Limited English Proficiency Population Estimate Methodology

1. We use the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) data as a base for our estimates because it provides virtually complete coverage of Washington's school population. Specifically we used the primary language code contained in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System's (CEDARS) database for each student in grades one through 12. We also checked our results against data from the TANF/Medicaid/SNAP enrollees requesting translation services and American Community Survey (ACS) data.

2. If the state or county had at least 250 or at least five percent of the student population listing a specific language as primary, the language was included for estimation.[1] If a language did not meet the initial threshold criteria, but there were more than 500 TANF/Medicaid/SNAP enrollees[2] requesting translation services then the language was included for estimation using the OSPI number of students.

3. In order to estimate other family members, we used the household size from the 2010 Census for the racial or ethnic group that was the closest match for a particular language. Spanish is the largest language group and all counties with languages estimated have Spanish speaking populations. For the Spanish language, the applicable county or state specific household size is used to estimate the Spanish speaking population. For Asian and Native American languages an effort was made to match the household size for a specific Asian or Native American ethnic group to the language. Unfortunately we do not have ethnic specific data on household size for the European, Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander, African, or Middle Eastern ethnicities. We used White household size for European, White or Pakistani for Middle Eastern, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander for Other Pacific Islander, and Black or African American for African.

4. After matching the best household size available to the specific language group, the estimate is obtained by multiplying the number of students by household size.

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[1] Similar Chinese language groups in the OSPI data were collapsed at the county level increasing the chances that the Chinese language groups would be estimated for a particular county and boosting the numbers of the estimated Chinese language speakers. Chinese-Mandarin, Chinese-Taiwanese, and Chinese-Unspecified were collapsed into the category Chinese-Mandarin and Chinese-Cantonese, Chinese-Fukienese, and Toishanese were collapsed into the category of Chinese-Cantonese. In addition, The P'urepecha and Tarasco languages were combined and the Sarahule and the Soninke languages were combined.

[2] TANF/Medicaid/SNAP programs include both adults and children so the threshold is higher.

Uncertainties:

1. Factors that may lead to over-representing the need for language services include: including the household of students with siblings more than once, language ability may vary across family members, and uncertainty regarding what the language ability threshold is for listing a non-English language.

2. Factors that may lead to under-representing the need for language services include: school does not register a student's language need, the student speaks English but his/her parents do not, a sizable population speaking a language with no school age children, and the household size applied to the language group is lower than the actual size.