

GAO

Report to the Honorable
John Edward Porter
House of Representatives

May 1997

BILINGUAL VOTING ASSISTANCE

Assistance Provided and Costs





General Government Division

B-275220

May 9, 1997

The Honorable John Edward Porter
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Porter:

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1973 *et seq.*), was enacted to, among other things, protect the voting rights of U.S. citizens of certain ethnic groups whose command of the English language may be limited (minority language groups). The act's "bilingual voting assistance requirements" apply to ethnic groups in 422 "covered jurisdictions"—most of which are counties—in 28 states.¹ Critics of the bilingual provisions have charged that the implementation of these requirements has been costly and has been of questionable benefit in increasing voter turnout of the targeted ethnic groups.

This report responds to your request that we review two aspects of the implementation of bilingual language provisions of the act. You asked that we determine (1) the types of assistance jurisdictions provided for the 1996 general election; and (2) the actual cost that covered jurisdictions incurred to provide bilingual voting assistance in 1996,² and in prior years, if available.

To determine the types of assistance jurisdictions provided and the related costs, we surveyed election officials representing each covered jurisdiction and each state that had covered jurisdictions. In all, we solicited responses from election officials in 28 states and 391 covered jurisdictions.³ See appendix I for a detailed discussion of our objectives, scope, and methodology. In total, 26 states and 292 covered jurisdictions responded to our questionnaires, a response rate of 93 percent and 75 percent, respectively.⁴ (See app. II).

¹Alaska, Arizona, and Texas are the only states in which the act's provisions apply to all jurisdictions in the state.

²We requested that covered jurisdictions provide information on the actual costs of providing bilingual voting assistance during 1996, including primary election and early voting period costs.

³For the 25 covered jurisdictions in Alaska (as determined by the 1990 Census) and the 3 covered jurisdictions in Hawaii, state election officials requested that they be permitted to respond for the jurisdictions; in both Alaska and Hawaii, the state and not the local jurisdictions is responsible for election administration. Their responses are contained in discussions of state assistance. In addition, New York City Board of Election officials agreed to provide a response for four covered jurisdictions—Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York Counties. Their response is included in the discussions on jurisdiction assistance. Thus, 422 covered jurisdictions, in total, were represented by the jurisdictions and states to which we mailed surveys.

⁴All percentages in this report have been rounded to the nearest percentage point.

The information contained in this report is limited to the data provided by the states and jurisdictions that responded to our survey. To the extent practical, we attempted to verify the completeness and accuracy of the responses. Where a response to a question was inconsistent with other answers elsewhere in the survey or where a respondent failed to answer a question, we contacted them to clarify or determine the response. On cost questions, we requested that respondents only provide actual costs for which they had supporting documentation, not cost estimates. In a number of cases jurisdictions provided us documentation supporting their costs; additional details are provided in appendix I (see page 34). Because the jurisdictions that reported costs were geographically dispersed, it was not practical to further verify the costs reported.

For both objectives, the survey was affected by variables which limit the responses' generalizability. For example, the covered jurisdictions varied in (1) the number of polling locations where bilingual voting assistance was provided, (2) the size of the populations in need of assistance, and (3) the number of minority groups for whom assistance was required. Accordingly, comparisons across jurisdictions are not meaningful and the responses of states and covered jurisdictions cannot be projected or generalized to nonresponding jurisdictions.

On April 9, 1997, we requested comments from the Attorney General or her designee on a draft of this report. On April 18, 1997, the Chief of the Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, on behalf of the Attorney General, provided technical information, which we incorporated where appropriate. We did our work in Washington, D.C., from July 1996 through April 1997 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results in Brief

Of the 292 jurisdictions that responded to our survey, 272 reported providing bilingual voting assistance for the 1996 general election. Of the 292 respondents, 213 said that they provided both written and oral bilingual voting assistance to their minority language voters; 45 said that they provided written assistance only; 14 said that they provided oral assistance only; and 20 said they did not provide any assistance. With respect to the jurisdictions not providing any assistance, 5 said that they tried but were unable to identify individuals needing assistance; 13 said that no one needed assistance or that no one had ever sought assistance; and 2 believed that they had been exempted from providing assistance. In addition, five jurisdictions and two states reported furnishing bilingual voting assistance to groups that the act did not require them to assist.

Of the 258 jurisdictions that reported providing written assistance:

- 94 percent said that they provided bilingual or separate translated ballots;
- 87 percent said that they provided bilingual or translated voting instructions;
- 71 percent said that they provided bilingual or translated signs at polling places; and,
- 70 percent said that they placed bilingual notices in newspapers.

Of the 227 jurisdictions that reported providing oral assistance:

- 82 percent reported that bilingual employees worked in their offices or at the polls to provide assistance;
- 15 percent reported that they used volunteer assistants; and,
- 13 percent reported that they hired special interpreters.

In addition to assistance provided by jurisdictions, states may also provide assistance, such as translations of state election propositions or translated sample ballots. Twelve of the 26 states that responded said that they furnished some bilingual voting assistance. The 14 remaining states reported that they provided no bilingual voting assistance. In addition, some states, such as California and New Jersey, have adopted their own laws requiring bilingual voting assistance.

As the act does not require covered jurisdictions and states to maintain data on the costs of providing bilingual voting assistance, information provided by the surveyed jurisdictions and states on their costs was scant. Of the 272 jurisdictions that reported providing assistance in 1996, 208 were unable to provide information on their costs. Of the 64 jurisdictions that reported cost information, only 34 provided information on total costs and the remainder provided partial costs. The 34 jurisdictions' reported costs varied greatly. For example, several counties which reported providing oral language assistance reported no additional costs, as they used bilingual workers to provide assistance. Conversely, Los Angeles County, CA, which reported providing written and oral bilingual assistance in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Tagalog (a Philippine language) at over 5,600 polling places, reported additional costs exceeding \$1.1 million.

Of the 12 states that provided assistance, only Hawaii and Florida reported their total costs for providing bilingual voting assistance in 1996. Arizona, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, and Rhode Island reported partial

cost data. Hawaii and Florida reported costs for bilingual voting assistance in 1996 of \$23,328 and \$7,900, respectively.

Only 29 jurisdictions and 6 states provided some data on election year costs for 1992 to 1995. For example, 28 jurisdictions reported 1994 election year costs and 12 jurisdictions reported 1995 costs. Moreover, the amounts jurisdictions reported spending on bilingual voting assistance in prior years varied widely—ranging from no costs for a 1995 election in Central Falls, RI, to \$764,900 for the 1994 elections in Los Angeles County, CA. The amounts states reported also varied by year.

Background

In 1975, Congress amended the Voting Rights Act and extended its coverage to protect the voting rights of citizens of certain ethnic groups whose language is other than English. The act's language minority provisions require states and covered jurisdictions—political subdivisions—that meet the act's coverage criteria to conduct elections in the language of certain "minority language groups" in addition to English. The act defined these language minorities as persons of Spanish heritage, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Alaskan Natives.

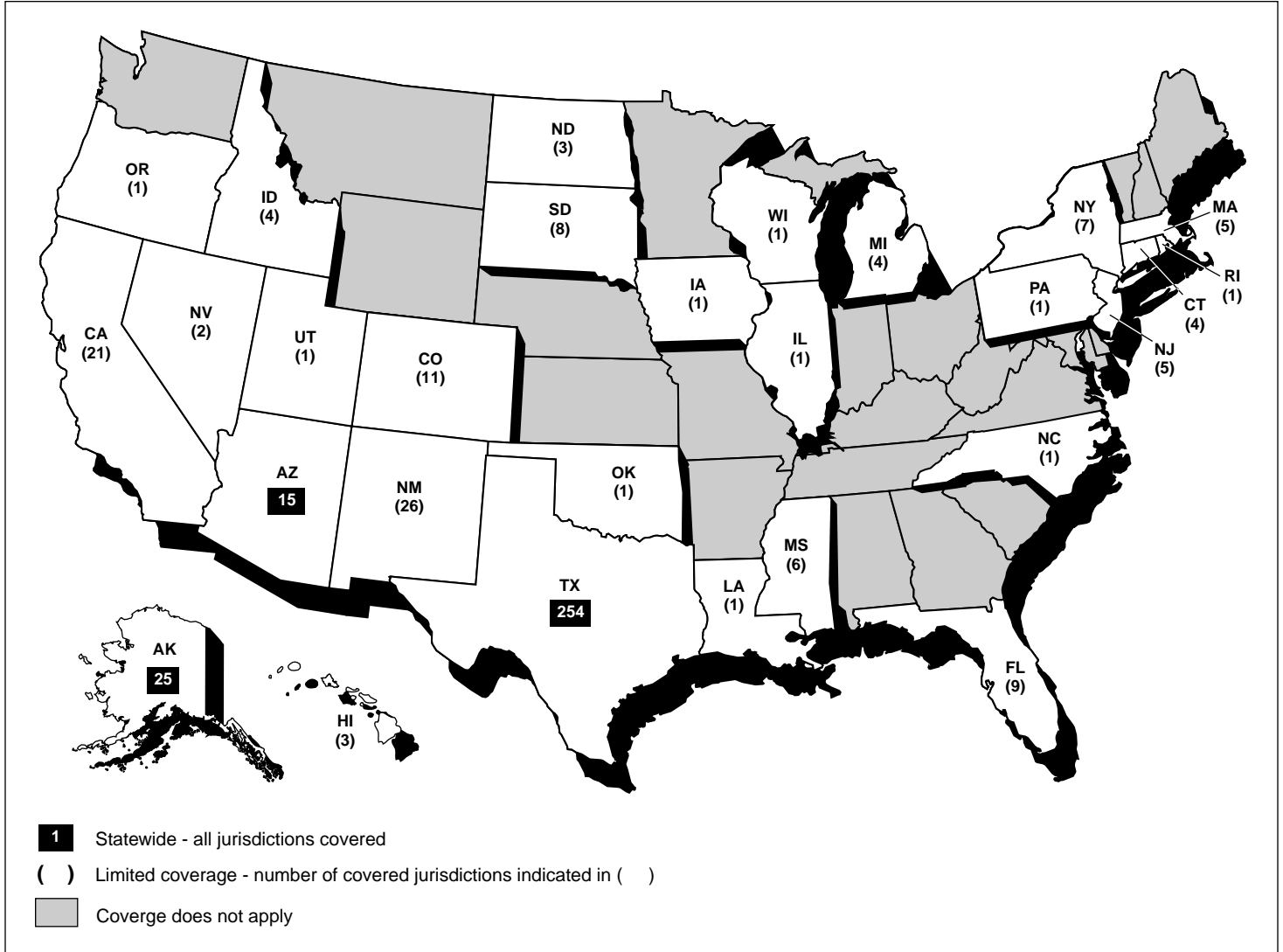
Where the applicable minority groups have a commonly used written language, the act requires covered jurisdictions to provide written election materials in the languages of the groups. For American Indians and Alaskan Natives whose languages are unwritten, only oral assistance and publicity, e.g., public information spots on the radio, are required. All covered jurisdictions must provide oral assistance when needed in the minority language. Both written and oral assistance must be available throughout the election process from registration to election day activities and are required for all federal, state, and local elections.

According to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section, the objective of the act's bilingual assistance provisions, in the Attorney General's view, is to enable members of applicable language minority groups to participate effectively in the electoral process. Further, according to the Section, jurisdictions should take all reasonable steps to achieve the goal, but they are not required to provide bilingual assistance that would not further that goal. A jurisdiction need not, for example, provide bilingual assistance to all of its eligible voters if it effectively targets its bilingual program to those in actual need of bilingual assistance.

The implementation of the act by states and jurisdictions could vary depending on the extent that the states provide assistance. For example, where states provide ballot translations for national and state issues and offices, the covered jurisdictions only have to translate the portions of ballot issues and offices that pertain to them. Where states provide no assistance, the responsibility for assistance falls entirely to the jurisdictions.

The act, as amended, contains two sections—4(f)(4) and 203(c)—which provide specific criteria for determining which states and jurisdictions are to be covered by the bilingual voting provisions. The act designates the Attorney General or the Director of the Census to make these determinations (see app. III). In total, 422 jurisdictions in 28 states were covered during 1996. These included three states—Alaska (Alaskan Natives), Arizona (Spanish heritage), and Texas (Spanish heritage)—which were covered statewide (i.e., the act’s provisions apply to all political subdivisions within the state). Figure 1 illustrates the number of covered jurisdictions in each state.

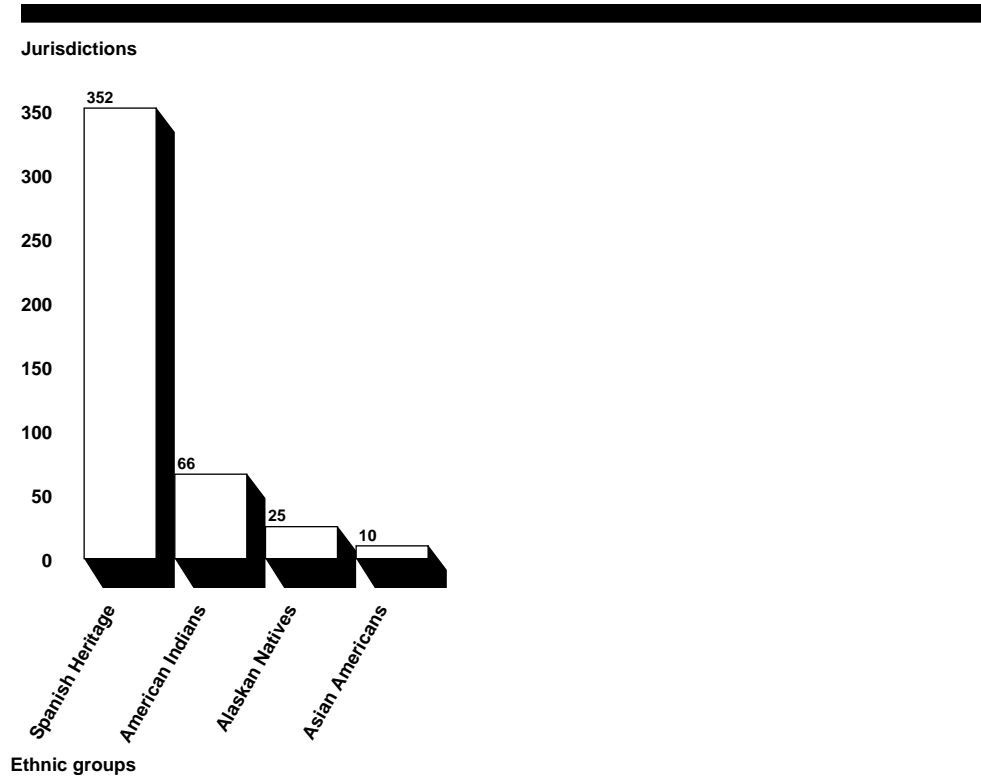
Figure 1: Locations of Covered Jurisdictions by State



Source: Department of Justice and Bureau of Census data.

Some covered jurisdictions have more than one ethnic group for which they are required to provide minority language voting assistance. Figure 2 shows the number of minority language groups by ethnicity within the 422 covered jurisdictions.

Figure 2: Number of Minority Language Groups by Ethnicity in Covered Jurisdictions



Note: Jurisdictions with multiple language minorities within the same ethnic group are counted only once. Thus, if a jurisdiction contained Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese American minorities, it is only counted once as an Asian American jurisdiction. However, if it contained Hispanics and Chinese Americans, it is counted as both a Spanish heritage and an Asian American jurisdiction.

Source: GAO analysis of the Code of Federal Regulations (28 CFR Ch.1).

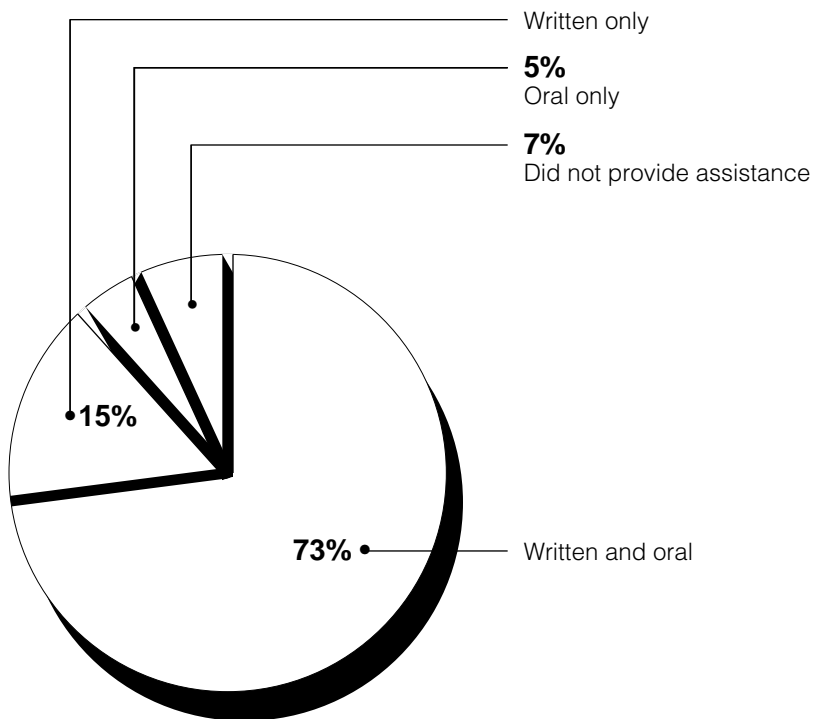
The Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division is to oversee the covered states and jurisdictions’ implementation of the act. Where states and jurisdictions fail to comply with the provisions, the Department of Justice may bring civil action to attain compliance with the bilingual language provisions.⁵

⁵Individuals also have a right to bring civil actions to obtain relief.

Assistance Jurisdictions and States Reported Providing in 1996

Most jurisdictions that reported providing bilingual voting assistance in the 1996 general election said that they provided both written and oral assistance. As shown in figure 3, about 73 percent of the 292 jurisdictions responding reported that they provided both written and oral assistance. Seven percent reported that they did not provide bilingual voting assistance for the 1996 general election (see page 13). Moreover, five jurisdictions that reported providing assistance also reported providing assistance to other language minority groups that the act did not require them to assist.

Figure 3: Percent of Jurisdictions Reporting Various Types of Bilingual Voting Assistance for the 1996 General Election



Source: GAO survey.

For 14 jurisdictions that reported providing oral assistance only, the act required 12 to provide assistance to American Indian groups. In addition, some jurisdictions that reported providing written and oral assistance

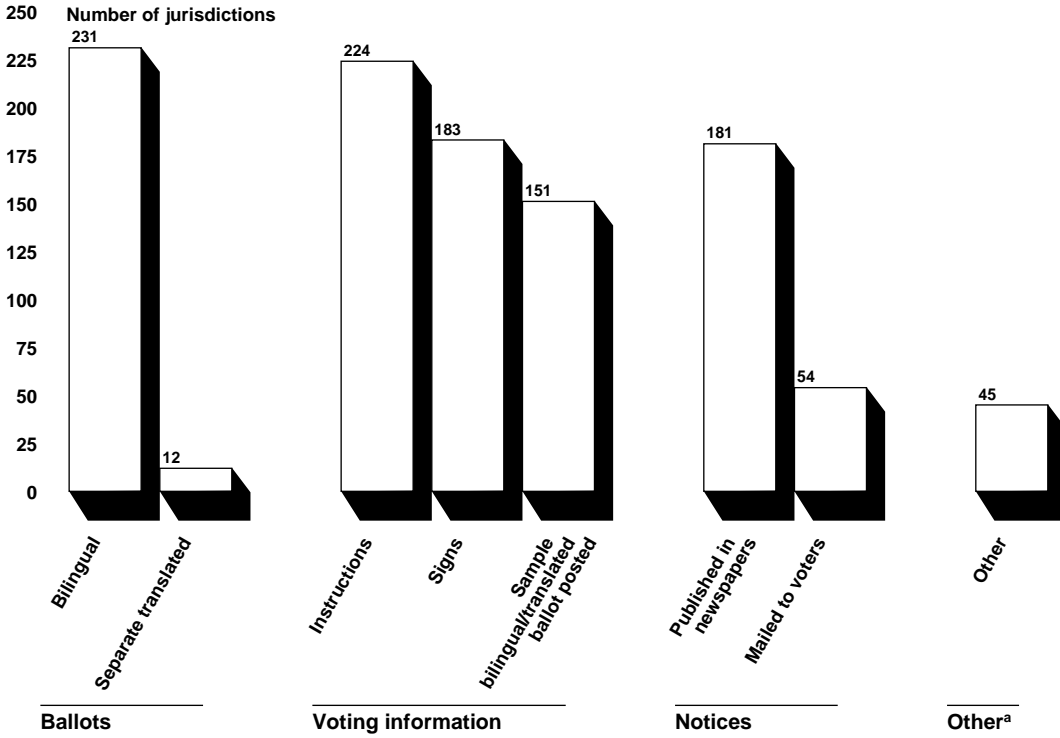
actually provided assistance to more than one covered ethnic group, and depending on the group assisted, the type of assistance they provided may have varied. For example, Gila, AZ, reported providing written and oral assistance to Hispanics but only oral assistance to Apache Indians whose language is not written to the extent needed for election translation.

Twenty-six of the 28 states surveyed responded. Of the responding states, 12 reported providing bilingual voting assistance. In addition, some states had passed their own legislation requiring some form of bilingual voting assistance (see page 15). Arizona, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Texas reported providing both written and oral assistance. Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, and Rhode Island reported providing written assistance only. And, Alaska reported providing oral assistance only. Moreover, two states, California and Hawaii, reported providing assistance to groups that the act did not require them to assist.

**Written Assistance
Reported by Jurisdictions
and States**

As shown in figures 4 and 5, bilingual ballots were the most frequent type of written assistance reported by jurisdictions and bilingual voting instructions were the single most frequent written assistance reported by states. Of the 258 jurisdictions that reported providing written assistance, 231 reported providing bilingual ballots. Of the 11 states that reported providing written assistance, 7 reported providing bilingual voting instructions. However, among jurisdictions, the types of bilingual voting assistance they reported providing ranged from ballot assistance alone to all voting materials provided to voters.

Figure 4: Types of Written Bilingual Voting Assistance Jurisdictions Reported for the 1996 General Election

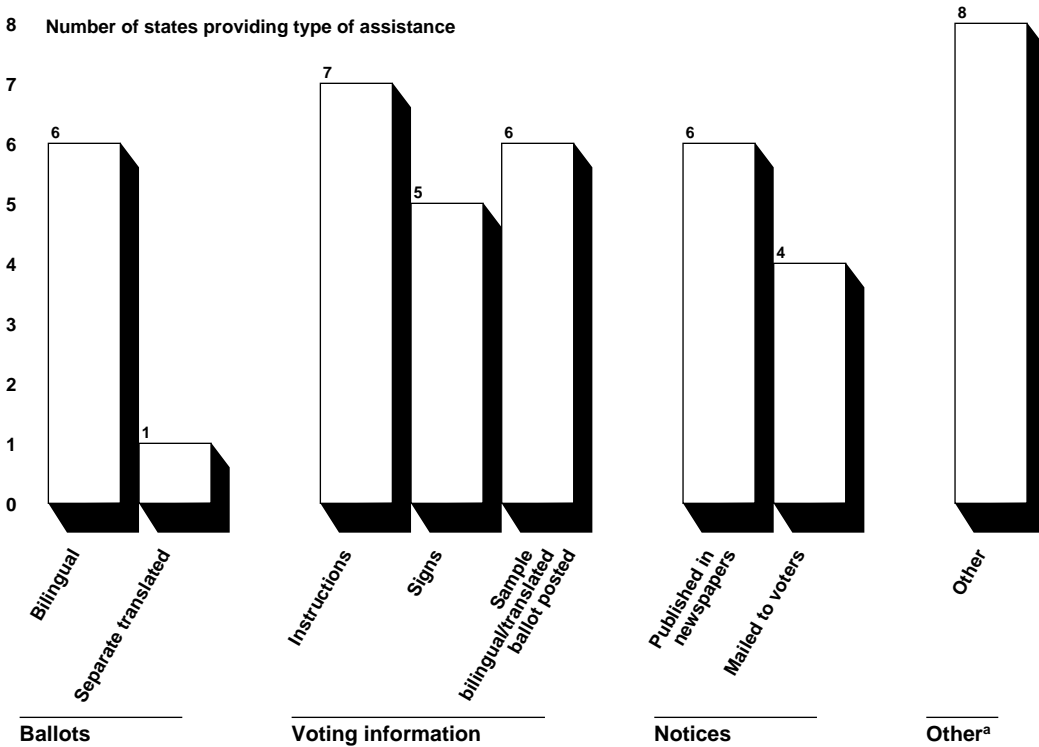


Note: More than one type of assistance may have been provided.

^aOther assistance includes translated materials such as state propositions and analyses and candidate statements.

Source: GAO survey.

Figure 5: Types of Written Bilingual Voting Assistance States Reported for the 1996 General Election



Note: More than one type of assistance may have been provided.

^aOther assistance includes, for example, translations of propositions, constitutional amendments, and forms.

Source: GAO survey.

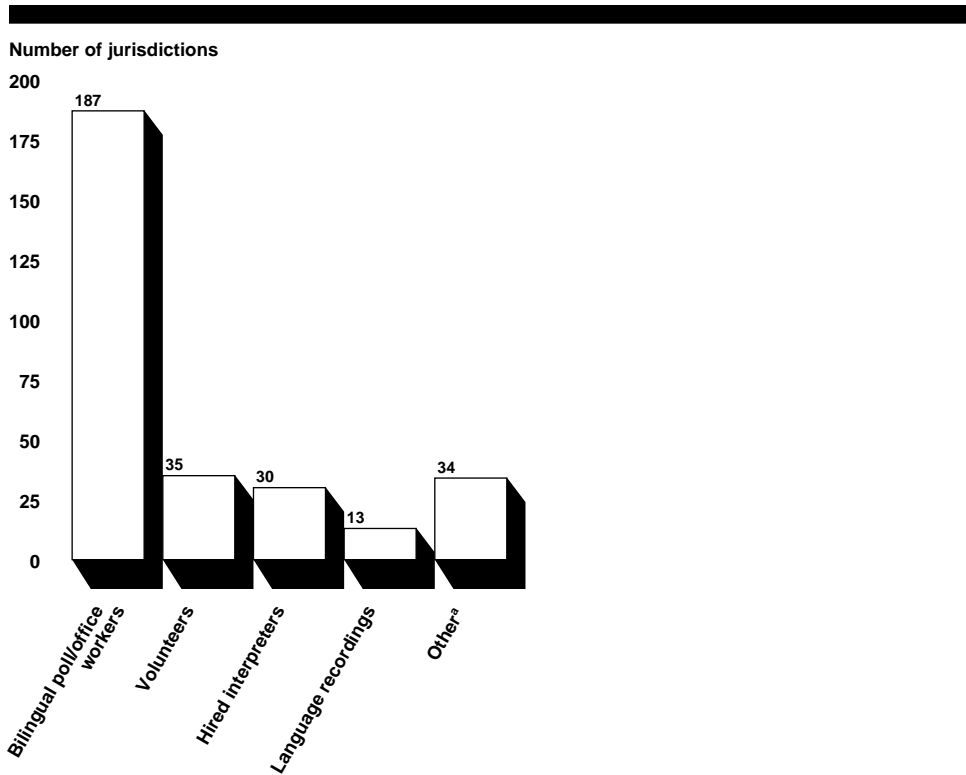
Appendix IV provides examples of translated voting instructions that were provided to some minority language voters and a portion of a bilingual ballot.

Oral Assistance Jurisdictions and States Reported

Almost all jurisdictions and states that provided minority language oral assistance did so by hiring bilingual poll and office workers or using the assistance of volunteers. Of the 227 jurisdictions that reported providing minority language oral assistance, 187 reported that they had hired

bilingual workers and 35 reported that they used the assistance of volunteers. In addition, 13 jurisdictions reported providing minority language tapes describing the ballot and/or voting instructions. Of the eight states providing bilingual oral assistance, four employed bilingual workers and two hired interpreters to provide assistance. Figures 6 and 7 show the types of oral assistance provided by 227 jurisdictions and 8 states, respectively.

Figure 6: Types of Bilingual Oral Assistance Jurisdictions Reported for the 1996 General Election

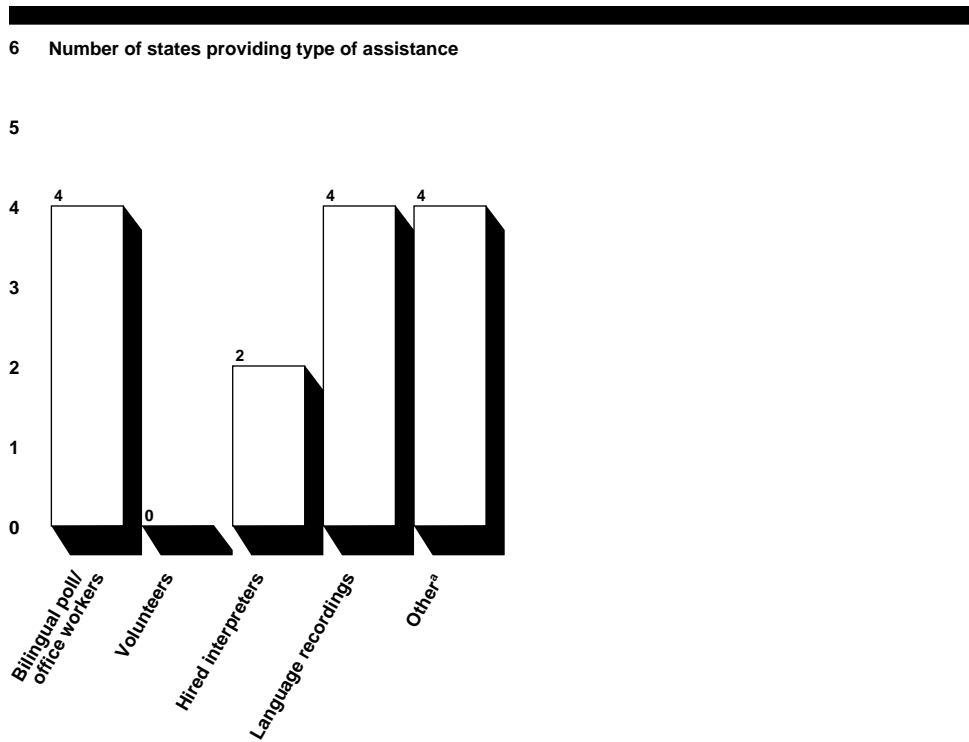


Note: More than one type of assistance may have been provided.

^aOther includes radio announcements; a telephone hotline; and bilingual officials in other offices who could assist, if needed.

Source: GAO survey.

Figure 7: Types of Bilingual Oral Assistance States Reported for the 1996 General Election



Note: More than one type of assistance may have been provided.

²Other includes public service announcements, telephone assistance, and additional special bilingual assistants.

Source: GAO survey.

Twenty-eight of the 227 responding jurisdictions reporting oral assistance provided this assistance to American Indian groups. In addition, the state of Alaska reported providing oral assistance to American Indian groups in six jurisdictions. Of these 34 jurisdictions, only 4 reported providing bilingual written materials as well as oral assistance to the American Indian groups.

Some Covered Jurisdictions Reported Providing No Bilingual Assistance

Although the jurisdictions that we surveyed were designated to provide bilingual voting assistance, 20 jurisdictions reported that they did not do so for the 1996 general election. They reported not providing assistance because they said that they (1) were unable to locate or identify

individuals in their areas needing assistance (5 jurisdictions), (2) were not contacted by individuals in need of assistance or did not know of individuals needing assistance (13 jurisdictions), or (3) believed they had been exempted from providing assistance (2 jurisdictions).

Of the 20 jurisdictions that reported not providing assistance, 17 were designated to provide it to American Indian groups and 3 were designated to provide it to Spanish heritage groups. Three of the jurisdictions designated to provide assistance to American Indian groups responded that they had contacted tribal officials to identify those in need of assistance but were told that no need existed. Another jurisdiction said that it had conducted a telephone survey of registered voters but was unable to find anyone in need of assistance. Further, 11 of the 20 jurisdictions indicated that should someone seek assistance, they had interpreters who were on call or could otherwise provide assistance.

According to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section, one should interpret with care a jurisdiction's response to the survey that it did not provide bilingual voting assistance. Most of the jurisdictions that indicated they had not provided bilingual voting assistance had relatively few members of the applicable language group, and the Attorney General's minority language guidelines explain that the objective of the bilingual provisions is "to enable members of applicable language minority groups to participate effectively in the electoral process." Accordingly, the Section said further inquiry would be needed to determine whether such a jurisdiction has violated the bilingual requirements of the act.

Some Jurisdictions and States Reported Providing Assistance to Groups That Were Not Required to Be Covered

Five jurisdictions and two states reported that in addition to providing assistance to minority language groups, as required under the act, they also furnished assistance to other groups. Table 1 identifies the jurisdictions and states that reported providing assistance to other groups and the groups that they assisted.

Table 1: Jurisdictions and States That Reported Assisting Other Groups in 1996

Jurisdiction or state	Groups required to be assisted	Other groups assisted
Jurisdictions:		
New York City, NY ^a	Spanish heritage, Chinese	Korean
San Francisco City and Co., CA	Chinese	Spanish heritage
Santa Clara Co., CA	Spanish heritage	Vietnamese, Chinese
Sandoval Co., NM	American Indian	Spanish heritage
Santa Fe Co., NM	Spanish heritage	American Indian
States:		
California	none	Korean
Hawaii	none	Chinese, Korean

^aThe New York City response provided consolidated data for Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York counties.

Source: GAO survey.

Some States Have Adopted Their Own Bilingual Voting Assistance Requirements

Several states have enacted laws requiring some form of minority language voting assistance during the election process. California, for example, requires that minority language sample ballots be posted in polling places in which the Secretary of State determines such assistance is needed. Also, when a need exists, county clerks are required to make reasonable efforts to recruit election officials fluent in minority languages. The state considers assistance to be needed when 3 percent or more of voting age citizens lack sufficient English skills to vote without assistance, or when citizens or organizations provide information supporting a need for assistance.

New Jersey requires that bilingual sample ballots be provided for election districts where Spanish is the primary language for 10 percent or more of the registered voters. Also, two additional election district board members who are Hispanic in origin and fluent in Spanish must be appointed in these districts.

In Texas, the election code specifies that bilingual election materials be provided in precincts where persons of Spanish origin or descent comprise 5 percent or more of the population of both the precinct and the county in which the precinct is located. In these covered precincts, the following materials must be presented bilingually: instruction cards, ballots, affidavits, other forms that voters are required to sign, and

absentee voting materials. In addition, the judge presiding over an election in covered precincts must make reasonable efforts to appoint election clerks who are fluent in both English and Spanish.

Also some states, such as North Dakota and Colorado, have laws that entitle non-English speaking electors to have assistance, e.g., for preparing ballots or operating voting machines, when they request it.

Costs Jurisdictions and States Reported Incurring to Provide Bilingual Voting Assistance in 1996

In response to our survey questions on the cost of providing bilingual voting assistance,⁶ 34 jurisdictions said they reported all costs and 30 jurisdictions said they reported partial costs for 1996 elections. Likewise, two states reported all and five states reported partial bilingual voting assistance costs for 1996 elections.⁷

For prior year elections, 29 jurisdictions and 6 states reported data for costs they incurred to provide bilingual voting assistance. Generally, jurisdictions and states said they did not keep track of the costs they incurred to provide the minority language portion of their voting assistance. Further, they are not required to identify such costs.

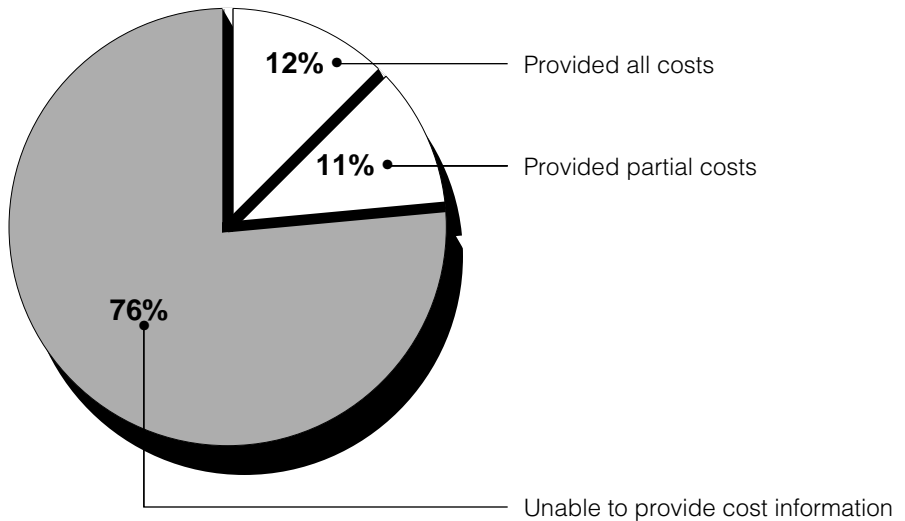
Few Jurisdictions and States Said They Identified Costs for Providing Bilingual Voting Assistance

Covered jurisdictions and states are not required to maintain data on their costs of providing bilingual voting assistance. However, a small number of jurisdictions and states reported cost information for providing bilingual voting assistance. About 76 percent of the jurisdictions (see fig. 8) and 42 percent of the states that provided bilingual voting assistance were unable to determine the cost of doing so. Some jurisdiction officials said that their jurisdictions have provided bilingual assistance for so many years that it is just a part of their total election process and they did not bother to keep track of the bilingual assistance costs.

⁶Our survey requested that respondents provide only the actual costs to implement the federal bilingual voting assistance provisions for which they had supporting documentation. We asked that they not provide cost estimates. We did not verify the cost data they provided.

⁷Bilingual voting assistance costs the states reported are over and above the costs the jurisdictions reported.

Figure 8: Percent of Jurisdictions Providing Bilingual Cost Data for Elections in 1996

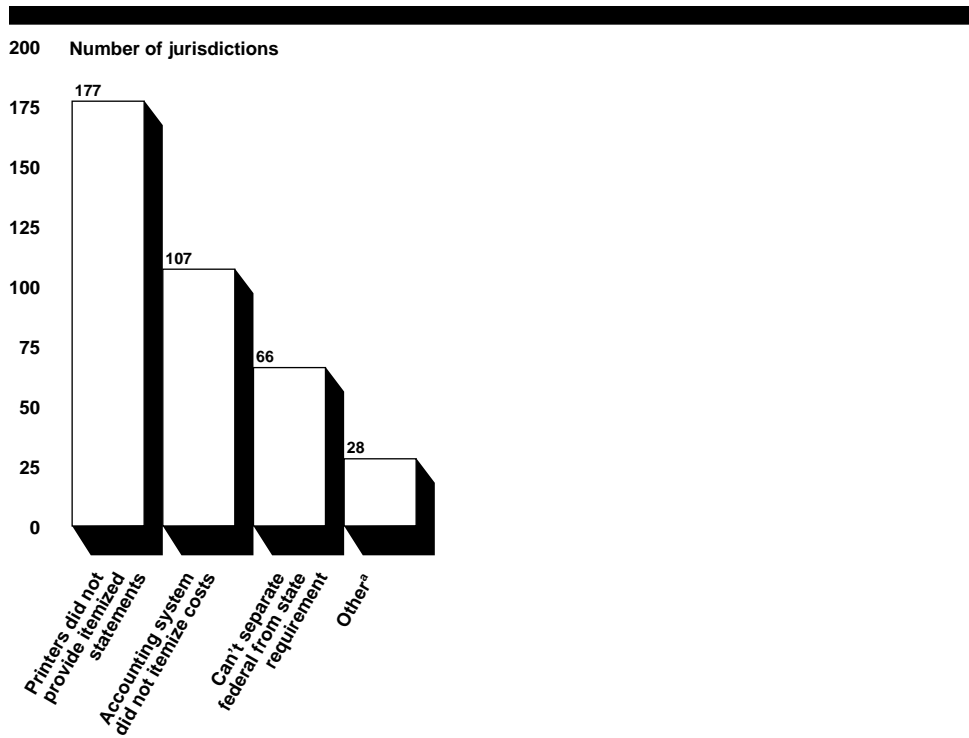


Note: Does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: GAO survey.

Most of the jurisdictions that were unable to provide cost data, cited, as causes, the lack of specificity in (1) printers' billing statements for election materials and (2) their accounting systems. In analyzing the jurisdictions' responses, we noted that 135 of the 272 jurisdictions reported they were unable to provide cost data for providing written assistance but reported using only bilingual workers or volunteer assistants to provide oral assistance. Figure 9 shows the specific reasons 231 jurisdictions reported being unable to do so.

Figure 9: Reasons Jurisdictions Could Not Provide Bilingual Assistance Costs



Note: Some jurisdictions gave more than one reason.

^aOther includes reasons such as being generally unable to separate the bilingual costs from the other costs incurred.

Source: GAO survey.

In addition, we contacted three printers of election materials and ballots in Texas⁸ to determine whether they could provide information on the cost of publishing the minority language portion of the ballot. None of the printers contacted could provide the costs of the minority portion of the ballot. One printer estimated that for 1996, the minority language portion of the ballot comprised about 25 percent of the total cost of ballots.

⁸These printers printed election materials and ballots for about 80 percent of Texas' 254 counties.

**Jurisdictions' Reported
Costs for Elections in 1996**

Of the 272 responding jurisdictions that reported providing bilingual voting assistance, 34 jurisdictions reported the total cost of providing such assistance,⁹ of which 6 jurisdictions said they provided oral assistance only but at no additional cost. In addition, 30 jurisdictions reported partial cost data. Table 2 shows the total costs jurisdictions reported they incurred to provide bilingual voting assistance under the act.¹⁰

⁹In reporting cost information, we requested that respondents include primary elections and, where applicable, the early voting period of the general election as part of the total costs for carrying out the elections. Because the data were not reported separately, costs of assistance for jurisdictions with primary elections or early voting cannot be distinguished from costs for jurisdictions that did not have such elections.

¹⁰The six jurisdictions that reported providing oral bilingual assistance at no additional cost were Jones County, MS; Newton County, MS; Humbolt County, NV; Harding County, NM; Benson County, ND; and Shannon County, SD.

Table 2: Jurisdictions' Reported Total Costs for Providing Bilingual Voting Assistance in 1996

Name of jurisdiction	Types of groups assisted	Number of polling places	Number of bilingual polling places
Alameda Co., CA	S, C	1,034	1,034
Colusa Co., CA	S	17	17
Inyo Co., CA	S	22	1
Kings Co., CA	S	28	28
Los Angeles Co., CA	S, C, V, J, F	5,632	5,632
Orange Co., CA	S, V	1,628	1,628
San Benito Co., CA	S	22	17
San Diego Co., CA	S	1,510	1,510
San Francisco City and Co., CA	C	652	250
Santa Clara Co., CA	S	1,146	1,146
New Britain, CT	S	19	8
Bingham Co., ID	S, I	22	2
Power Co., ID	I	7	2
Springfield, MA	S	64	64
Chelsea, MA	S	10	10
Clyde Township, MI	S	1	1
Zilwaukee Township, MI	S	1	1
Middlesex Co., NJ	S	247	225
Luna Co., NM	S	13	13
New York City, NY ^f	S, C	1,280	788
Suffolk Co., NY	S	350	350
Jackson Co., NC	I	18	1
Adair Co., OK	I	18	18
Central Falls, RI	S	9	9
Dewey Co., SD	I	14	9
Todd Co., SD	I	11	6
Andrew Co., TX	S	5	5
San Juan Co., UT	I	15	7

Types of help provided	Total election costs	Bilingual written costs	Bilingual oral costs	Other bilingual costs	Total bilingual costs
Written/oral	\$2,842,300	\$213,200	b	\$23,778 ^c	\$236,978
Written/oral	83,500	300	b	d	300
Oral	79,372	a	\$100	d	100
Written/oral	220,200	66,500	2,000	d	68,500
Written/oral	30,981,718	828,800	276,300	d	1,105,100
Written/oral	5,730,100	340,400	66,800	d	407,200
Written/oral	111,400	15,300	b	d	15,300
Written/oral	3,450,000	29,400	2,160	d	31,560
Written/oral	3,200,000	78,000	b	d	78,000
Written/oral	5,405,000	581,123	62,125	d	643,248
Written/oral	50,100	700	b	d	700
Oral	109,000	a	1,200	d	1,200
Oral	19,361	a	200	d	200
Written/oral	47,000	500	b	d	500
Written/oral	48,700	1,000	b	d	1,000
Written/oral	4,500	900	162	d	1,062
Written	1,000	0 ^e	a	d	0
Written/oral	281,058	105,200	b	d	105,200
Written/oral	26,000	15,000	b	d	15,000
Written/oral	16,000,000	369,500	216,900	d	586,400
Written/oral	1,800	1,000	b	d	1,000
Written/oral	18,000	100	200	d	300
Oral	1,000	a	100	d	100
Written/oral	12,749	100	b	d	100
Oral	16,450	a	138	d	138
Oral	17,100	a	700	d	700
Written/oral	6,300	1,900	700	d	2,600
Oral	68,500	a	44,500	d	44,500

Legend: S = Spanish heritage; C = Chinese; V = Vietnamese; J = Japanese; F = Filipino; and I = American Indian.

^aFor jurisdictions providing oral voting assistance only, bilingual written assistance costs are not applicable. Likewise, for jurisdictions providing written assistance only, bilingual oral assistance costs are not applicable.

^bFor jurisdictions providing both written and oral assistance, but which reported no costs for oral assistance, the oral assistance was reportedly provided by bilingual poll/office workers at no additional cost.

^cOther included computer upgrades, word processing package purchases, and additional costs for office personnel.

^dJurisdiction did not indicate costs in this category.

^eZilwaukee reported incurring no additional costs as bilingual sample ballots and other bilingual voting materials that it posted were paid for by the state and the county.

^fThe New York City response provided consolidated cost data for Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York counties.

Source: GAO survey.

In addition to the above jurisdictions, table 3 provides information on the 30 jurisdictions that were able to provide partial cost information.

Table 3: Jurisdictions' Reported Partial Costs for Providing Bilingual Voting Assistance in 1996

Name of jurisdiction	Types of groups assisted	Total polling places	Bilingual polling places
Coconino Co., AZ	S, I	75	75
Maricopa Co., AZ	S, I	843	92
Pima Co., AZ	S, I	402	402
Imperial Co., CA	S	65	65
Kern Co., CA ^a	S	318	237
Monterey Co., CA	S	169	52
Riverside Co., CA	S	961	961
San Bernardino Co., CA ^a	S	876	291
Tulare Co., CA ^a	S	168	168
Ventura Co., CA	S	427	427
Yuba Co., CA	S	43	43
Saguache Co., CO	S	10	10
Hartford Town, CT	S	27	27
Collier Co., FL	S, I	94	94
Dade Co., FL	S	576	576
Hillsborough Co., FL	S	314	314
Monroe, Co., FL	S	33	33
Orange Co., FL	S	218	218
Passaic Co., NJ	S	279	81
Union Co., NJ	S	219	46
Cibola Co., NM	S, I	30	30
Lea Co., NM	S	46	46
San Juan Co., NM	S, I	83	83
Taos Co., NM	S, I	40	40
Valencia Co., NM	S	36	36
Philadelphia Co., PA	S	1,681	1,681
Lamb Co., TX	S	12	11
Parmer Co., TX	S	10	9
Collin Co., TX	S	119	119
Jones Co., TX	S	15	5

Types of help provided	Total election costs	Bilingual written costs	Bilingual oral costs	Other bilingual costs	Partial bilingual costs totals
Written/oral	\$242,600	unknown	\$1,500	\$275 ^e	\$1,775
Written/oral	3,500,000	\$3,400	294	^d	3,694
Written/oral	1,640,363	unknown	600	^d	600
Written/oral	277,665	70,200	^c	^d	70,200
Written/oral	800,000	23,000	^c	^d	23,000
Written/oral	^d	38,500	^c	^d	38,500
Written/oral	2,700,000	22,800	unknown	^d	22,800
Written/oral	1,550,315	72,400	2,340	^d	74,740
Written/oral	329,900	18,591	^c	^d	18,591
Written/oral	unknown	3,400	^c	200 ^e	3,600
Written/oral	188,896	16,651	^c	^d	16,651
Written/oral	28,000	200	^c	^d	200
Written/oral	24,370	1,432	^c	^d	1,432
Written/oral	540,000	2,000	unknown	^d	2,000
Written/oral	2,700,000	53,900	^c	^d	53,900
Written/oral	1,080,000	700	^c	^d	700
Written/oral	65,000	2,662	^c	^d	2,662
Written/oral	1,348,400	12,200	^c	^d	12,200
Written/oral	727,100	8,349	25,000	^d	33,349
Written/oral	634,800	14,400	4,300	^d	18,700
Written/oral	44,844	unknown	4,960	^d	4,960
Written/oral	84,779	9,699	^c	^d	9,699
Written/oral	450,100	unknown	64,600	1,976 ^e	66,576
Written/oral	^f	unknown	120	^d	120
Written/oral	120,500	2,000	500	6,500 ^e	9,000
Written/oral	^f	unknown	3,100	^d	3,100
Written/oral	5,900 ^b	unknown	700	^d	700
Written/oral	5,500 ^b	unknown	600	^d	600
Written/oral	230,000 ^b	4,000	^c	^d	4,000
Written/oral	10,983 ^b	unknown	300	^d	300

Legend: S = Spanish heritage and I = American Indian.

^aTotal election costs for Kern County, San Bernardino County, and Tulare County, CA, were only for the primary election. Bilingual assistance costs for San Bernardino County were only for the primary election. Bilingual assistance costs for Kern County and Tulare County were for both the primary and general elections.

^bIn Texas, the political parties paid the costs of the primary elections, while the jurisdictions paid the costs for the general election.

^cFor jurisdictions providing both written and oral assistance, but which reported no costs for oral assistance, the oral assistance was reportedly provided by bilingual poll/office workers or volunteers at no additional cost. For jurisdictions providing written assistance only, no oral assistance was provided.

^dJurisdiction did not indicate costs in this category.

^eOther bilingual costs included: Coconino County, AZ, incurred mileage costs; Ventura County, CA, replaced signs, instructions, and forms; San Juan County, NM, produced video and audio tapes and purchased bulletin boards; and Valencia County, NM, purchased audio/visual equipment for pollworker training.

^fJurisdiction did not complete this question.

Source: GAO survey.

States' Reported Costs for Elections in 1996

Of the 12 state respondents that reported providing bilingual voting assistance, Florida and Hawaii reported total bilingual voting assistance costs for the 1996 elections. Arizona, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, and Rhode Island provided partial cost data. Table 4 presents the cost data reported by the seven states for the 1996 elections.

Table 4: States' Reported Costs for Providing Bilingual Voting Assistance in 1996

State	Type of help provided	Bilingual written costs	Bilingual oral costs	Other bilingual costs	Total bilingual costs
Total costs:					
Hawaii	Written/oral	\$22,648	\$680	a	\$23,328
Florida	Written	7,900	b	a	7,900
Partial costs:					
Arizona	Written/oral	3,970	a	a	3,970
Massachusetts	Written/oral	3,437	0 ^c	a	3,437
Michigan	Written	3,930	b	a	3,930
New Mexico	Written/oral	unknown	9,400	\$60,900 ^d	70,300
Rhode Island	Written	8,000	b	a	8,000

^aStates did not report costs in these categories.

^bStates provided written assistance only; bilingual oral assistance costs were not applicable.

^cMassachusetts reported providing oral assistance at no additional cost by having state employees available that spoke the minority language.

^dNew Mexico provided grants to jurisdictions to provide bilingual voting assistance.

Source: GAO survey.

States' and Jurisdictions' Reported Costs for Prior Elections

For prior election years 1992 to 1995, 29 jurisdictions and 6 states provided cost data. However, the cost data provided may not represent all bilingual costs.

The bilingual assistance costs jurisdictions reported for prior years' elections varied widely. For example, Central Falls City, RI, reported costs of \$83 for 1992, \$164 for 1993, \$175 for 1994, but \$0 for 1995. Los Angeles County, CA, reported costs of \$451,800 for 1993, \$764,900 for 1994, and \$292,400 for 1995. Table 5 shows the prior year election costs reported by the jurisdictions.

Table 5: Reported Costs to Provide Bilingual Voting Assistance by Jurisdiction, Election Years 1992-1995

Name of jurisdiction	Bilingual costs 1992	Bilingual costs 1993	Bilingual costs 1994	Bilingual costs 1995
Alameda Co., CA	\$67,300	\$48,200	\$191,800	\$33,563
Colusa Co., CA	300	^a	300	^a
Imperial Co., CA	^a	^a	47,800	16,700
Inyo Co., CA	^a	45	90	^a
Kern Co., CA	51,000	^a	30,000	^a
Los Angeles Co., CA	^a	451,800	764,900	292,400
Orange Co., CA	160,084	^a	381,138	^a
Riverside Co., CA	11,452	7,659	22,008	22,972
San Benito Co., CA	12,562	^a	10,175	418
San Diego Co., CA	19,299	25,557	45,000	28,800
San Francisco City and Co., CA	34,552	45,865	43,571	35,632
Santa Clara Co., CA	^a	^a	352,447	^a
Tulare Co., CA	38,100	9,900	19,400	11,000
Ventura Co., CA	600	100	14,200	^a
Yuba Co., CA	^a	^a	28,793	^a
Saguache Co., CO	^a	^a	110	^a
Windham Co., CT	^a	^a	^a	1,700
Orange Co., FL	7,344	^a	5,400	^a
Bingham Co., ID	500	^a	500	^a
Power Co., ID	^a	^a	200	^a
Clyde Township, MI	422	106	500	^a
Union Co., NJ	^a	36,900	32,000	24,500
New York City, NY ^b	127,060	309,620	450,624	264,226
Jackson Co., NC	325	^a	332	^a
Lea Co., NM	13,872	^a	12,195	^a
Adair Co., OK	117	^a	117	^a
Central Falls City, RI	83	164	175	0
Dewey Co., SD	452	^a	406	^a
San Juan Co., UT	^a	^a	49,700	^a

^aJurisdictions did not report costs in these years because, for example, they were unable to determine those costs or no elections were held.

^bThe New York City response provided consolidated cost data for Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York counties.

Source: GAO survey.

Similarly, the costs reported by the six states for prior election years varied. For example, for 1994, Hawaii reported costs of \$610, while New Mexico reported costs of more than \$70,000. Four of the states reported they did not incur any election costs in odd-numbered years, but other states did not provide cost information for a year. Table 6 shows the prior year election costs reported by the states.

Table 6: States' Reported Prior Year Election Costs, 1992-1995

State	Bilingual costs 1992	Bilingual costs 1993	Bilingual costs 1994	Bilingual costs 1995
Arizona	a	a	\$10,000	a
Hawaii	\$1,872	a	610	a
Massachusetts	3,000	a	6,000	a
Michigan	1,590	\$806	8,901	a
New Mexico	a	a	70,300	a
Texas	146,524	247,295	1,520	\$248,281

^aStates did not incur or did not provide costs for these years.

Source: GAO survey.

We are providing copies of this report to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Committees on the Judiciary and their respective Ranking Minority Members. We will also make copies available to others on request.

Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V. If you have any questions about this report, please call me on (202) 512-8777.

Sincerely yours,



Norman J. Rabkin
Director, Administration of
Justice Issues

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Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Our objectives were to determine (1) what types of bilingual voting assistance states and covered jurisdictions provided during the 1996 general election to implement the bilingual voting assistance provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended; and (2) the actual costs states and covered jurisdictions incurred in 1996 to provide bilingual voting assistance and materials, as well as the actual costs they incurred in prior elections. Regarding cost information, we agreed to collect election costs, not voter registration costs, and only obtain the actual bilingual costs of the states and covered jurisdictions (not estimates).

We began our review by carrying out a search of the legal and social science literature on bilingual voting assistance. We reviewed the studies identified through the search, as well as relevant newspaper articles and reports by the Congressional Research Service. We also reviewed our 1986 report on the costs and use of bilingual voting assistance during the 1984 general election.¹ We contacted Department of Justice and Bureau of Census officials to identify jurisdictions covered by the act.

To address both our objectives, we sought descriptive data and other information about all 422 covered jurisdictions and the 28 states in which the jurisdictions were located, through mail-out questionnaires. We developed one questionnaire to request information from the covered jurisdictions and a second questionnaire to solicit information from the states in which the covered jurisdictions were located. We sent a questionnaire to election officials representing 391² covered jurisdictions and the 28 states.

With respect to the first objective, we requested, from each covered jurisdiction and state, information on the types of written and oral bilingual voting assistance provided. In addition, we asked the states and jurisdictions to provide samples of the written materials and information provided to minority language voters.

¹Bilingual Voting Assistance: Costs of and Use During the November 1984 General Election (GAO/GGD-86-134BR, Sept. 1986).

²For the 25 covered jurisdictions in Alaska (as determined by the 1990 Census) and the 3 covered jurisdictions in Hawaii, state election officials requested that they be permitted to respond for the jurisdictions; in both Alaska and Hawaii, the state and not the local jurisdictions is responsible for election administration. Their responses are contained in discussions of state assistance. In addition, New York City Board of Election officials agreed to provide responses for four covered jurisdictions—Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York Counties. Their response is included in the discussions on jurisdiction assistance. Thus, in total, 422 covered jurisdictions were represented by the jurisdictions to which we mailed surveys.

Regarding the second objective, we asked the covered jurisdictions and states to provide actual cost information for the 1996 general election, including early voting and absentee voting costs, and for the primary elections. We also asked the jurisdictions and states to provide actual data for other costs that were the result of providing bilingual voting assistance, e.g., for special equipment such as enhanced voting machines. We solicited information on the actual costs incurred by the jurisdictions and states to provide written and oral assistance costs as well as other related costs for elections between 1992 and 1995. If, however, a state or jurisdiction could not provide actual cost data, we asked that it not provide estimated costs.

Further, we used the questionnaires to collect information on bilingual voting assistance laws in the 28 states. Specifically, we asked the states and jurisdictions to provide information on any state or local bilingual voting assistance requirements.

To develop the questionnaires, we spoke with officials in the Voting Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. In addition, we contacted state elections officials in the 28 states where the 422 jurisdictions were located to (1) obtain the names and addresses of the appropriate election officials in the covered jurisdictions and (2) ascertain what information might be available on the bilingual voting assistance materials provided and the costs of providing such materials. We pretested the questionnaires, by telephone, with election officials from judgmentally selected states and covered jurisdictions. Through these pretests, we received input from states and jurisdictions in different geographic regions. We revised the questionnaires on the basis of this input.

On November 15, 1996, we mailed the questionnaires. We followed up with a second mailing to those jurisdictions that had not responded by December 23, 1996. In mid-January 1997, we followed up with phone calls to election officials in those jurisdictions and states that had not responded.

In all, we received information about 323 of the 422 covered jurisdictions and 26 of the 28 states. Specifically, we received fully or partially completed responses from 292 (75 percent) of the 391 covered jurisdictions sent questionnaires. Alaska and Hawaii provided information for the 28 jurisdictions in their states. The New York City Board of Election provided responses for four covered jurisdictions—Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York Counties.

To the extent practical, we attempted to verify the completeness and accuracy of the responses. We conducted edit checks of key responses for completeness. When necessary, we contacted respondents to obtain responses to incomplete answers and to resolve any apparent inconsistencies between answers to different questions. For Los Angeles County, we contacted an election official to determine the source of Los Angeles' reported bilingual assistance cost information. As a consistency check, where possible, we compared questionnaire responses on the assistance provided with the samples of written election materials the respondents provided us. Of the 258 respondents reporting that they provided written bilingual voting assistance, 155 or 60 percent sent us samples of the bilingual materials they provided.

In addition, a number of jurisdictions provided us documentation supporting their costs. Ten jurisdictions provided copies of invoices they received to support, in total or in part, the bilingual costs they reported and seven jurisdictions provided, in their questionnaire responses, itemized cost breakdowns to support the costs they reported. For example, Pima County, AZ, provided copies of invoices supporting the \$600 in costs it reported; Monterey County, CA, provided invoices totaling \$17,511.68 it received for, among other things, translations of candidate statements and ballot measures; and San Bernardino County, CA, showed on its response, among other things, calculations to support \$2,340 it paid in pay adjustments to its bilingual staff. A Los Angeles County official told us that their reported costs were prepared by their budget and accounting section, which tracks the cost information, and were based on hard copy evidence. Moreover, she said that the county has to follow accounting rules and regulations specified by the county auditor. Furthermore, we extended our reporting deadline, because we had asked for actual costs and some jurisdictions, such as New York City and San Francisco, had not received all of their invoices in time to meet our originally requested date. The supporting documentation the jurisdictions provided was not inconsistent with the bilingual costs they reported. Because the jurisdictions that reported costs were geographically dispersed, it was not practical to fully verify the costs reported.

For both objectives, however, the questionnaire findings were affected by a variety of limitations in the information and data available. The covered jurisdictions varied in the number of polling places where bilingual assistance was provided, the size of the populations in need of bilingual assistance, and the number of minority groups provided bilingual assistance within the jurisdiction. Accordingly, comparisons across

jurisdictions are not meaningful and findings should not be projected to nonrespondents.

Further, the response rate varied across minority language groups. We received information about 262 (74 percent) of the 352 jurisdictions required to provide assistance to Spanish heritage groups. Figure I.1 illustrates the location and number of these jurisdictions.

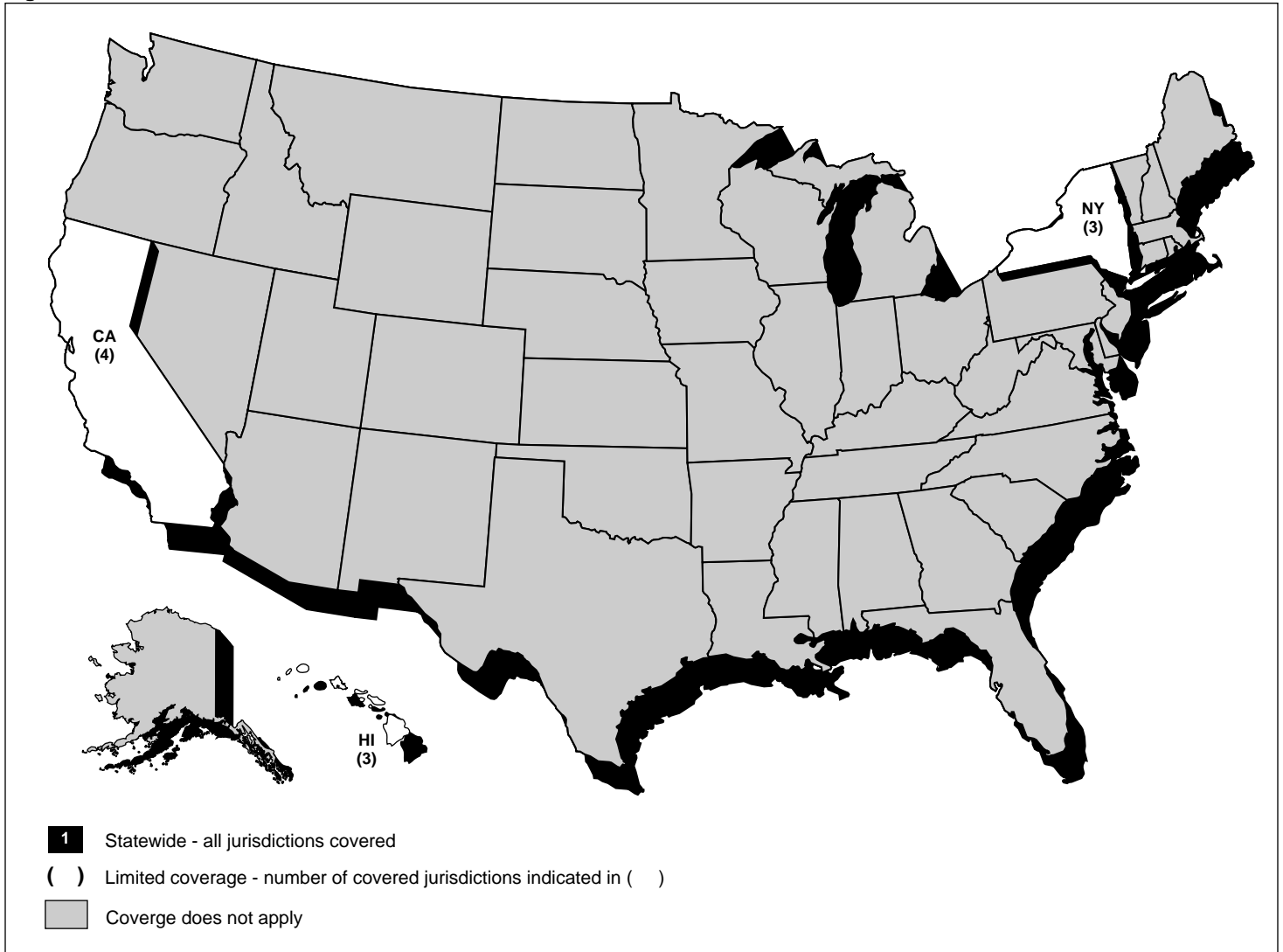
Figure I.1: Location and Number of Spanish Heritage Covered Jurisdictions



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Justice and Bureau of Census data.

We received information about all 10 jurisdictions required to provide assistance to Asian Americans. Figure I.2 illustrates the location and number of these jurisdictions.

Figure I.2: Location and Number of Asian American Covered Jurisdictions



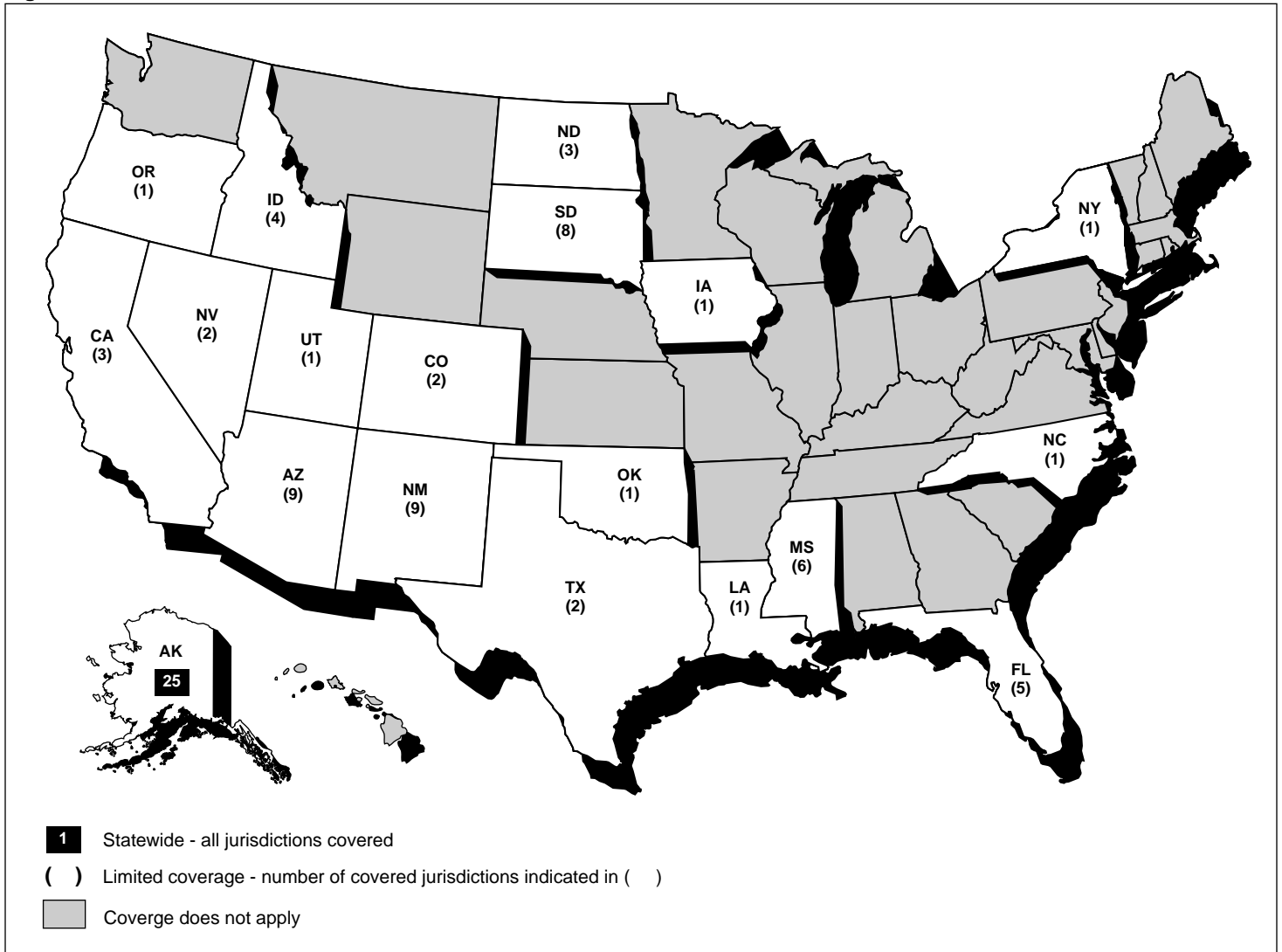
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Justice and Bureau of Census data.

We received information representing 51³ (77 percent) of the 66 jurisdictions required to provide assistance to American Indians. The state of Alaska provided statewide information on assistance provided to

³We received statewide information from Alaska where there are six jurisdictions with American Indian populations.

Alaskan Natives (25 jurisdictions). Figure I.3 illustrates the location and number of the American Indian and Alaskan Native covered jurisdictions.

Figure I.3: Location and Number of American Indian and Alaskan Native Covered Jurisdictions



Note: Of the 25 Alaskan jurisdictions, 6 provided assistance to both Alaskan Natives and American Indians.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Justice and Bureau of Census data.

Thus, we can report responses representing all Alaskan Native and all Asian American jurisdictions. We can report responses representing 77 percent of the American Indian jurisdictions. Of the 90 Spanish heritage jurisdictions (26 percent) not reporting, most were in Texas. Since even within a language group, the jurisdictions are very different, comparisons across jurisdictions or projections of findings to the nonrespondents within a particular language group should not be made.

We received information from jurisdictions in all 28 states. The respondents included urban and rural jurisdictions. We did not, however, receive information from the major metropolitan areas of Suffolk County, MA—Boston—and Harris County, TX—Houston. We did not receive information from the states of Colorado and Nevada.

In addition, 20 of the jurisdictions responding reported providing no bilingual voting assistance. Seventeen of these jurisdictions were to provide assistance to American Indians; they comprised one fourth of the 66 jurisdictions required to provide assistance to American Indians. Three of the 20 jurisdictions were to provide assistance to Spanish heritage groups. Since the 20 jurisdictions were not randomly distributed among the respondents but were primarily American Indian jurisdictions, there may be something unique about these jurisdictions, e.g., the size of the minority language population or the oral language tradition, that could explain the responses. Further, since the responses were self-reported, reflecting the interpretation of the respondent, conclusions regarding compliance cannot be drawn without further inquiry.

In addition, differences in the calculation and reporting of election costs precluded comparisons among the jurisdictions and states that could provide election cost and/or bilingual cost data. For example, for Texas jurisdictions' total election costs did not include the costs of primary elections because the political parties paid the primary costs, while across California the jurisdictions incurred both primary and election costs. Because of the differences in election and bilingual assistance costs across the states and jurisdictions, we did not attempt to compare the percentage of bilingual costs to total costs across jurisdictions, calculate any summary costs, or use these data to project the costs of nonrespondents. We only reported the cost figures as provided by the jurisdictions and states that could provide us with actual cost data. We did not verify independently the cost data provided.

Further, in an effort to obtain cost information in addition to that provided by the questionnaire respondents, we contacted three printers in Texas. We focused on Texas because it had the largest number of covered jurisdictions (254) of any state and these jurisdictions comprised over half of the total of covered jurisdictions nationwide. Since few Texas jurisdictions could provide any cost data and most Texas jurisdictions used these printers, we contacted them to ask whether they could provide cost information.

On April 9, 1997, we requested comments from the Attorney General or her designee on a draft of this report. On April 18, 1997, the Chief of the Voting Section, Civil Rights Division, on behalf of the Attorney General, provided technical information, which we incorporated where appropriate. We did our work between July 1996 and April 1997 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions That Responded to GAO's Survey

The following table shows the states and covered jurisdictions that responded to GAO's survey and the related ethnic and minority language groups to whom bilingual voting assistance applied.

Table II.1: States and Covered Jurisdictions That Responded to GAO's Survey and the Applicable Ethnic and Minority Language Groups

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
Alaska ^a		Alaskan Natives (Eskimo, Aleut); American Indian (Athapascan, Tanaina, Tlinglit, Kuchin)
Arizona	Coconino County	American Indian (Havasupai, Hopi, Navajo); Spanish heritage
	Gila County	American Indian (Apache); Spanish heritage
	Graham County	American Indian (Apache); Spanish heritage
	Greenlee County	Spanish heritage
	La Paz County	Spanish heritage
	Maricopa County	American Indian (Pima, Yavapai); Spanish heritage
	Mohave County	Spanish heritage
	Pima County	American Indian (Pima); Spanish heritage
	Pinal County	American Indian (Apache, Pima); Spanish heritage
California	Alameda County	Asian American (Chinese); Spanish heritage
	Colusa County	American Indian (Wintun)
	Fresno County	Spanish heritage
	Imperial County	Spanish heritage
	Inyo County	American Indian (Spanish)
	Kern County	Spanish heritage
	Kings County	Spanish heritage
	Lake County	American Indian (Spanish)
	Los Angeles County	Asian American (Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Vietnamese); Spanish heritage
	Merced County	Spanish heritage
	Monterey County	Spanish heritage
	Orange County	Asian American (Vietnamese); Spanish heritage
	Riverside County	Spanish heritage
	San Benito County	Spanish heritage
	San Bernardino County	Spanish heritage
	San Diego County	Spanish heritage
	San Francisco County	Asian American (Chinese)
Santa Clara County	Spanish heritage	
Tulare County	Spanish heritage	
Ventura County	Spanish heritage	

(continued)

Appendix II
Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions
That Responded to GAO's Survey

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
	Yuba County	Spanish heritage
Colorado ^b	Alamosa County	Spanish heritage
	Archuleta County	Spanish heritage
	Bent County	Spanish heritage
	Conejos County	Spanish heritage
	La Plata County	American Indian (Ute)
	Las Animas County	Spanish heritage
	Montezuma County	American Indian (Ute)
	Otero County	Spanish heritage
	Rio Grande County	Spanish heritage
	Saguache County	Spanish heritage
Connecticut	Bridgeport Town (Fairfield County)	Spanish heritage
	Hartford Town (Hartford County)	Spanish heritage
	New Britain Town (Hartford County)	Spanish heritage
	Windham Town (Windham County)	Spanish heritage
Florida	Broward County	American Indian (Mikasuki, Muskogee); Spanish heritage
	Collier County	American Indian (Mikasuki)
	Dade County	American Indian (Mikasuki); Spanish heritage
	Hardee County	Spanish heritage
	Hendry County	American Indian (Mikasuki, Muskogee)
	Hillsborough County	Spanish heritage
	Monroe County	Spanish heritage
	Orange County	Spanish heritage
Hawaii ^a		Asian American (Filipino, Japanese)
Idaho	Bingham County	American Indian (Shoshoni)
	Owyhee County	American Indian (Shoshoni)
	Power County	American Indian (Shoshoni)
Illinois	Cook County	Spanish heritage
Iowa	Tama County	American Indian (Fox)
Louisiana	Avoyelles Parish	American Indian (French)
Massachusetts	Chelsea City (Suffolk County)	Spanish heritage
	Holyoke City (Hampden County)	Spanish heritage
	Springfield City (Hampden County)	Spanish heritage
Michigan	Clyde Township (Allegan County)	Spanish heritage
	Zilwaukee Township (Saginaw County)	Spanish heritage
Mississippi	Jones County	American Indian (Choctaw)
	Kemper County	American Indian (Choctaw)
	Leake County	American Indian (Choctaw)

(continued)

Appendix II
Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions
That Responded to GAO's Survey

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
	Neshoba County	American Indian (Choctaw)
	Newton County	American Indian (Choctaw)
Nevada ^b	Elko County	American Indian (Shoshoni)
	Humboldt County	American Indian (Paiute)
New Jersey	Essex County	Spanish heritage
	Middlesex County	Spanish heritage
	Passaic County	Spanish heritage
	Union County	Spanish heritage
New Mexico	Chaves County	Spanish heritage
	Cibola County	American Indian (Keres, Navajo, Zuni); Spanish heritage
	Colfax County	Spanish heritage
	Dona Ana County	Spanish heritage
	Eddy County	Spanish heritage
	Grant County	Spanish heritage
	Guadalupe County	Spanish heritage
	Harding County	Spanish heritage
	Hidalgo County	Spanish heritage
	Lea County	Spanish heritage
	Luna County	Spanish heritage
	McKinley County	American Indian (Navajo, Zuni)
	Mora County	Spanish heritage
	Quay County	Spanish heritage
	Roosevelt County	Spanish heritage
	San Juan County	American Indian (Navajo)
	Sandoval County	American Indian (Jicarilla, Keres, Navajo, Towa)
	Santa Fe County	Spanish heritage
	Socorro County	American Indian (Navajo); Spanish heritage
	Taos County	American Indian (Tiwa); Spanish heritage
	Torrance County	Spanish heritage
	Union County	Spanish heritage
	Valencia County	American Indian (Keres, Tiwa); Spanish heritage
New York	Franklin County	American Indian (Mohawk)
	New York City ^c	Asian American (Chinese), Spanish heritage
	Suffolk County	Spanish heritage
North Carolina	Jackson County	American Indian
North Dakota	Benson County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Eddy County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Ramsey County	American Indian (Dakota)

(continued)

Appendix II
Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions
That Responded to GAO's Survey

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
Oklahoma	Adair County	American Indian (Cherokee)
Oregon	Malheur County	American Indian (Paiute)
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia County	Spanish heritage
Rhode Island	Central Falls City (Providence County)	Spanish heritage
South Dakota	Dewey County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Gregory County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Lyman County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Mellette County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Shannon County	American Indian
	Todd County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Tripp County	American Indian (Dakota)
	Ziebach County	American Indian (Dakota)
Texas	Andrews County	Spanish heritage
	Aransas County	Spanish heritage
	Archer County	Spanish heritage
	Atascosa County	Spanish heritage
	Bailey County	Spanish heritage
	Bastrop County	Spanish heritage
	Baylor County	Spanish heritage
	Bee County	Spanish heritage
	Bowie County	Spanish heritage
	Brazoria County	Spanish heritage
	Burnet County	Spanish heritage
	Caldwell County	Spanish heritage
	Calhoun County	Spanish heritage
	Callahan County	Spanish heritage
	Cameron County	Spanish heritage
	Camp County	Spanish heritage
	Carson County	Spanish heritage
	Castro County	Spanish heritage
	Childress County	Spanish heritage
	Cochran County	Spanish heritage
	Coke County	Spanish heritage
	Collin County	Spanish heritage
	Concho County	Spanish heritage
	Cooke County	Spanish heritage
	Comal County	Spanish heritage
	Coryell County	Spanish heritage
Crane County	Spanish heritage	

(continued)

**Appendix II
Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions
That Responded to GAO's Survey**

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
	Crockett County	Spanish heritage
	Crosby County	Spanish heritage
	Culberson County	Spanish heritage
	Dallam County	Spanish heritage
	Dallas County	Spanish heritage
	Dawson County	Spanish heritage
	Deaf Smith County	Spanish heritage
	Denton County	Spanish heritage
	Dewitt County	Spanish heritage
	Dickens County	Spanish heritage
	Dimmit County	Spanish heritage
	Donley County	Spanish heritage
	Duval County	Spanish heritage
	Eastland County	Spanish heritage
	Ector County	Spanish heritage
	Edwards County	Spanish heritage
	El Paso County	American Indian (Spanish); Spanish heritage
	Ellis County	Spanish heritage
	Erath County	Spanish heritage
	Falls County	Spanish heritage
	Fannin County	Spanish heritage
	Fayette County	Spanish heritage
	Fisher County	Spanish heritage
	Floyd County	Spanish heritage
	Foard County	Spanish heritage
	Fort Bend County	Spanish heritage
	Franklin County	Spanish heritage
	Freestone County	Spanish heritage
	Frio County	Spanish heritage
	Gaines County	Spanish heritage
	Garza County	Spanish heritage
	Gillespie County	Spanish heritage
	Glasscock County	Spanish heritage
	Goliad County	Spanish heritage
	Gonzales County	Spanish heritage
	Gray County	Spanish heritage
	Grayson County	Spanish heritage
	Gregg County	Spanish heritage
	Grimes County	Spanish heritage

(continued)

Appendix II
Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions
That Responded to GAO's Survey

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
	Guadalupe County	Spanish heritage
	Hall County	Spanish heritage
	Hardeman County	Spanish heritage
	Hardin County	Spanish heritage
	Hartley County	Spanish heritage
	Hays County	Spanish heritage
	Hemphill County	Spanish heritage
	Henderson County	Spanish heritage
	Hidalgo County	Spanish heritage
	Hockley County	Spanish heritage
	Hood County	Spanish heritage
	Hopkins County	Spanish heritage
	Howard County	Spanish heritage
	Hudspeth County	Spanish heritage
	Hunt County	Spanish heritage
	Irion County	Spanish heritage
	Jack County	Spanish heritage
	Jackson County	Spanish heritage
	Jeff Davis County	Spanish heritage
	Jefferson County	Spanish heritage
	Jim Hogg County	Spanish heritage
	Jim Wells County	Spanish heritage
	Jones County	Spanish heritage
	Karnes County	Spanish heritage
	Kaufman County	Spanish heritage
	Kenedy County	Spanish heritage
	Kent County	Spanish heritage
	Kerr County	Spanish heritage
	Kimble County	Spanish heritage
	Kinney County	Spanish heritage
	Kleberg County	Spanish heritage
	La Salle County	Spanish heritage
	Lamb County	Spanish heritage
	Lavaca County	Spanish heritage
	Lee County	Spanish heritage
	Leon County	Spanish heritage
	Limestone County	Spanish heritage
	Lipscomb County	Spanish heritage
	Live Oak County	Spanish heritage

(continued)

Appendix II
Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions
That Responded to GAO's Survey

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
	Llano County	Spanish heritage
	Lubbock County	Spanish heritage
	Lynn County	Spanish heritage
	Madison County	Spanish heritage
	Martin County	Spanish heritage
	Mason County	Spanish heritage
	McLennan County	Spanish heritage
	McMullen County	Spanish heritage
	Medina County	Spanish heritage
	Menard County	Spanish heritage
	Midland County	Spanish heritage
	Milam County	Spanish heritage
	Mitchell County	Spanish heritage
	Montague County	Spanish heritage
	Moore County	Spanish heritage
	Newton County	Spanish heritage
	Nolan County	Spanish heritage
	Oldham County	Spanish heritage
	Orange County	Spanish heritage
	Palo Pinto County	Spanish heritage
	Panola County	Spanish heritage
	Parmer County	Spanish heritage
	Pecos County	Spanish heritage
	Polk County	American Indian (Alabama)
	Potter County	Spanish heritage
	Presidio County	Spanish heritage
	Reagan County	Spanish heritage
	Real County	Spanish heritage
	Red River County	Spanish heritage
	Refugio County	Spanish heritage
	Roberts County	Spanish heritage
	Robertson County	Spanish heritage
	Runnels County	Spanish heritage
	Rusk County	Spanish heritage
	San Augustine County	Spanish heritage
	San Saba County	Spanish heritage
	Schleicher County	Spanish heritage
	Scurry County	Spanish heritage
	Shelby County	Spanish heritage

(continued)

**Appendix II
Listing of States and Covered Jurisdictions
That Responded to GAO's Survey**

State	Covered jurisdiction	Ethnic groups (minority language group)
	Smith County	Spanish heritage
	Starr County	Spanish heritage
	Sutton County	Spanish heritage
	Swisher County	Spanish heritage
	Tarrant County	Spanish heritage
	Taylor County	Spanish heritage
	Terrell County	Spanish heritage
	Terry County	Spanish heritage
	Throckmorton County	Spanish heritage
	Titus County	Spanish heritage
	Tom Green County	Spanish heritage
	Travis County	Spanish heritage
	Upton County	Spanish heritage
	Uvalde County	Spanish heritage
	Val Verde County	Spanish heritage
	Van Zandt County	Spanish heritage
	Victoria County	Spanish heritage
	Ward County	Spanish heritage
	Washington County	Spanish heritage
	Webb County	Spanish heritage
	Wharton County	Spanish heritage
	Wichita County	Spanish heritage
	Wilbarger County	Spanish heritage
	Willacy County	Spanish heritage
	Wilson County	Spanish heritage
	Winkler County	Spanish heritage
	Wood County	Spanish heritage
	Yoakum County	Spanish heritage
	Zapata County	Spanish heritage
	Zavala County	Spanish heritage
Utah	San Juan County	American Indian (Navajo, Ute)
Wisconsin	Curtiss Village (Clark County)	Spanish heritage

^aAlaska and Hawaii provided consolidated responses for all state jurisdictions.

^bState did not respond to GAO's survey.

^cThe New York City response provided consolidated responses for Bronx, Kings, Queens, and New York counties.

Source: GAO survey and Appendix to Part 55, Code of Federal Regulations (28 CFR Ch.1).

Coverage Criteria for Implementation of the Voting Rights Act Provisions Regarding Language Minority Groups

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, contains two sections—4(f)(4) and 203(c)—which provide criteria for determining which states and jurisdictions are to be covered by its minority language provisions. The following material was excerpted from the Code of Federal Regulations (28 CFR Ch.1), which describes the coverage criteria.

§55.5 Coverage Under Section 4(f)(4).

(a) Coverage formula. Section 4(f)(4) applies to any State or political subdivision in which

- (1) Over five percent of the voting age citizens were, on November 1, 1972, members of a single language minority group,
- (2) Registration and election materials were provided only in English on November 1, 1972, and
- (3) Fewer than 50 percent of the voting-age citizens were registered to vote or voted in the 1972 Presidential election.

All three conditions must be satisfied before coverage exists under section 4(f)(4).¹

(b) Coverage may be determined with regard to section 4(f)(4) on a statewide or political subdivision basis.

- (1) Whenever the determination is made that the bilingual requirements of section 4(f)(4) are applicable to an entire State, these requirements apply to each of the State's political subdivisions as well as to the State. In other words, each political subdivision within a covered State is subject to the same requirements as the State.
- (2) Where an entire State is not covered under section 4(f)(4), individual political subdivisions may be covered.

§55.6 Coverage Under Section 203(c).

(a) Coverage formula. There are four ways in which a political subdivision can become subject to section 203(c).²

- (1) Political subdivision approach. A political subdivision is covered if-

¹Coverage is based on sections 4(b) (third sentence), 4(c), and 4(f)(3).

²The criteria for coverage are contained in section 203(b).

Appendix III
Coverage Criteria for Implementation of the
Voting Rights Act Provisions Regarding
Language Minority Groups

- (i) More than 5 percent of its voting age citizens are members of a single language minority group and are limited-English proficient; and
 - (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens in the political subdivision is higher than the national illiteracy rate.
- (2) State approach. A political subdivision is covered if-
- (i) It is located in a state in which more than 5 percent of the voting age citizens are members of a single language minority and are limited-English proficient;
 - (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens in the state is higher than the national illiteracy rate; and
 - (iii) Five percent or more of the voting age citizens of the political subdivision are members of such language minority group and are limited-English proficient.
- (3) Numerical approach. A political subdivision is covered if-
- (i) More than 10,000 of its voting age citizens are members of a single language minority group and are limited-English proficient; and
 - (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens in the political subdivision is higher than the national illiteracy rate.
- (4) Indian reservation approach. A political subdivision is covered if there is located within its borders all or any part of an Indian reservation-
- (i) In which more than 5 percent of the voting age American Indian or Alaska Native citizens are members of a single language minority group and are limited-English proficient; and
 - (ii) The illiteracy rate of such language minority citizens is higher than the national illiteracy rate.
- (b) Definitions. For the purpose of determinations of coverage under section 203(c), “limited-English proficient” means unable to speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process; “Indian reservation” means any area that is an American Indian or

**Appendix III
Coverage Criteria for Implementation of the
Voting Rights Act Provisions Regarding
Language Minority Groups**

Alaska Native area, as defined by the Census Bureau for the purposes of the 1990 decennial census; and “illiteracy” means the failure to complete the fifth primary grade.

(c) Determinations. Determinations of coverage under section 203(c) are made with regard to specific language groups of the language minorities listed in section 203(e).

Examples of Bilingual Voting Written Assistance Materials


The following are excerpted examples of bilingual voting materials provided by covered jurisdictions.


**Appendix IV
Examples of Bilingual Voting Written
Assistance Materials**

Figure IV.1: Bilingual Ballot - Comal County, TX

**GENERAL ELECTION (ELECCION GENERAL)
(CONDADO DE) COMAL COUNTY, TEXAS
November 5, 1996 (5 de Noviembre de 1996)
OFFICIAL BALLOT (BOLETA OFICIAL)**

INSTRUCTION NOTE: (NOTA DE INSTRUCCION)

Vote for the candidate of your choice in each race by completing the arrow beside the candidate's name. You may cast a straight-party vote (that is, cast a vote for all the nominees of one party) by completing the arrow beside the name of the party of your choice. If you cast a straight-party vote for all the nominees of one party and also cast a vote for an opponent of one of that party's nominees, your vote for the opponent will be counted as well as your vote for all the other nominees of the party for which the straight-party vote was cast. You may vote for a write-in candidate by writing in the name of the candidate on the line provided and completing the arrow provided to the right of the line. To Vote, Complete The Arrow Pointing To The Candidate of Your Choice, Like This: 

(Vote por el candidato de su preferencia en cada carrera completando la flecha de negro a la derecha del nombre del candidato. Usted podrá votar por todos los candidatos de un solo partido político (es decir, votar por todos los candidatos nombrados del mismo partido político) completando la flecha de negro a la derecha del nombre de dicho partido político. Si usted vota por un solo partido político ("straight-ticket") y también vota por el contrincante de uno de los candidatos de dicho partido político su voto por el contrincante tanto como su voto por todos los demás candidatos del partido político de su preferencia sera contado. Usted podrá votar por inserción escrita escribiendo el nombre del candidato en la línea provista y completando la flecha de negro a la derecha de la línea. Para Votar, Complete La Flecha A La Derecha Del Candidato De Su Preferencia, Así:) 

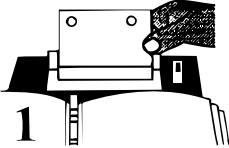
STRAIGHT PARTY VOTE (VOTAR PARTIDO DERECHO)		JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT, PLACE 1 (JUEZ, CORTE SUPREMA, LUGAR NUM. 1)		CHIEF JUSTICE, 3RD COURT OF APPEALS DISTRICT (JUEZ PRESIDENTE, CORTE DE APELACIONES, DISTRITO NUM. 3)	
REPUBLICAN PARTY (PARTIDO REPUBLICANO)	←	JOHN CORNYN	REP ←	SKEET DES CHAMP	REP ←
DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PARTIDO DEMOCRATICO)	←	PATRICE BARRON	DEM ←	JIMMY CARROLL	DEM ←
LIBERTARIAN PARTY (PARTIDO LIBERTARIANO)	←	THOMAS STULTS	LIB ←		
NATURAL LAW PARTY (PARTIDO DE LEY NATURAL)	←	JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT, PLACE 2 (JUEZ, CORTE SUPREMA, LUGAR NUM. 2)		DISTRICT JUDGE, 22ND JUDICIAL DISTRICT (JUEZ DEL DISTRITO, DISTRITO JUDICIAL NUM. 22)	
U.S. TAXPAYERS PARTY (PARTIDO DE PAGADORES DE IMPUESTOS)	←	JAMES A. BAKER	REP ←	CHARLES R. RAMSAY	REP ←
		GENE KELLY	DEM ←	DISTRICT ATTORNEY, 22ND JUDICIAL DISTRICT (PROCURADOR DEL DISTRITO, DISTRITO JUDICIAL NUM. 22)	
PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT (PRESIDENTE Y VICE PRESIDENTE)		EILEEN FLUME	LIB ←	DIB WALDRIP	REP ←
BOB DOLE/JACK KEMP	REP ←	JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT, PLACE 3 UNEXPIRED TERM (JUEZ, CORTE SUPREMA, LUGAR NUM. 3, DURACION RESTANTE DEL CARGO)		COUNTY ATTORNEY (PROCURADOR DEL CONDADO)	
BILL CLINTON/AL GORE	DEM ←	GREG ABBOTT	REP ←	BILL M. REIMER	REP ←
HARRY BROWNE/JO JORGENSEN	LIB ←	JOHN B. HAWLEY	LIB ←	VICKI LANGHAM	DEM ←
JOHN HAGELIN/MIKE TOMPKINS	NLP ←	JUDGE, COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, PLACE 1 (JUEZ, CORTE DE APELACIONES CRIMINALES, LUGAR NUM. 1)		SHERIFF (SHERIFF)	
HOWARD PHILLIPS/HERBERT W. TITUS	UST ←	SUE HOLLAND	REP ←	BOB HOLDER	REP ←
ROSS PEROT/JAMES CAMPBELL	IND ←	BOB PERKINS	DEM ←	COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR-COLLECTOR (ASESOR-COLECTOR DE IMPUESTOS DEL CONDADO)	
WRITE-IN (VOTO ESCRITO)		JUDGE, COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, PLACE 2 (JUEZ, CORTE DE APELACIONES CRIMINALES, LUGAR NUM. 2)		GLORIA K. CLENNAN	DEM ←
UNITED STATES SENATOR (SENADOR DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS)		PAUL WOMACK	REP ←	COUNTY SURVEYOR, UNEXPIRED TERM (AGRIMENSOR DEL CONDADO, DURACION RESTANTE DEL CARGO)	
PHIL GRAMM	REP ←	CHARLES HOLCOMB	DEM ←	WRITE-IN (VOTO ESCRITO)	←
VICTOR M. MORALES	DEM ←				
MICHAEL BIRD	LIB ←				
JOHN HUFF	NLP ←				

Figure IV.2: Bilingual Instructions - Los Angeles County, CA

English

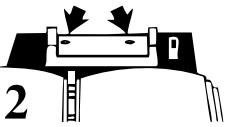
INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

PREPARE TO VOTE:



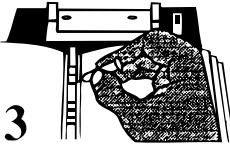
1

INSERT THE BALLOT CARD INTO THE VOTE-RECORDER. **DO NOT PUNCH**



2

BE SURE THE HOLES AT THE TOP OF THE BALLOT CARD FIT OVER THE RED



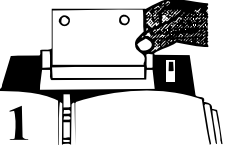
3

PUSHING VOTING PUNCH DOWN THROUGH THE HOLE NEXT TO ARROW

Vietnamese

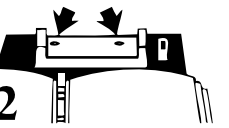
BẢN HƯỚNG DẪN CHO CỬ TRI

CHUẨN BỊ BẦU PHIẾU:



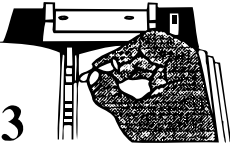
1

ĐẶT LÁ PHIẾU VÀO MÁY GHI PHIẾU. **ĐỪNG BẤM LỖ LÁ PHIẾU Ở BÊN NGOÀI MÁY GHI PHIẾU.**



2

NHẮM NGAY LỖ Ở TRÊN HÀNG ĐẦU LÁ PHIẾU PHẢI VỪA VỚI TRỤC MÀU ĐỎ.



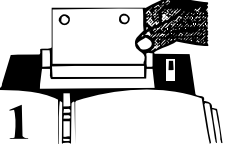
3

BẤM MÁY BẤM LỖ THỂ BẦU CỬ XUYÊN QUA LỖ KẾ BÊN MŨI TÊN ĐỂ BẦU. **KHÔNG ĐƯỢC DÙNG VIẾT MỤC HAY VIẾT CHỈ.**

Chinese

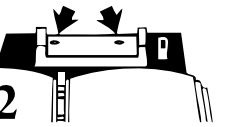
投票指南

準備投票



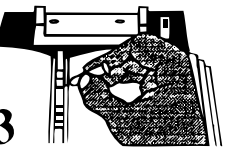
1

將選票卡插入投票記錄機。請勿在投票記錄機之外給選票打洞。



2

務必將選票卡上端之孔套入紅色短柱。



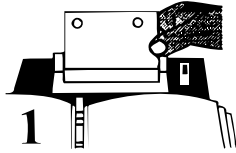
3

用選票打孔器在前頭的旁邊打洞進行投票。請勿用鋼筆、原子筆或鉛筆。

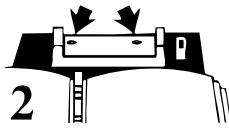
Spanish

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS VOTANTES

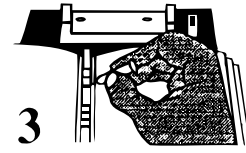
PREPARESE PARA VOTAR:



1
INTODUZCA LA TARJETA DE VOTACION EN LA URNA REGISTRADORA DE VOTOS. **NO MARQUE EL VOTO FUERA DE LA URNA REGISTRADORA.**



2
ASEGURESE QUE LAS DOS RANURAS EN EL EXTREMO DE SU TARJETA ENCAJEN EN LOS DOS PASADORES ROJOS.

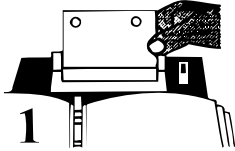


3
PARA VOTAR, EMPUJE EL PERFORADOR DE VOTOS A TRAVES DEL ORIFICIO QUE ESTA AL LADO DE LA FLECHA. **NO USE PLUMA NI LAPIZ.**

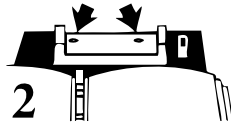
Japanese

投票手続き

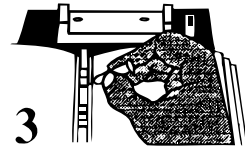
投票の準備:



1
投票用紙を投票記録機に挿入してください。投票記録機以外では用紙に穴を開けないでください。



2
投票用紙が赤い支柱にぴったり合うようにしてください。

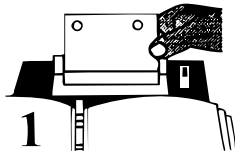


3
投票用紙に矢印の横に穴を投票パンチで開けてください。ペンや鉛筆を使わないで下さい。

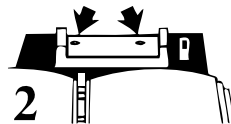
Tagalog

MGA ALITUNTUNIN PARA SA MGA BOTANTE

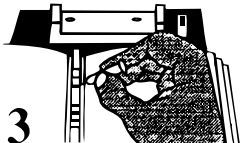
HUMANDA SA PAGBOTO:



1
IPASOK ANG BALOTA SA LOOB NG TALAAN SA PAGBOTO. HUWAG BUTASAN ANG BALOTA SA LABAS NG TALAAN SA PAGBOTO.



2
ISIGURONG NAKATAPAT ANG MGA BUTAS SA ITAAS NG BALOTA SA MGA PULANG POSTE NG TALAAN SA PAGBOTO.



3
PARA BUMOTO, ITUSOK ANG PAMBUTAS SA BALOTA SA BUTAS NA KATAPAT NG PANA. HUWAG GUMAMIT NG PLUMA O LAPIS.

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