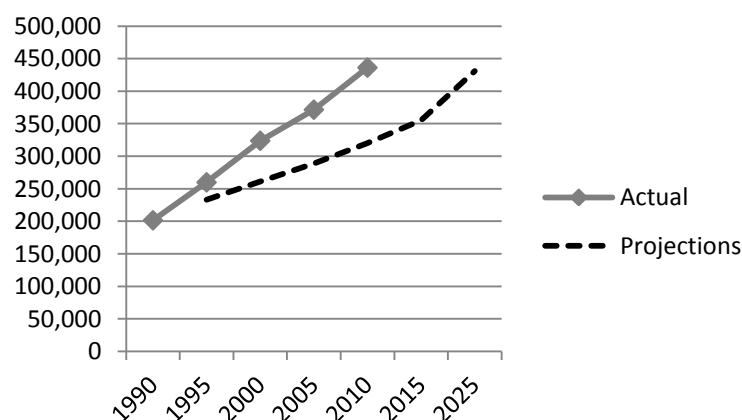
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Michigan's limited English proficient (LEP) population has remained fairly steady over the past thirty years, growing from 196,597 to 287,457 in that period. Yet due to the rapidly increasing LEP populations in other states, Michigan's state ranking fell from 25th in 1980 to 34th in 2010. The Great Lakes State, rising to its recent high of 3.18% LEP residents in 2000, made a slight drop in 2010 to 3.10%.



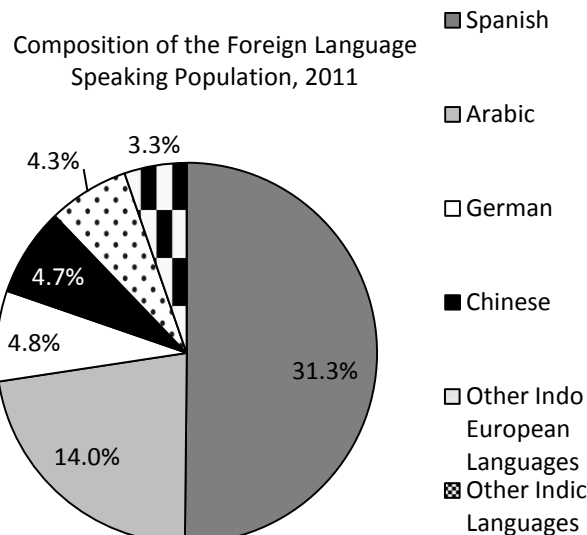
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Michigan took off between 1990 and 2000, rising more than 100,000 and surpassing the Census Bureau's projected population of 261,000 when the number of Hispanics at the turn of the millennium was 323,877. The Hispanic population grew to 371,627 in 2005, when the Census had predicted a count of 289,000, and by 2010, the number of Hispanics had jumped again—by more than 100,000 to 436,358—topping even the Census Bureau's projection of 431,000 for the year 2025.



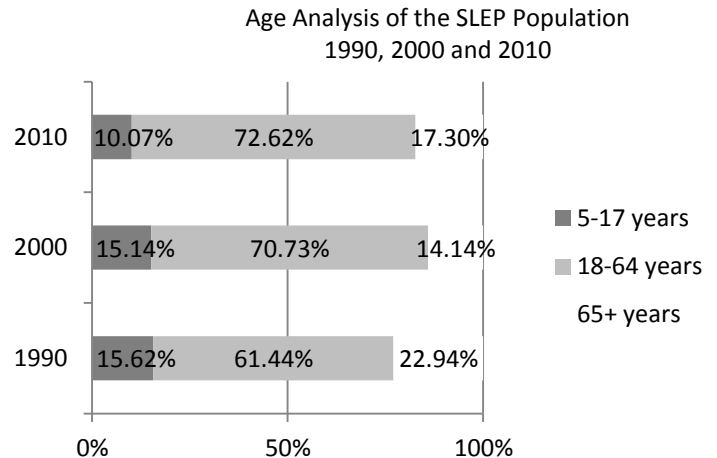
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Close to 850,000 Michigan residents speak a language other than English at home, with a majority of them (264,965 residents) speaking Spanish. Arabic is also widely spoken, with its 119,005 speakers accounting for 14% of the state's foreign language speakers. Speakers of German, Chinese, other Indo European languages and other Indic languages round out the top most widely spoken foreign languages in the Great Lakes State, although each language group accounts for less than 5% of foreign language speakers. Just over 40,000 residents speak German, 39,728 speak Chinese, 36,374 speak other Indo European languages and 27,575 speak other Indic languages.



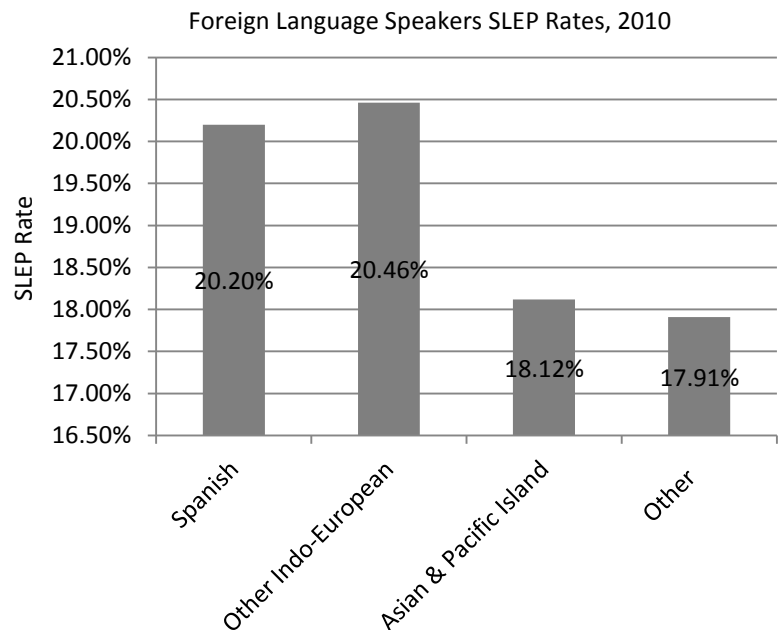
Non-English Proficiency by Age

While the number of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children in Michigan has decreased over the past 20 years, with 12,882 5 to 17 year olds only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” the Great Lakes State placed 14th nationwide in this age group. With close to 10,000 more SLEP seniors accounting for 17.30% of the state’s SLEP population, this group also placed 14th on the nationwide list. Meanwhile, with 92,868 SLEP adults accounting for 72.62% of the SLEP population, Michigan adults ranked 19th on the nationwide list.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

The 20.46% severe limited English proficient (SLEP) rate among Michigan’s speakers of other Indo-European languages places this group top on the nationwide list of SLEP speakers by state. But despite a nearly equal SLEP percentage of 20.20%, the Great Lakes State’s Spanish speakers placed much lower, ranking 40th compared to similar language speakers in other states. A similar trend occurs with the 18.12% of SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages and 17.91% of SLEP speakers of ‘other’ languages, with these groups ranking 31st and 6th, respectively.

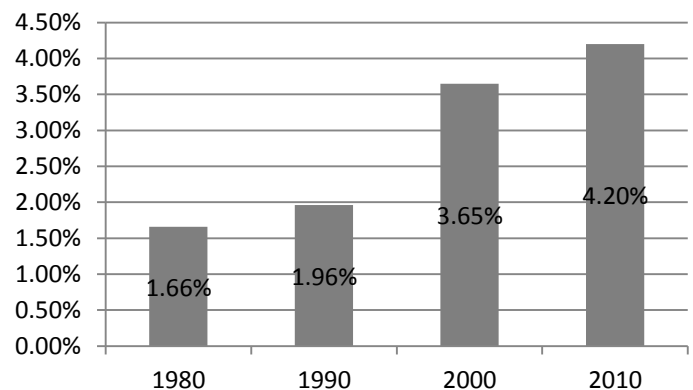


Conclusion

Michigan’s limited English proficient population has remained fairly steady over the years, but has declined in the past ten years. Even so, the state must continue to emphasize the importance of learning English, especially among speakers of other Indo-European languages, who place the highest among severe limited English proficiency rates in the nation. Targeting English learning programs at this group, and ensuring that such programs are available to all of Michigan’s foreign language speakers, will allow the state to remain ahead of the problem and prevent language divisions.

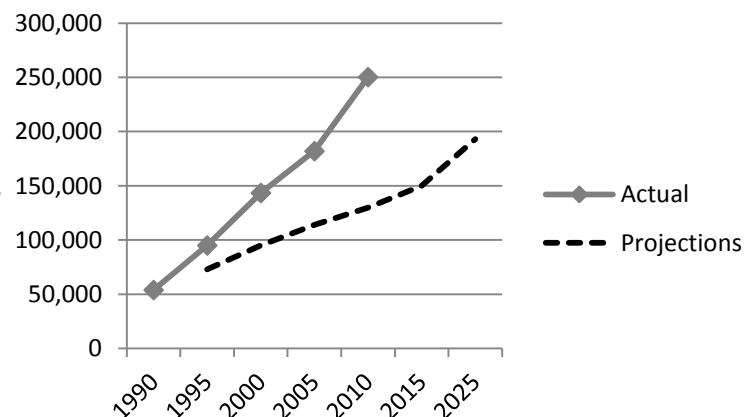
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Minnesota's limited English proficient (LEP) population has more than tripled over the past thirty years, rising from 62,508 to a whopping 205,751 in 2010. Once stable with a less than 2% LEP rate, in 2010 this number had jumped to 4.2%. And once at the lower end of the state LEP rate rankings, at number 34 in 1980, the North Star State had risen to 25th place in 2010.



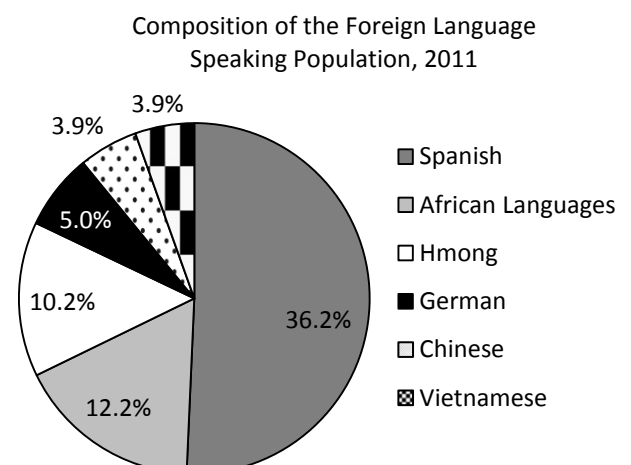
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Minnesota nearly tripled from 1990 to 2000, jumping from 53,884 to 143,382. The jump surpassed the Census Bureau's projections for the year 2005, when the North Star State was predicted to have 114,000 Hispanic residents. By 2005, 181,959 Hispanics called Minnesota home, surpassing the projected 150,000 for the year 2015. By the most recent count in 2010, the Hispanic population came in at 250,258—far above the 193,000 projected by the Census Bureau for the year 2025.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

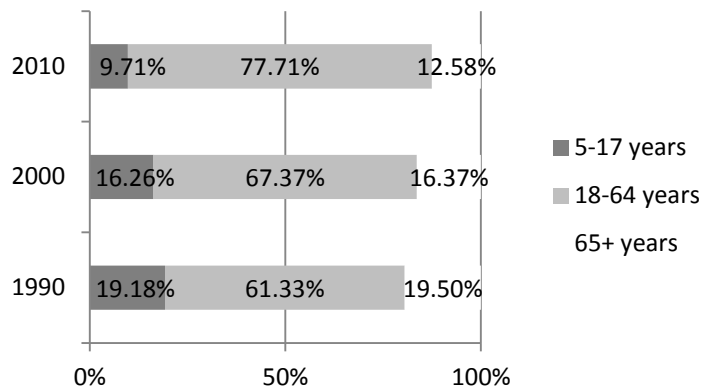
More than half a million North Star State residents speak a language other than English at home, with a majority (195,885 residents) speaking Spanish. African languages and Hmong are also popular foreign languages in Minnesota, with 65,718 residents and 55,077 residents using them at home, respectively. Accounting for a smaller percentage of the state's foreign language speakers but still among the most widely used foreign languages are German (spoken by 26,789 residents), Chinese (spoken by 21,175 residents) and Vietnamese (spoken by 20,991 residents).



Non-English Proficiency by Age

Minnesota's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population falls in the middle of nationwide rankings when compared to that of other states. With 9,661 children aged 5 to 17 years old only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," the North Star State ranks 21st nationwide among that age group. SLEP adults (77,357 individuals) and seniors (12,523 individuals), account for 77.71% and 12.58% of the state's SLEP population respectively, both placing 22nd nationwide in rankings by age group.

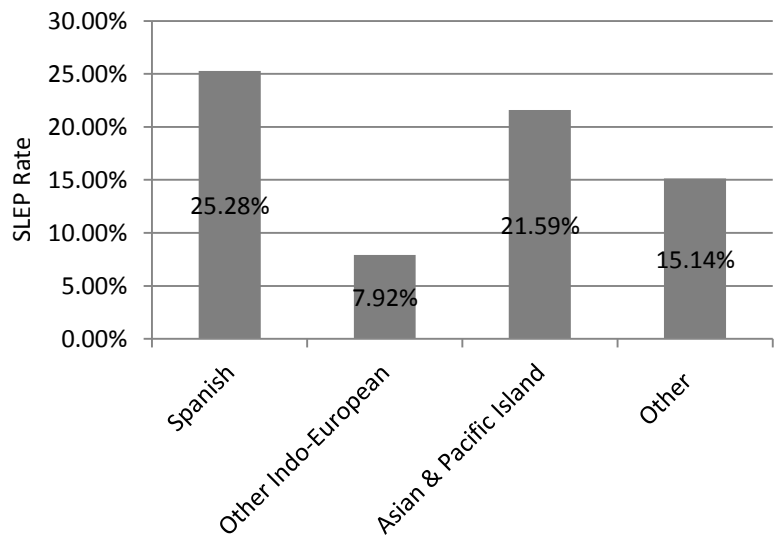
Age Analysis of the SLEP Population
1990, 2000 and 2010



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

The percentage of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) speakers of 'other' languages residing in Minnesota ranks 10th nationwide when compared with speakers of 'other' languages in other states. Spanish speakers, despite more than a quarter being SLEP, rank in the middle of national rankings in 28th place, while speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages rank 16th nationwide due to their 21.59% SLEP rate. Minnesota's 8,362 SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages rank even lower nationally, placing 31st.

Foreign Language Speakers SLEP Rates, 2010



Conclusion

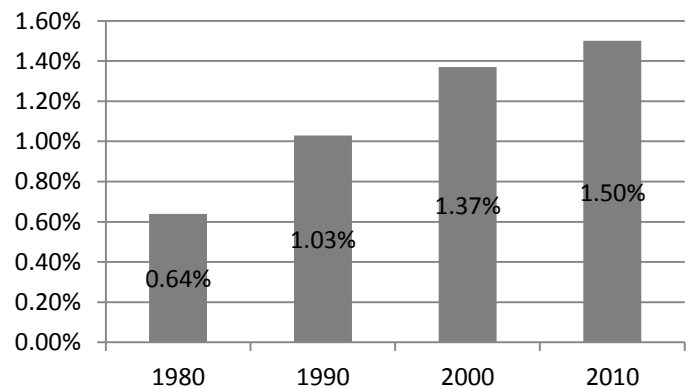
Minnesota saw its limited English proficient population triple from 1980 to 2010, indicating a growing problem of immigrants failing to assimilate and learn English. More than 20% of Minnesota's Spanish and Asian & Pacific Island speakers are considered severely limited English proficient, and the SLEP rate for speakers of 'other' languages is among the nation's highest. Targeting English language learning programs at these populations is of the utmost importance, to prevent worsening limited English proficiency rates in the years to come.

Mississippi

Capital: Jackson
2010 Population: 2,970,036
Joined Union: Dec. 10, 1817

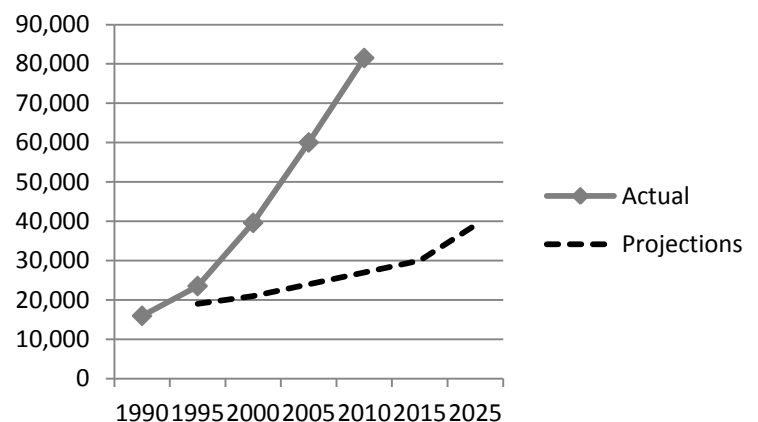
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Mississippi's limited English proficient (LEP) population has more than doubled from 1980 to 2010, rising to 41,848 from 13,864 over that period. Despite this increase, the Magnolia State remains among the bottom of the list nationwide with a consistently low LEP rank. In 1980, Mississippi fell in at number 46, and by 2010 had fallen further to become the state with the fourth lowest LEP rate.



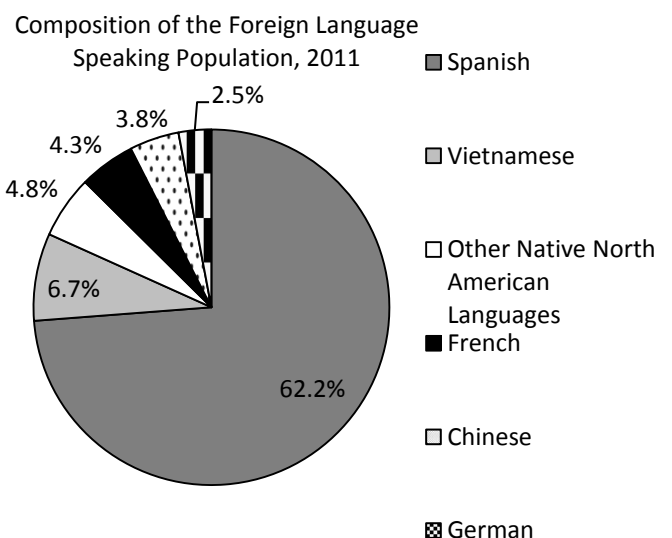
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Mississippi remains among the lowest in the nation. Yet by 2010, the count of 81,481 Hispanic residents already more than doubled the Census Bureau's projection of 39,000 in the year 2025. In fact, by 2000, the Census predicted the Hispanic population in the Magnolia State would stand at about 21,000—yet the actual count at that time was also nearly double, at 39,569.



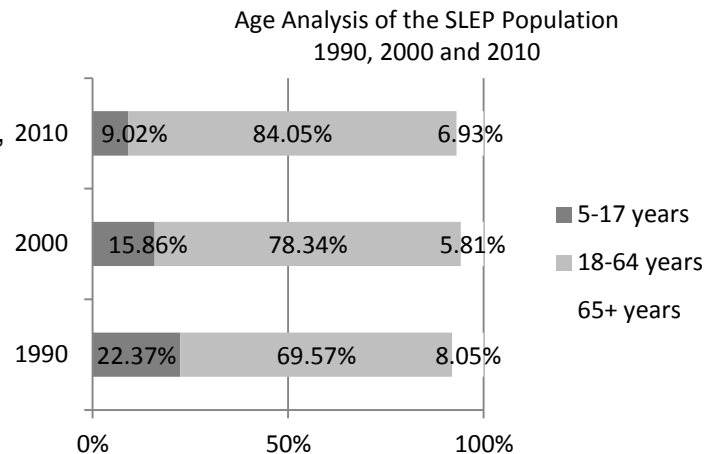
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Of Mississippi's 2.7 million residents age 5 and older, 2.6 million speak English at home, accounting for an overwhelming 96.4% of the state's population. Among the 3.6% of foreign language speakers, a majority speak Spanish, with 65,472 residents (more than 62% of the state's foreign language speaking population) falling into that category. Just over 7,000 Magnolia State residents speak Vietnamese, while 5,072 speak other Native North American languages. French, Chinese and German round out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in the state, with 4,566, 4,018 and 2,656 speakers, respectively.



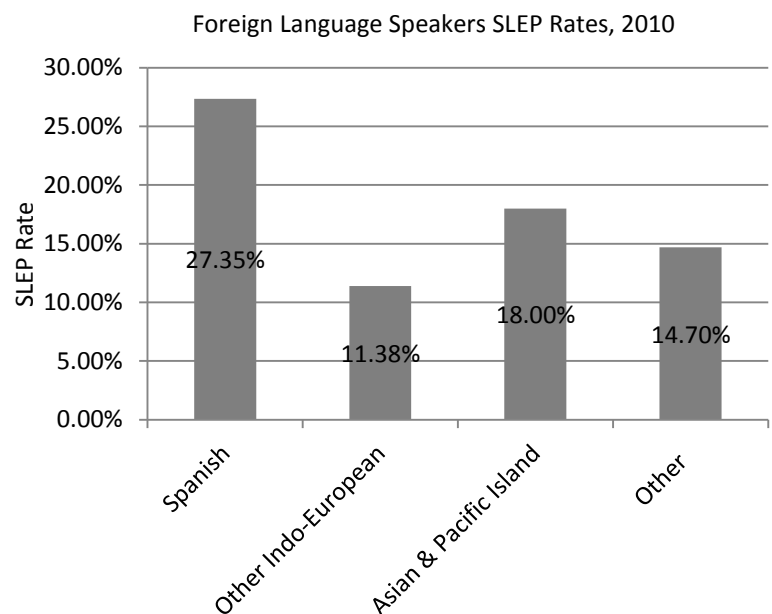
Non-English Proficiency by Age

In all three age groups, the Magnolia State places near the bottom of nationwide rankings of the number of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents. Adults aged 18 to 64 rank 40th, with 19,152 residents in this age group only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” Accounting for 9.02% of the state’s SLEP population, Mississippi’s 2,055 SLEP children place 41st nationwide, in part due to a 13 percentage point drop from 1990 to 2010. Mississippi seniors place even lower on the list, ranking 43rd nationwide with only 1,580 SLEP residents in this age group.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

In three out of four language groups, Mississippi’s severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranks in the top 20 nationwide. With 1,580 of the state’s 13,879 speakers of other Indo-European languages considered SLEP, this group just missed the top 10, placing 12th. The 1,080 SLEP residents who speak ‘other’ languages and account for 14.70% of the state’s ‘other’ language speakers placed 13th, while the Magnolia State’s Spanish speakers placed slightly lower at 19th. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages had the lowest ranked percentage of SLEP speakers statewide, placing 33rd.

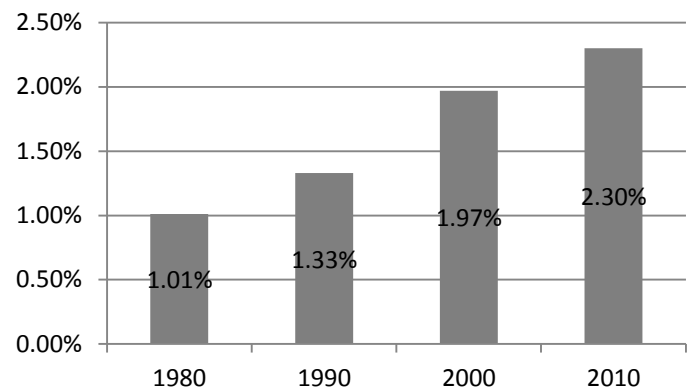


Conclusion

Mississippi remains at the bottom of nationwide rankings due to the low limited English proficiency of its residents. But despite only a small percentage of Magnolia State residents speaking foreign languages at home, those who do rank high in their limited English proficiency. Mississippi should begin making efforts now to ensure that speakers of other Indo-European languages, Spanish, and other languages are aware of, and encouraged to attend, English language learning classes.

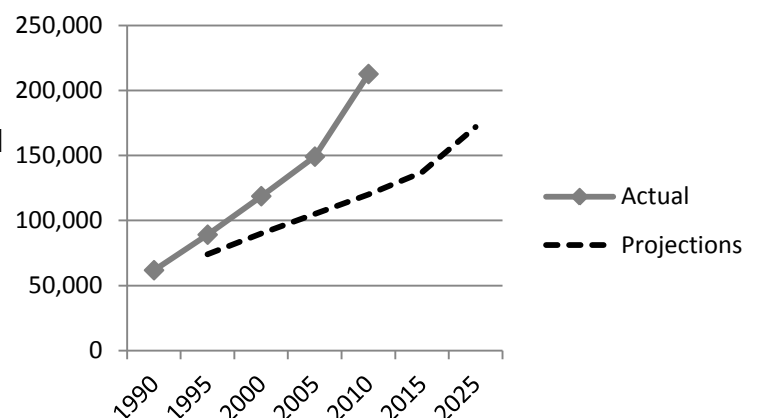
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Missouri's limited English proficient (LEP) population has more than doubled, rising from 1.01% (46,242 residents) in 1980 to 2.30% (128,931 residents) in 2010. Despite the increase, the Show Me State has remained steady in the state LEP rankings, holding in 42nd place in 2010, just as it was thirty years ago.



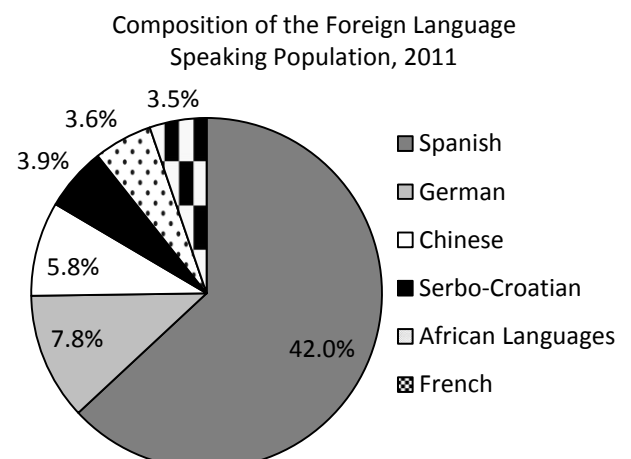
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Missouri grew to 212,470 in 2010—so large that it already surpassed Census Bureau projections for the year 2025. By that time, the agency predicted there would be 172,000 Hispanic residents. In 2005, there were 148,994 Hispanic residents in the Show Me State—still nearly 50,000 higher than the predicted 105,000. Even at the turn of the new millennium in 2000, the number of Hispanics in Missouri stood at 118,592, more than 20,000 greater than Census Bureau projections.



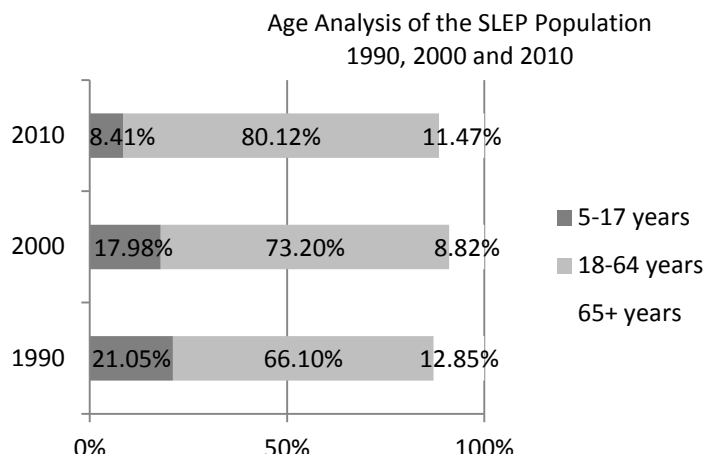
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Just over 6% of Missouri residents classify themselves as foreign language speakers, with the other 5.2 million residents saying they speak English at home. Of the Show Me State's foreign language speakers, 42%, or 152,223 residents, are Spanish speakers. German and Chinese speakers also account for a good amount of the foreign language speaking population, with 28,126 and 21,060 residents using those languages, respectively. Spoken by a smaller number of residents, Serbo-Croatian (14,045 speakers), African languages (13,219 speakers) and French (12,551 speakers) are also widely used in Missouri.



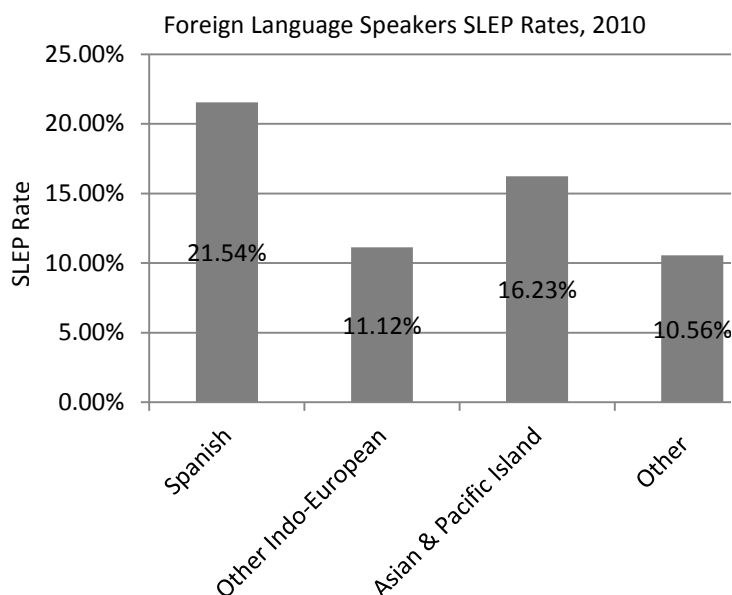
Non-English Proficiency by Age

While accounting for 80.12% of the state's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population, Missouri's SLEP adults only rank 31st nationwide among residents 18 to 64 years old who can only speak English "not well" or "not at all." With more than a 50% drop in the percentage of SLEP children between 1990 and 2010, the 4,713 SLEP residents aged 5 to 17 fell in 30th place nationwide in 2010. Meanwhile, the state's 6,427 SLEP seniors placed 29th, despite a 3 percentage point increase in the past decade.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Missouri's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population placed low overall on nationwide rankings, with the exception of speakers of other Indo-European languages, who placed 14th. With 10.56% of Show Me State speakers of 'other' languages only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group ranked 23rd compared to SLEP speakers of 'other' languages in other states. Meanwhile, despite the highest SLEP rates in the state, speakers of Spanish and Asian & Pacific Island languages both placed 39th when compared with similar language speakers across the nation.

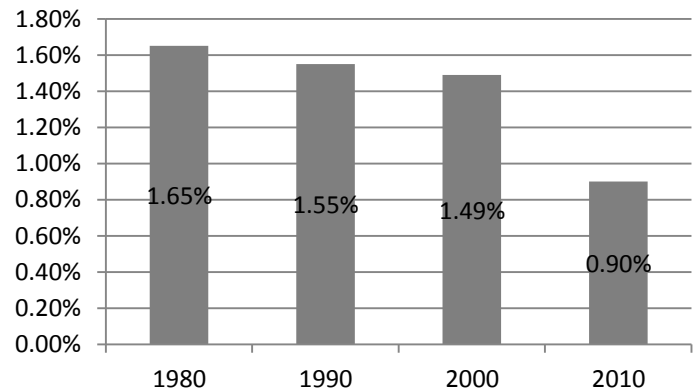


Conclusion

Missouri continues to have low rates of limited English proficiency (LEP) compared to other states, despite a slight increase in the LEP rate between 2000 and 2010. With only 6% of Missouri residents speaking languages other than English at home, speakers in all four foreign language groups placed low on nationwide rankings of severe limited English proficiency, showing that the state is doing an adequate job of encouraging assimilation and English learning among its immigrants. Missouri should continue to ensure that English learning programs are available for its foreign language speaking population.

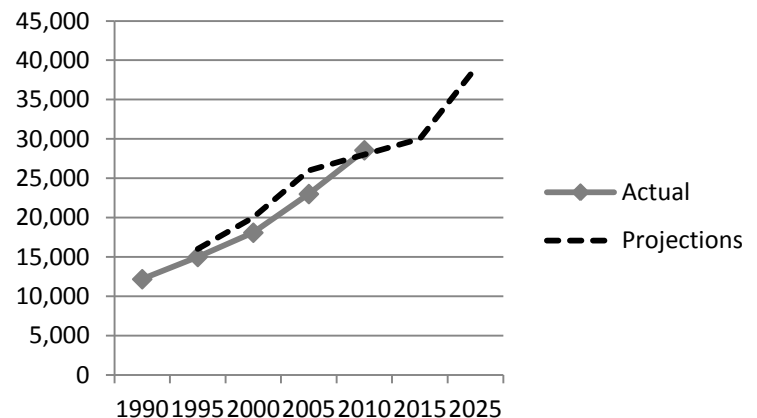
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Montana is one of the few states to see a decline in the number of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals over the past thirty years. With 11,883 LEP residents in 1980, the Treasure State saw an increase to 12,663 in 2000, followed by a drop to 8,099 in 2010. Thanks to its LEP rate of less than 1%, in 2010 Montana ranked as the state with the second lowest LEP rate nationwide, with only West Virginia having a lower rate of limited English proficient residents.



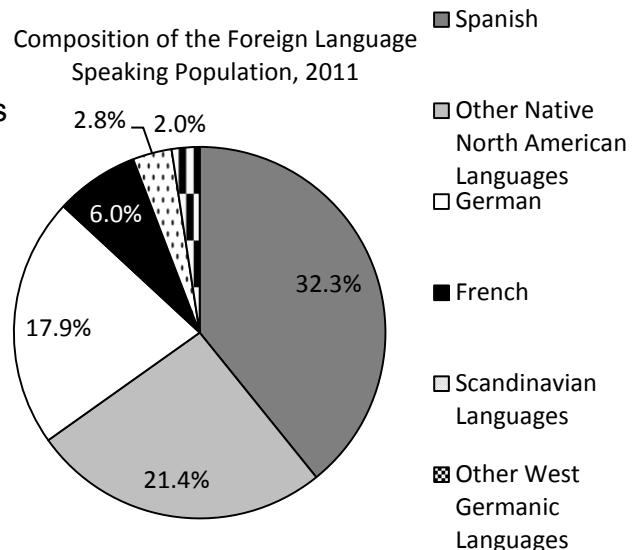
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Montana has risen steadily over the past thirty years, although it still continues to fall below Census Bureau projections. Projected to have 20,000 Hispanics residing there in 2000, the Treasure State only had 18,081. Ten years later, the 2010 Census showed a Hispanic population count of 28,565, approaching but still below the Census Bureau's projection of 30,000 for the year 2015 and a further projection of 39,000 in the year 2025.



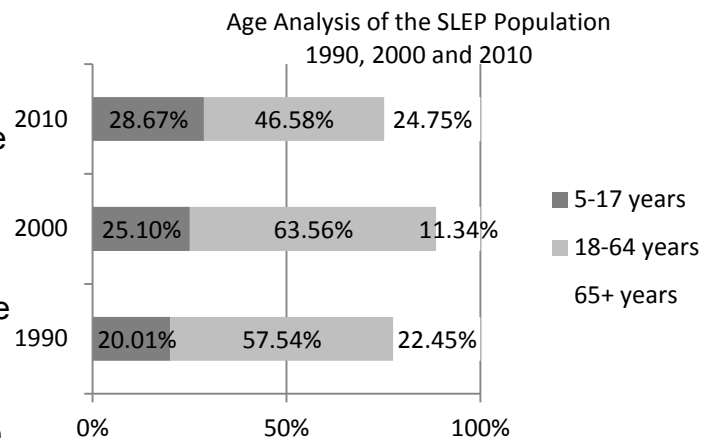
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Of the close to 1 million residents of Montana, only 43,660 speak a language other than English at home. A majority of these foreign language speakers use Spanish (14,100 residents), other Native North American languages (9,328 residents) and German (7,813 residents) at home. Accounting for a significantly smaller number of the Treasure State's foreign language speakers are those who use French, with the 2,635 residents accounting for 6% of foreign language speakers. Those who use Scandinavian languages and other West Germanic languages account for 1,233 and 872 residents, respectively.



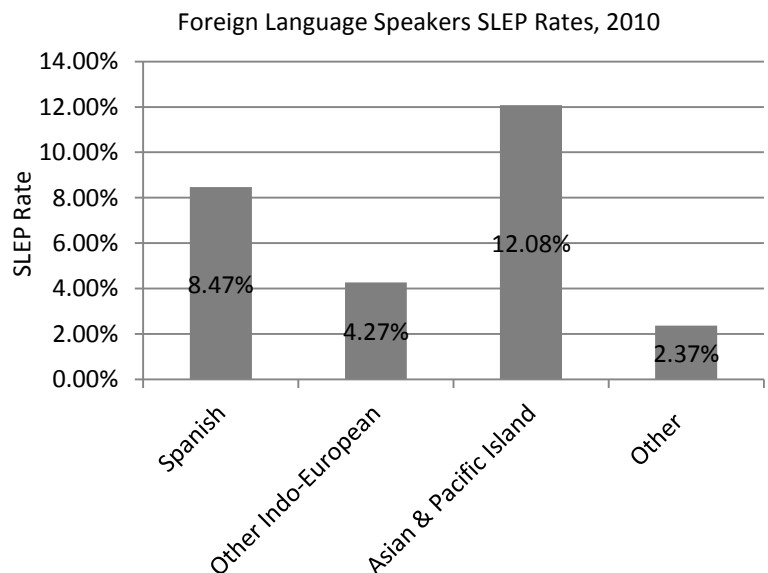
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With only 1,131 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adult residents, Montana ranks the lowest among individuals aged 18 to 64 on nationwide rankings in 2010. The Treasure State is also home to 601 seniors aged 65 and older who are only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.” This group also placed low on rankings with other states, coming in 47th among the senior citizen age group. Meanwhile, Montana’s 696 non-English speaking children aged 5 to 17 years old who account for 28.67% of the state’s SLEP population rank slightly higher, at 45th place nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

In all four language groups, Montana’s severe limited English proficient (SLEP) rates are among the lowest in the nation. With the highest percentage of SLEP residents in the state, Asian & Pacific Island speakers ranked 46th nationwide, with a 12.08% SLEP rate. With SLEP rates all falling well below 10%, speakers of Spanish, other Indo-European languages and ‘other’ languages ranked 47th, 44th and 49th, respectively.



Conclusion

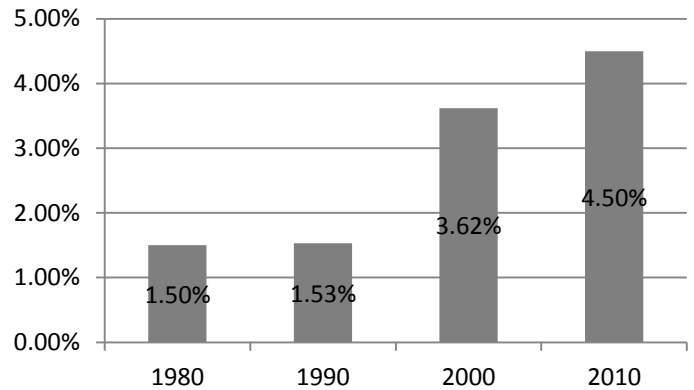
Second only to West Virginia, Montana’s limited English proficiency rates are the lowest in the nation. In fact, severe limited English proficiency rates among the four Census-defined language groups all place below 10%, with the exception of Asian & Pacific Island speakers—nearly unheard of across-the-board rates compared to other states. If current population trends continue, Montana is unlikely to face a significant influx of non-English speakers in the coming months and years; however, the state should ensure that should this occur, a system is in place to help these people learn English.

Nebraska

Capital: Lincoln
2010 Population: 1,830,429
Joined Union: Mar. 1, 1867

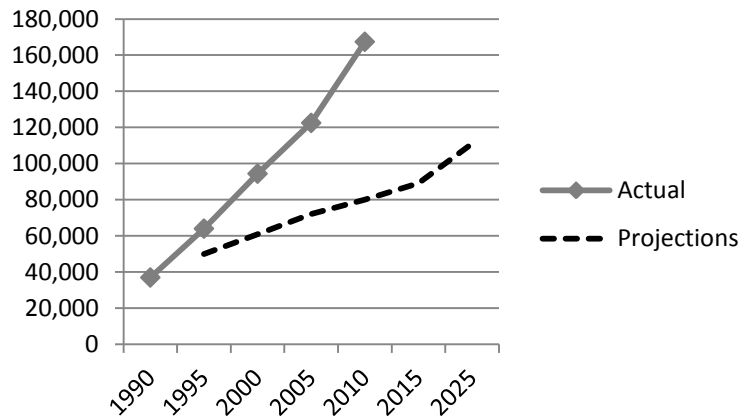
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Nebraska's limited English proficient (LEP) population multiplied two and a half times between 1980 and 2010. With 21,707 LEP residents thirty years ago, the Cornhusker State reached 57,772 LEP residents in 2000 and then rose to 76,144 LEP individuals by 2010. This continued increase has led to Nebraska rising on the state by state LEP rate comparison, reaching 33rd place in 2010 from its spot at 39th in 1980.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

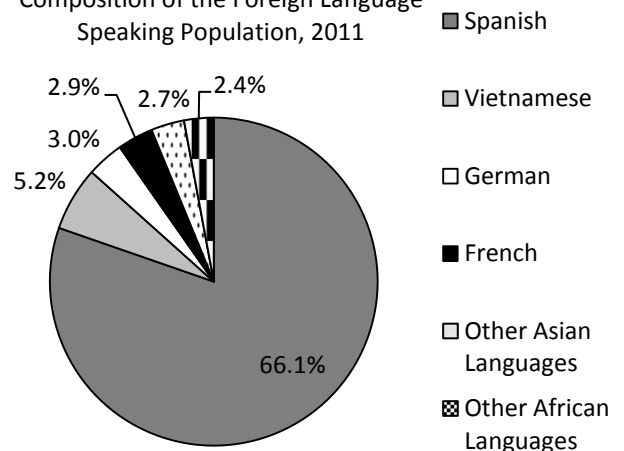
According to the 2010 Census, Nebraska's Hispanic population already surpasses Census Bureau projections for the year 2025 by more than 50,000. By 2025, the agency had predicted 111,000 Hispanic residents would live in the Cornhusker State. Already in the year 2000, the state's actual Hispanic population numbers were far above projections—with 94,425 residents compared to the projected 61,000. In 2005, the difference was even greater—with the actual Hispanic population at 122,518 and projections at 72,000.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

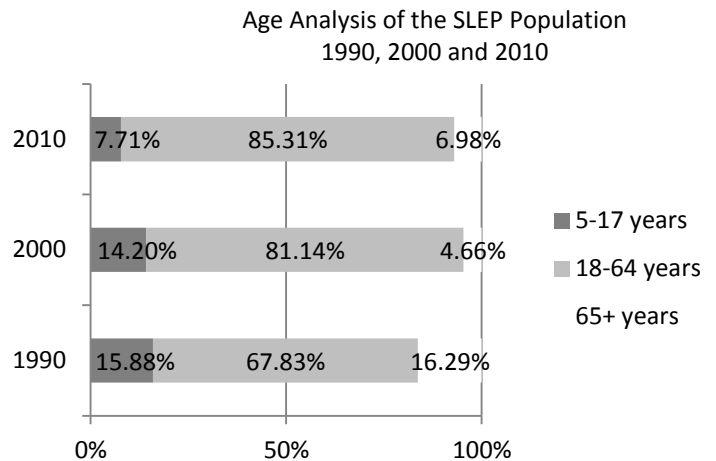
More than 176,000 Nebraska residents speak a language other than English at home. Of these, 116,344 residents (66.1% of the state's foreign language speakers) use Spanish. Vietnamese is spoken by 9,162 residents and German is spoken by 5,309. Speakers of French (5,127 residents), other Asian languages (4,802 residents) and other African languages (4,181 residents) each account for less than 3% of the Cornhusker State's foreign language speakers.

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



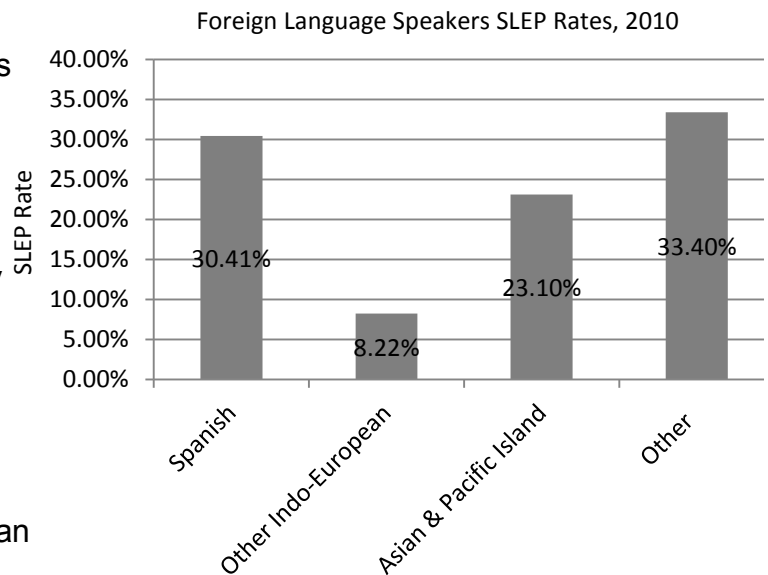
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Nebraska's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children, adults and seniors all rank 35th nationwide in comparison to like age groups in other states. Accounting for 85.31% of Cornhusker State residents who are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," there are 39,067 SLEP adults aged 18-64 residing in Nebraska. The decreasing percentage of SLEP children resulted in a tally of 3,531 individuals aged 5-17 unable to speak English in 2010; while SLEP seniors aged 65 and above accounted for 3,197 residents.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Two of Nebraska's language groups ranked in the top five nationwide for their high populations of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) individuals. With 4,046 of the state's 18,200 speakers of 'other' languages unable to speak English better than "not well" or "not at all," the 33.40% SLEP rate places Nebraska at the very top of nationwide rankings. The Cornhusker State's 35,060 SLEP Spanish speakers, accounting for nearly a third of all Spanish speakers statewide, placed 6th. Meanwhile, speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed 13th and speakers of other Indo-European languages placed slightly lower at 27th.



Conclusion

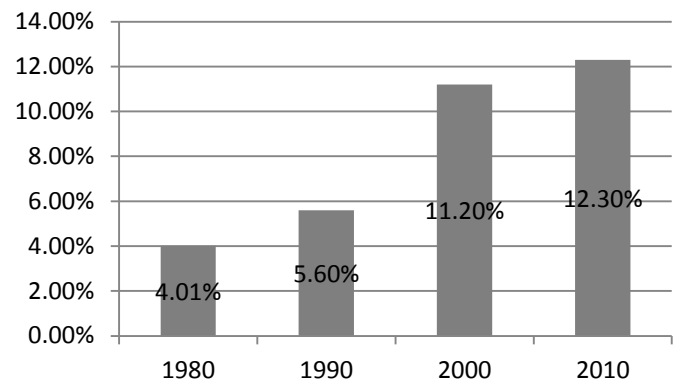
Nebraska is seeing a worsening situation when it comes to its limited English proficient population. The state's Hispanic population already surpasses 2025 projections, 65% of foreign language residents speak Spanish, and the third of Spanish speakers who are severely limited English proficient place 6th nationwide. Nebraska faces an immediate need to target English language learning programs at these Spanish speakers, as well as the growing number of severely limited English proficient working aged adults. Taking these actions now will prevent language divisions from impacting the state's economy in the years to come.

Nevada

Capital: Carson City
2010 Population: 2,704,642
Joined Union: Oct. 31, 1864

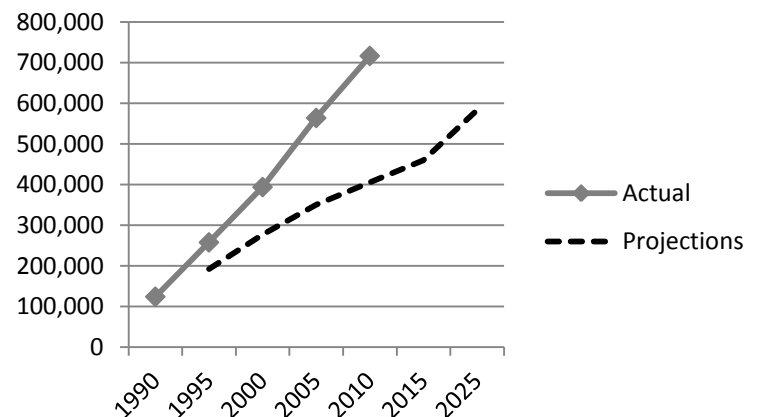
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Nevada's limited English proficient (LEP) population has grown nearly 8 times over in the period between 1980 to 2010, facing one of the largest LEP population increases nationwide. Previously at 14th place on the state ranking list with a 4.01% LEP rate (29,899 individuals) in 1980, by 2010 the Silver State had jumped to 5th place with a staggering 229,495 LEP residents, accounting for 12.30% of the population.



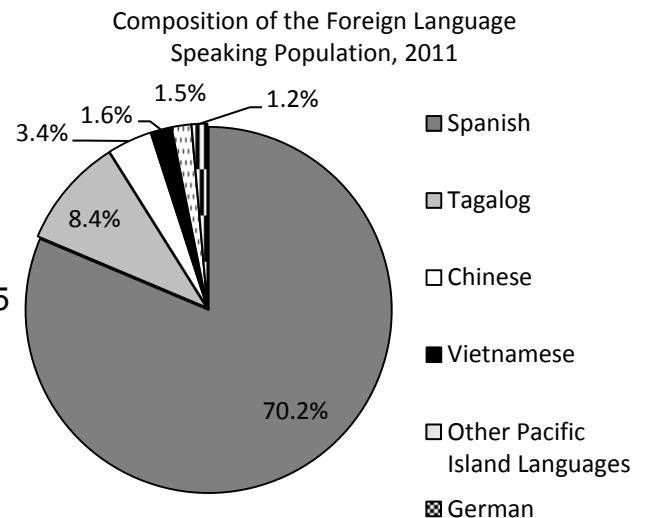
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

In the year 2000, Nevada's Hispanic population of 393,970 already surpassed Census Bureau projections of 277,000. Five years later, a 2005 count showed that gap had widened, with the Bureau's projected 350,000 residents coming in with an actual count of 563,999. By 2010, the Silver State was home to 716,501 Hispanics, far surpassing the 2015 projection of 460,000 and even the 2025 projection of 583,000.



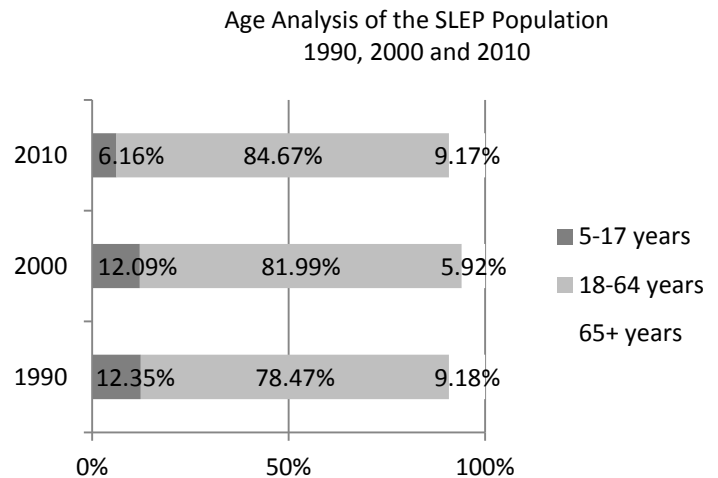
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 25% of Nevada residents speak a language other than English at home, with 754,531 residents placing themselves in the foreign language speaker category. Of these, more than half a million residents speak Spanish, accounting for more than 70% of the state's foreign language speakers. Tagalog is the second most widely used foreign language, with 63,095 residents using it at home, followed by Chinese, with 25,737 speakers in Nevada. Vietnamese (12,170 speakers), other Pacific Island languages (11,037 speakers) and German (8,922 speakers) round out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in the state.



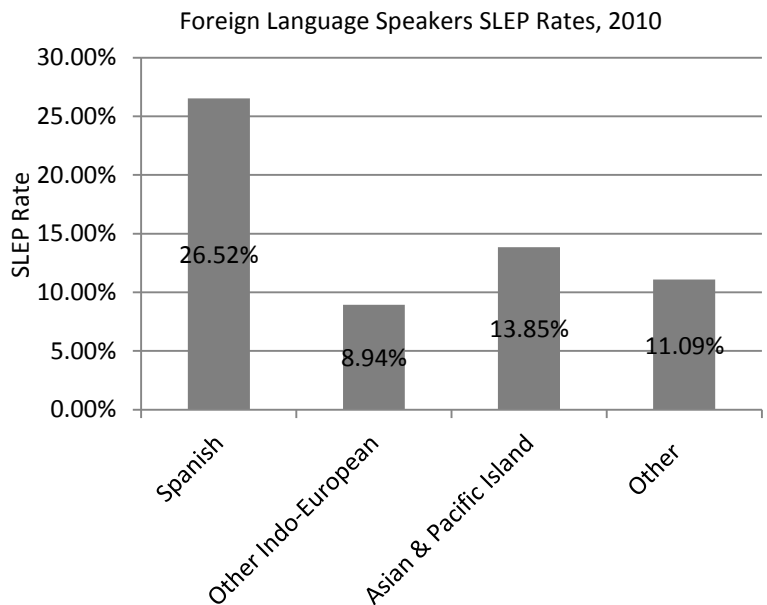
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Adults in Nevada, aged 18 to 64, ranked 15th nationwide in severe limited English proficiency (SLEP). The 135,329 adults who are only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all” account for more than 84% of Nevada’s SLEP residents. Children aged 5 to 17 years old, with a tally of 9,844 residents, placed 20th, while seniors aged 65 and older also rounded out the top 20 nationwide with 14,649 SLEP residents.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Nevada’s severe limited English proficient (SLEP) population falls in the middle of nationwide rankings in all four language groups. With just over a quarter of the Silver State’s Spanish speakers only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” this group placed 23rd in comparison to Spanish speakers in other states. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed much lower at 42nd, while the SLEP rate among speakers of ‘other’ languages, placed 21st nationally. With the lowest SLEP rate in the state, Nevada’s speakers of other Indo-European languages placed 24th compared to similar language groups in other states.



Conclusion

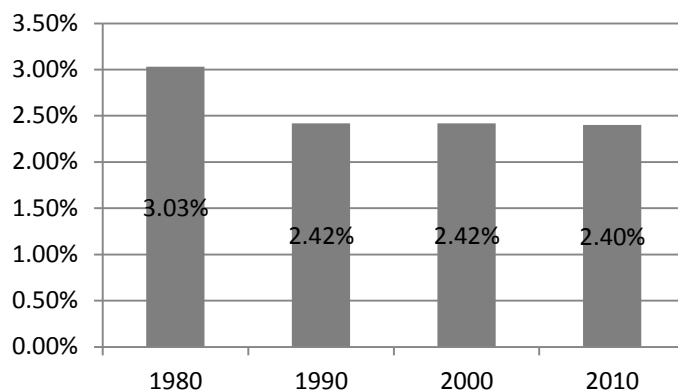
Nevada has long struggled to encourage English learning among its immigrant population. With more than 70% of foreign language speakers fluent in Spanish, and more than a quarter of these considered severely limited English proficient, Nevada must immediately create and target English learning programs toward these individuals. With the percentage of severely limited English proficient working aged adults continuing to rise, this group must also be encouraged to assimilate, or risk negative consequences on the state economy and worker productivity. Nevada should immediately place a focus on encouraging that non-English speakers learn English, to prevent further linguistic divisions and improve the quality of life of the state’s immigrants.

New Hampshire

Capital: Concord
2010 Population: 1,316,759
Joined Union: June 21, 1788

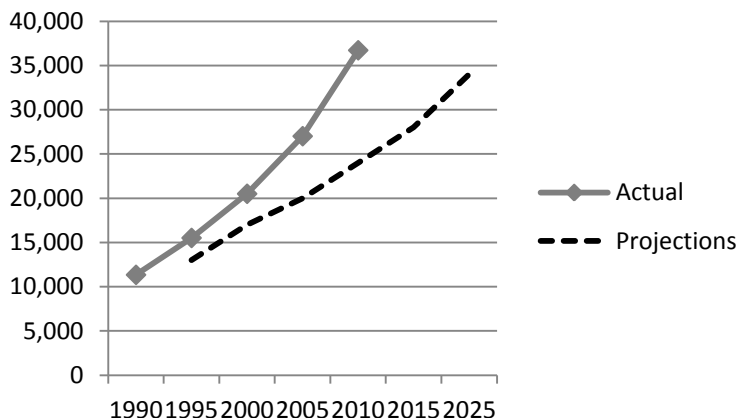
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

New Hampshire's limited English proficient (LEP) rate has decreased over the past 30 years, despite a slight increase in the number of LEP residents during that period. In 1980, 25,978 Granite State residents were considered LEP, and by 2010 that number had risen slightly to 29,764. Because of an increase in the state's overall population, which led to a decrease in the LEP rate, New Hampshire fell from its 18th place ranking nationwide in 1980 to its 2010 ranking as the 40th ranked LEP state.



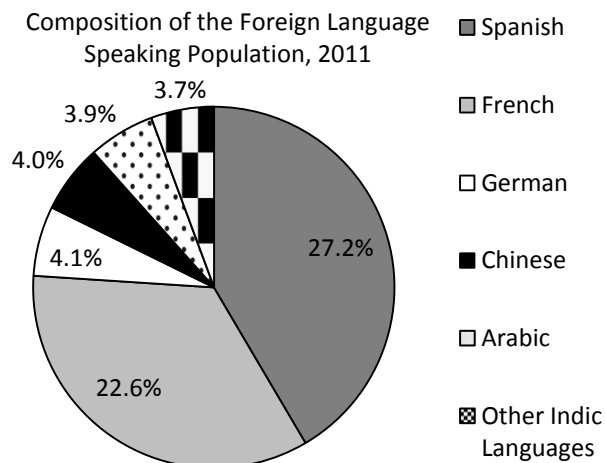
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in New Hampshire, at 11,333 in 1990, rose more than 9,000 by the year 2000 to 20,489. The increase caused New Hampshire to just barely surpass Census Bureau projections for the turn of the millennium, when it predicted a Hispanic population of 20,000. By 2010, the number of Hispanics residing in the Granite State had nearly doubled, reaching 36,704 and surpassing the Census projection of 34,000 for the year 2025.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

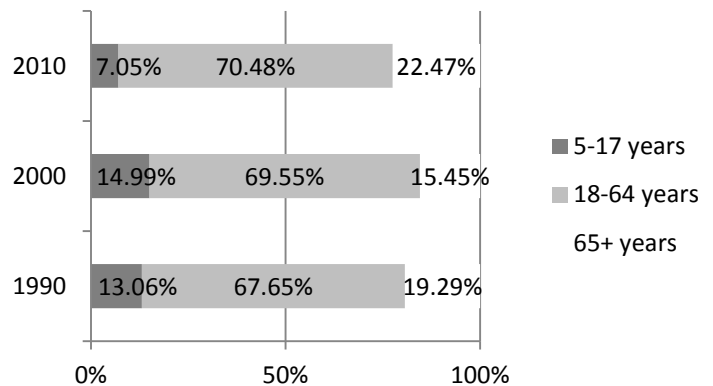
Less than 100,000 New Hampshire residents speak a language other than English at home, but among these, more than 27% (26,533 residents) speak Spanish and 22% (22,017 residents) speak French. Accounting for much smaller percentages of the state's foreign language speakers are German, Chinese, Arabic and other Indic languages. German is spoken by 3,992 residents, Chinese by 3,922, Arabic by 3,789 and other Indic languages are spoken by 3,564 Granite State residents.



Non-English Proficiency by Age

New Hampshire ranks near the bottom of nationwide rankings of the population of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents. With 2,606 seniors aged 65 and above only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” this group ranked 37th nationwide. Meanwhile, with only 817 SLEP children aged 5 to 17, the Granite State ranked slightly lower in this age group, placing 44th. Adults aged 18 to 64, accounting for 70.48% of New Hampshire’s SLEP population, also ranked at the bottom nationally in 44th place.

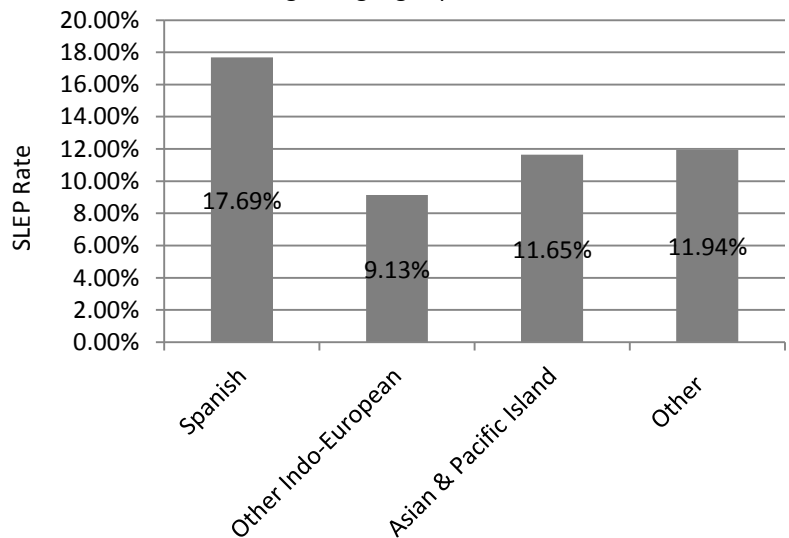
Age Analysis of the SLEP Population
1990, 2000 and 2010



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

New Hampshire’s severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population spread across the board on nationwide rankings. Speakers of ‘other’ languages placed fairly high at 17th when compared with similar language groups in other states, while speakers of Asian & Pacific Island ranked among the lowest at 47th. SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages and Spanish fell in between, with the 9.13% of SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages placing 23rd and the 17.69% of SLEP speakers of Spanish placing 43rd.

Foreign Language Speakers SLEP Rates, 2010



Conclusion

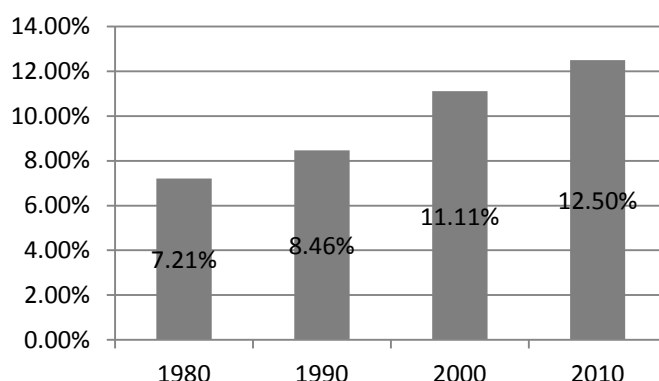
While a majority of New Hampshire’s foreign language speakers use other Indo-European languages, only a small fraction of those are considered severely limited English proficient. New Hampshire has done an adequate job encouraging its foreign language speakers to learn English, and as a result, the state ranks near the bottom nationwide in severe limited English proficiency. The state’s Hispanic population, however, has now surpassed projections for 2025. With a quarter of the state’s foreign language speakers using Spanish and with this group facing the highest severe limited English proficiency rate statewide, New Hampshire should consider targeting English learning programs at these Spanish speakers to ensure that these statistics do not worsen in the future.

New Jersey

Capital: Trenton
2010 Population: 8,801,624
Joined Union: Dec. 18, 1787

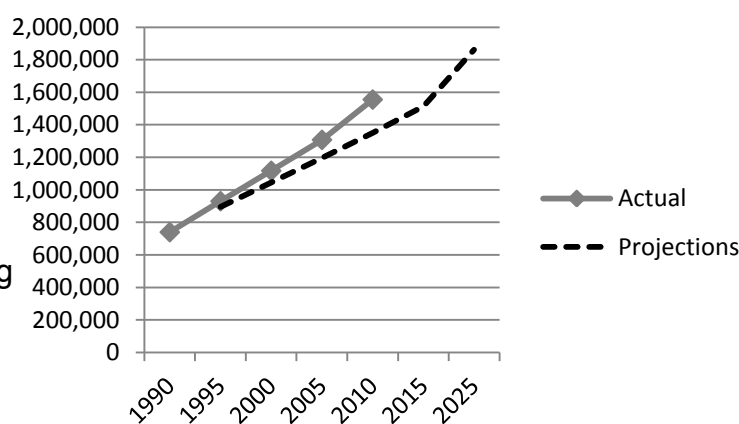
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

New Jersey has long ranked near the top of the nation's limited English proficient (LEP) list by state. At 7th place in 1980, by 2010 the Garden State had jumped three spots to 4th, thanks to a more than 5% increase in the LEP population during that time. With 497,723 LEP residents in 1980, that population more than doubled to 1,030,990 in 2010.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

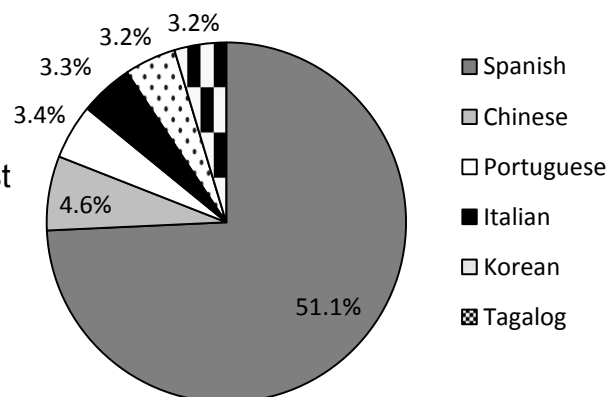
The Hispanic population in New Jersey stood at 739,861 in 1990, more than 150,000 residents below Census Bureau projections for the same year. By 2000, the population had grown enough to surpass the agency's projection of 1,044,000, with the actual count coming in at 1,117,191. In 2005, that steady growth continued, and the number of Hispanics residing in the Garden State topped Census estimates yet again, with 1,307,412 Hispanic residents compared to the projected 1,196,000. By 2010, the population grew to 1,555,144—surpassing even the 1,513,000 projection for the year 2015.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

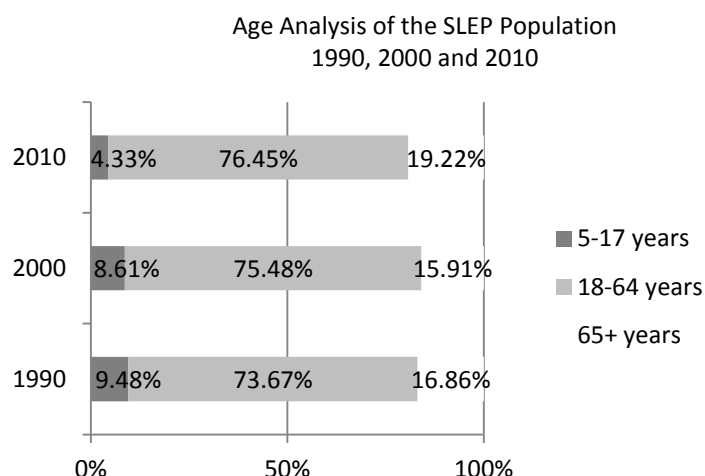
Nearly 30% of New Jersey residents are considered foreign language speakers because they speak a language other than English at home. Of these, just over half, 1,288,272 residents, speak Spanish. A significant number of residents speak Chinese, with 116,485 residents accounting for 4.6% of the state's foreign language speakers. Rounding out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in the Garden State are Portuguese (84,824 residents), Italian (82,355 residents), Korean (81,922 residents) and Tagalog (81,237 residents).

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



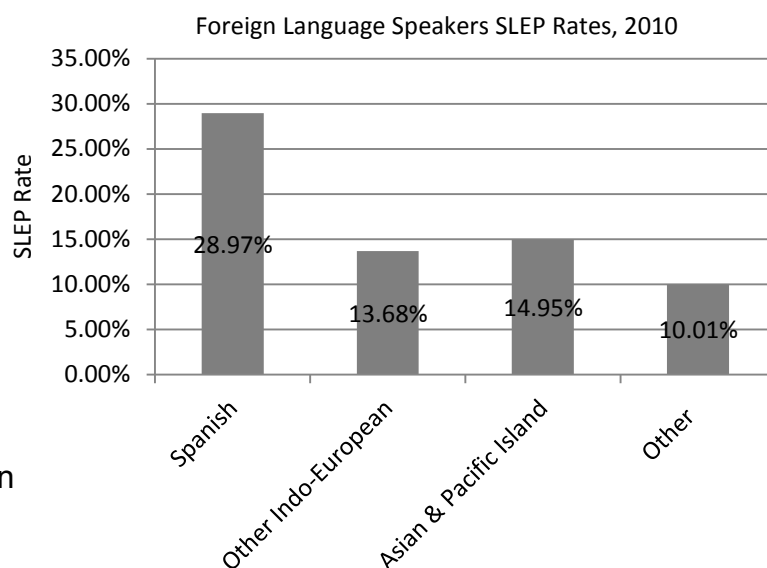
Non-English Proficiency by Age

New Jersey children, adults and seniors all placed in the top 10 nationwide thanks to their high populations of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents. Among seniors, who account for just under 20% of the state's SLEP population, New Jersey ranks fifth, with 101,676 residents aged 65 and above only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all." Children ranked slightly lower in 7th place with 22,918 SLEP five to 17 year olds, and adults ranked 6th with 404,578 individuals unable to speak English well.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Nearly a third of New Jersey's Spanish speakers are severely limited English proficient (SLEP), meaning they are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all." The 365,780 residents falling into that category account for nearly a third of Garden State Spanish speakers and rank 9th compared to similar groups nationwide. Also in the top 10 compared to other states are New Jersey's 13.68% SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages, ranking 9th. The state's SLEP speakers of 'other' languages and Asian & Pacific Island languages ranked lower, in 29th and 40th, respectively.



Conclusion

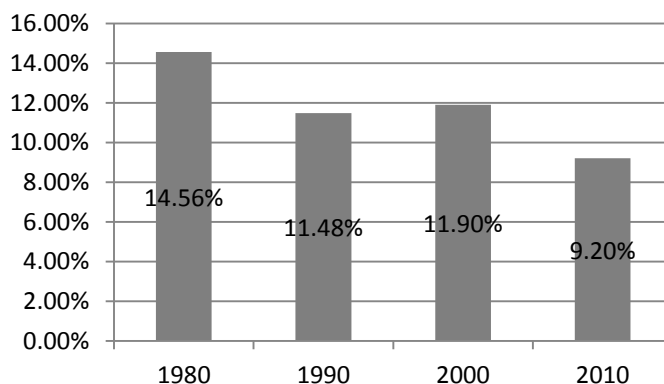
New Jersey has long been a haven for foreign language speaking residents and has consistently placed among the states with the highest rates of limited English proficient residents. With Spanish speakers accounting for more than half of the state's non-English speakers, their nearly 30% severely limited English proficient rate places this group of Spanish speakers in the top ten nationwide. Rather than allowing the limited English proficiency among its foreign language speakers to continue to worsen, New Jersey should focus on ensuring that its non-English speaking residents, especially Spanish speakers, are encouraged to assimilate and learn the common language, English.

New Mexico

Capital: Santa Fe
2010 Population: 2,065,932
Joined Union: Jan. 6, 1912

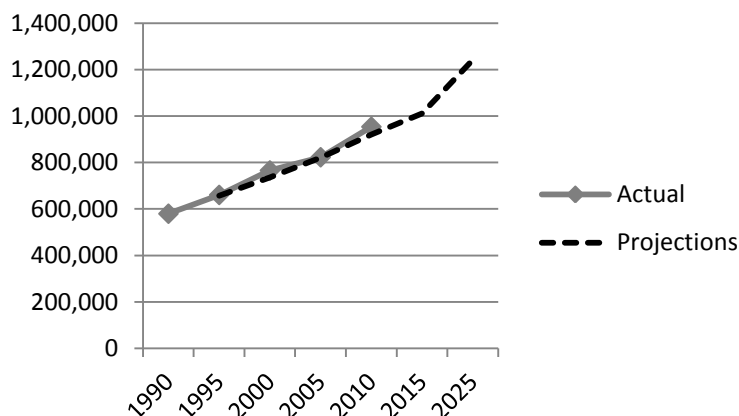
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

New Mexico's limited English proficient (LEP) population has shown a steady decline from 1980 to 2010, dropping more than 5 percentage points. Though 176,709 Land of Enchantment residents were considered limited English proficient in 2010, the change marked enough of a decline to bring New Mexico from the state with the highest LEP population in 1980 to its most recent place rounding out the top ten in 2010.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

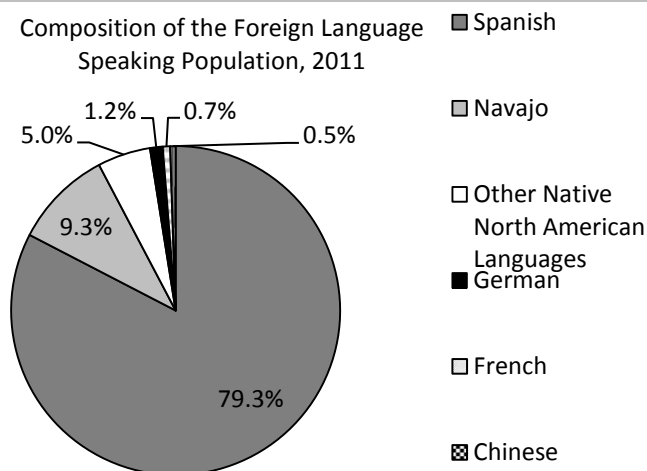
The Hispanic population in New Mexico remained above Census Bureau projections in 2000 and 2005, but by 2010 it had returned to expected levels. In 2000, the Census Bureau projected that 736,000 Hispanics would reside in the Land of Enchantment. The actual population count came in slightly higher, at 765,386. In 2005, the Census projected a Hispanic population of 821,000 and the actual tally was 822,224. By 2010, growth had slowed, with 953,403 Hispanic residents calling New Mexico home—still comfortably below the Census projection of 1,011,000 for the year 2015.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

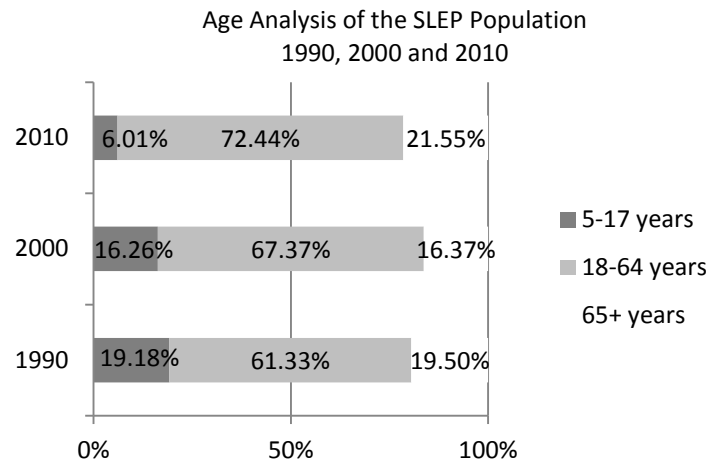
More than 35% of New Mexico residents speak a language other than English at home, with the great majority of them speaking Spanish. In fact, nearly 80% of foreign language speakers in the Land of Enchantment speak Spanish, with 560,964 residents falling into this category. Just over 9% of foreign language speakers (65,563 residents) speak Navajo, while 5% (35,527 residents) speak other Native North American languages. Other widely used foreign languages in New Mexico include German (8,678 speakers), French (4,709 speakers) and Chinese (3,850 speakers).

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



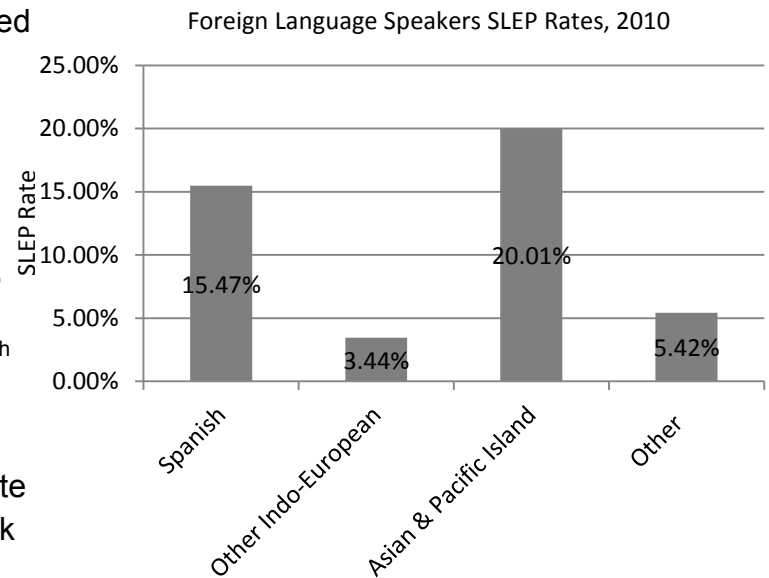
Non-English Proficiency by Age

New Mexico has the 15th highest population nationwide of senior citizens who are only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” with 20,813 residents aged 65 and above falling into that category. Adults 18 to 64, while gradually increasing since 1990, fell lower on the list at number 24, with 69,960 residents in this group being severely limited English proficient (SLEP). Thanks in part to a more than 10% drop in the past decade, the Land of Enchantment’s 5,802 SLEP children aged 5 to 17 years old placed even lower at 28th nationally.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

For the most part, New Mexico’s severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population is low compared to other states. The 5,466 SLEP speakers of ‘other’ languages accounting for 5.42% of the Land of Enchantment’s ‘other’ language speakers place 44th nationally. The 15.47% of SLEP Spanish speakers and 3.44% of SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages fall even lower, placing 45th and 47th nationally. With the highest SLEP rate in the state, speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages still only place 24th nationally, despite the fact that nearly a fifth are only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all.”

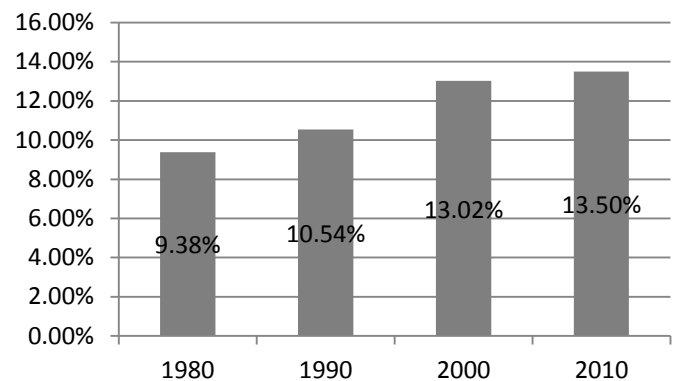


Conclusion

In recent years, New Mexico has done an adequate job encouraging their foreign language speaking population to learn English, resulting in a decline in the state’s limited English proficient population. New Mexico also places low in all four language categories when it comes to severe limited English proficiency, despite a fifth of Asian & Pacific Island residents falling under this category. Even so, with more than 35% of residents speaking a language other than English at home, New Mexico should hold off future problems by ensuring that its current English learning opportunities will still suffice in the event of an increase in limited English proficient individuals.

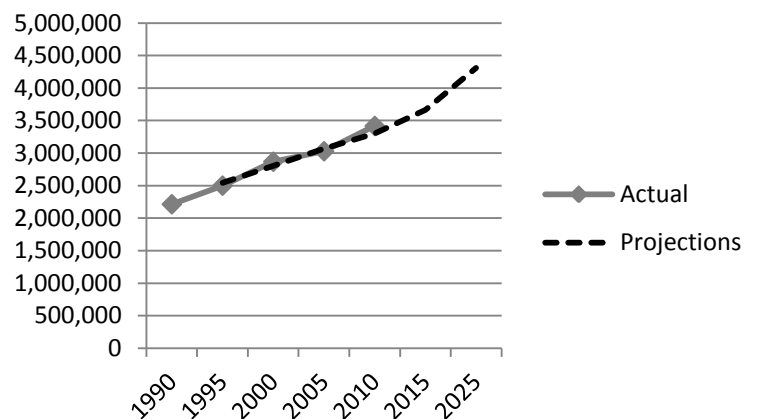
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

New York has long topped the list of states with the highest limited English proficient (LEP) population. The Empire State's 1,540,714 LEP residents in 1980 comprised 9.38% of the population and made the home of the Big Apple the state with the 5th highest LEP rate. Increasing numbers have led to a staggering 2,457,806 LEP residents in 2010, accounting for 13.50% of the population and leaving only California and Texas to surpass its LEP rate.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

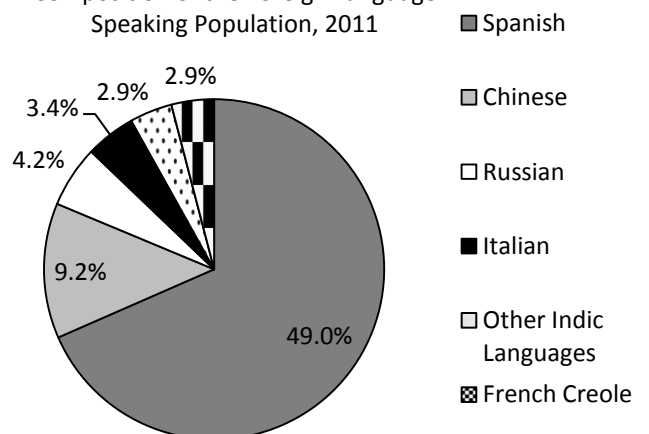
The Hispanic population in New York has consistently fallen in line with Census Bureau projections, while remaining the state with the third highest Hispanic population nationwide. In 1990, the Empire State had 2,214,026 Hispanic residents, compared to the Census Bureau's projected 2,541,000. By 2005, the number grew to 2,867,583, compared to the projected 2,805,000. By the most recent count in 2010, the Hispanic population stood at 3,416,922, on course to hit the 2015 Census projection of 3,664,000.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

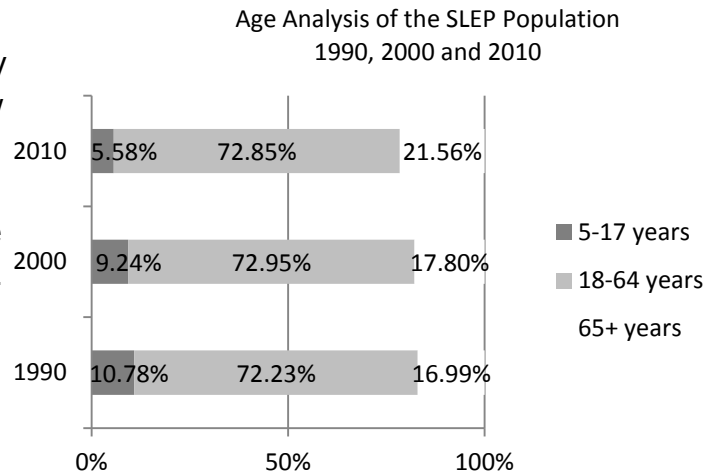
More than 5.4 million New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home, accounting for 30% of the state's population. Of those, nearly half speak Spanish, with nearly 2.7 million residents falling into that category. More than half a million residents speak Chinese, while 232,495 New Yorkers speak Russian. Slightly smaller groups of residents use Italian (189,702 speakers), other Indic languages (161,326 speakers) and French Creole (159,799 speakers), still placing these language groups among the 6 most widely used in the Empire State.

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



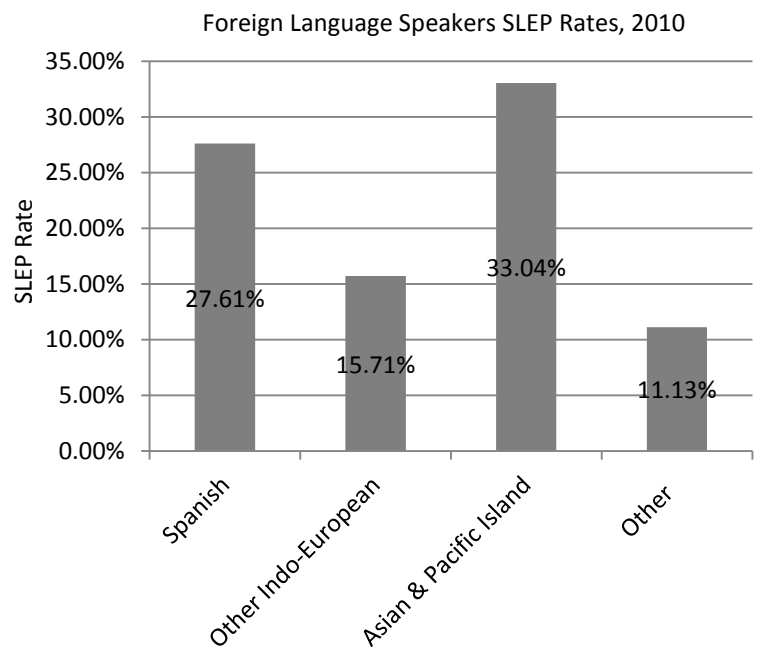
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The Empire State ranks in the top three nationwide due to its high population of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents. New York's 960,548 adults who can only speak English "not well" or "not at all" account for 72.85% of the state's SLEP speakers and place 3rd nationally in the 18 to 64 year old age group. Also topping out the top 3 nationally are the 73,582 SLEP New York children aged 5 to 17 years old. Meanwhile, with 284,317 seniors aged 65 and above falling into the SLEP category, this group placed second highest among all 50 states and the District of Columbia.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

New York State's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranks in the top 20 nationwide among all four language groups, with two groups placing in the top three spots. With a third of the Empire State's speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages considered SLEP, this group had the 2nd highest SLEP rate nationally. The 254,873 SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages, accounting for 15.71% of that population, ranked third compared to similar language groups in other states. Meanwhile, New York's SLEP speakers of Spanish and 'other' languages both ranked lower but still in the top 20, placing 17th and 20th, respectively.



Conclusion

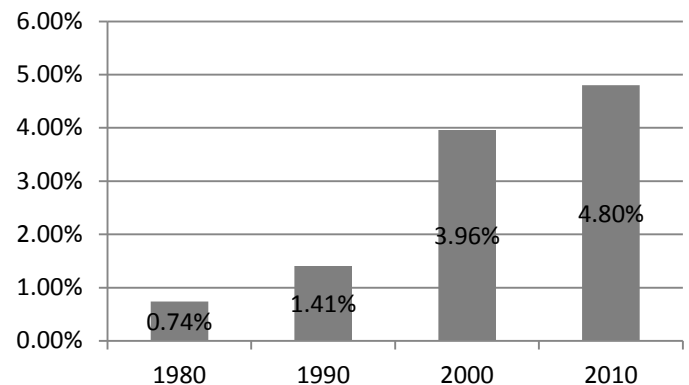
New York's limited English proficient population has long topped nationwide rankings, to the point where the state now faces an overwhelming urgency in encouraging its non-English speaking residents to assimilate. In fact, the Empire State ranks in the top 20 in all four language groups due to its high severe limited English proficiency rates. When it comes to age demographics, New York ranks even higher, placing in the top 3 for the severely limited English proficient rates of children, adults and seniors. New York must immediately create opportunities for and encourage assimilation among its residents of all ages and all linguistic backgrounds, to ensure that the state's linguistic divisions do not continue to worsen.

North Carolina

Capital: Raleigh
2010 Population: 9,561,558
Joined Union: Nov. 21, 1789

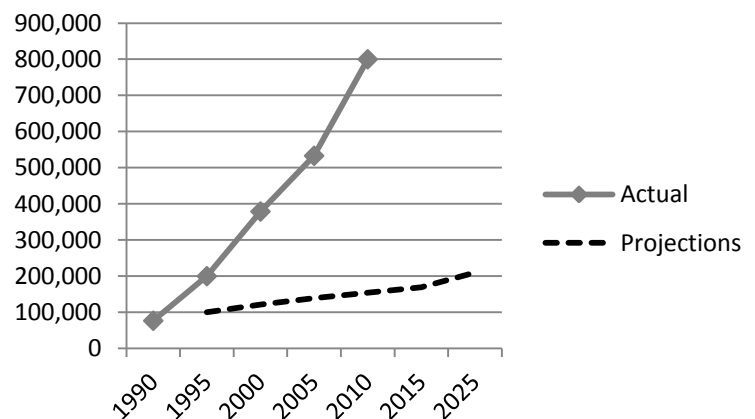
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Thirty years ago, North Carolina was the state with the 7th lowest limited English proficient (LEP) rate in the nation. By 2010, it had jumped to number 22, with the limited English proficient population making up nearly 5% of individuals in the state. With 429,928 LEP residents in 2010, the Tar Heel State's limited English proficient population jumped more than tenfold from its LEP count of 40,486 in 1980.



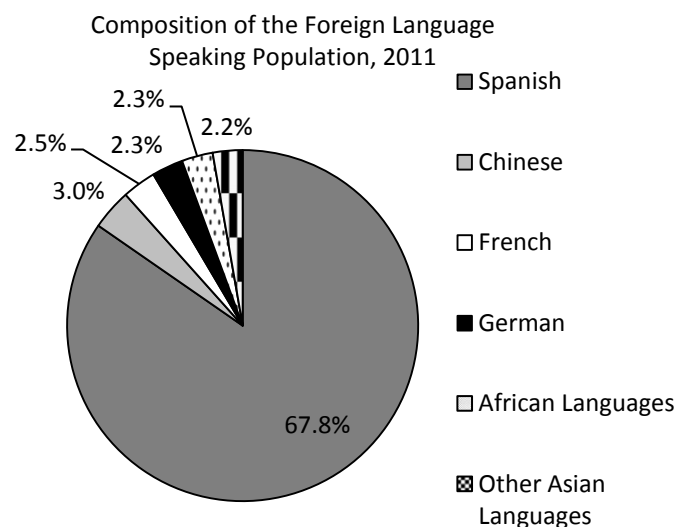
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

North Carolina's Hispanic population has seen staggering growth over the past thirty years. In 2010, with 800,120 Hispanic residents, the Tar Heel State had nearly four times the number of Hispanics once projected by the Census Bureau for the year 2025. In 1990, the population stood at 76,726, but by 2000 that had jumped to 378,963, and by 2005 it had seen another large increase, reaching 533,087—much higher already than the projection of 139,000 for that year.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

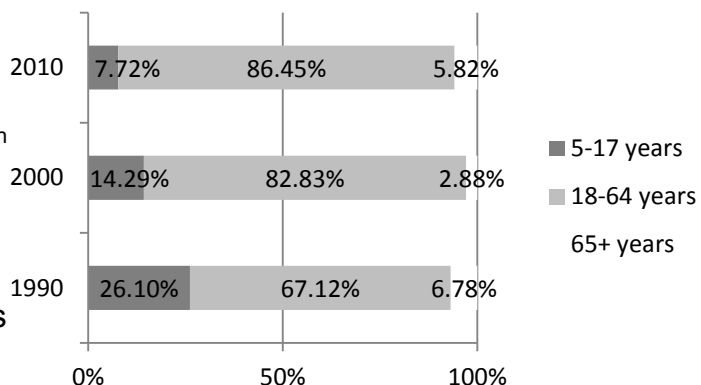
Nearly 1 million North Carolina residents speak a language other than English at home. Of these foreign language speakers, 67% (655,303 residents) speak Spanish. A much smaller number of residents speak Chinese, but these 29,319 residents use the second most widely used foreign language in the Tar Heel State. French (24,289 speakers), German (22,572 speakers), African languages (21,816 speakers) and other Asian languages (21,708 speakers) round out the top 6 most commonly used foreign languages statewide.



Non-English Proficiency by Age

The high number of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults and children in North Carolina place the Tar Heel State in the top 10 nationwide in comparison with other states. The 202,925 adults who could only speak English “not well” or “not at all” ranked North Carolina 9th nationwide, while SLEP children aged 5 to 17 years old, 18,130 individuals, rounded out the top ten compared to youngsters in other states. Seniors, accounting for only 5.82% of the state’s overall SLEP population, ranked lower at 21st place nationally with 13,670 SLEP residents aged 65 and older.

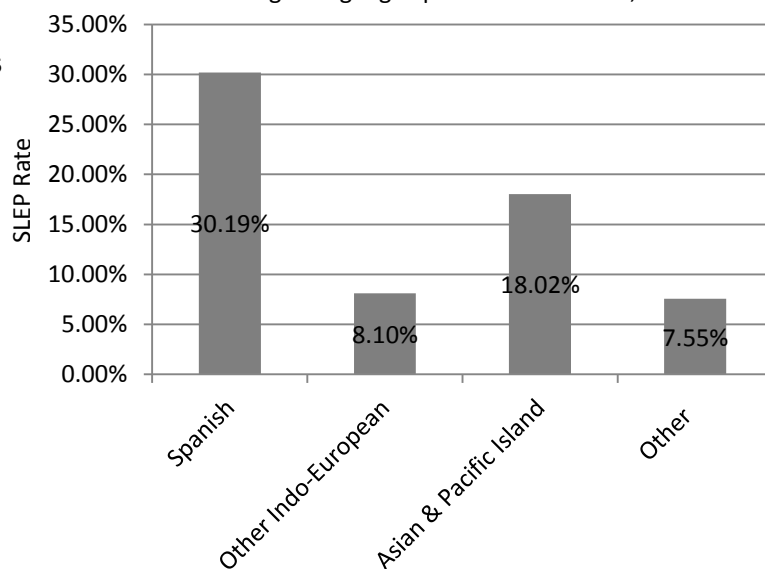
Age Analysis of the SLEP Population
1990, 2000 and 2010



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

North Carolina’s 195,222 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) Spanish speakers, who account for more than 30% of the state’s Spanish speaking residents, rank 7th nationwide compared to similar groups in other states. Despite that high ranking, the Tar Heel State’s other language groups placed near the bottom of national rankings. SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages, for example, placed 28th and SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed 32nd. With only 7.55% of North Carolina’s speakers of ‘other’ languages considered SLEP, this group placed lowest, in 40th place nationally.

Foreign Language Speakers SLEP Rates, 2010



Conclusion

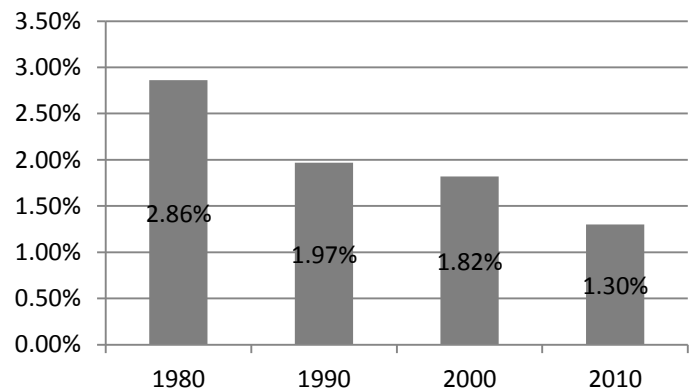
North Carolina’s limited English proficient population has grown exponentially in the past thirty years, as has the state’s Hispanic population. While most of the state’s foreign language groups still manage to place near the bottom of nationwide rankings for severe limited English proficiency, Spanish speakers rank in the top 10. While North Carolina’s seniors place in the middle of nationwide SLEP rankings, adults and children both place the Tar Heel State in the top ten as well. These most recent statistics show a clear need for English learning programs targeted specifically at North Carolina’s children and working aged-adults, as well as Spanish speakers. These residents must be encouraged to assimilate, or face further divisions from the rest of the state’s residents.

North Dakota

Capital: Bismarck
2010 Population: 674,499
Joined Union: Nov. 2, 1889

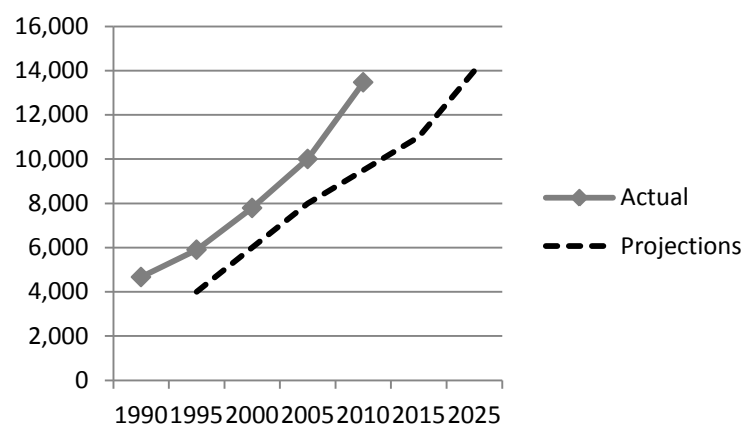
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

North Dakota's limited English proficient (LEP) population has seen a dramatic decrease over the last thirty years, dropping from 17,087 in 1980 to 8,140 in 2010. Once the state with the 19th highest limited English proficiency rate, in 2010 the Peace Garden State dropped to 49th, leaving only Montana and West Virginia with lower percentages of limited English individuals.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

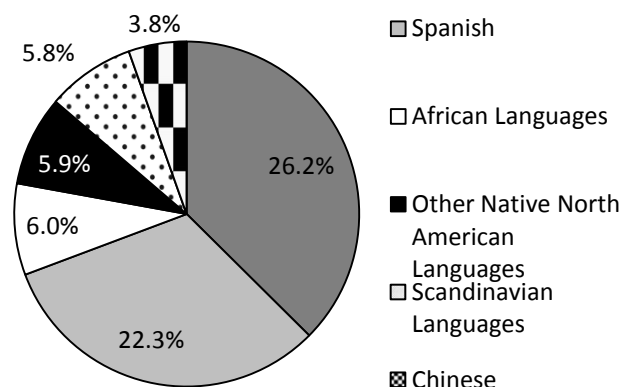
The Hispanic population in North Dakota has remained consistently above Census Bureau projections. In 1990, the Census measured an actual Hispanic population of 4,665, compared to its estimate of 4,000 Hispanic residents for 1995. By 2000, the Census counted 7,786 Hispanic residents, well above the projected 6,000 residents. By 2010, North Dakota's Hispanic population of 13,467 surpassed the 2015 projection of 11,000 and was on its way to passing the 2025 prediction of 14,000 Hispanic residents.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

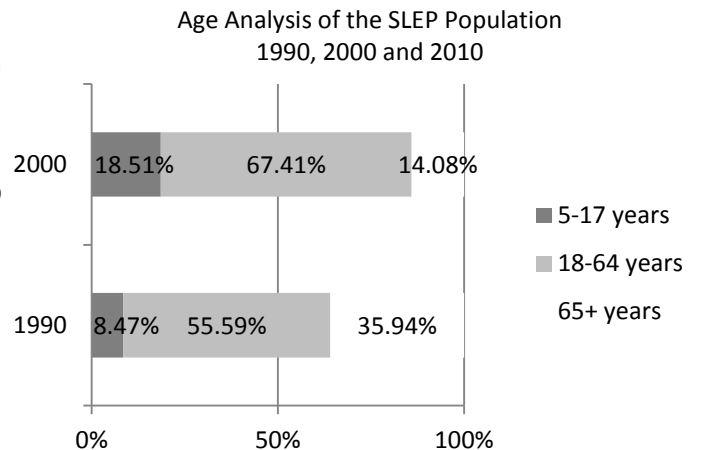
Of the 32,380 North Dakota residents who speak a language other than English at home, a majority speak German and Spanish, with 8,470 and 7,213 residents using these languages, respectively. Nearly 2,000 residents use African languages at home, while 1,924 residents speak other Native North American languages and 1,884 speak Scandinavian languages. Chinese is the 6th most widely used foreign language in the Peace Garden State, with its 1,215 speakers accounting for 3.8% of North Dakota's foreign language speaking population.

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



Non-English Proficiency by Age

North Dakota's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population cannot be ranked in comparison to that of other states, as the 2010 Census did not contain updated information on the breakdown of Peace Garden State residents who are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all." However, in the year 2000, a whopping 18.51% of SLEP residents in North Dakota were children aged 5 to 17 years old. Compared to the weighted percentage of children in other states in 2010, North Dakota children would have ranked 2nd. Adults would have tied for 19th, while seniors would have ranked 47th.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

North Dakota's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) rates cannot be analyzed or ranked in comparison to that of other states, as the 2010 Census did not contain updated information on the breakdown of Peace Garden State residents who were only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all" based on language group.

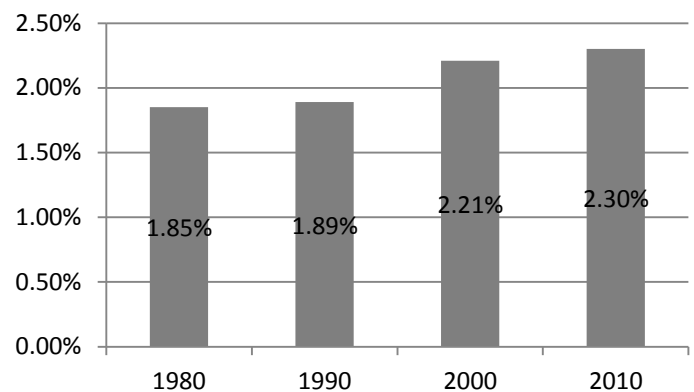


Conclusion

North Dakota's limited English proficient population is hard to analyze in depth, due to a lack of 2010 Census data breaking down English proficiency among age groups and language groups. However, the trend since 1980 has been a continued decrease in the state's limited English proficient population, likely resulting from passage of Official English in 1987. An overwhelming majority of North Dakota residents speak English at home, and all signs point to the state doing an adequate job encouraging its foreign language speaking residents to assimilate and learn English. North Dakota should ensure, however, that there are enough opportunities for children aged 5 to 17 to learn English, as the severe limited English proficiency rate among this group in the year 2000 would have ranked the state 2nd nationwide, had it held steady in 2010.

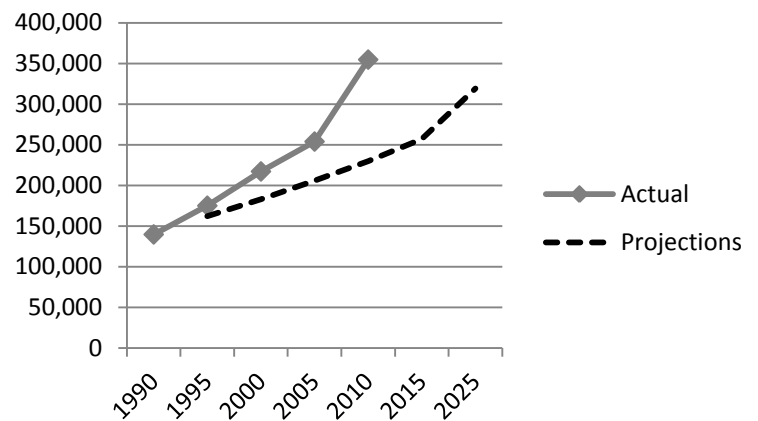
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

The number of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals in Ohio has increased over the past thirty years, rising from 185,595 in 1980 to 252,872 in 2010. Yet due to the rapidly growing LEP populations in other states, Ohio continues to drop in the state LEP rankings. At 30th place in 1980, the Buckeye State fell to 34th in 1990 and by 2010 had settled in 41st place, with only ten states boasting lower rates of limited English proficient individuals.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

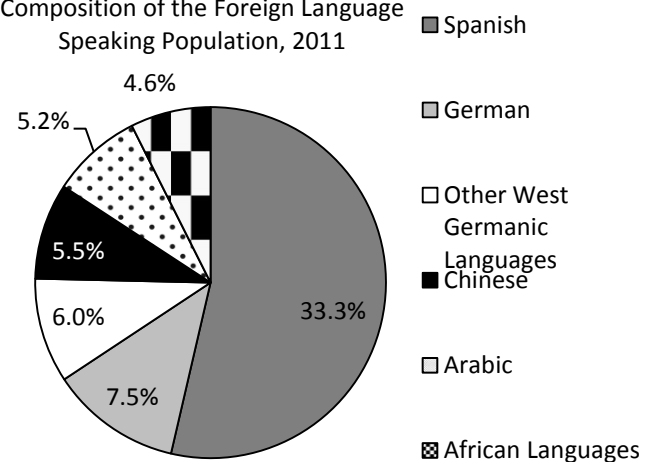
By 2010, Ohio's Hispanic population already surpassed Census Bureau projections for the year 2025. With 354,674 Hispanic residents in 2010, the Census Bureau projected only 319,000 residents in the year 2025. The Buckeye State's Hispanic population, however, has not always been so high. In 1990, there were 139,696 Hispanic residents in Ohio, far below the 1995 projection of 162,000. In 2000, the population rise began, with a count of 217,123 Hispanic residents, compared to the projected 183,000.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

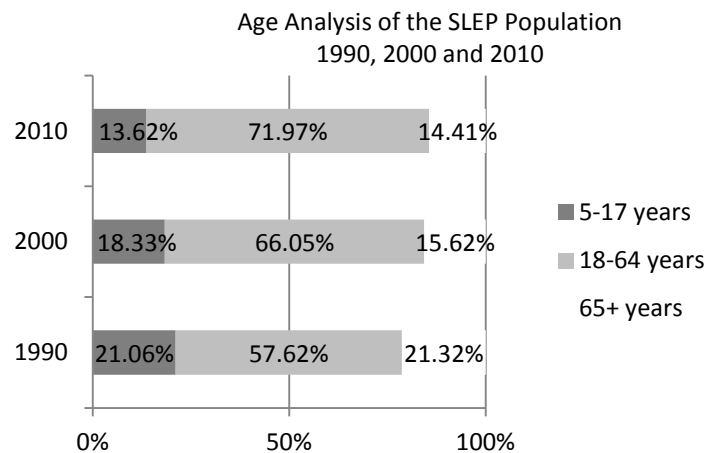
More than 720,000 Ohio residents speak a language other than English at home. Of the top 5 most widely spoken foreign languages, each represents more than 5% of foreign language speakers in the state. A third of Ohio's foreign language speakers (240,103 residents) use Spanish, while 7.5% (54,475 residents) use German. Just over 43,000 residents speak other West Germanic languages, while 39,934 residents speak Chinese. Close to 38,000 Buckeye State residents speak Arabic, and with 33,104 speakers, African languages round out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in Ohio.

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



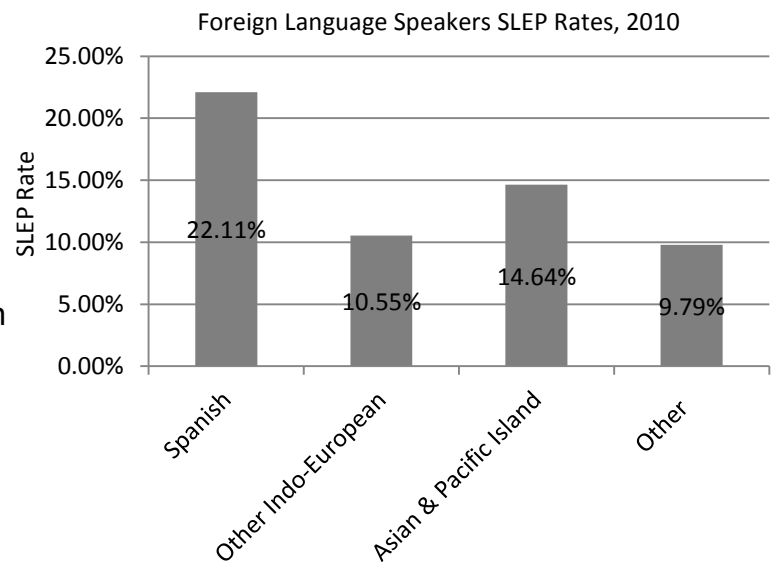
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With 14,670 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children residing in Ohio, this group just misses the top 10 list nationally, ranking in at number 12. Seniors aged 65 and above placed lower at 19th, with 15,531 residents only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all,” accounting for 14.41% of the Buckeye State’s SLEP population. The great majority of Ohio’s SLEP population, adults aged 18 to 64 years old, reached a count of 77,543 in 2010—still low enough to place them in the middle of the pack by age group nationwide, in 21st place.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Ohio’s 29,589 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) speakers of other Indo-European languages account for only 10.55% of the state’s Indo-European language speakers, but this rate is high enough to place the group 17th on nationwide rankings. Ohio’s speakers of ‘other’ languages place 31st with their 9.79% SLEP rate, while 52,889 residents comprising the Buckeye State’s SLEP Spanish speaking population place even lower at 36th when compared with similar language groups in other states. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed lowest statewide on national rankings, with the 14.64% SLEP rate placing this group 41st.



Conclusion

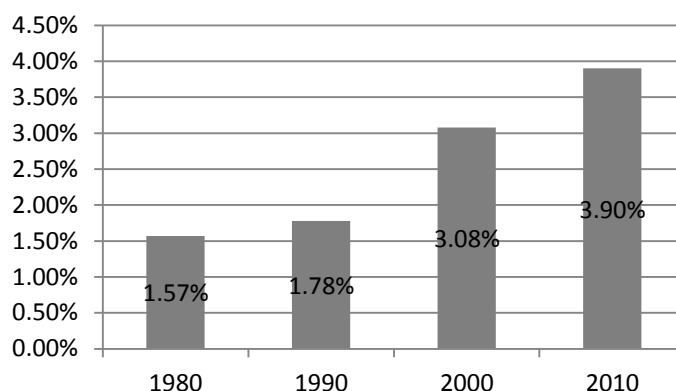
Ohio’s limited English proficient rates have continued to rise over the past 30 years, but because of higher rates of growth in other states, the Buckeye State has dropped in state by state rankings. Even so, Ohio statistics show several warning signs that the state should begin targeting English learning programs at certain populations. Children aged 5 to 17, for example, just missed the top 10 ranking nationally for their severe limited English proficient rate. Speakers of other Indo-European languages also placed high on national rankings, coming in 17th for their rate of severe limited English proficiency. To protect the future of the state’s economy and the success of its future leaders, Ohio should ensure that children and speakers of other Indo-European languages have adequate access to English language learning programs, before these statistics worsen further.

Oklahoma

Capital: Oklahoma City
2010 Population: 3,761,702
Joined Union: Nov. 16, 1907

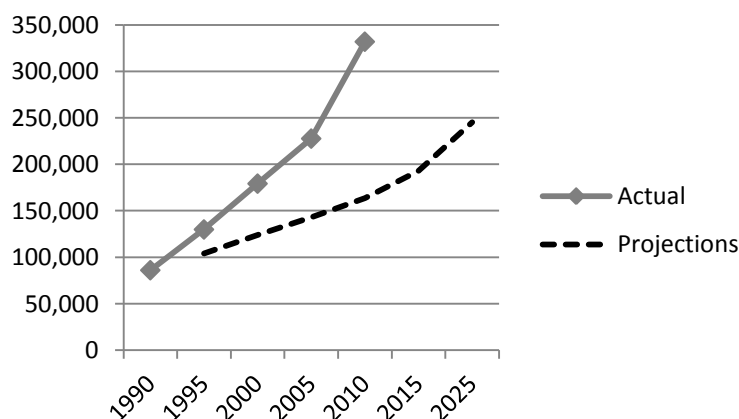
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

The limited English proficient (LEP) population in Oklahoma has tripled in the past three decades, rising from just over 1.5% in 1980 to nearly 4% in 2010. With 134,787 limited English proficient residents in 2010, the Sooner State rose to 28th on the list of state LEP rankings, from its 37th spot in 1980 when only 43,740 state residents were considered to be lacking in English skills.



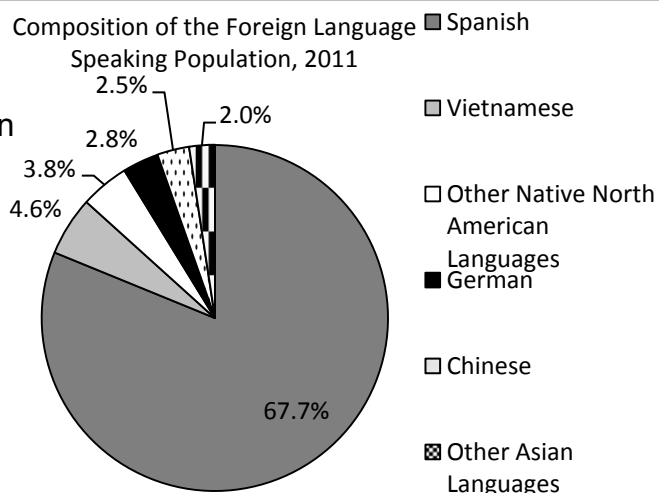
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

In 2010, Oklahoma's Hispanic population already surpassed the Census Bureau's projections for the year 2025 by nearly 100,000. With a count of 332,007 Hispanic residents in 2010, the Census Bureau had projected 245,000 by 2025. With only 86,260 Hispanic residents in 1990, this number had more than doubled by the turn of the millennium, with 179,304—well above the projected Hispanic population of 124,000. In fact, the 2000 Hispanic population in the Sooner State already surpassed the 2005 projection of 143,000.



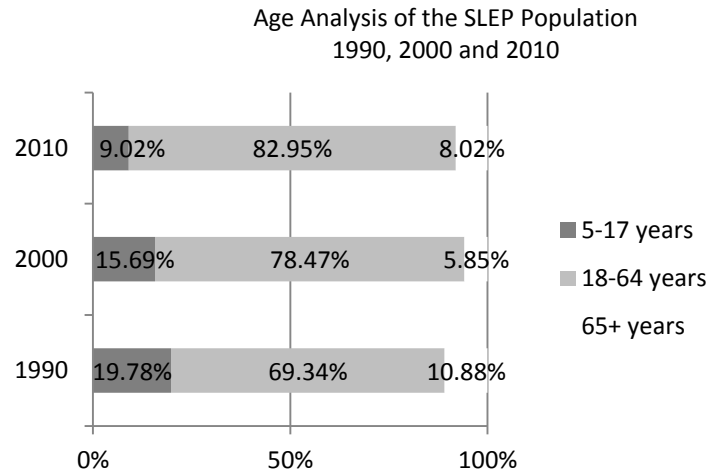
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Of the more than 329,000 foreign language speakers in Oklahoma, 222,734 of them use Spanish, accounting for 67.7% of the state's foreign language speaking population. More than 15,000 residents speak Vietnamese, while 12,491 speak other Native North American languages and 9,207 residents speak German. Rounding out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in the Sooner State are Chinese, with 8,195 speakers, and other Asian languages, with 6,653 speakers.



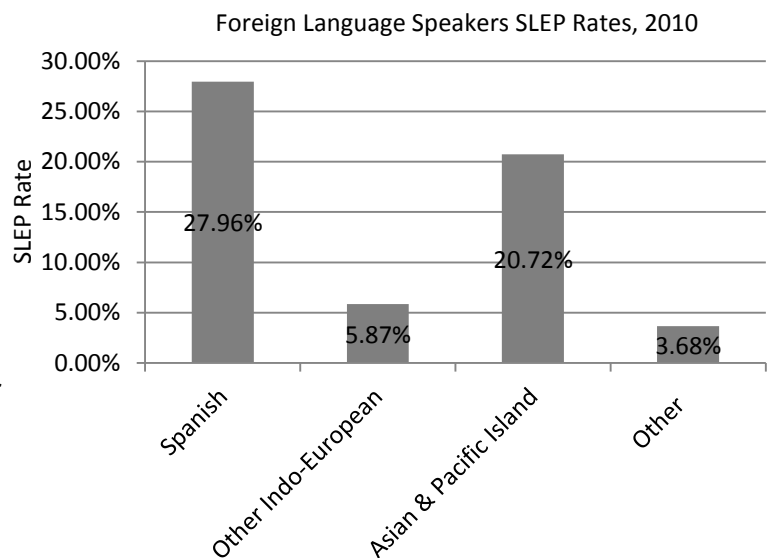
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Thanks to a drop of over 10% from 1990 to 2010, the 6,549 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children in Oklahoma fell in the middle of the pack nationwide, placing 25th among 5 to 17 year olds. Despite accounting for 82.95% of the Sooner State residents who could only speak English “not well” or “not at all,” the 60,204 SLEP adults placed even lower at 28th nationwide. Oklahoma seniors placed the lowest of all, with the 5,822 SLEP residents aged 65 and above coming in 30th compared to seniors in other states.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Of the Sooner State’s 213,194 Spanish speakers, 59,600 are considered severely limited English proficient (SLEP), accounting for nearly a third of the state’s Spanish speaking residents. This rate places Oklahoma 14th on nationwide rankings among similar language groups in other states. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages rank slightly lower in 21st, while the significantly smaller populations of SLEP speakers of other Indo-European and ‘other’ languages fall to the bottom of the list in 40th and 47th, respectively.

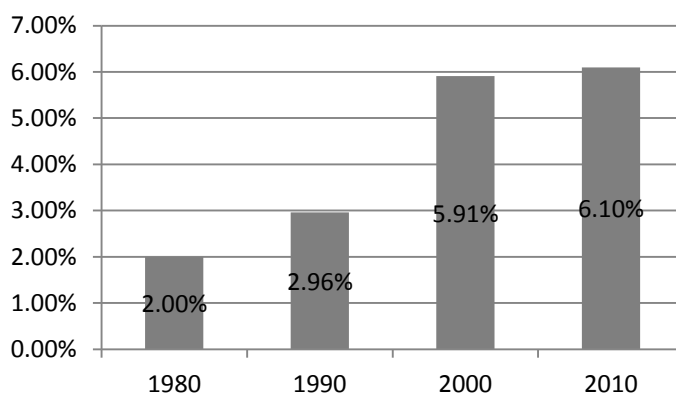


Conclusion

In 2010, Census Bureau statistics report that 66% of Oklahoma’s foreign language speakers spoke Spanish, and the Hispanic population statewide already surpassed projections for the year 2025. Nearly a third of the state’s Spanish speakers were severely limited English proficient, ranking this group among the top in the nation and signaling that Oklahoma should immediately create and encourage opportunities for this group of residents to learn English. Speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages have risen in recent years as well, indicating that the encouragement of language assimilation in Oklahoma should be emphasized to prevent further divisions.

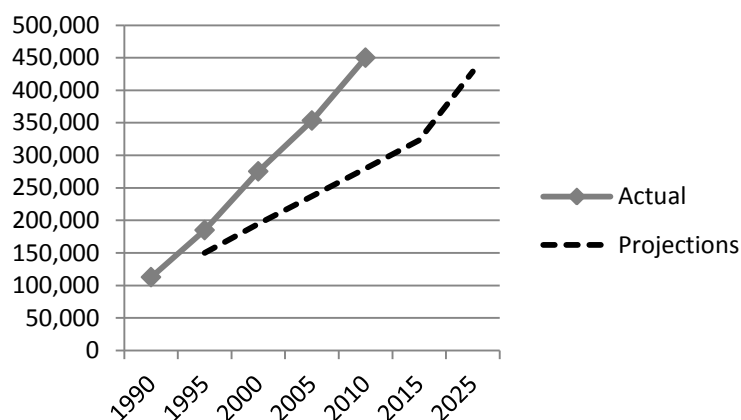
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Oregon's limited English proficient (LEP) population has grown significantly over the past thirty years, rising more than 4% and more than 160,000 during that period. In 1980, the Beaver State was 28th in the rankings of state LEP levels, with 48,732 LEP residents. By 2010, Oregon rose to 17th on the list, with 218,379 individuals struggling to gain proficiency in English.



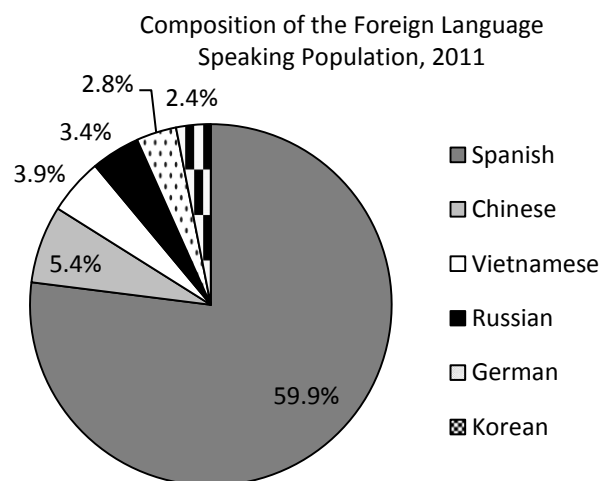
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

Oregon's Hispanic population, standing at 112,707 in 1990, significantly increased by the year 2000, reaching 275,314. By 2000, the Census Bureau projected a Hispanic population of 195,000—more than 20,000 less than the actual count. In 2005, the Beaver State's Hispanic population had grown to 353,433—more than 100,000 above the projected 237,000 for the same year. In 2010, the number of Hispanic residents in Oregon had reached 450,062—more than 20,000 greater than the Census projection for the year 2025.



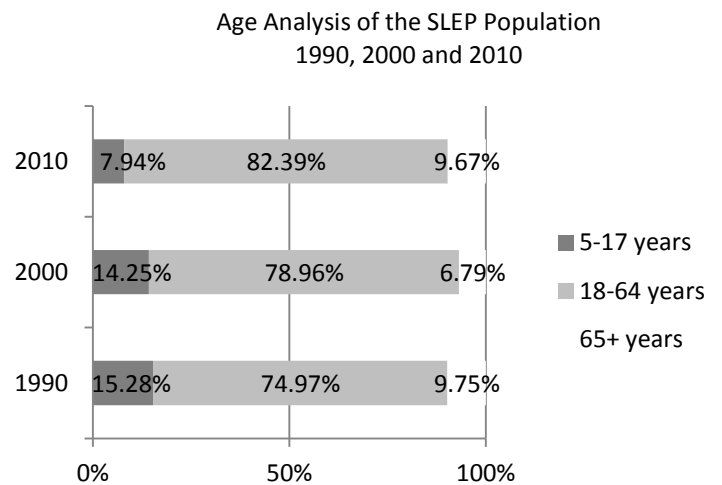
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Nearly 15% of Oregon residents speak a language other than English at home, accounting for just over half a million residents. Of these, nearly 60% (323,721 residents) are Spanish speakers. Other widely used foreign languages in the Beaver State are Chinese, spoken by 28,945 residents, and Vietnamese, spoken by 21,344 residents. Russian (spoken by 3.4% of Oregon residents) and German (spoken by 2.8%) are also used by a significant number of Oregonians, with 18,363 and 15,163 individuals speaking them at home, respectively. Rounding out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in the state is Korean, spoken by 12,727 residents.



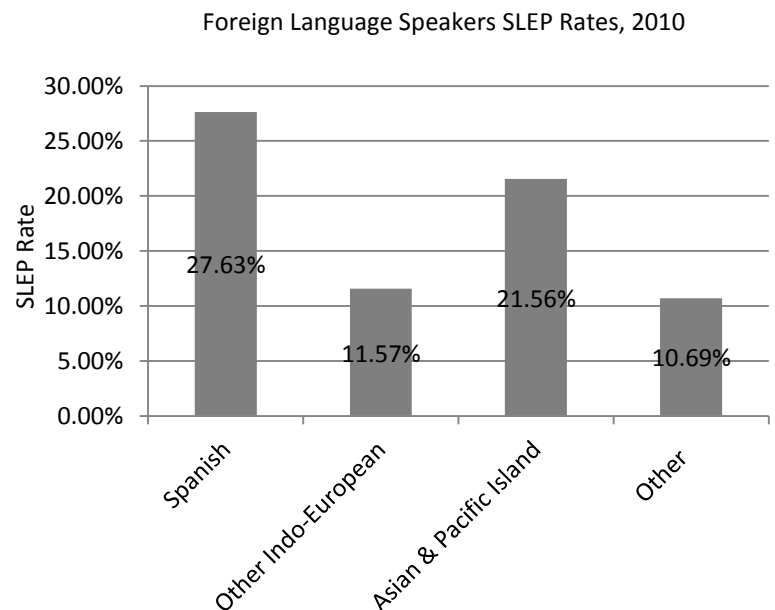
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With just under 100,000 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults residing in Oregon, this age group ranks the Beaver State 18th compared to similar populations in other states. Thanks in part to a 7% drop in the number of SLEP 5 to 17 year olds, Oregon children placed 22nd on the list, with a tally of 9,484 children only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all” in 2010. The 11,533 seniors aged 65 and above placed slightly lower at 23rd compared to the SLEP seniors in other states.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Three of Oregon’s four language groups place in the top 20 nationally due to their high rates of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents. Speakers of other Indo-European languages place highest on national rankings by language group, with the 11.57% of SLEP residents placing 11th. Despite the higher SLEP rates, Spanish and Asian & Pacific Island language speakers place slightly lower on nationwide rankings, coming in 16th and 17th, respectively. With only 1,665 of the state’s 15,582 speakers of ‘other’ languages considered SLEP, this group placed 22nd compared to similar groups in other states.



Conclusion

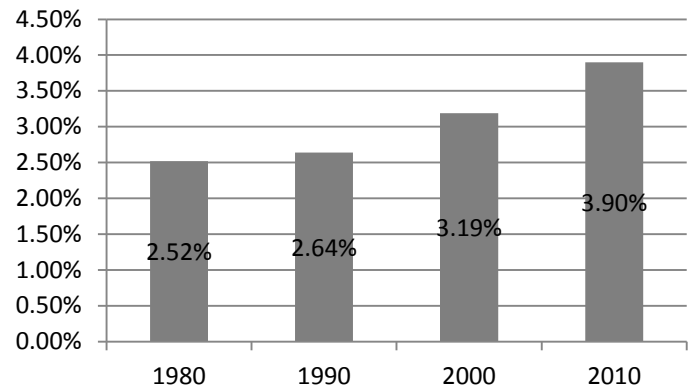
Oregon has seen a significant increase in its limited English proficient population in recent years, jumping to 17th place on national rankings in 2010. With nearly 60% of the state’s foreign language speakers speaking Spanish, an effort should be made to ensure that this population is encouraged to learn English. Unfortunately, the number of severely limited English proficient Spanish speakers places in the top 20 nationally, indicating that either there are not enough opportunities for these residents to learn English, or they are simply not being encouraged to do so. In fact, three of the state’s four foreign language groups all place in the top 20 nationally due to their severe limited English proficiency. This has contributed to a rise in the percentage of severely limited English proficient working aged adults. Oregon should focus on creating English learning opportunities for these individuals or face potentially harmful economic consequences down the road.

Pennsylvania

Capital: Harrisburg
2010 Population: 12,709,630
Joined Union: Dec. 12, 1787

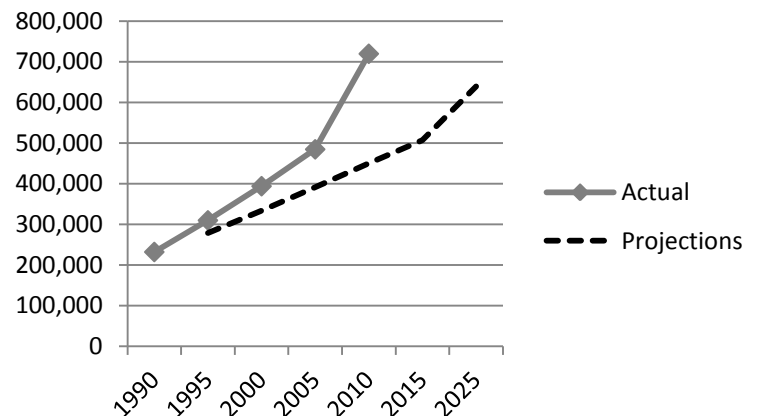
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Pennsylvania's limited English proficient (LEP) population grew steadily from 1980 to 2010, but due to the rapid increase in LEP rates nationwide, the Keystone State dropped four spots on the state by state LEP ranking list to 27th. With 280,381 limited English proficient residents in 1980, Pennsylvania grew to house 368,257 LEP residents in 2000 and most recently added nearly 100,000 LEP residents, rising to 465,625 LEP individuals in 2010.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

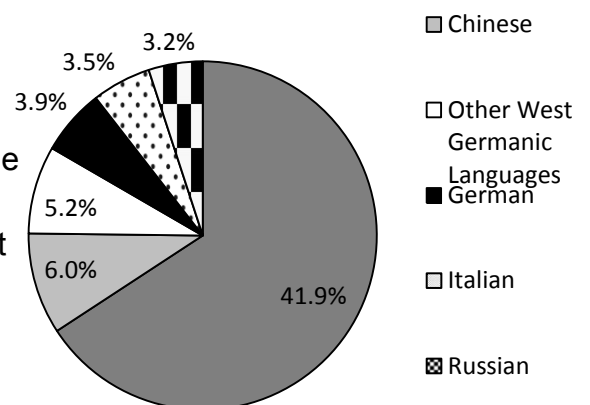
While the Hispanic population in Pennsylvania was close to Census projections in 2000, the growth of this demographic increased dramatically in the years to follow. The number of Hispanic residents in the Keystone State grew greatly between 2005 and 2010, rising from 484,679 in 2005 to a count of 719,660 five years later. This number already surpassed the Census Bureau projection of 639,000 for the year 2025 by more than 100,000.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Just over 10% of Pennsylvania residents speak a language other than English at home, accounting for more than 1.2 million individuals. More than 40% (518,056 residents) of these foreign language speakers use Spanish at home. While the other most widely used foreign languages account for a much smaller percentage of residents, a large number of individuals speak them. Chinese is spoken by 73,872 residents, while other West Germanic languages are spoken by 64,607 and German is spoken by 48,344. Italian, accounting for 3.5% of the state's foreign language speakers, is used by 43,214 residents and Russian by 39,767.

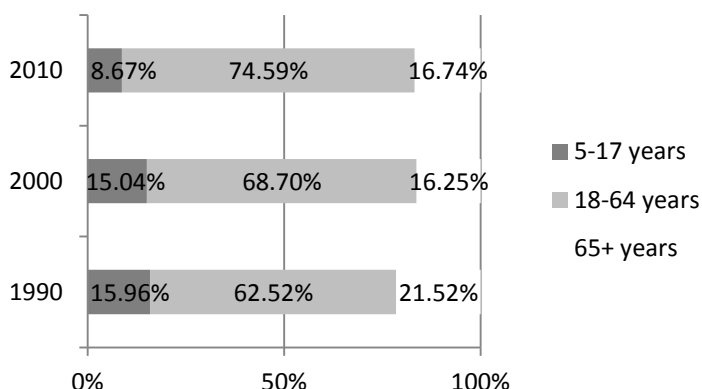
Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



Non-English Proficiency by Age

Pennsylvania's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranks in the top 10 in nearly every age group. With 18,607 children only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," five to 17 year olds in the Keystone state ranked 9th compared to the same age group in other states. Seniors aged 65 and above just rounded out the nationwide top 10, with the 35,907 SLEP residents placing 10th. With 159,996 SLEP adults aged 18 to 64, this group just misses the top ten, placing Pennsylvania 13th among all 50 states.

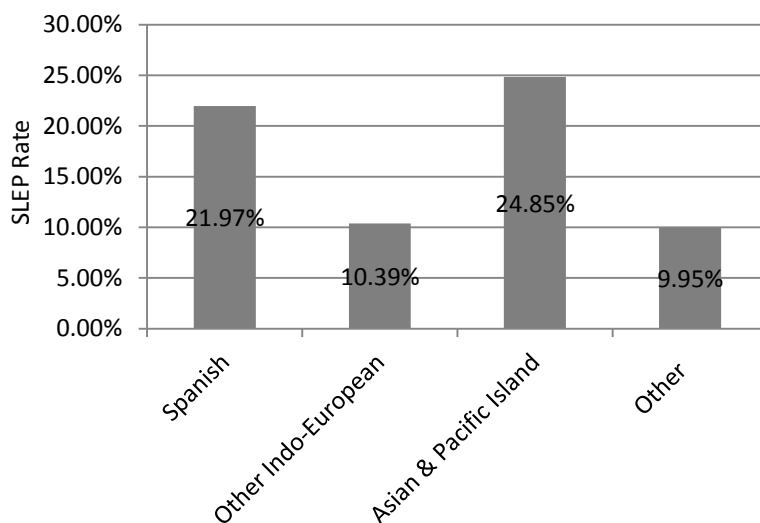
Age Analysis of the SLEP Population
1990, 2000 and 2010



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Nearly 25% of Pennsylvania's speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages, 50,967 of 205,097 individuals, are considered severely limited English proficient (SLEP), giving this group the third highest SLEP rate among Asian & Pacific Island language speakers nationwide. Despite having the second highest SLEP rate in the state, Spanish speakers placed 37th on national SLEP rankings, while SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages and 'other' languages ranked 18th and 30th, respectively.

Foreign Language Speakers SLEP Rates, 2010



Conclusion

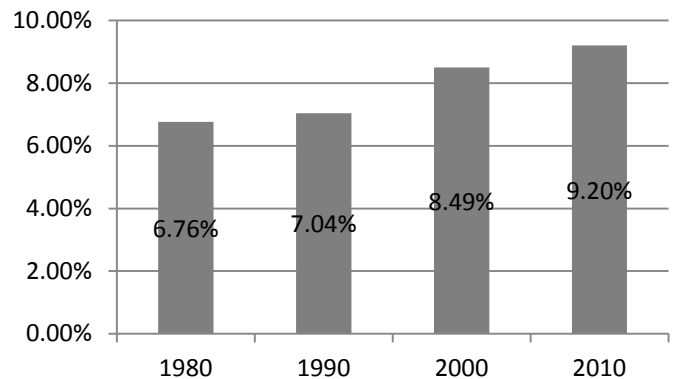
Pennsylvania's limited English proficient population continues to rise, and although it is not yet at alarming levels, steps should be taken now to prevent further linguistic divisions down the road. English learning programs should be targeted at Spanish speakers, who have seen a jump in population in the past several years and account for more than 40% of the state's foreign language speakers. Programs should also be geared towards Pennsylvania's speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages, who have among the highest rate of limited English proficient speakers nationwide. Furthermore, while the state's percentage of severely limited English proficient children has decreased over the past 30 years, this group still ranks 9th nationwide, showing a clear need for this population to learn English. Unless steps are taken now to encourage these groups to learn English, Pennsylvania will likely soon face the skyrocketing limited English proficient rates that other large states are currently battling.

Rhode Island

Capital: Providence
2010 Population: 1,052,886
Joined Union: May 29, 1790

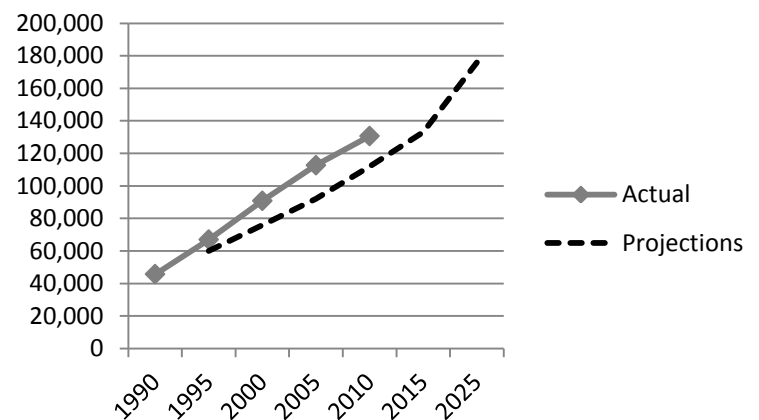
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Rhode Island's limited English proficient (LEP) population has grown steadily in the period from 1980 to 2010, rising from 60,226 to 91,737. But due to increasing national limited English proficiency rates, the Ocean State managed to fall three places in the state LEP rate ranking, from 8th place in 1980 to its current spot at number 11.



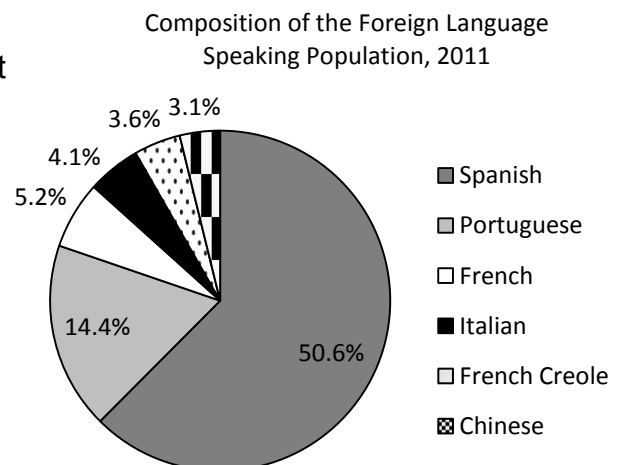
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Census Bureau had projected that Rhode Island would be home to 76,000 Hispanic residents in the year 2000, 92,000 in 2005, 133,000 in 2015 and 176,000 in 2025. In reality, Census counts showed a Hispanic population of 90,820 in 2000 (more than 10,000 above projections), 112,722 in 2005 (more than 20,000 above projections) and 130,655 in 2010—only 3,000 residents away from surpassing the previously projected population for the year 2015.



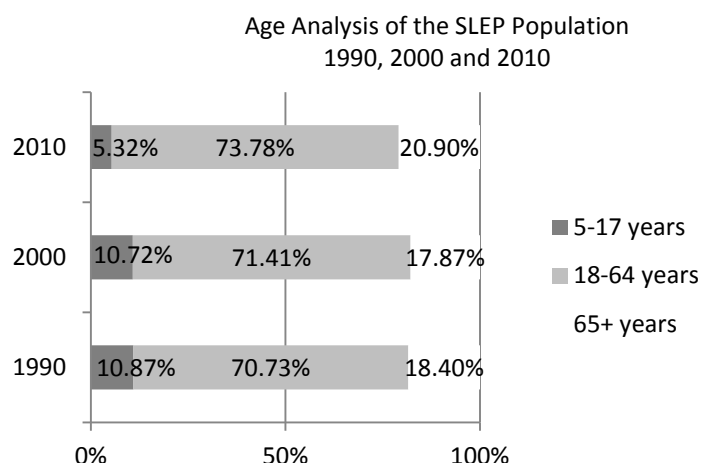
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 211,000 Rhode Island residents speak a language other than English at home, representing just over 20% of the state's total population. Of these foreign language speakers, more than half speak Spanish, with 106,799 residents falling into that category. More than 14% of foreign language speakers (11,046 residents) use French at home, while 8,701 residents speak Italian. French Creole is used by 7,608 individuals in the Ocean State, and rounding out the top six most widely used foreign languages in Rhode Island is Chinese, spoken by 6,642 individuals.



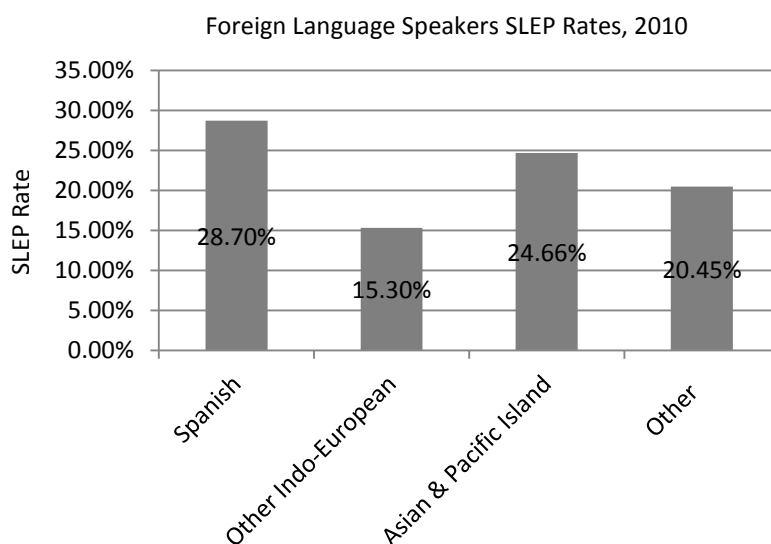
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Rhode Island's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranks low compared to that of other states. With 10,193 seniors only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group placed 24th, accounting for 20.90% of the state's SLEP population. The Ocean State placed even lower among children and adults—with 2,595 SLEP residents aged 5 to 17 and 35,980 SLEP residents aged 18 to 64, Rhode Island ranked 39th and 37th, respectively.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Rhode Island is home to some of the highest severe limited English proficient (SLEP) populations in the nation, placing in the top 10 nationally in all four language groups. While the 31,283 SLEP Spanish speakers, accounting for close to a third of the state's Spanish speakers, placed tenth compared to similar groups in other states, SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages, Asian & Pacific Island languages and 'other' languages all placed 5th in their respective categories.



Conclusion

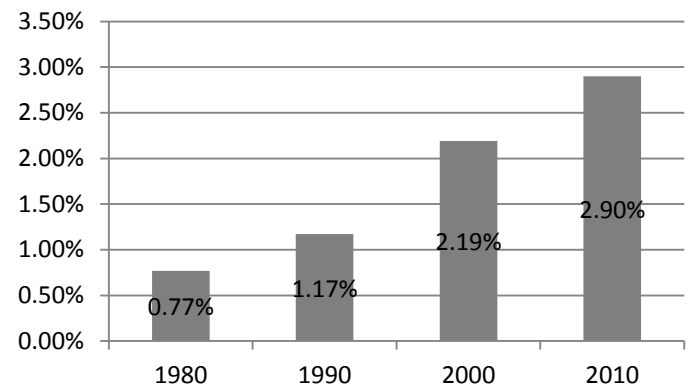
The steady growth in Rhode Island's limited English proficient population has led to some alarming statistics about the assimilation of the state's foreign language speakers. More than 20% of Rhode Island's population speaks a language other than English at home, and three of the four Census-defined language groups place in the top five nationwide for their rates of severe limited English proficiency. The fourth language group, Spanish speakers, placed 10th nationwide. Rhode Island should immediately take steps to ensure that it has adequate opportunities for its foreign language speakers to learn English, and should encourage foreign language speakers to take advantage of such programs. Without taking steps to improve circumstances now, Rhode Island will continue on a path toward placing among the nation's highest limited English proficiency rates.

South Carolina

Capital: Columbia
2010 Population: 4,636,312
Joined Union: May 23, 1788

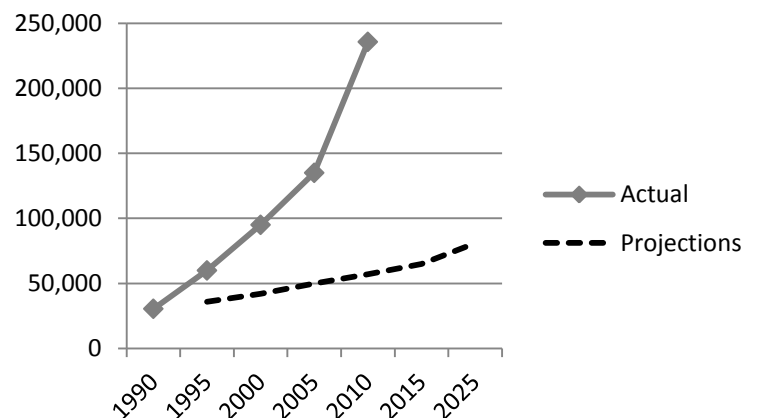
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

South Carolina's limited English proficient (LEP) population has grown nearly six times over in the past thirty years, growing from a reasonably low 22,089 in 1980 to its current 127,315. The Palmetto State saw the addition of more than 40,000 limited English proficient residents between 2000 and 2010, leading to its rise on the state LEP rank chart—from 44th place in 1980 to its current rank in 37th.



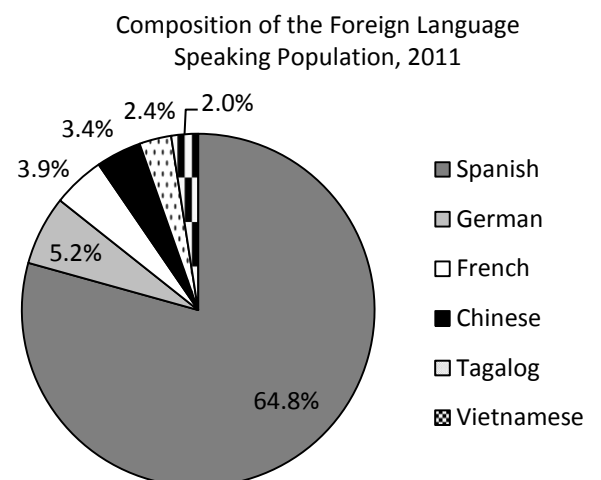
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

In 2010, South Carolina's Hispanic population had reached 235,682—nearly 3 times the Census Bureau's projection of 81,000 for the year 2025. Similarly, the Census had projected a Hispanic population of 50,000 in 2005, but by then the Palmetto State's Hispanic population had already reached 135,041—more than double the estimate. Even as far back as 2000, the number of Hispanics calling South Carolina home far exceeded projections—with a Hispanic population of 95,076 compared to the projected 42,000.



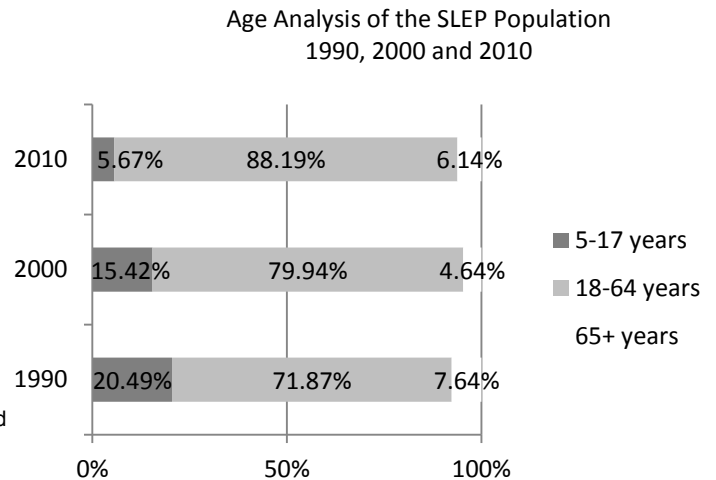
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 289,000 South Carolina residents speak a language other than English at home, classifying them as foreign language speakers. The state's 187,394 Spanish speakers account for 64.8% of overall foreign language speakers. Other widely used foreign languages are spoken by far fewer individuals, with 14,938 residents speaking German and 11,244 residents speaking French. Chinese is spoken by 9,764 Palmetto State residents, and Tagalog is used by 6,885. The sixth most widely used foreign language in South Carolina is Vietnamese, spoken at home by 5,665 residents.



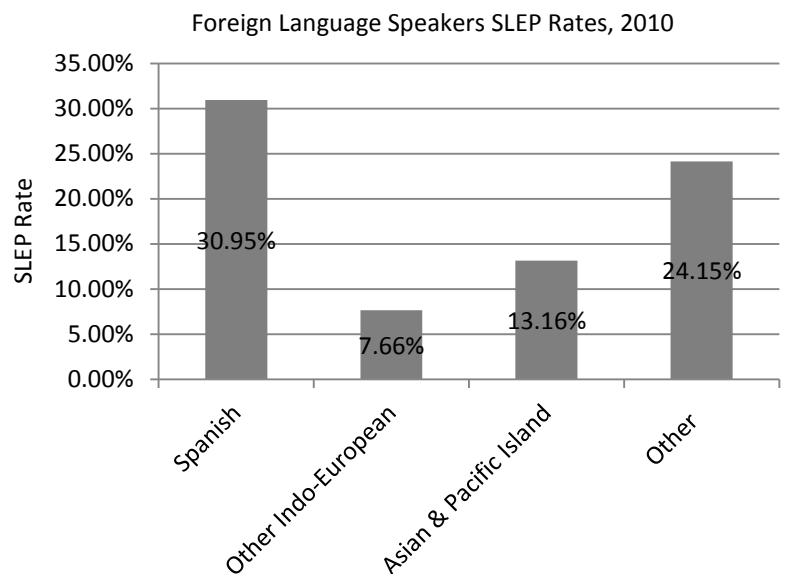
Non-English Proficiency by Age

South Carolina ranks in the middle of the pack when it comes to its severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population in comparison to that of other states. Among adults, who comprise 88.19% of the state's SLEP population, the Palmetto State has 62,899 residents who can only speak English "not well" or "not at all," ranking 25th nationwide. With 4,043 children aged 5 to 17 considered SLEP, this group ranks 31st, while the state's 4,381 seniors aged 65 and above fall just below in 32nd place compared to other states' SLEP senior populations.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

South Carolina's severe limited English proficient (SLEP) population covers the spectrum of nationwide rankings, with the close to 25% of SLEP speakers of 'other' languages ranking second highest nationally and SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages ranking among the lowest in 45th place, compared to similar language speakers in other states. The SLEP rate among Spanish speakers placed high at third nationwide, while the rate among speakers of other Indo-European languages, at 7.66%, was tied for 32nd.



Conclusion

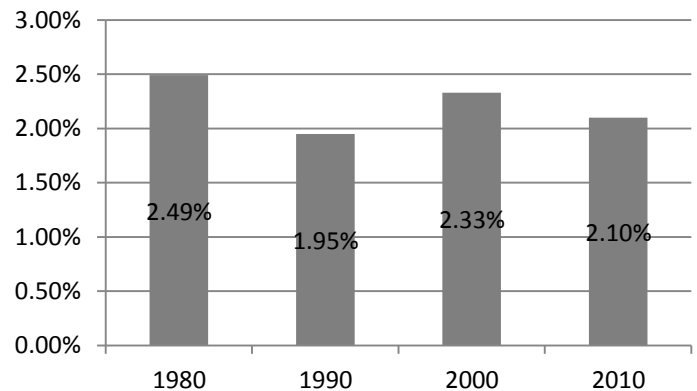
In recent years, South Carolina has struggled to encourage its Spanish speaking population to assimilate and learn English. With the state's Hispanic population already surpassing the Census Bureau's 2025 projections and with 66% of the state's foreign language speakers using Spanish, South Carolina should take immediate steps to target English learning programs at this population. While Spanish speakers should be the state's primary focus, speakers of 'other' languages also placed in the top three on national rankings of severe limited English proficiency. This indicates that the lack of language assimilation in South Carolina is beginning to influence additional language groups.

South Dakota

Capital: Pierre
2010 Population: 816,463
Joined Union: Nov. 2, 1889

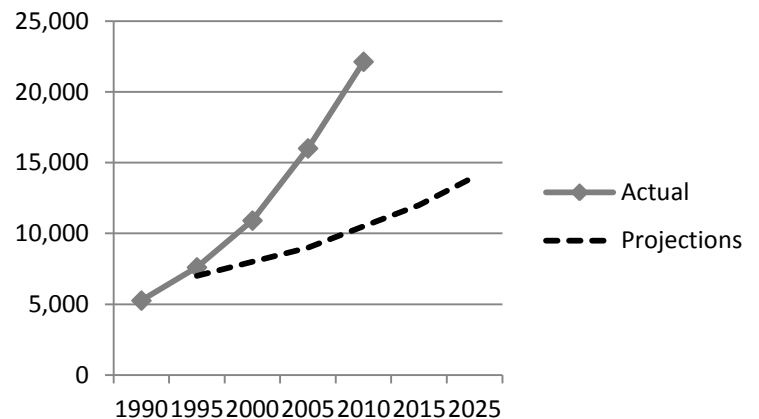
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

South Dakota has seen one of the biggest drops on the ranking of state limited English proficient (LEP) rates. At the middle of the pack at 24th place in 1980, the Mount Rushmore State has now dropped to the 44th position. South Dakota's LEP population grew from 15,720 in 1980 to 16,376 in 2000; but due to slight overall population growth and a drop to 15,857 LEP individuals in 2010, it still saw a drop in the LEP rate during this time, reaching its most recent 2.10%.



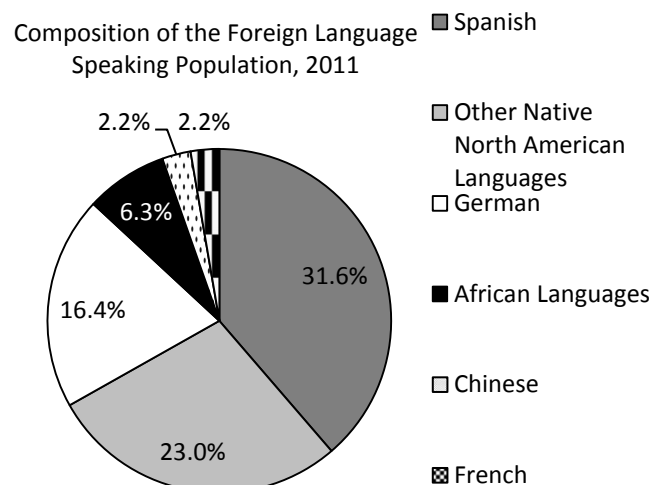
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

South Dakota is home to one of the nation's smallest Hispanic populations. With 5,252 Hispanics calling the Mount Rushmore State home in 1990, 10,903 residing there in 2000 and the count standing at 22,119 in 2010, the Hispanic population is still far above projections made by the Census Bureau. The Bureau projected a population of 7,000 in 1995, 8,000 in 2000 (surpassed by nearly 3,000), 12,000 in 2015 and 14,000 in 2025—a number that had already nearly doubled by the official 2010 count.



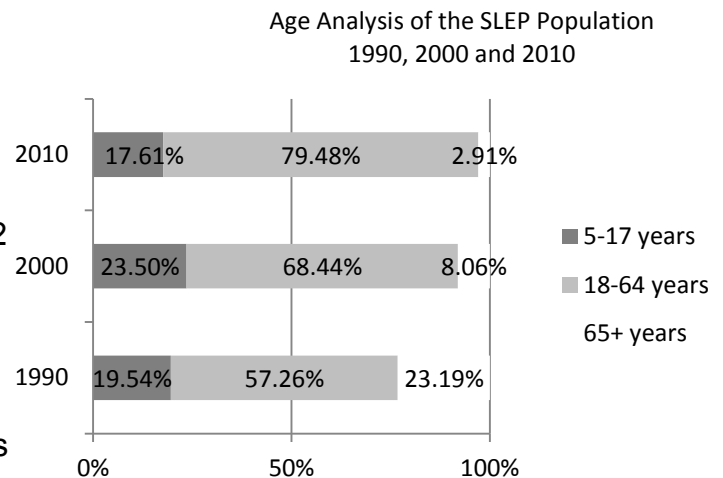
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 50,000 South Dakota residents speak a language other than English at home. Of these foreign language speakers, the top three most widely spoken account for close to 75% of foreign language speakers in the state. Spanish is used by 15,919 residents, other Native North American languages are spoken by 11,557 residents, and German is used at home by 8,258 residents. African languages, spoken by 6.3% of all foreign language speakers in South Dakota, are used by 3,171 individuals. Round out the top six most used foreign languages are Chinese (spoken by 1,096 residents) and French (spoken by 1,094 residents).



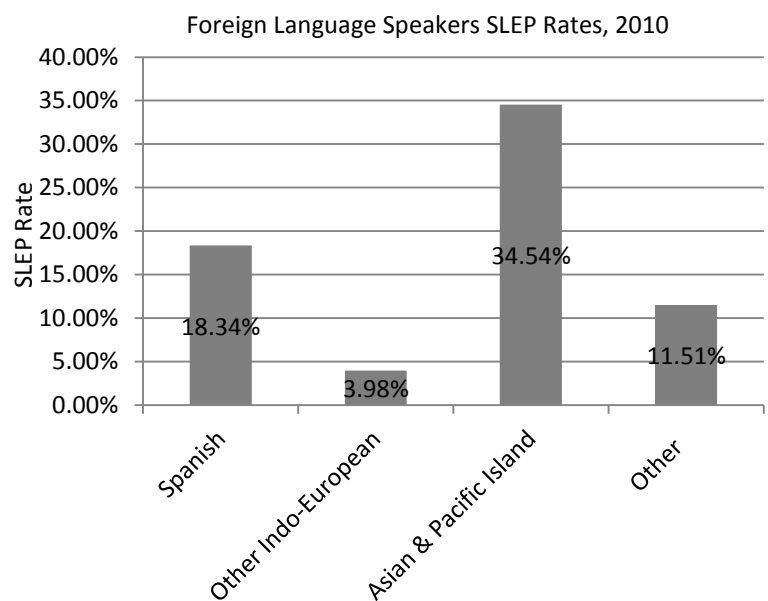
Non-English Proficiency by Age

With 1,354 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children aged 5 to 17, this group ranked South Dakota 42nd compared to the similar populations in other states. Adults comprised 79.48% of the Mount Rushmore State's SLEP population with a count of 6,112 residents, placing the 18 to 64 age group 45th nationwide. With a count of only 224 individuals, the number of South Dakota seniors only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all" ranked this group as the nation's lowest SLEP population aged 65 and above in 2010.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

South Dakota has the highest population of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages in the nation, with more than 34% of residents in this group only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all." Speakers of 'other' languages also ranked fairly high compared to similar populations in other states, placing 18th. Despite those high rankings, SLEP speakers of Spanish and other Indo-European languages placed South Dakota at the very bottom of national rankings, holding the 41st and 45th spots, respectively.

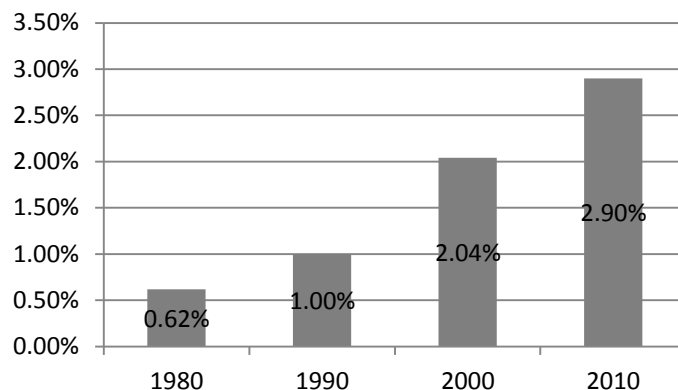


Conclusion

South Dakota has done an adequate job encouraging its foreign language speaking residents to assimilate and learn English. With a majority of residents speaking English at home and one of the nation's lowest Hispanic population counts, South Dakota has even seen a drop in national rankings of limited English proficient populations in recent years. Despite this promising outlook, however, South Dakota should make it a priority to target English learning programs at its speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages. This group, with a more than 34% rate of severe limited English proficiency, was the highest in the nation in 2010. To encourage this group to assimilate and prevent other language groups from facing the same issue down the road, South Dakota should ensure that English learning opportunities are ready and available for all of its foreign language speaking residents.

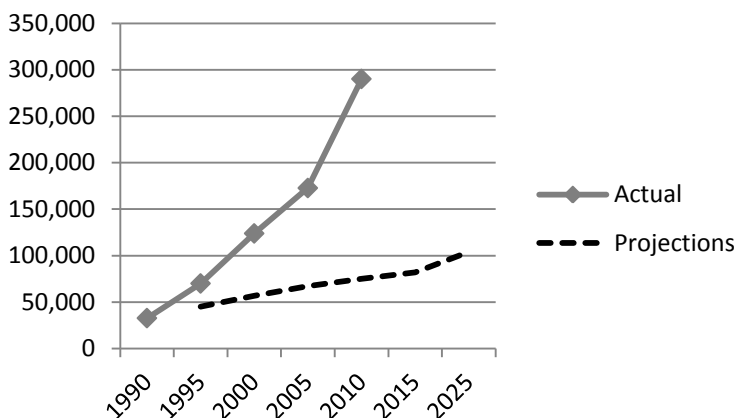
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Tennessee was once the state with the fifth lowest limited English proficient (LEP) population, being beaten out only by Arkansas, West Virginia, Kentucky and Alabama in 1980. By 2010, however, the LEP rate had risen to nearly 3%, placing the Volunteer State at number 36. With 26,396 LEP residents in 1980, this number soon grew nearly 7 times over, soaring to 173,606 in 2010.



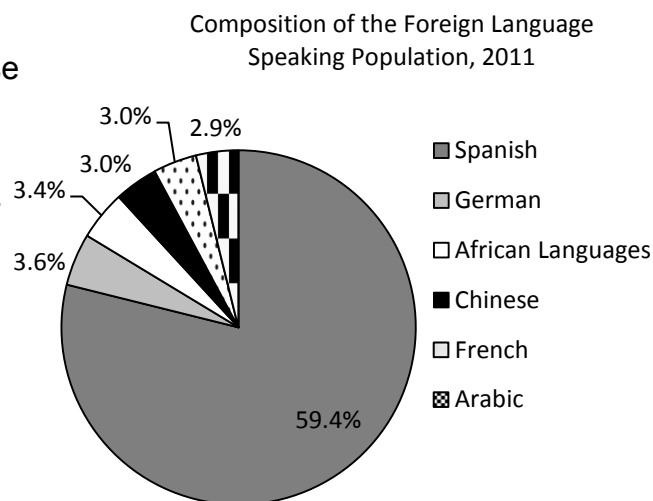
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

By the year 2000, Tennessee's Hispanic population of 123,838 already surpassed the Census Bureau's projection of 104,000 for the year 2025 by nearly 20,000. In 2005, with 172,704 Hispanics calling the Volunteer State home, the Census Bureau projection of 67,000 had been more than doubled. In 2010, when Tennessee's Hispanic population hit 290,059, it was more than triple the Census Bureau's 2015 projection and nearly three times greater than the 2025 projection of 104,000.



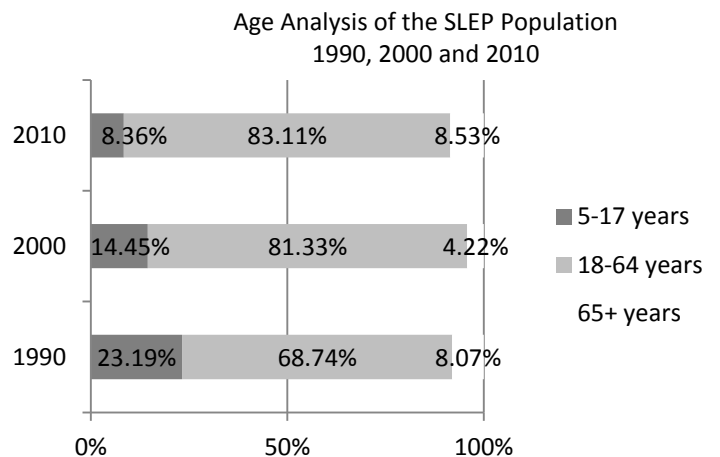
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Among the 6.9% of Volunteer State residents who speak a language other than English at home, close to 60% (246,448 residents) are Spanish speakers. German is used at home by 14,751 residents and African languages are spoken by 14,200 residents. Accounting for only 3% each of the state's foreign language speakers are the 12,638 residents speaking Chinese and the 12,626 residents speaking French. Rounding out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in Tennessee is Arabic, spoken at home by 12,145 individuals.



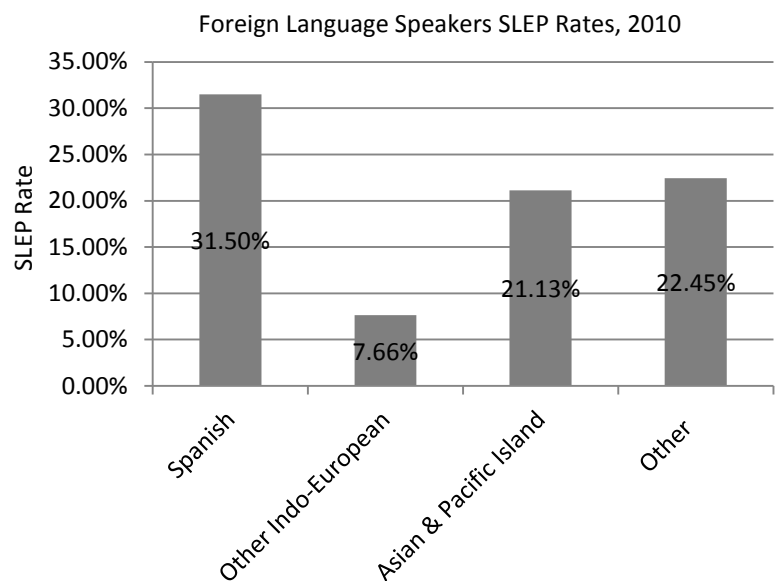
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Tennessee's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population falls in the middle of rankings by state. Accounting for 83.11% of the state's SLEP population, Tennessee's 78,541 SLEP adults rank 20th compared to other states' SLEP 18 to 64 year olds. The 8,059 seniors only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all" account for only 8.53% of the state's SLEP residents and rank Tennessee 25th nationwide; while the 7,900 SLEP Volunteer State children aged 5 to 17 placed 23rd.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Tennessee's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population tops nationwide rankings in two categories. SLEP speakers of Spanish (70,700 residents) and 'other' languages (6,859 residents) take the 2nd and 3rd spots compared to similar language speakers in other states, with 31.50% and 22.45% SLEP rates, respectively. The Volunteer State's SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages rank slightly lower in 19th place, while the state's 5,323 SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages tie South Carolina in 32nd.

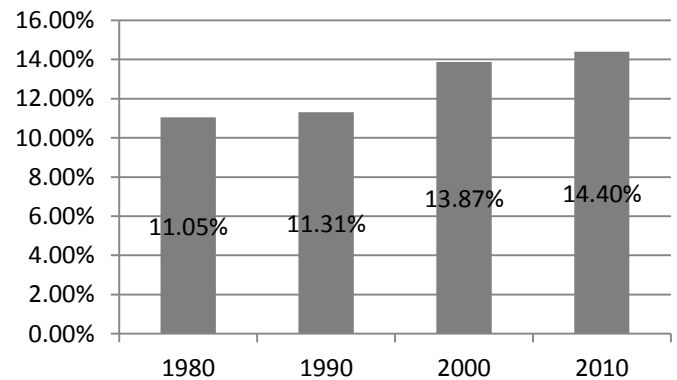


Conclusion

Tennessee, once a state with one of the lowest rates of limited English proficiency, has seen this number rise dramatically over the past 30 years. The Volunteer State saw its Hispanic population jump in 2010, reaching nearly three times the Census Bureau projection for the year 2025. With a majority of the state's foreign language speakers using Spanish and this group's rate of severely limited English proficient residents ranking second highest nationwide, Tennessee should immediately target English language learning programs at this group. Furthermore, the state's speakers of 'other' languages placed third nationwide for their severe limited English proficiency. Unfortunately, this seems to be a sign that efforts to encourage foreign language speakers to assimilate and learn English have fallen flat in Tennessee in recent years.

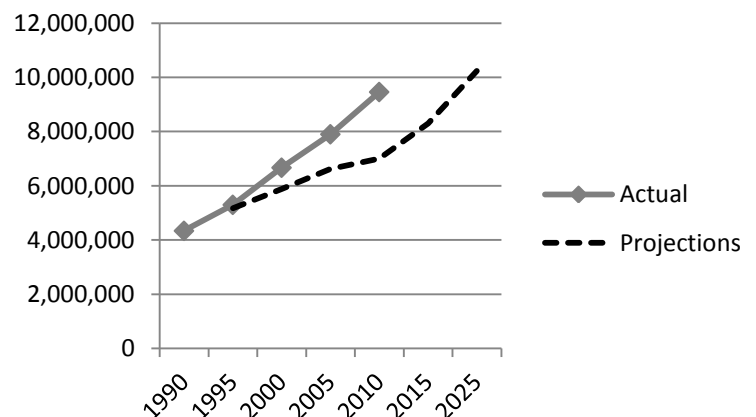
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Texas has long acted as an immigrant gateway, leading to its consistent spot as one of the top 5 states with the highest limited English proficient (LEP) populations. Despite the Lone Star State's high count of 1,443,233 LEP residents (11.05% of the state's population) in 1980, this population continued to skyrocket, hitting 3,358,567 LEP residents in 2010 and accounting for nearly 15% of Texas residents. This continued increase has brought it from its overall rating of 4th in 1980 to second place in 2010.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

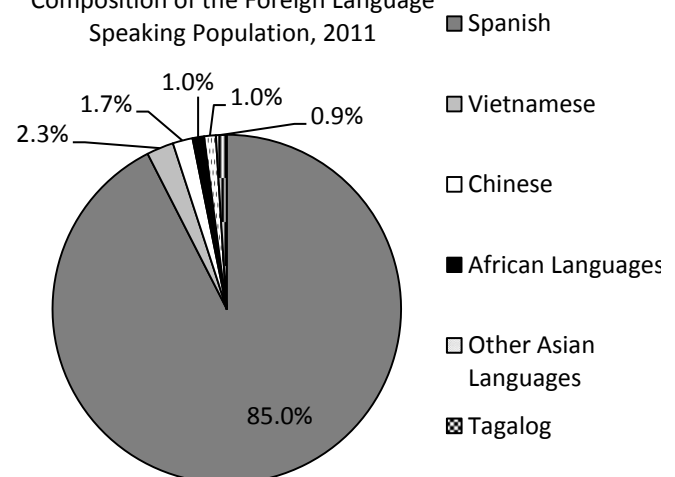
The Hispanic population in Texas has been outpacing Census Bureau projections since the year 2000. At the time, the Lone Star State was home to 6,669,666 Hispanic residents—already nearly 1 million more than the 5,875,000 the Census Bureau projected for the same year. By 2005, the Hispanic population was projected at 6,624,000, but measured in far above that at 7,903,079. In 2010, Texas was home to 9,460,921 Hispanic residents—surpassing the projection of 8,294,000 for the year 2015.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

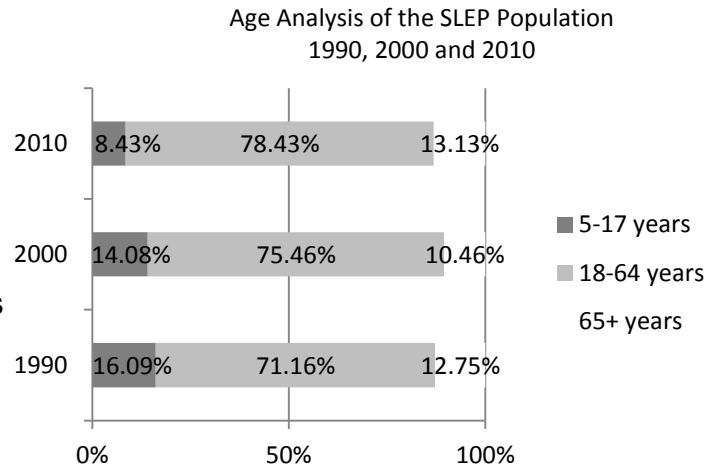
Nearly 35% of residents in Texas speak a language other than English at home, with more than 8.2 million residents claiming to do so. An overwhelming majority, nearly 7 million of those, speak Spanish at home, accounting for nearly 30% of the Lone Star State's overall population and 85% of the state's foreign language speaking population. Other widely used foreign languages in the Lone Star State include Vietnamese (185,994 speakers), Chinese (138,769 speakers), African languages (80,759 speakers), other Asian languages (81,396 speakers) and Tagalog (75,964 speakers).

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



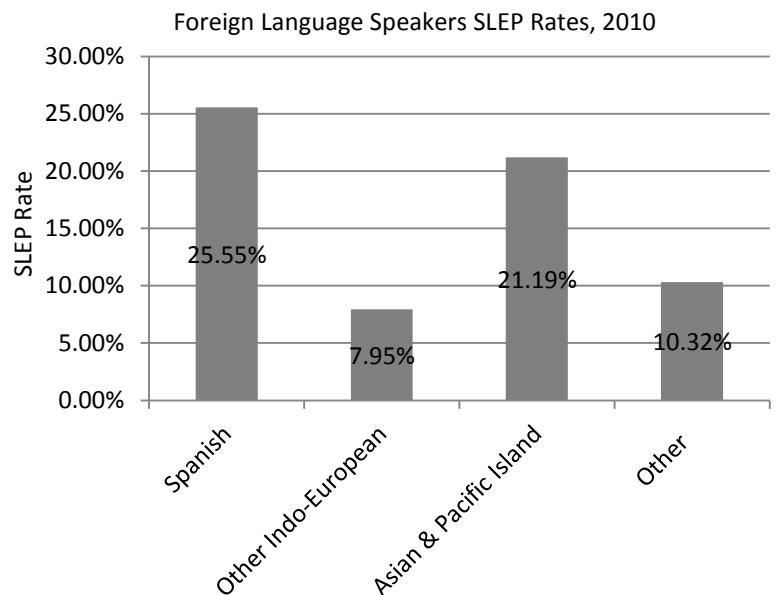
Non-English Proficiency by Age

The number of Lone Star State children who are only able to speak English “not well” or “not at all” is only 10,000 short of being the highest ranking population nationwide. Home to 163,835 severely limited English proficient (SLEP) individuals aged 5 to 17, Texas ranks second in the nation. It also ranks second nationwide in its number of SLEP adults, with 1,523,456 residents in the 18 to 64 age group accounting for 78.43% of the SLEP population. Seniors rank slightly lower but still place in the top 5, with 255,138 residents aged 65 and above placing 4th among SLEP seniors nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Despite some high rates of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents, Texas ranks in the middle of nationwide SLEP rankings among all language groups. Of the Lone Star State's 599,734 speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages, 127,094 are considered SLEP, placing this group 18th on national rankings. The 25.55% SLEP rate among Spanish speakers and the 10.32% rate among speakers of 'other' languages both place 25th compared to other states, while SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages place lowest for the state, in 30th.

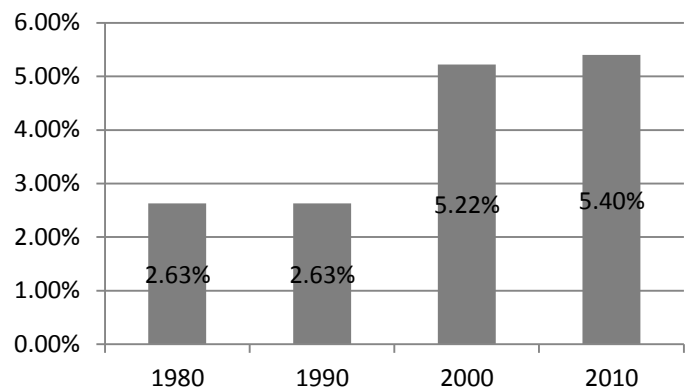


Conclusion

Widely recognized as a welcoming home state for new immigrants, it comes as no surprise that Texas has among the highest limited English proficient populations in the nation. Left untreated for many years, however, the state is now facing severe divisions within its foreign language speaking population. Close to 35% of Texans speak a language other than English at home, and nearly 85% of those residents speak Spanish. Texas should immediately create English language learning programs to accommodate this growing demand, especially among the state's Spanish speakers. Furthermore, the number of severely limited English proficient children, working aged adults and senior citizens all top nationwide rankings, indicating a need for English learning programs across all age groups.

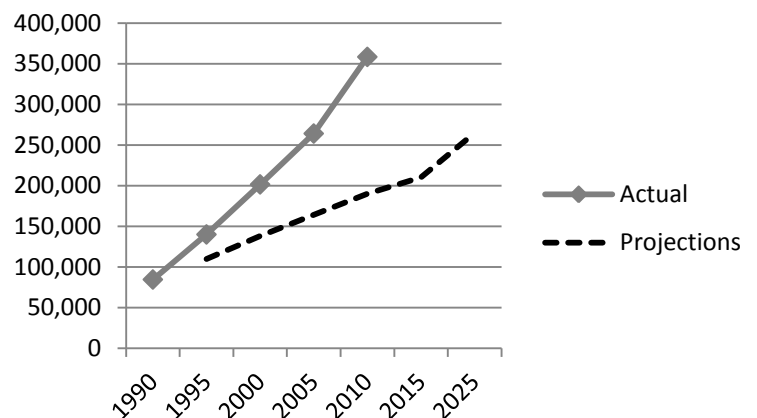
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Utah's limited English proficient (LEP) population has more than quadrupled between 1980 and 2010, with the percentage of LEP residents doubling in that period—from 2.63% in 1980 to 5.40% in 2010. Despite a jump from 33,404 LEP residents in 1980 to 136,837 in 2010, the Beehive State remains in the middle of the pack when it comes to state LEP rates—at 22nd place in 1980, it still remains nearby, placing at number 21 in 2010.



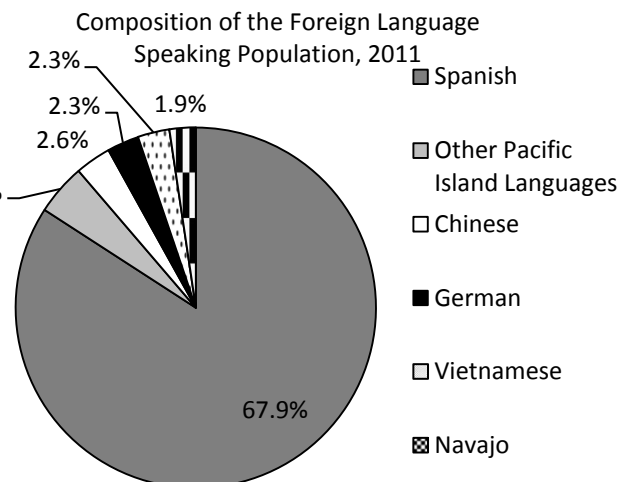
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Utah reached 358,340 in 2010, nearly 100,000 above the Census Bureau's projection of 265,000 for the year 2025. This trend continues from 2005, when 264,084 Hispanics called the Beehive State home, compared to the projected 164,000. Even as far back as 2000, Utah far surpassed Census projections, with an official count of 201,559 Hispanic residents, compared to the projected 138,000.



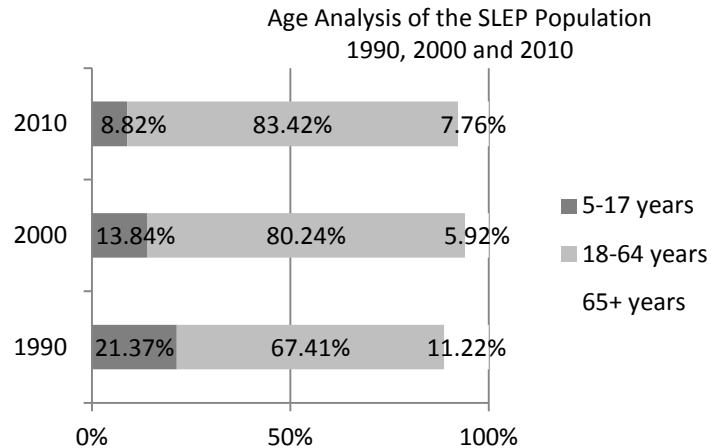
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 380,382 Utah residents speak a language other than English at home, classifying them as foreign language speakers. Of these, nearly 68% (258,275 residents) speak Spanish. Close to 4% (14,207 residents) of Beehive State foreign language speakers use other Pacific Island languages, and 9,793 residents speak Chinese. Accounting for less than 2.5% of the state's foreign language speaking population are those who use German (8,835 residents), Vietnamese (8,617 residents) and Navajo (7,106 residents) at home.



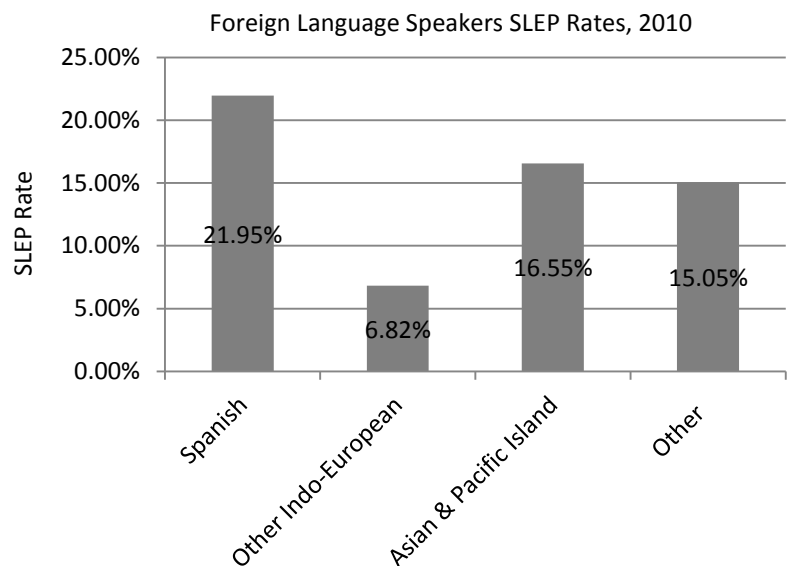
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Utah's population of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children has dropped five percentage points since the year 2000 and by more than half since 1990. Even so, the 5,915 five to 17 year olds who can only speak English "not well" or "not at all" rank the Beehive State 27th among that age group. Adults place slightly lower, with Utah's 55,965 SLEP adults placing 29th compared to SLEP 18 to 64 year olds in other states. Meanwhile, seniors place even lower, with the 5,208 individuals aged 65 and older placing 31st in the nation.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

For the most part, Utah's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) rates are low compared to other states. But with 2,607 of 17,321 speakers of 'other' languages only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group just missed the top 10, ranking in 11th place. Speakers of other Indo-European languages, with a SLEP rate of 6.82%, ranked much lower at 36th, while Utah's SLEP Spanish speakers and speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed 38th in their respective language categories.

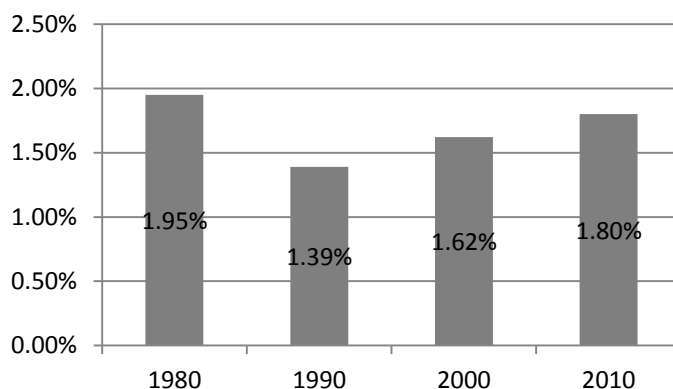


Conclusion

Nearly 15% of Utah residents speak a language other than English at home, and the state's limited English proficient population has grown significantly since the year 1990. Even so, Utah's limited English proficient rates remain low in comparison to those of other states. Despite these promising statistics, Utah should ensure that English language learning programs are in place for its growing foreign language speaking population, as speakers of 'other' languages placed 11th in 2010 due to the high rate of severe limited English proficiency. Utah would be wise to encourage this group to assimilate and learn English, before the linguistic divisions within the state worsen.

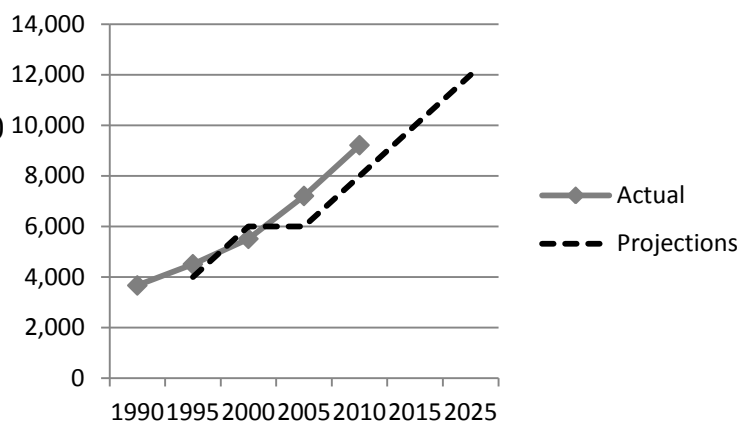
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Vermont's limited English proficient (LEP) ranking in comparison to other states has dropped dramatically in the past thirty years. At 29th in 1980, it has now fallen to 45th. With the LEP rate constantly fluctuating but remaining relatively level, the Green Mountain State grew to have 10,535 LEP residents in 2010 from the 9,273 who called it home in 1980. Thanks to an overall population increase, however, the LEP rate dropped from nearly 2% to 1.8% in that period.



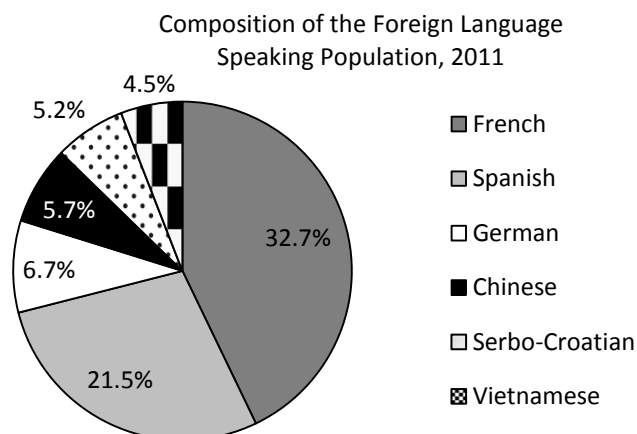
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Vermont has remained steadily in line with Census Bureau projections. In 1990, the Green Mountain State was home to 3,661 Hispanic residents. By 2000 that number had grown to 5,504 and by 2010, 9,208 Hispanics called Vermont home. The Census Bureau previously projected that 4,000 Hispanics would reside in Vermont in 1995, rising to 6,000 in 2000 and remaining there in 2005. Projections called for a Hispanic population of 10,000 in 2015 and 12,000 in 2025—rates that Vermont is on track to meet.



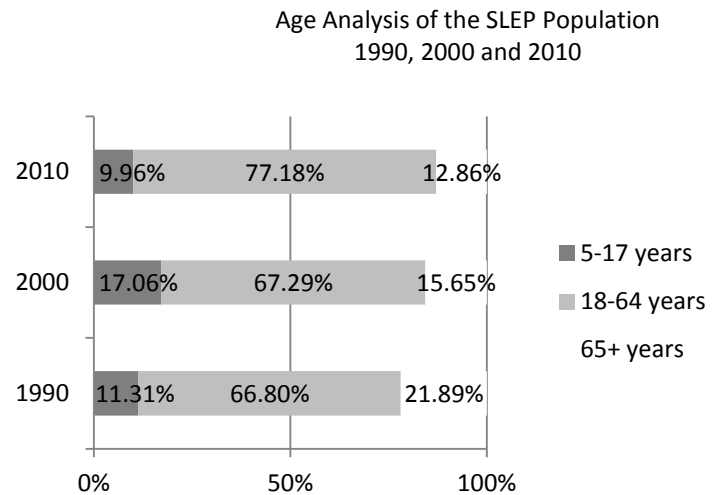
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Vermont is one of very few states where Spanish is not the most widely used foreign language. Among the state's 4.9% of residents who use a language other than English at home, 32.7% (9,624 residents) speak French. Just over 21% (6,311 residents) speak Spanish, while significantly fewer (1,968 residents) speak German. Rounding out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in the Green Mountain State are Chinese (1,685 speakers), Serbo-Croatian (1,531 speakers) and Vietnamese (1,314 speakers).



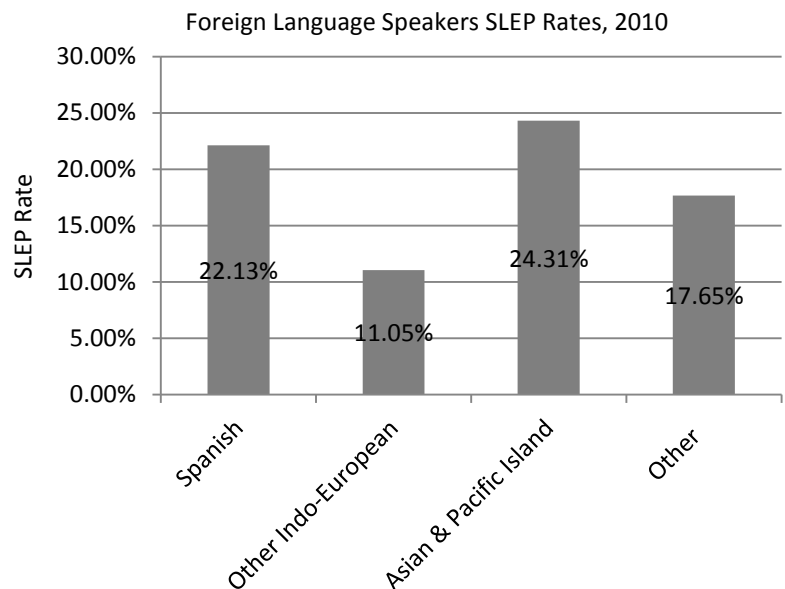
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Vermont's low population of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents places the state near the very bottom of nationwide rankings in all three age groups. With 654 seniors only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group placed 46th among SLEP groups aged 65 and older in all states. The Green Mountain State's 3,926 SLEP adults placed 48th among the 18 to 64 year old group in all 50 states, while Vermont's 507 SLEP children were the lowest population in the country, according to 2010 Census data.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Vermont's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranks in the top 10 nationwide in two language categories. With 24.31% of Asian & Pacific Island language speakers and 17.65% of speakers of 'other' languages considered SLEP, these groups ranked 6th and 8th, respectively. With a SLEP rate of 11.05%, speakers of other Indo-European languages ranked 15th compared with similar speakers in other states, while the Green Mountain State ranked even lower among SLEP Spanish speakers, placing 35th on the nationwide list.

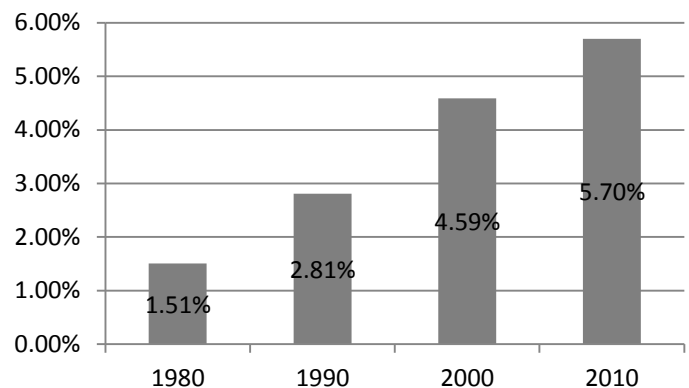


Conclusion

Like several other New England-area states, Vermont's population of limited English proficient residents is low compared to other states across the country. Also working in its favor is the fact that nearly 95% of Vermont's residents speak English at home. This is a major contributing factor in the state placing low on rankings of severely limited English proficient children, working-age adults and senior citizens, ranked by age group in comparison to other states. While this is promising, Vermont would be wise to ensure that it has adequate English language learning programs to offer its foreign language speaking residents, as speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages and speakers of 'other' languages both placed in the top 10 on nationwide rankings of severely limited English proficient rates by language category.

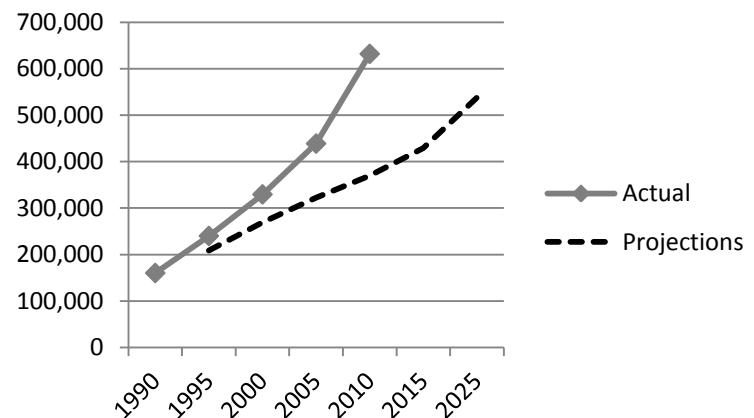
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Virginia has seen a rapid growth in its limited English proficient (LEP) population over the past thirty years, moving from 38th in state LEP rankings to its current place at 19th. The Old Dominion State, home to 75,182 LEP residents in 1980, has grown more than five times over and now houses 427,195 LEP individuals. This exponential growth has led to Virginia's LEP rate jumping from less than 2% in 1980 to its current rate of close to 6%.



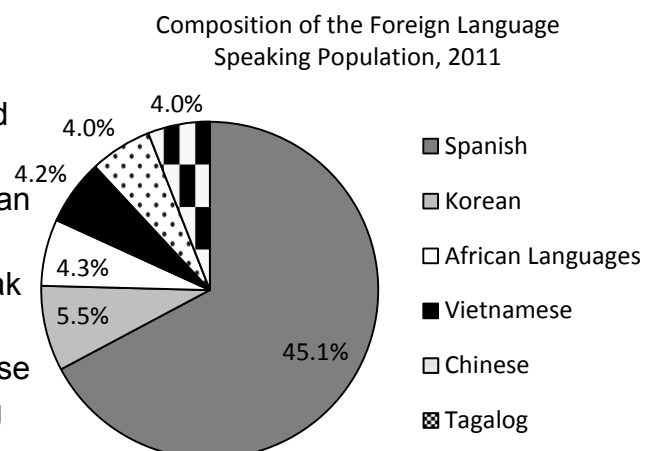
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Hispanic population in Virginia, standing at 160,288 in 1990, doubled to a count of 329,540 in the year 2000. While the Census Bureau predicted a moderate increase during that period, it projected only 269,000 Hispanics would reside in Virginia that year. In 2005, the number of Hispanic residents continued to outpace projections—with an actual count of 438,789 to the projected 322,000. In 2010, the trend remained, with 631,825 Hispanic residents—nearly 100,000 higher than the projected population for the year 2025.



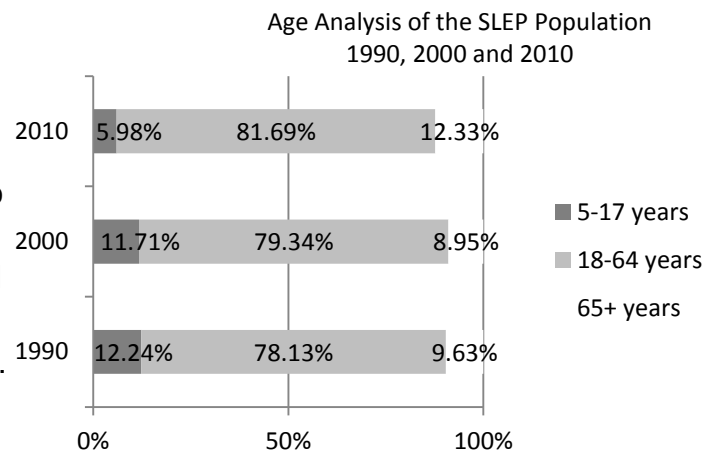
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

Close to 15% of those living in Virginia speak a language other than English at home, with over 1.1 million individuals falling into that category. Of the Old Dominion State's foreign language speakers, 45% (511,047 residents) speak Spanish at home. More than 62,000 residents speak Korean, while 48,280 individuals speak African languages and 47,738 speak Vietnamese. Accounting for 4% of Virginia's foreign language speaking population are speakers of Chinese and Tagalog, with 45,218 and 44,866 residents using those languages at home, respectively.



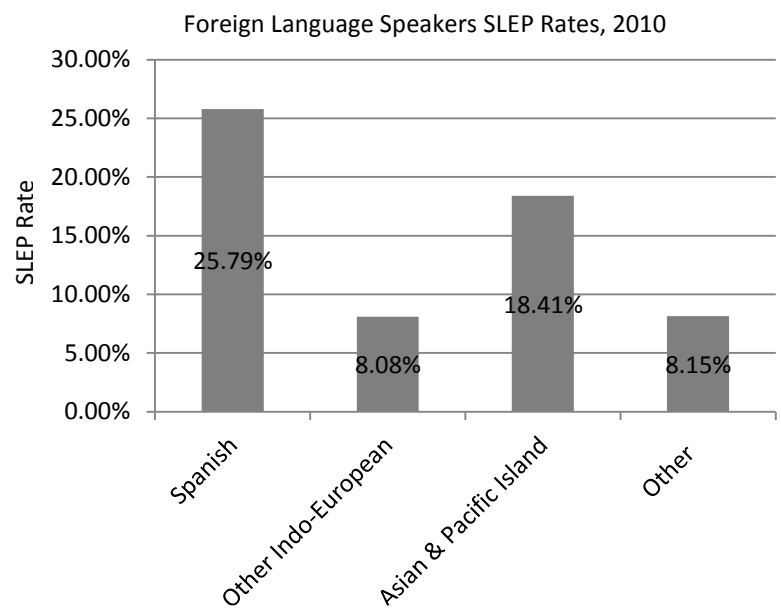
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Virginia's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population just missed the top 10 nationwide in 2010. With 168,153 adults only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group placed 12th among the nation's 18 to 64 year old SLEP residents. The Old Dominion State's seniors aged 65 and above also placed 12th, with 25,387 individuals accounting for 12.33% of the state's SLEP population in 2010. Meanwhile, Virginia's 5 to 17 year old SLEP residents placed slightly lower, with the 12,301 SLEP children placing 15th.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Virginia's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population is about average compared to nationwide rates. With a quarter of the state's Spanish speakers only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group ranked 24th among SLEP Spanish speakers nationwide. SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed 28th, and SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages were close behind in 29th. With only 7,946 of the Old Dominion State's 97,448 speakers of 'other' languages considered SLEP, this group ranked lowest at 36th compared to other states.

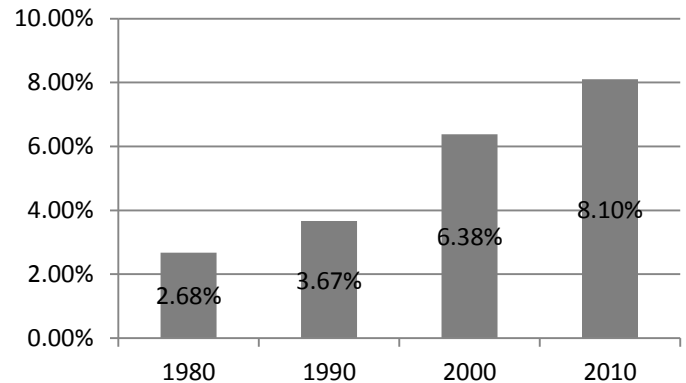


Conclusion

Virginia's limited English proficient population has grown steadily over the past 30 years, facing its most significant jump between 2005 and 2010. By 2010, the number of Hispanics residing in Virginia surpassed Census Bureau projections for the year 2025 by nearly 100,000 people, and the overall number of limited English proficient residents in the state reached more than 425,000. While the state's rates of severely limited English proficient speakers mostly fall in line with national averages, the Old Dominion State faces alarming percentages of severely limited English proficient senior citizens and working-age adults. The state should focus immediately on creating English language learning programs to target at the working-age population especially, given that the economic conditions of the state depend largely on this age group assimilating and learning English.

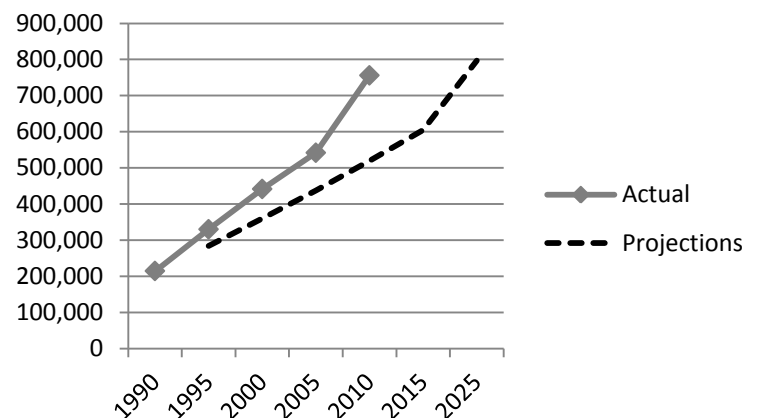
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Washington's limited English proficient (LEP) rate has led to its rise on the state LEP rankings—jumping 7 spots since 1980 to number 14. Washington's LEP rate has almost quadrupled in the past thirty years as well, jumping from 2.68% to 8.10%. With 102,456 limited English proficient residents in 1980, this number has multiplied more than 5 times, and now the Evergreen State is considered home to 511,576 LEP residents.



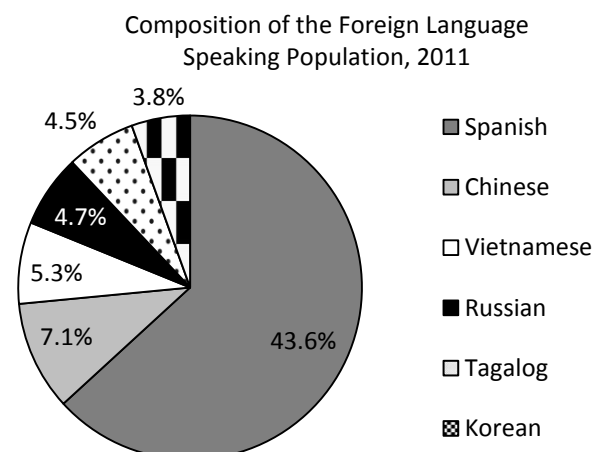
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

According to the Census Bureau, Washington State was home to 755,790 Hispanic residents in the year 2010—only 40,000 below the Census Bureau's previous projection of 797,000 for the year 2025. In 1990, the Evergreen State had only a quarter of the number of Hispanic residents, at 214,570. By 2000, that number had more than doubled to 441,509, outpacing the Bureau's projection of 360,000 for that year. In 2005, the Hispanic population stood at 541,722—more than 100,000 above the projected population of 437,000.



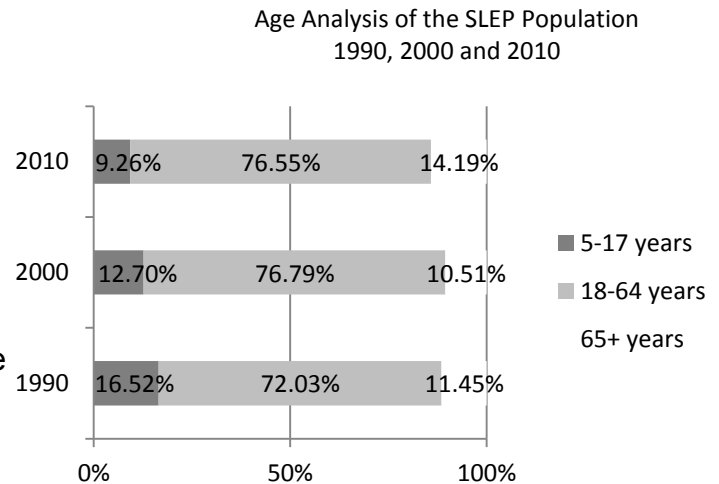
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 1.1 million Washington State residents speak a language other than English at home, accounting for 18.6% of the state's overall population. Of these foreign language speakers, close to half (43.6%, or 517,751 residents) speak Spanish. More than 7% (83,777 residents) speak Chinese, and 5.3% (62,696 residents) speak Vietnamese. Accounting for less than 5% of the Evergreen State's foreign language speakers are those who use Russian (56,085 residents), Tagalog (53,846 residents) and Korean (45,123 residents) at home.



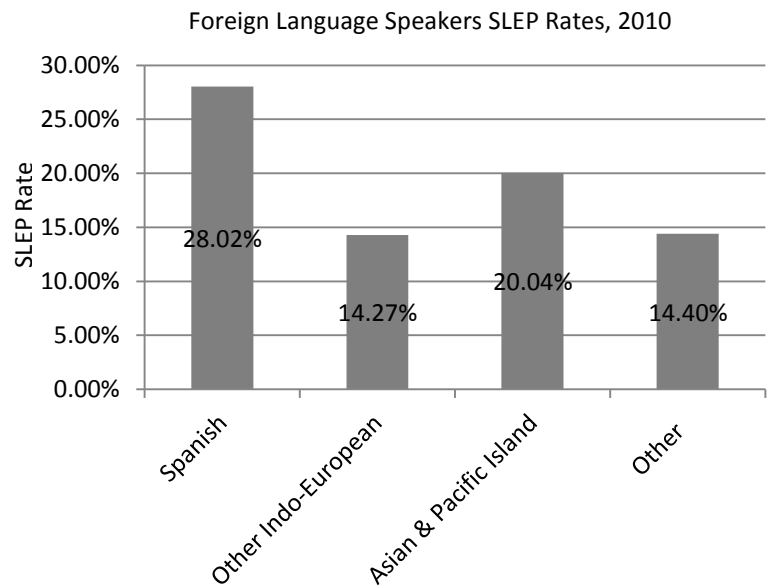
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Washington's three groups of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) residents all placed in the top ten nationwide in 2010. Children aged 5 to 17 placed highest in 6th place, thanks to the 23,651 individuals who could only speak English "not well" or "not at all." Seniors placed slightly lower despite a small increase from 2000 to 2010, with 36,251 Evergreen State residents aged 65 and above ranking 9th. SLEP adults aged 18 to 64 had a population count of 195,586 in 2010, setting up Washington State to round out the top 10 in that age group.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

In all four language categories, Washington's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population ranked in the top 25 nationwide. With the lowest national ranking in the state, Washington's speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages placed 23rd, with a SLEP rate of 20.04%. The 33,273 SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages ranked the highest, in 8th place compared to similar populations in other states, while SLEP speakers of Spanish and 'other' languages ranked nearby in 12th and 14th places, respectively.



Conclusion

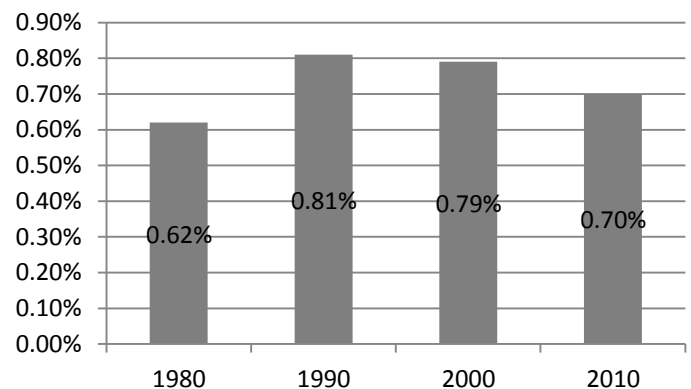
Washington State has faced a growing number of limited English proficient residents for the past 30 years. Most recently, however, the state has begun showing trends which, if left uncorrected, could lead to economic decline in the coming years. English language learning programs should be targeted at speakers of other Indo-European languages, whose severe limited English proficiency rates placed in the top 10 nationwide. Even more importantly, programs should be created for children aged five to 17, whose rates of severe limited English proficiency ranked them 6th highest in the nation. In fact, Washington's working-age adults and senior citizens also placed on the top of nationwide rankings by age group. A strong effort should be made to encourage all new immigrants and foreign language speakers in Washington to learn English, to prevent further linguistic divisions among residents.

West Virginia

Capital: Charleston
2010 Population: 1,853,973
Joined Union: June 20, 1863

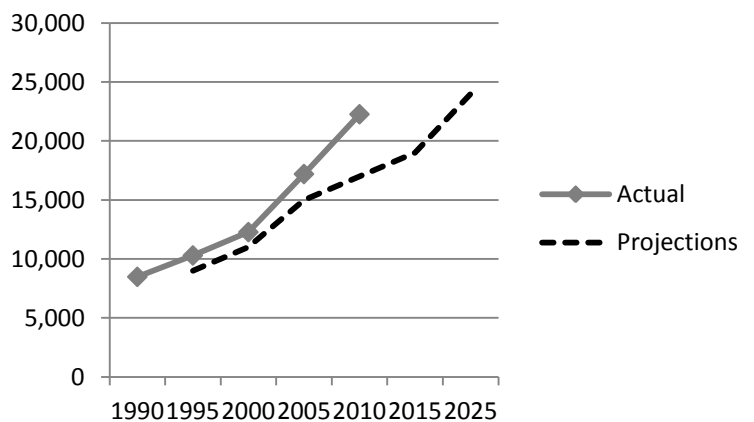
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

West Virginia has long been at the bottom of the state rankings for its low limited English proficient (LEP) population. With a consistent low rate of LEP residents, West Virginia was the 49th lowest ranked state in 1980 and had the lowest LEP rate nationwide in 2010. The Mountain State, with 11,115 LEP residents in 1980, rose to its highest LEP rate in 1990 and has since dropped to 12,985 LEP residents.



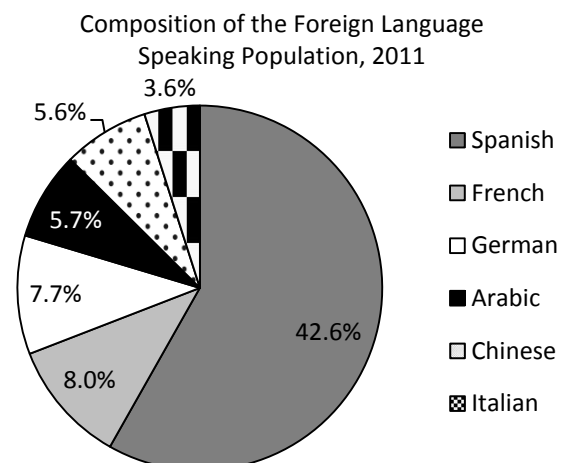
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

The Census Bureau projected that the Hispanic population in West Virginia would be 11,000 in the year 2000, rising to 15,000 in 2005, 19,000 in 2015 and 24,000 in 2025. Actual Census counts, however, showed that in 2000, the number of Hispanic residents in the Mountain State surpassed projections at 12,279. By 2010, that number nearly doubled, reaching 22,268—surpassing projections for the year 2015 and falling only 2,000 residents short of Census projections for the year 2025.



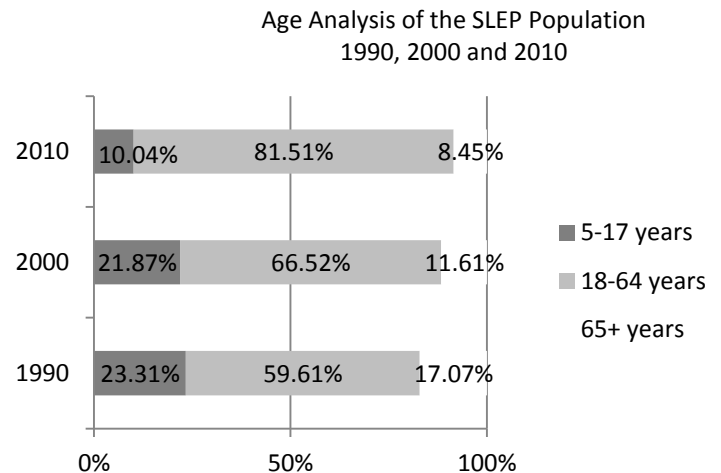
Prevalence of Foreign Languages

More than 40,000 West Virginia residents speak a language other than English at home, classifying them as foreign language speakers. Of this group, more than 42% (17,188 residents) speak Spanish. French is spoken by 3,223 residents, and German is spoken by 3,122. Accounting for less than 6% of the Mountain State's foreign language speakers are those who use Arabic and Chinese at home, with 2,284 and 2,254 residents falling into those groups, respectively. Rounding out the top 6 most widely used foreign languages in West Virginia is Italian, which 1,444 residents use at home.



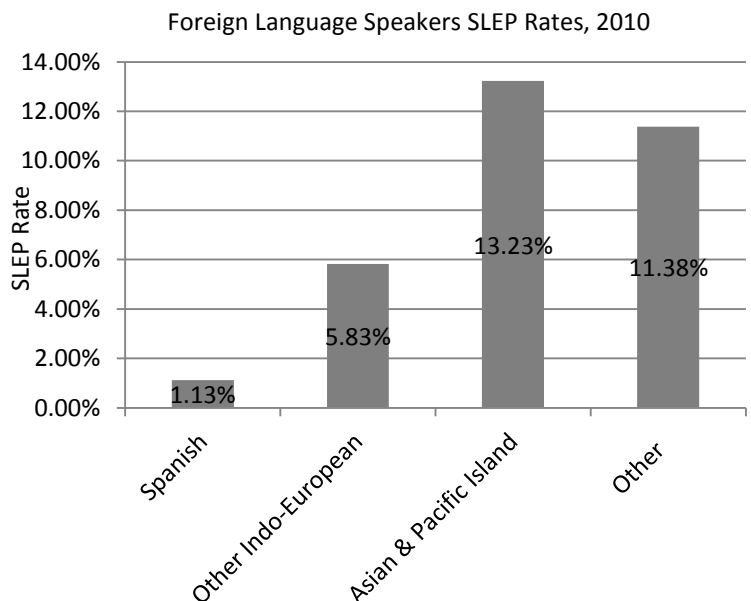
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Despite a nearly 20% increase in the number of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) adults in West Virginia between 2000 and 2010, the Mountain State placed 46th nationwide in terms of its 18 to 64 year old population who speak English “not well” or “not at all.” Due to a decrease in the number of SLEP children and seniors from 2000 to 2010, with only 531 SLEP 5 to 17 year olds and 447 SLEP seniors aged 65 and above, these two age groups both placed West Virginia 48th nationwide.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

In all but one language category, West Virginia placed in the bottom 10 nationwide on rankings of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) populations, due to its low rates of SLEP residents. With only 3,302 of the state's 291,764 Spanish speakers limited to speaking English “not well” or “not at all,” this group ranked 49th nationwide. The SLEP ranking for Mountain State speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages and other Indo-European languages was slightly higher, in 44th and 41st, respectively. Meanwhile, the state's SLEP speakers of ‘other’ languages placed in the top 20, in 19th place with a SLEP rate of 11.38%.

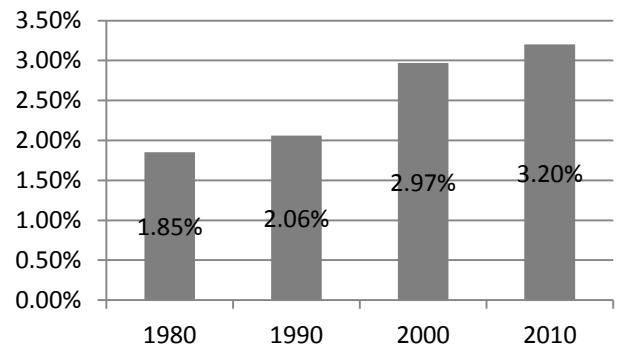


Conclusion

West Virginia is one of few states to not have pressing worries over encouraging foreign language speakers and new immigrants to assimilate and learn English. The state has constantly faced low percentages of limited English proficient residents, even seeing a decrease in this count from 2000 to 2010. A helpful contributor to this is the fact that only about 2% of the state's residents speak a language other than English at home, indicating that newcomers to West Virginia are taking the steps necessary to learn English. One area that West Virginia should keep an eye on is the group of residents who speak ‘other’ languages. This group places in the top 20 nationwide for its rate of severe limited English proficiency. If the state can target English learning programs at this group, assimilation should continue at an impressive rate.

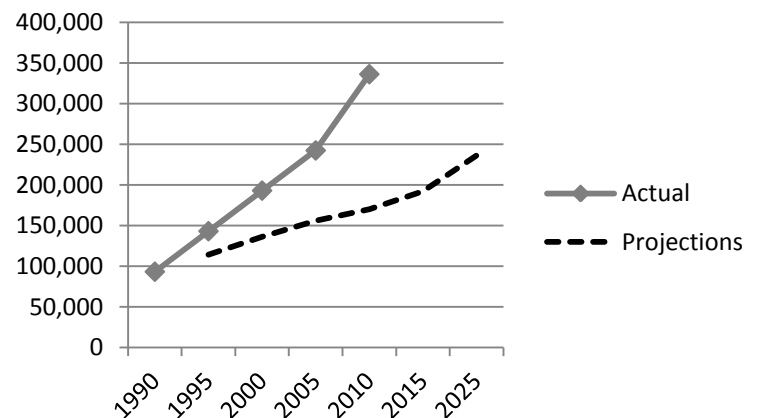
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Wisconsin's limited English proficiency (LEP) rate has more than doubled over the past thirty years, growing from 80,697 (1.85% of the state's population) in 1985 to 169,792 (3.20% of the state's population) in 2010. Even so, the Badger State has held steady on the state by state LEP ranking list, finding itself at number 31 in 2010, just as it was in 1980.



Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

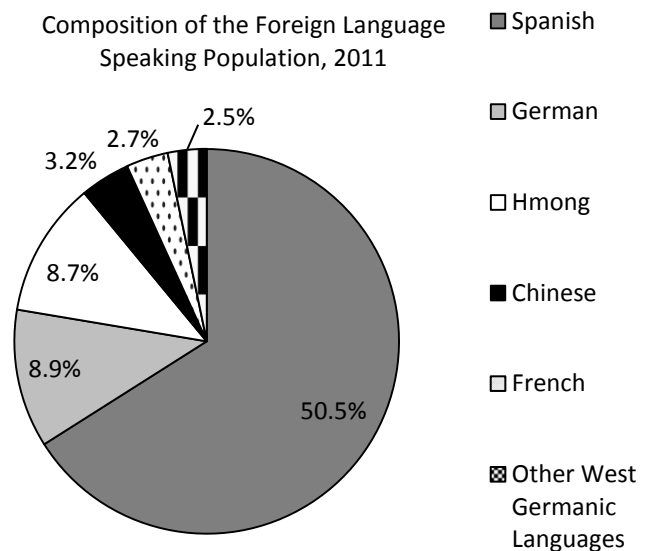
In 1990, the Hispanic population in Wisconsin was 93,194 and projected to rise to 114,000 in 1995. But by 2000, this population jumped to 192,921—over 50,000 more than Census Bureau projections for the same year. In 2005, the Badger State was home to 242,287 Hispanic residents—80,000 more than the Census Bureau projected. By 2010, 336,056 Hispanics resided in Wisconsin—100,000 more than previous Census projections for the year 2025.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

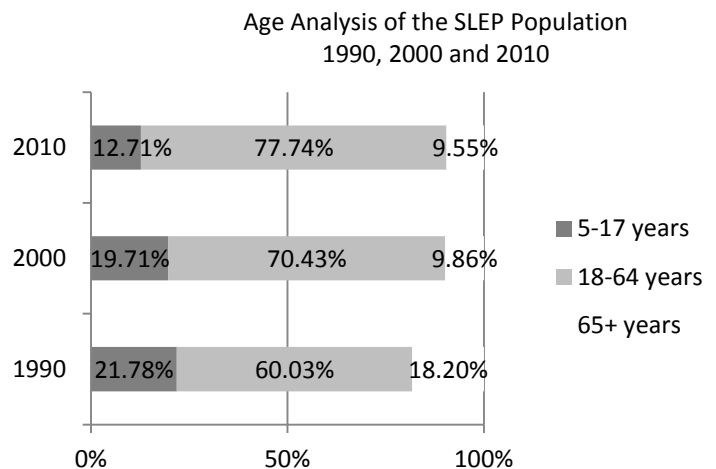
Close to 9% of Wisconsin residents speak a language other than English at home, with 467,555 residents falling into this category. Of these foreign language speakers, just over half are Spanish speakers, with 235,950 residents speaking it at home. German is spoken by 41,624 residents and Hmong is spoken by 40,594, leaving these groups to account for 8.9% and 8.7% of the Badger State's foreign language speakers, respectively. Rounding out Wisconsin's top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages are Chinese (15,147 speakers), French (12,641 speakers) and other West Germanic languages (11,912 speakers).

Composition of the Foreign Language Speaking Population, 2011



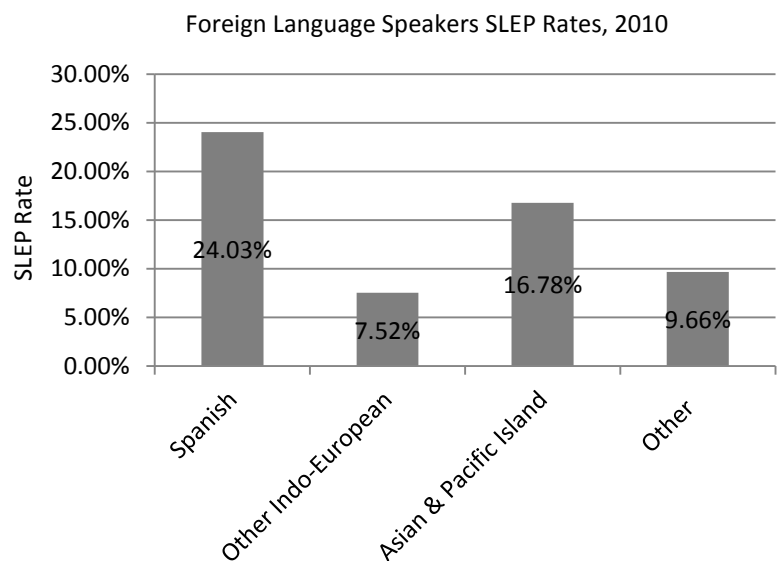
Non-English Proficiency by Age

Wisconsin's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children, accounting for 12.71% of the state's SLEP residents, placed 19th nationwide, with 10,242 individuals aged 5 to 17 years old only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all." Adults and seniors both placed 26th when ranked with similar populations in other states. With a 7% increase in SLEP adults from 2000 to 2010, the 18 to 64 year old population reached 62,632 in 2010; while SLEP seniors aged 65 and above held fairly steady at 7,691.



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Despite the fact that nearly a quarter of Wisconsin's Spanish speaking residents are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all," this group still ranks fairly low at 33rd place on national rankings. The severely limited English proficient (SLEP) rate among other age groups fall closely in line, with SLEP speakers of other Indo-European languages ranking 34th, SLEP speakers of Asian & Pacific Island languages ranking 36th and SLEP speakers of 'other' languages ranking 32nd.

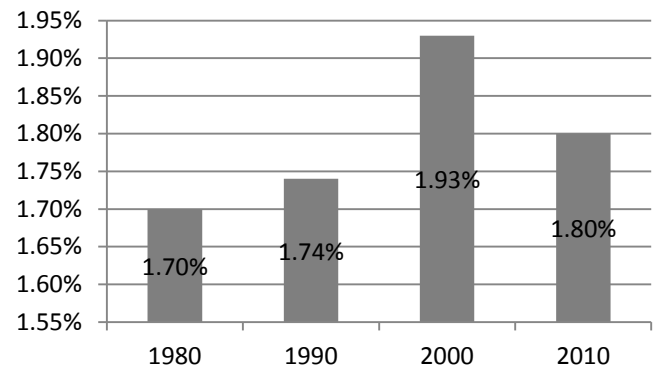


Conclusion

Wisconsin has seen a gradual increase in its limited English proficient population over the past 30 years, but not yet to the extent that it faces a pressing need to reverse this trend. Despite the growing rates of severely limited English proficient residents, Wisconsin has also been doing an adequate job of encouraging foreign language speakers to assimilate and learn English. The state does show signs of trouble, however, with its percentage of severely limited English proficient (SLEP) children, with this group placing 19th compared to other states' SLEP rates for residents aged five to 17. These children will grow up to be the workers responsible for the success of the state's economy, and Wisconsin would be wise to ensure that this age group has opportunities to learn English and the encouragement to do so.

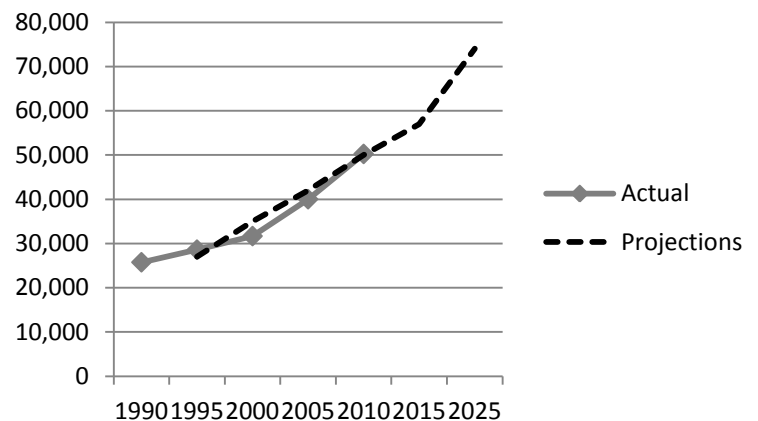
Limited English Proficiency, 1980-2010

Due to growth in the state's overall population, Wyoming has seen a drop in both its limited English proficient (LEP) rate and its ranking on the state by state LEP list. From 1980 to 2000, the number of LEP individuals rose from 7,230 to 8,919. By 2010, the Equality State was home to 9,428 LEP residents. Its LEP rate, however, fell from 1.93% in 2000 to 1.80% in 2010. This led to its drop on the state LEP rankings list, from 33rd in 1980 to 46th in 2010.



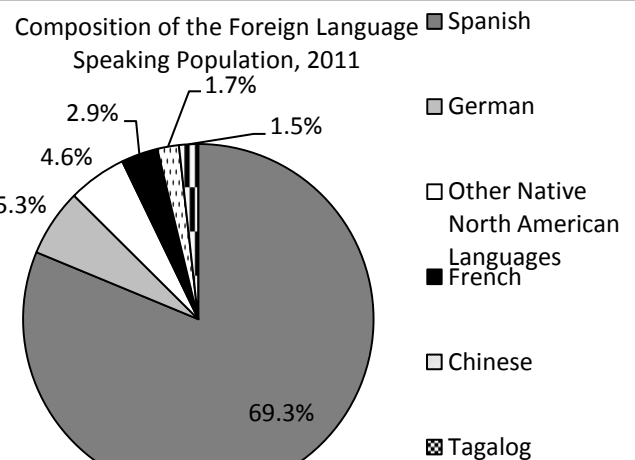
Hispanic Population Growth vs. Projections, 1990-2025

Throughout the years, the Hispanic population in Wyoming has remained fairly steady in line with Census Bureau projections. With 25,751 Hispanics calling it home in 1990, the Equality State was poised to reach the Census projection of 27,000 Hispanic residents in 1995. In 2000, with 31,669 Hispanic residents, the number remained below projections of 35,000. Even with 50,231 Hispanic residents in the year 2010, Wyoming was still comfortably below the projected 57,000 Hispanics the Census estimated would reside there in the year 2015.



Prevalence of Foreign Languages

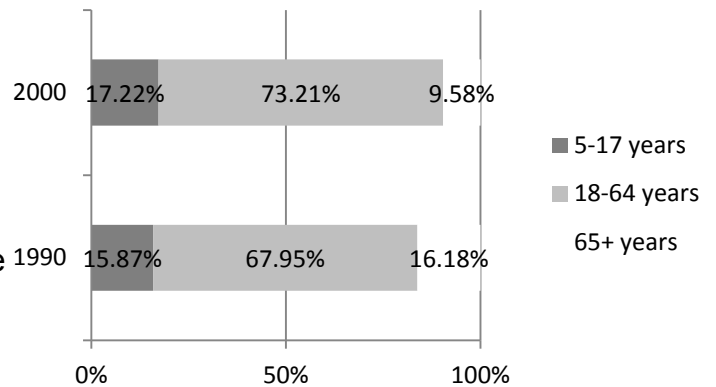
While most of Wyoming's population speaks English at home, 6.4% of residents, or 33,934 individuals, speak a language other than English at home, classifying them as foreign language speakers. Of those, nearly 70% speak Spanish, with 23,514 residents falling into this category. German is spoken by 1,796 residents and other Native North American languages are spoken by 1,575 residents. With less than 1,000 speakers each, French (968 speakers), Chinese (578 speakers) and Tagalog (506 speakers) round out the top 6 most widely spoken foreign languages in the Equality State.



Non-English Proficiency by Age

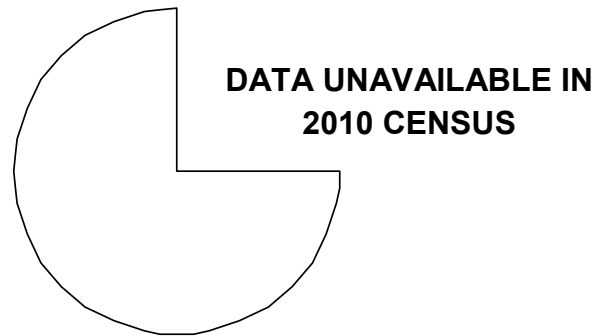
Wyoming's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) population cannot be ranked in comparison to that of other states, as the 2010 Census did not contain updated information on the breakdown of Equality State residents who are only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all." However, in the year 2000, nearly three-quarters of SLEP residents in Wyoming were adults aged 18 to 64 years old. Compared to the weighted percentage of adults in other states in 2010, this group would have ranked low in 40th place. Children would have ranked higher at 5th, while seniors would have ranked 33nd.

Age Analysis of the SLEP Population
1990, 2000 and 2010



Non-English Proficiency by Language Spoken

Wyoming's severely limited English proficient (SLEP) rates cannot be analyzed or ranked in comparison to that of other states, as the 2010 Census did not contain updated information on the breakdown of Equality State residents who were only able to speak English "not well" or "not at all" based on language group.



Conclusion

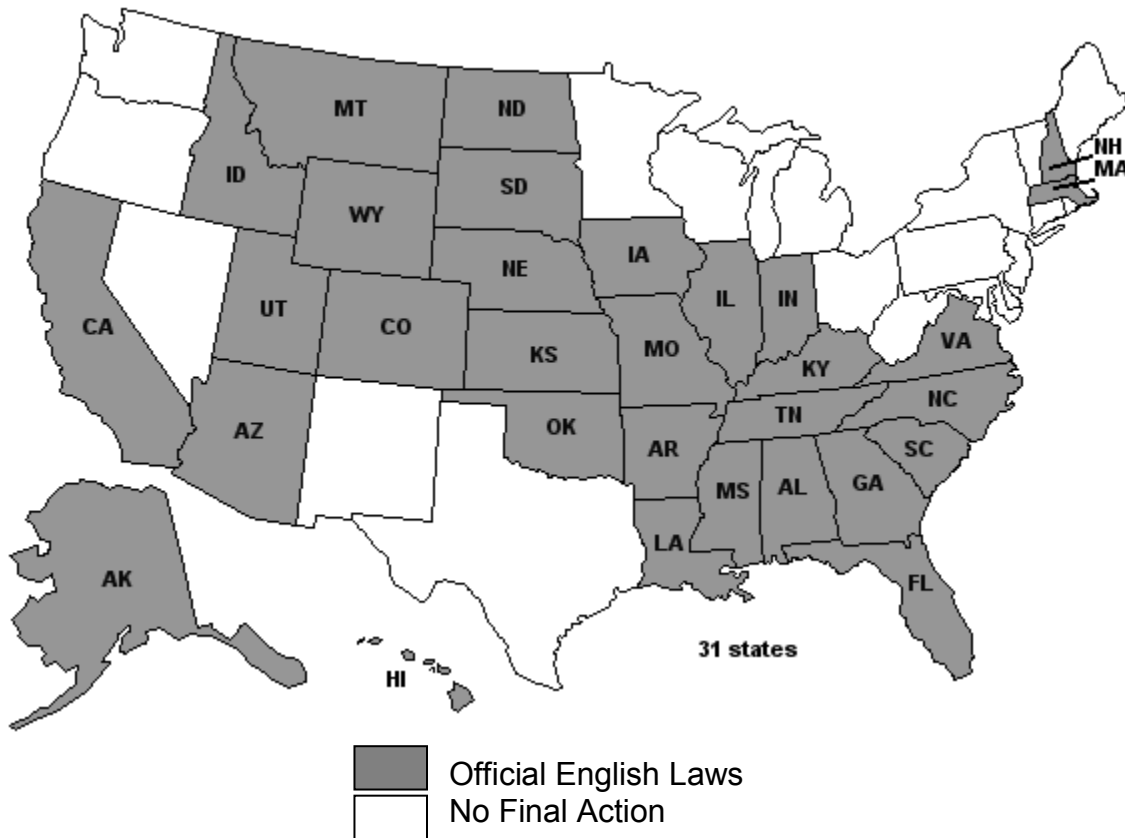
Wyoming has seen a decrease in the number of limited English proficient residents in recent years. All signs point to the state doing an adequate job of encouraging its foreign language speaking residents to assimilate and learn English. However, due to missing Census Bureau data for the year 2010, it is not possible to analyze current trends in depth. Presuming that trends from the year 2000 held steady in 2010, Wyoming would be wise to ensure that children aged five to 17 are being provided with opportunities for English language learning. This group ranked high nationwide, placing 5th in comparison to the severe limited English proficiency rates of children in other states.

Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of Population
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates, Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over
- U.S. Census Bureau, Projected State Populations, by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995-2025

Appendix A

States with Official English 2013



Alabama (1990)
Alaska (1998)
Arizona (2006)
Arkansas (1987)
California (1986)
Colorado (1988)
Florida (1988)
Georgia (1986 & 1996)
Hawaii (1978)
Idaho (2007)
Illinois (1969)
Indiana (1984)
Iowa (2002)
Kansas (2007)
Kentucky (1984)
Louisiana (1812)

Massachusetts (1975)
Mississippi (1987)
Missouri (1998 & 2008)
Montana (1995)
Nebraska (1920)
New Hampshire (1995)
North Carolina (1987)
North Dakota (1987)
Oklahoma (2010)
South Carolina (1987)
South Dakota (1995)
Tennessee (1984)
Utah (2000)
Virginia (1981 & 1996)
Wyoming (1996)

Appendix B

Foreign Language Usage by State, 2011

State	Total Population	Total Speakers of Foreign Lang.	% Foreign Lang. Speakers	Total LEP Residents	% LEP Residents
Alabama	4,504,275	235,830	5.2%	105,144	2.3%
Alaska	658,127	111,319	16.6%	34,257	5.1%
Arizona	6,034,541	1,629,853	27.0%	561,924	9.3%
Arkansas	2,740,313	204,666	7.5%	92,617	3.4%
California	35,158,257	15,390,211	43.8%	6,816,671	19.4%
Colorado	4,775,755	798,923	16.7%	303,590	6.4%
Connecticut	3,384,503	724,026	21.4%	279,004	8.2%
Delaware	851,887	115,717	13.6%	40,439	4.7%
District of Columbia	571,129	87,516	15.0%	24,105	4.1%
Florida	17,983,218	4,959,186	27.6%	2,133,967	11.9%
Georgia	9,141,183	1,214,783	13.3%	520,520	5.7%
Hawaii	1,273,878	323,915	25.2%	154,320	12.0%
Idaho	1,449,701	152,712	10.4%	57,380	3.9%
Illinois	12,042,289	2,730,437	22.7%	1,165,574	9.7%
Indiana	6,088,598	501,711	8.2%	199,954	3.3%
Iowa	2,864,107	208,066	7.3%	85,076	3.0%
Kansas	2,669,198	304,111	11.4%	123,724	4.6%
Kentucky	4,090,258	197,131	4.8%	82,636	2.0%
Louisiana	4,261,861	371,986	8.7%	122,025	2.9%
Maine	1,261,967	83,579	6.6%	19,381	1.5%
Maryland	5,465,168	914,110	16.7%	339,442	6.2%
Massachusetts	6,224,979	1,370,449	22.0%	553,242	8.9%
Michigan	9,292,794	847,255	9.1%	298,225	3.2%
Minnesota	4,992,262	540,623	10.8%	212,886	4.3%
Mississippi	2,759,514	105,186	3.8%	46,643	1.7%
Missouri	5,629,071	362,210	6.4%	137,657	2.4%
Montana	930,061	43,660	4.7%	7,124	0.8%
Nebraska	1,711,659	176,008	10.3%	80,848	4.7%
Nevada	2,538,136	754,531	29.7%	318,541	12.6%
New Hampshire	1,250,588	97,479	7.8%	28,783	2.3%
New Jersey	8,285,611	2,520,761	30.4%	1,073,312	13.0%
New Mexico	1,937,824	707,597	36.5%	194,898	10.1%
New York	18,307,740	5,506,992	30.1%	2,463,454	13.5%
North Carolina	9,029,678	966,322	10.7%	422,213	4.7%
North Dakota	630,522	32,380	5.1%	9,200	1.4%
Ohio	10,836,508	721,796	6.7%	253,293	2.3%
Oklahoma	3,527,312	329,017	9.3%	135,643	3.8%
Oregon	3,633,190	540,456	14.9%	227,922	6.3%
Pennsylvania	12,021,912	1,237,714	10.3%	462,469	3.8%
Rhode Island	995,856	211,150	21.2%	87,093	8.7%
South Carolina	4,376,509	289,004	6.6%	119,615	2.7%
South Dakota	757,925	50,335	6.6%	17,034	2.2%
Tennessee	6,003,565	414,669	6.9%	174,871	2.9%
Texas	23,721,334	8,221,202	34.7%	3,442,354	14.5%
Utah	2,554,924	380,382	14.9%	135,465	5.3%
Vermont	594,196	29,402	4.9%	8,418	1.4%
Virginia	7,588,188	1,132,310	14.9%	421,112	5.5%
Washington	6,390,691	1,186,543	18.6%	508,518	8.0%
West Virginia	1,749,410	40,310	2.3%	14,249	0.8%
Wisconsin	5,362,567	467,555	8.7%	177,233	3.3%
Wyoming	515,858	33,934	6.4%	9,243	1.7%

INTRODUCTION

In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Jones Act, making Puerto Rico a U.S. territory and granting residents of Puerto Rico statutory citizenship. In 1952, Congress passed the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, allowing the people of Puerto Rico to hold a Constitutional Assembly. There, a document was drafted establishing the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The Commonwealth was approved by an overwhelming majority, and later by Congress.

Since then, the island has had the best of both worlds—a great level of political autonomy, while remaining under the direct authority of the United States Congress. As a Commonwealth, the people of Puerto Rico have been able to reap the benefits of a close relationship with the U.S. while also preserving their unique culture and sense of identity.

POLITICAL STATUS DEBATE

Residents of Puerto Rico have, since the establishment of the Commonwealth, debated this status. Yet, each time an official vote has occurred, residents have repeatedly and overwhelmingly reaffirmed the continuation of the Commonwealth status. In 1967, 1993 and 1998, the government of Puerto Rico held plebiscites to determine the will of residents with regard to status, but no change occurred.

Most recently, in November 2012, Puerto Ricans once again voted—in what has since shown to be a controversial election. In a two-question vote, for the first time ever, 54% of respondents said they did not support the island's status as a commonwealth (46% did). Among alternative options, 61% elected statehood, 33% favored free association, and 5.5% supported independence. While this was initially hailed as a clear call for statehood, it was later revealed that more than 480,000 people left their ballot blank with regard to an alternate status choice in a form of protest. As a result, the validity of this most recent plebiscite has been widely questioned.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ISSUES

Since Puerto Rico is a sovereign U.S. Commonwealth, we are ordinarily unconcerned with their internal politics. But, U.S. English believes that the acceptance of an entire U.S. state where public schools, courts, and the legislature operate in a non-English language would drive a spike through the unifying power of English, our common language.

According to the Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey, 95.2% of Puerto Rico's total population of 3,489,898 speak a language other than English at home. Of these foreign language speakers, 80.1% are considered limited English proficient, meaning they can only speak English less than "very well." More than 95% of foreign language speakers in Puerto Rico speak Spanish (3,318,530 residents), leaving fewer than 5,000 residents speaking other Indo-European languages, Asian & Pacific Island languages and other languages, combined.

Currently in Puerto Rico, state, legislative and legal proceedings are conducted entirely in Spanish. On top of that, Puerto Rico is currently exempt from the English language testing provisions of federal education law, and their system of education is taught primarily in Spanish. If Puerto Rico were to become a state in the United States of America, would Spanish be used for the official record in federal and state courts in Puerto Rico? What language will be spoken by employees of the federal and state governments in Puerto Rico? If Spanish is chosen, how will they communicate with the rest of the United States? What language will be taught in Puerto Rican schools? Will English be treated as a foreign language? If Spanish is the principal means of educational instruction, how will English fluency be attainable by students?

In September 2012, U.S. English commissioned a face-to-face poll of 1,000 likely voters in Puerto Rico. Results showed that just 37% of respondents strongly agree that Puerto Rico should become a state of the United States of America. Only 28% of those polled would still support Puerto Rico becoming a state if the U.S. Congress required that in order to do so, English is made the sole official language of Puerto Rico. Even in California, the state with the highest percentage of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals, the LEP rate is only 19.4%, compared to the 80.2% LEP rate in Puerto Rico.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, there is much to be addressed before Puerto Rico is seriously considered for potential admission as a state in the United States of America. U.S. English believes that if statehood is selected, it done with the support of a supermajority (not simple majority) of Puerto Rican voters. In addition, English should first be declared the sole official language. Official English is crucial to our national identity and our unity as a country, and the potential addition of a 51st state should not take away from this founding principle.

