An Introduction to
The Census Bureau Language Mapper Application

Developed by:
Social Economic and Housing Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau
Purposes of the Mapper Application

• Easily-accessible information about location of language needs
• Information on languages used in various parts of the U.S.
• Entry point into detailed language data from the American Community Survey
Outline

• Overview of the American Community Survey
• ACS: Speaking language other than English
• ACS language data and Title VI
• Using the mapper application
• Using the TIGERweb application
• Using American Factfinder to find detailed tables
An Overview of the American Community Survey
What is the American Community Survey (ACS)?

A large, continuous survey that:

• produces characteristics of population and housing (similar to Census 2000 long form)

• produces estimates for small areas and small population groups

• samples approximately 3.54 million resident addresses per year (about 290,000 per month)
Target Population

• Resident population of the United States and Puerto Rico living in housing units and group quarters (GQ)
  – **Housing units**: house, apartment, mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters
  – **Group quarters**: Place where people live or stay that is normally owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing or services for the residents.

• Current residents at the selected address
  – “Two month” rule

• Year-round data collection (12 months/year)
## Population Thresholds for ACS Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-year estimates</th>
<th>3-year estimates</th>
<th>5-year estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65,000+ people</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000+ people</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20,000 people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing Across Geographies

• Only compare the same type of estimate
  • 1-year estimates to other 1-year estimates
  • 3-year estimates to other 3-year estimates
  • 5-year estimates to other 5-year estimates

• Same time period
Topics Covered by the ACS (Partial list)

- Sex and Age
- Race and Hispanic Origin
- Ancestry
- Citizenship Status
- Place of Birth
- Year of Entry
- Migration
- Journey to Work - Residence
- Journey to Work - Workplace
- Relationship and Marital Status
- School Enrollment
- Educational Attainment
- Language Use and English Ability
- Disability

- Income, Earnings and Poverty
- Veterans
- Transfer Programs
- Employment Status
- Industry and Occupation
- Health Insurance
- Computer and Internet Use
- Housing Occupancy and Vacancy
- Owner Costs
- Renter Statistics
- Value of Home
- Vehicles Available

For more information see www.census.gov/acs
American Community Survey:
Population Speaking a Language Other than English
ACS question on language use and English ability

14. 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
Coding of languages

• Write-ins are coded to 3-digit codes
• 381 possible languages
• Over 300 were reported in recent years of ACS
• Most detailed general table shows 39 languages
# 39 Language groups

## 1. Spanish or Spanish Creole

- French (incl. Patois, Cajun)
- French Creole
- Italian
- Portuguese or Portuguese Creole
- German
- Yiddish
- Other West Germanic languages
- Scandinavian languages
- Greek
- Russian

## 2. Other Indo-European languages

- Polish
- Serbo-Croatian
- Other Slavic languages
- Armenian
- Persian
- Gujarati
- Hindi
- Urdu
- Other Indic languages
- Other Indo-European languages

## 3. Asian and Pacific Island languages

- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mon-Khmer, Cambodian
- Hmong
- Thai
- Laotian
- Vietnamese
- Other Asian languages
- Tagalog
- Other Pacific Island languages

## 4. Other Languages

- Navajo
- Other Native North American languages
- Hungarian
- Arabic
- Hebrew
- African languages
- Other and unspecified languages
Fifteen languages used in the mapper application:

- Spanish
- French
- French Creole
- Italian
- Portuguese
- German
- Russian
- Polish
- Persian
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Vietnamese
- Tagalog
- Arabic
Tabulation of all coded languages, by state
Using ACS language data for Title VI

ACS English ability ≠ LEP
• Speak English less than “Very well:”
  Individuals who have indicated in a check box that they spoke English “Well,” “Not well,” or “Not at all”

• Limited English Proficient:
  Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or "LEP." These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.
Validity of self-rated English ability

1989 study found lower English speaking ability is associated with:

• More use of non-English language relative to English
• Less likely to say they are able to read the newspaper or write a letter in English
The Census Bureau
Language Mapper Application
Census Bureau homepage: www.census.gov
Hover on People, Click on Language Use
Dot-density map: covers 50 states, DC, not PR
Dots mark population speaking specific language other than English at home, tied to census tracts.
Zoom in to an area of interest
Add a background map
Chicago area distribution of people speaking Russian at home
Distribution of Russian speakers who speak English less than very well
Chicago area distribution of people speaking Polish at home
Chicago area distribution of people speaking Vietnamese at home
Using TIGER to locate tracts, places, other geographies
Start again from the main page - www.census.gov
Keep clicking on TIGERweb
Identify census tracts or other geographic units
Using American FactFinder to examine detailed tables
Use “advanced search” in American FactFinder
Select geographies
Select table B16001
Vietnamese speakers in Bloomingdale, Glendale Heights, Chicago metro and U.S.
Vietnamese-speaking population of Glendale Heights, Illinois

- 5 year estimate (2008-2012) is 1,455
- Margin of error is 525
- Can be 90% confident there were between 930 and 1,980 people in Glendale who speak Vietnamese at home.
Download tables to your computer
Data from other sources

- Department of Education – school children with language needs
- Other organizations providing compilations of Census Bureau data on language use:
  - Migration Policy Institute
  - Modern Language Association
  - City-Data.com
Summary

• Language Data Mapper is a quick way to locate language clusters
• Census does not define LEP, but provides the tools to look for language needs
• Census Bureau provides many tools to look directly at the data
More information

- Census Bureau Website http://www.census.gov/
- Department of Justice http://www.lep.gov/
- Data Ferrett http://dataferrett.census.gov/
- Summary files http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/summary_file/
- Questions: Census Call Center 1-800-923-8282 (toll free) or visit https://ask.census.gov/
- Education and Social Stratification Branch, U.S. Census Bureau 301-763-2464