



Puget Sound Regional Council

Language Assistance Plan

The Puget Sound Regional Council develops policies and coordinates decisions about regional growth, transportation, and economic development planning within King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties. PSRC is composed of over 80 county, city, port, transit, tribal, and state agencies serving the region. The region is home to a population of some 4.1 million residing in over 6,000 square miles of land.

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." Language for LEP individuals can be a barrier to accessing important benefits or services, understanding and exercising important rights, complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding other information provided by federally funded programs and activities.

PSRC takes steps to ensure that all persons have meaningful access to its programs, services, and information, at no cost. This plan is specifically aimed at individuals who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English, referred to as limited English proficient (LEP).

A Language Assistance Plan starts with an assessment to identify LEP individuals who do not speak English as a primary language. Implementation includes the development of language assistance methods, notification to LEP individuals, and monitoring of the plan.

Federal Laws and Policies Guiding Limited English Proficiency Plans

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

This act states that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (refer to 23 CFR 200.9 and 49 CFR 21). The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 broadened the scope of Title VI coverage by expanding the definition of the terms "programs or activities" to include all programs or activities of

Federal Aid recipients, subrecipients, and contractors, whether such programs and activities are federally assisted or not (Public Law 100259 [S. 557] March 22, 1988).

Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Clarifies the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with regards to accessibility of federal programs and services to persons who are not proficient in the English language. This executive order stated that individuals who do not speak, read, write, or understand English well are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Table 1: Persons with Limited English Proficiency in the region in 2016

	Total population age 5 and over		Limited English proficiency									
			Persons with limited English proficiency		Language spoken at home other than or in addition to English							
					Spanish		Other Indo-European languages		Asian and Pacific Island languages		Other languages	
	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE
Central Puget Sound	3,810,500	621	324,400	10,657	93,000	5,427	53,500	4,993	150,300	6,695	27,500	3,791
King County	2,020,700	*	221,200	8,275	55,800	4,029	36,500	3,913	108,300	5,243	20,600	3,072
Kitsap County	249,500	87	5,500	1,579	1,800	937	620	518	3,000	1,125	50	288
Pierce County	802,700	424	44,400	3,890	17,800	2,437	5,900	1,871	18,100	2,019	2,500	1,272
Snohomish County	737,700	367	53,300	4,483	17,600	2,452	10,500	2,210	20,800	2,641	4,400	1,491

Source: 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

* The estimate is controlled. A statistical test for sampling variability is not applicable.

This table shows that of the 3.8 million people living in the central Puget Sound region in 2016, 324,400 had Limited English Proficiency.

Language Spoken at Home

Table 2: Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English 2016

		Central Puget Sound		King County		Kitsap County		Pierce County		Snohomish County	
		Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE	Estimate	MoE
Total Population 5 years and over		3,681,600	*	1,952,500	*	242,600	*	775,800	*	710,600	*
Speak only English		2,895,900	7,971	1,435,100	5,890	225,500	900	663,000	2,795	572,500	3,325
Speak a language at home other than English	Speak English "very well"	478,400	6,414	312,700	5,277	12,100	827	69,500	2,396	84,000	2,827
	Total, Speak English less than "very well"	307,200	5,162	204,800	4,223	5,000	593	43,300	1,836	54,100	2,247
	Spanish	88,100	2,839	53,000	2,038	1,500	373	16,700	1,080	17,000	1,282
	Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	25,100	1,677	15,700	1,380	180	96	3,400	575	5,800	723
	Other Indo-European languages	27,200	1,745	19,100	1,539	450	177	3,500	525	4,200	585
	Korean	21,600	1,157	10,500	935	140	74	5,500	558	5,500	698
	Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	41,900	1,590	36,100	1,522	210	100	1,100	291	4,600	580
	Vietnamese	29,300	1,697	19,400	1,225	260	127	4,500	695	5,200	751
	Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	15,900	1,189	9,400	1,025	1,500	315	2,400	429	2,600	506
	Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	34,900	1,572	23,500	1,336	650	174	5,100	650	5,800	706
	Other and unspecified languages	23,200	1,449	18,200	1,371	150	104	1,200	336	3,600	629
	Speak only English		78.7%	0.2%	73.5%	0.3%	92.9%	0.4%	85.5%	0.4%	80.6%
Speak a language at home other than English	Speak English "very well"	13.0%	0.2%	16.0%	0.3%	5.0%	0.3%	9.0%	0.3%	11.8%	0.4%
	Total, Speak English less than "very well"	8.3%	0.1%	10.5%	0.2%	2.1%	0.2%	5.6%	0.2%	7.6%	0.3%
	Spanish	2.4%	0.1%	2.7%	0.1%	0.6%	0.2%	2.1%	0.1%	2.4%	0.2%
	Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	0.7%	0.0%	0.8%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.8%	0.1%
	Other Indo-European languages	0.7%	0.0%	1.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.6%	0.1%
	Korean	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%	0.1%	0.8%	0.1%
	Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	1.1%	0.0%	1.8%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.1%
	Vietnamese	0.8%	0.0%	1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.7%	0.1%
	Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	0.1%
	Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	0.9%	0.0%	1.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.7%	0.1%	0.8%	0.1%
	Other and unspecified languages	0.6%	0.0%	0.9%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

* The estimate is controlled. A statistical test for sampling variability is not applicable.

This table shows that 78.7% of the population speaks only English. Of the 13% that speak another language, 8.3% do not speak English well. Just over 2% of this group speaks Spanish.

Common Languages Spoken in the Region

The common languages spoken in the central Puget Sound region are Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, German, French, and Arabic.

Table 3: Common Languages Other Than English Spoken in the Central Puget Sound: 2016

Rank	Central Puget Sound Region		
		Estimate	MoE
1	Spanish	224,200	3,803
2	Other Asian	97,300	2,878
3	Other Indo-European languages	84,700	2,978
4	Chinese	81,700	2,611
5	Russian	60,100	3,468
6	Vietnamese	49,300	2,357
7	Other and unspecified languages	48,300	2,392
8	Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	48,000	2,116
9	Korean	40,500	1,833
10	German	21,700	1,128
11	French, Haitian, or Cajun	17,700	1,110
12	Arabic	12,100	1,561

PSRC had previously been translating its vital documents into the first six languages listed, but added German, French, and Arabic based on this new data.

Determination of Need

The U.S. Department of Transportation has outlined a four factor LEP analysis to determine the need for language assistance measures. The four factors are:

1. The number and proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service population.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with PSRC programs, activities, or services.
3. The importance to LEP persons of PSRC's program, activities, and services.
4. The resources available to PSRC and overall cost to provide LEP assistance.

Factor 1: Number and proportion of LEP persons in the service area

PSRC looked at American Community Survey data for people who speak English "less than very well" as Limited English Proficient persons. Table 1 shows the extent of limited English proficiency in the region. Table 2 shows the languages spoken at home, by ability to speak English, for persons five years of age and older, with number and percentage broken out by county.

Looking at the regional totals, the five most frequently spoken languages other than English are Spanish, Russian, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. None of these language groups have 5% or more limited English proficiency in the region. Spanish is the language most likely to be requested with 2.4% of the region's Spanish speakers unable to speak English well.

Table 3 shows the most commonly spoken languages in the region. While none of these reach 5% of the regional population, 9 have populations of 1,000 speakers or more.

Factor 2: Frequency of LEP populations' contact with programs, activities, services

Since 1999, PSRC has placed special emphasis on including Title VI and Environmental Justice populations in its outreach efforts. In addition to diversifying its mailing lists, PSRC has worked through consulting firms to conduct targeted outreach, including holding lunch sessions and focus meetings, with minority and low-income community group members. Such meetings provide insight into the needs and concerns of residents who too often have limited participation in regional government and decision making. Recently, written translated materials have started to be requested and/or recommended for any of these community group meetings. PSRC has done its best to meet all requests.

Factor 3: Importance to LEP population of programs, services, activities

PSRC works with the central Puget Sound counties (King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap), cities and towns, ports, tribes, transit agencies, and the state to develop policies and make decisions about long-term regional issues on land use, transportation, and the economy. PSRC does not provide any direct projects or services to the population of the central Puget Sound region.

PSRC does distribute funds through several transportation programs. The development of both the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Regional Transportation Plan includes a Title VI/Environmental Justice analysis to determine impacts of these programs on the traditionally underserved. All funds PSRC distributes to eligible recipients must be consistent with adopted regional plans, the approval and adoption process of which are guided by PSRC's Public Participation Plan and all other applicable laws and regulations. Furthermore, PSRC requires project sponsors receiving federal funds through PSRC to certify annually that they are meeting all federal, state, and local requirements in their operations. So, while not a direct service provider, PSRC ensures that its plans, policies, and programs comply with the law, and are inclusive and beneficial to those who live in the central Puget Sound region.

Factor 4: Resources available to PSRC and overall cost to provide LEP assistance

PSRC is committed to providing translation services to people who request them and translating its vital documents as needed. PSRC will seek creative, low-cost measures to assist LEP individuals and provide translation services when needed, particularly when PSRC is engaged in Title VI or Environmental Justice outreach as part of its major

plan updates. PSRC will continue to monitor all requests for translation services and flexibly respond to such requests as they occur.

In early 2014, PSRC contracted with a telephone translation provider to expand its language offerings to over 200 choices, though only Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Russian are advertised on the website, news releases, and agenda packets. In 2018, need was shown for German, French, and Arabic to be added to the vital document translation and notices. The telephone translator has been used several times, particularly during the household survey and other outreach times.

PSRC uses a website translation widget with over 100 languages to help visitors to the site, translate on the spot. Adjustments have been made to the widget over time to meet language requests made by the public.

Language Assistance Measures

PSRC uses Language Assistance Measures to provide meaningful, early and continuous opportunities for all interested Puget Sound residents to participate in the dialogue that informs key decisions, regardless of language barriers.

These include:

Staff

PSRC has a diverse staff that includes native speakers of other languages as well as staff with other language skills. These staff have agreed to be on call for assistance when immediate language needs arise. PSRC will call for professional language assistance once this intermediary step occurs.

These staff have language skills:

- Angela Yang – Mandarin Chinese
- Brian Lee – Cantonese and Traditional Chinese
- Jean Kim – Korean
- Thu Le – Vietnamese
- Sarah Gutschow – German
- Hana Sevcikova – German, Czech, and Slovak
- Erika Harris – French
- Carol Naito – Japanese
- Pavithra Parthasarathi – Tamil, Hindi

Online Translation

PSRC uses Google Translate tools for its website. This tool will prompt anyone looking at PSRC's website from a computer that is not set to English that the translation tool is

available. Google offers over 100 languages. PSRC also has its vital documents translated and available online at <https://www.psrc.org/contact-center/language-assistance>.

Reception Desk

PSRC's reception staff keeps an *I Speak* card at the front desk. The *I Speak* card is a print out of 38 languages, which a non-English speaking person can point to and identify their language. Reception then can seek translation help from staff who speak that language or via the contracted telephone translator.

Visualization Techniques

PSRC uses visualization techniques such as maps, charts, graphs, illustrations, presentations and videos at all types of meetings and in all types of print materials to explain concepts behind actions and decision-making. Visualization techniques can be helpful when communicating with LEP or low-literacy persons. PSRC may also use handouts and posters to display visual information. PSRC's boardrooms are equipped with computers, projectors, and sound systems for displaying visual and audio information. PSRC uses style guides for data presentation and PowerPoint presentations to present a consistent, streamlined, and easy to understand visual message.

Notification Techniques

PSRC regularly notifies community groups and the media when there are opportunities for public comment or new information is available. This includes notifying community based organizations that support LEP groups as well as non-English media sources. PSRC's website, publications, and news releases include a notification of the public's rights under Title VI as well as the availability of translation services.

Agendas

The agendas for all PSRC board meetings include instruction on how to get materials in alternative formats. The notification reads:

Sign language, and communication material in alternative formats, can be arranged given sufficient notice by calling 206-464-7090, TTY Relay 711.

اللغة | Arabic, 中文 | Chinese, Deutsch | German, Français | French,

한국 | Korean, Русский | Russian, Español | Spanish, Tagalog, Tiếng Việt | Vietnamese

Call 206-587-4819

Mailing List Improvements

PSRC continuously updates its mailing lists and databases to maintain and initiate contact with interested parties, targeting those traditionally underserved and/or gaps in

existing databases. PSRC mailing lists include tribes, community groups, Title VI relevant populations, businesses, membership, and local governments. To join PSRC's mailing list, contact reception at 206-464-7090 or use the online form at psrc.org.

Accessibility for Sight and Hearing Impaired

PSRC maintains an accessible website and uses the TTY Relay. All PSRC meetings are conducted in facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities and to people who rely on public transit. PSRC staff received training in 2018 on how to make Word, InDesign, and PDF documents accessible and is working towards improved accessibility of its online publications.

Focus Groups

PSRC, often with the help of consulting firms, has convened targeted outreach sessions, such as lunch sessions or focus group meetings, with community leaders that represent Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficient populations. These meetings are an effective way to increase participation from communities PSRC may not have come into contact with previously, including LEP individuals. These meetings will include translation services if the participating community leaders recommend it or is requested in advance.

Monitoring and Updating the Language Assistance Plan

PSRC will monitor requests for translations and adjust practices to meet demand and will periodically update this plan as needed to reflect changes.