DISCLAIMER

U.S. Population, 2000: 281,421,906

All of the information in this report is derived from Census 2000 information as released by the U.S. Census Bureau. Language data was collected through the Census "long form," distributed to one-in-six households. Residents were asked to indicate whether each member of the household, age five and older, speaks English at home. If English was not specified as the language spoken at home, respondents were asked to list the language spoken at home.

The figures in this report refer solely to the language stated as being spoken at home by the residents of the United States. They make no effort to determine whether this language is a first language or a second language, whether this language is spoken at home 51 percent of the time or 100 percent of the time, or whether the individual is fluent in this or any other language. It is quite likely that a portion of those who report speaking a language other than English at home are fluent in English, as it is also quite likely that a portion of those who speak English at home are fluent in a language other than English. No attempt has been made to include any information other than the self-reported language spoken at home as recorded by Census 2000.

Outside of correcting for spelling mistakes within the Census data, and adjusting language names (such as aligning the "Mayan language" and "Mayan Languages" categories) for comparison purposes, no changes have been made to the data as provided. Anomalies within the data (e.g.: the fact that the Census reported Thai speakers in every state except California) have been left as reported; the missing information has not been inferred or otherwise derived.

It must be noted that the Census has instituted confidentiality protections that prevent the disclosure of data detailing small populations that may be directly identifiable to a single person or small group of people. Therefore, instances where there was only one single speaker of a language or one single family speaking a language in a given state/county, that information has likely been suppressed. Therefore, the number of speakers of a given language is best described as a very close estimate, while the number of languages spoken is most certainly an absolute minimum. For example, while there are at least 322 languages spoken in the United States, the actual number is likely higher, including several languages with small numbers suppressed by the Census confidentiality protections. Again, no effort has been made to infer or otherwise derive information not given in the Census report.

For comparison purposes, all divisions of a state have been classified as "counties," whether or not they are officially known as counties. This report's use of "counties" includes jurisdictions classified as "parishes" in Louisiana, "census areas" in Alaska, "boroughs" in Alaska, "municipalities" in Alaska, and "independent cities" in Maryland, Missouri, Nevada and Virginia. For the purpose of this report, the District of Columbia has also been classified as a county. In no case is any data from one "county" included in information for another "county," nor is any area of the United States not included in a "county." The total number of "counties" in the United States is 3,141. The term "states" refers to the 50 states of the United States, plus the District of Columbia, for a total of 51.

Some data is also provided for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, an MSA is a single county or cluster of counties "containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core." A full definition of MSA, as well as a current list of MSAs and their component counties, can be found on the U.S. Census Bureau website at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metroarea.html>.

Languages are presented as given in the Census data. As language is a self-reported, write-in category on the Census long form, a portion of the respondents entered languages that could not be further classified. For example, nearly 13,000 respondents wrote in "African," which could not be traced to a specific actual language. This report includes these languages "as is" with no effort to further break them up among actual language categories. Other grouped languages include: "India, not elsewhere classified (n.e.c.)," "Mayan languages," "Pakistan, not elsewhere classified (n.e.c.)," and "language not reported."

Within the data tables, a "t-" or "(tie)" indicates that the language tied for a specific ranking with another language. A tie is only noted when the percentages are a true exact match. While all percentages are shown to a maximum of three figures throughout this report, these figures have been calculated further in the dissection of the data. For example, while the percentage of speakers of "African" appears to be the same in both Sumter County, S.C., and Essex County, N.J. (0.031%), these actual percentages are 0.0310 and 0.0306. Only a few percentage values were true ties.

Within the report, all percentages reported are above zero. Due to minimal numbers of speakers of some languages in populous counties/states, some figures may appear as 0.000 percent when reported to three decimal places. For example, the percentage of Apache speakers in Los Angeles County, Calif., appears as 0.000, but is 0.00028 when taken to five decimal places. In all, 555 figures appear as 0.000 [14 county, 368 state, 173 national]. At six decimal places, these percentages actually range from 0.000499 to 0.000002.