

American Community Survey

Population: Question on Language Spoken at Home

Question as it appears in the questionnaire.

14 a. Does this person speak a language other than English at home?

Yes

No → SKIP to question 15a

b. What is this language?

For example: Korean, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese

c. How well does this person speak English?

Very well

Well

Not well

Not at all

Source: ACS-1(2009)KFI

MEETING FEDERAL NEEDS

Government agencies use information on language spoken at home for their programs that serve the needs of the foreign-born and specifically those who have difficulty with English. Under the Voting Rights Act, language is needed to meet statutory requirements for making voting materials available in minority languages. Specifically, the Census Bureau is directed, using data about language spoken at home and the ability to speak English, to identify minority groups that speak a language other than English and to assess their English-speaking ability. The U.S. Department of Education uses these data to prepare a report to Congress on the social and economic status of children served by different local school districts.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Education

Data on language are used to allocate grants to school districts for children with limited English language proficiency.

State and local educational agencies receive grants for programs to improve educational skills, complete secondary schooling, and provide job training and placement for adults based on data about language.

Social Services

State and local agencies concerned with aging develop health care and other services tailored to the language and cultural diversity of the elderly under the Older Americans Act.

Government

Under the Voting Rights Act, these data are needed to assess the fairness of voting practices in governmental subdivisions.

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