



# Multilingual Access to Elections 2013



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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk



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# Introduction





## Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

While Los Angeles County is one of the nation's largest election jurisdictions, it is also widely recognized as one of the most diverse. Cultural and linguistic diversity is one of its defining characteristics and this diversity makes for a vibrant democracy. To support and foster an open and inclusive democratic process for our language minority communities, the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's office (the Department) provides translated material and language assistance in numerous languages throughout its 5,000 voting precincts.

In compliance with state and federal language minority provisions, the Department has offered, for the last decade, translated material and translation services for six languages other than English. In 2012, in compliance with new federal language assistance requirements, the Department started offering translated material and assistance for three additional languages. Voters with a limited command of English can now exercise their right to vote through access to bilingual pollworkers and translated election materials in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog/Filipino, Vietnamese, Hindi, Khmer, and Thai. While assistance in these nine languages fulfills its legislative obligation, the County goes beyond minimal compliance by offering bilingual pollworker assistance in Bengali, Gujarati, Russian, Armenian, Punjabi, Urdu, and Farsi. In addressing the language needs of our voters, the County spends approximately \$500,000 per language on both materials and pollworkers each election.

The County is committed to continuing its comprehensive approach in complying with state and federal language requirements and achieving its objective in providing fair, accessible and transparent election services for all voters. This report describes the numerous services the Department provides, how they can be accessed by limited English voters, and the Department's goals in continuing to serve and foster a diverse electorate.

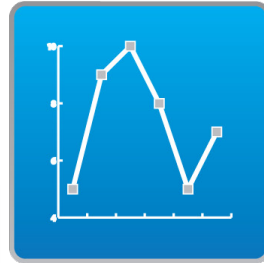


"In a County as large and diverse as Los Angeles, our language services help foster an open and inclusive democratic process for our growing multi-faceted community of voters."

**Dean Logan**

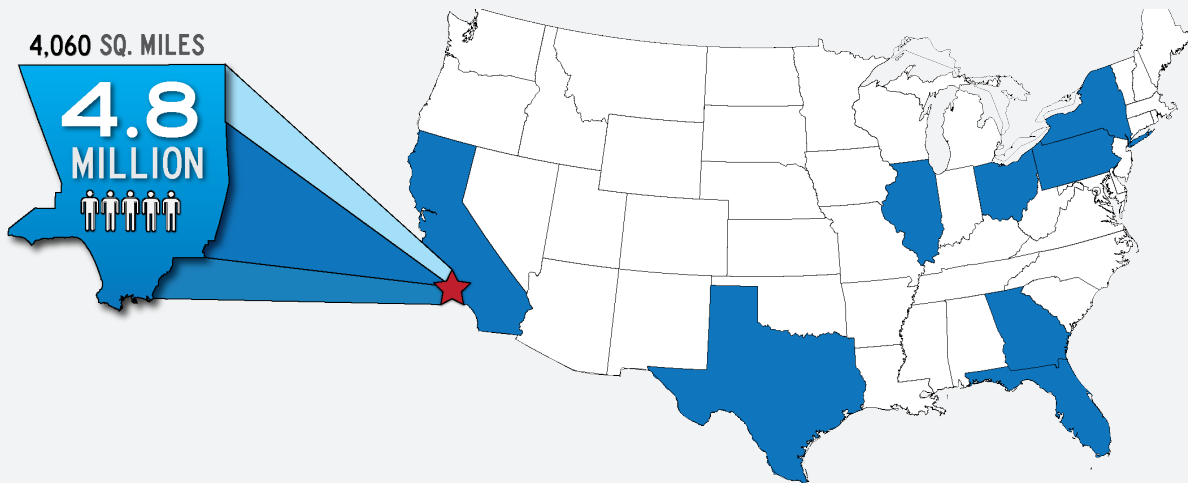


# Demographics





With an electorate larger than 42 of the 50 states, Los Angeles County is the largest and most diverse county election jurisdiction in the nation, serving nearly five million voters in 16 different languages. Composed of 88 cities and 2,649 square miles of unincorporated areas, the County administers elections across 500 political districts, including its five-member Board of Supervisors and municipal governments. This complexity means that on Election Day, the Department manages more than 25,000 volunteers and nearly 5,000 polling places in a single day.



Los Angeles County's electorate is larger than 42 of the 50 states.

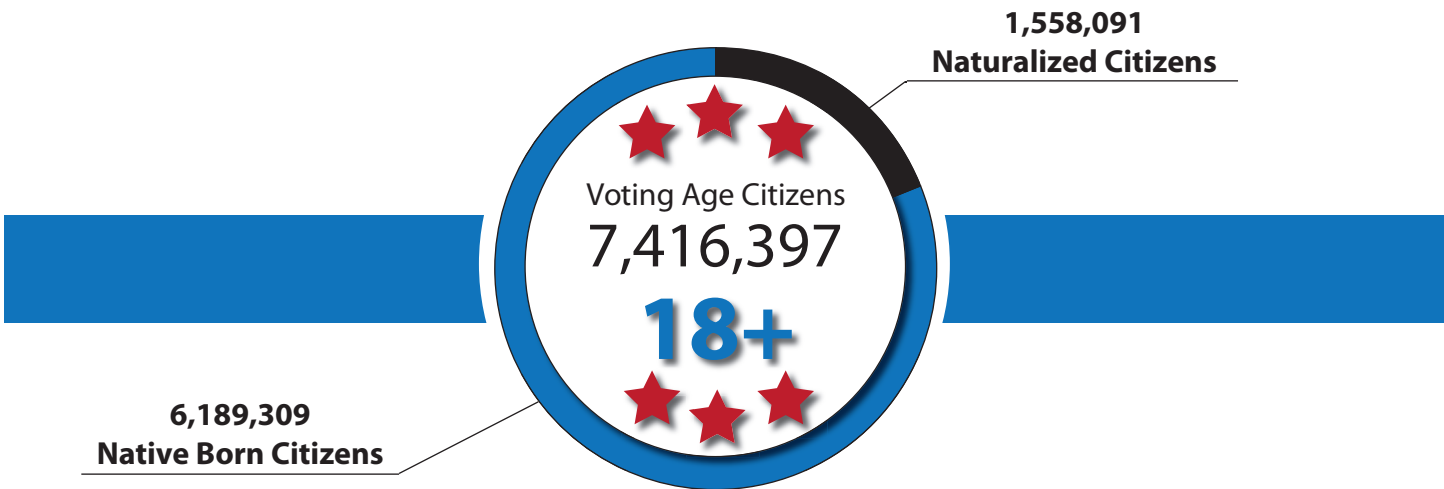
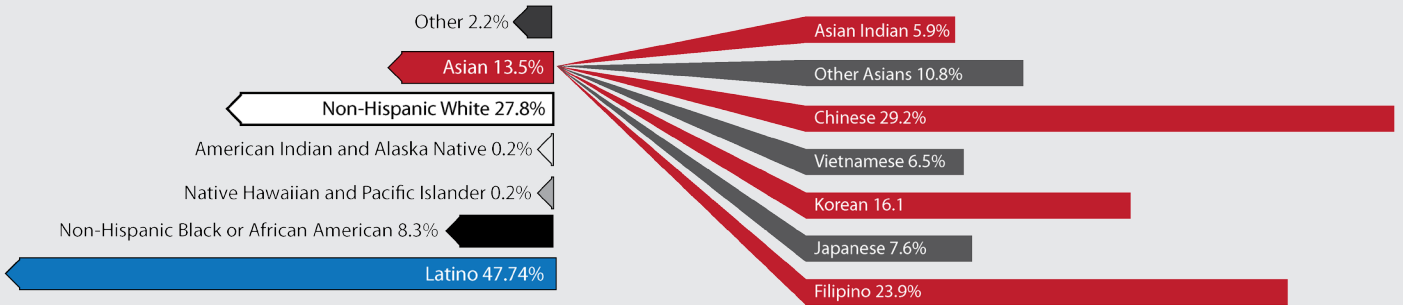
In addition to its size, the County has an extremely diverse population. With a total of 9,818,605 residents, the County is comprised of Latino (47.7%), Non-Hispanic White (27.8%), Asian (13.5%), African American (8.3%), and Native American and Alaska Native (0.2%) residents. The County has over three million foreign-born residents, making it the largest number in the nation, and almost two million of these are voting age citizens. It also has a greater number of minority and women-owned businesses than any other County. Within the entire population, 57% of residents speak a language other than English at home and 26.4% speak English less than "very well." Spanish (39.4%) and Asian & Pacific Islander languages (10.8%) are the predominant minority languages spoken in the County. Currently, the Department has received 214,127 requests for translated election material, with the majority of requests being for Spanish and Chinese.

### REQUESTS FOR TRANSLATED MATERIALS

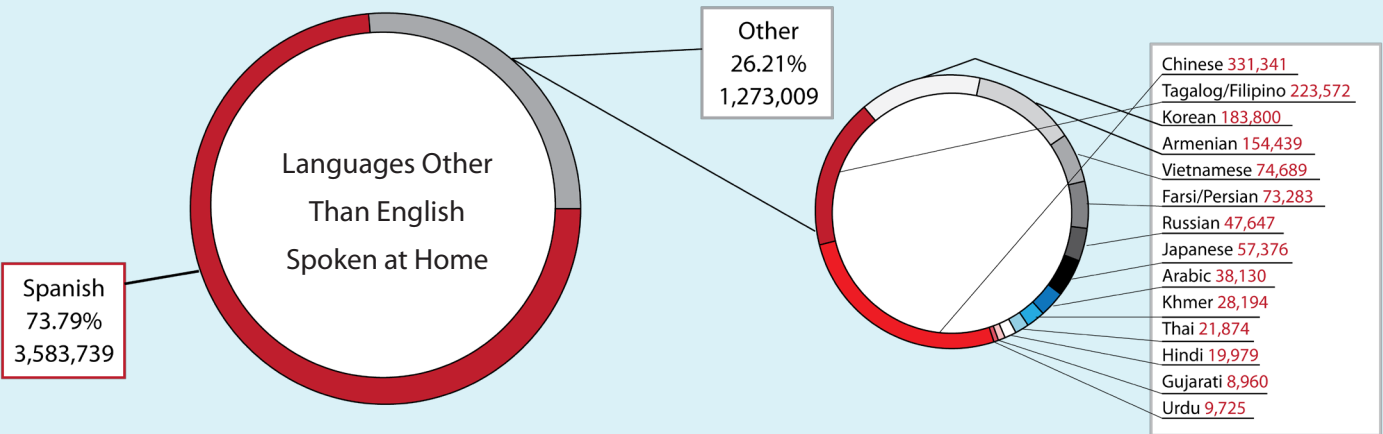




### RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION - LOS ANGELES COUNTY

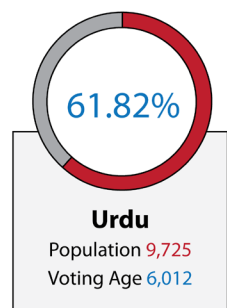
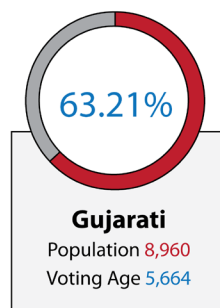
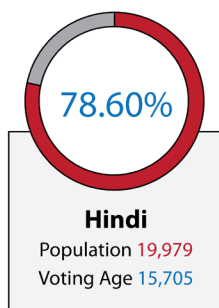
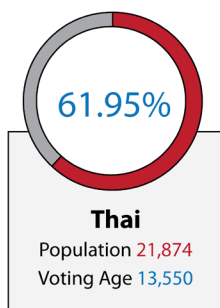
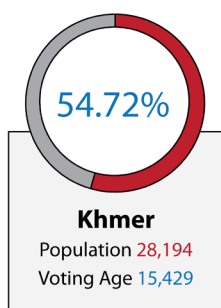
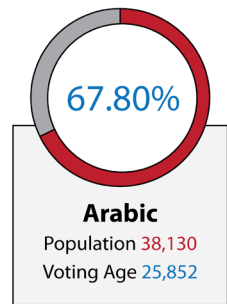
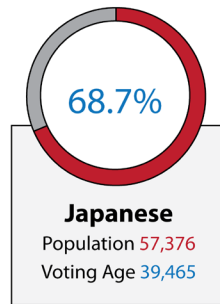
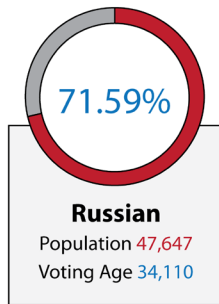
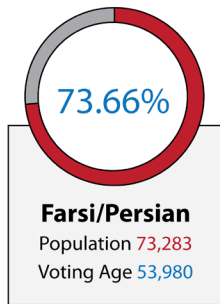
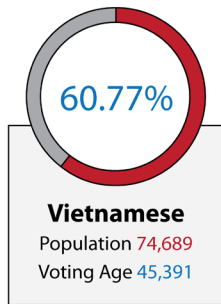
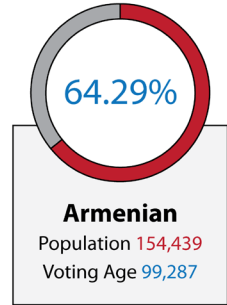
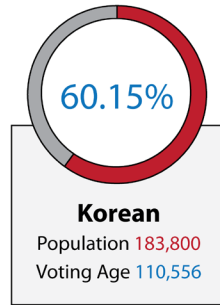
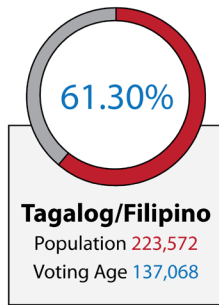
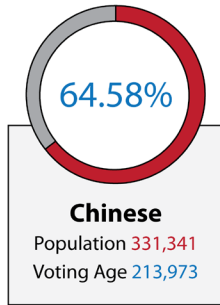
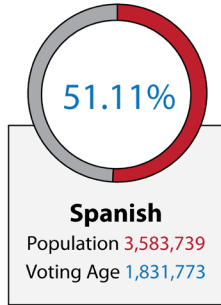


### LOS ANGELES COUNTY LANGUAGES POPULATION





PERCENT OF LANGUAGE POPULATION OF VOTING AGE<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Data from the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Language Targeting System





## Federal and State Requirements





Federal and California state laws mandate Counties to provide written and oral language assistance to minority language voters in areas with a large population of limited-English proficient (LEP) residents. These language minority provisions are found in section 4(f)(4) and 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) and in California Elections Code section 12303 and 14201. The laws were enacted in order to remove voting barriers, prevent election discrimination against language minorities, and provide all citizens with the opportunity to be a part of the democratic process. Prohibiting English-only elections and requiring jurisdictions to provide language assistance, ensures a citizen's right to cast an accurate and informed ballot. Because of this, Los Angeles County is required to provide assistance for the following language minority groups: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Hispanic, Japanese, Korean, Other Asian-Non Specified, and Vietnamese.

## **FEDERAL MANDATES**

### **Voting Rights Act**

In 1975, Congress enacted section 4(f)(4) and 203 of the VRA, which requires jurisdictions with large populations of language minorities to provide bilingual voting assistance. Section 203 states, "Whenever any State or political subdivision [covered by the section] provides registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language." Congress reauthorized and amended these sections in 1982, 1992 and again in 2006.

Under section 4(f)(4), a State or political subdivision is covered if: (1) over 5% 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% of the voting-age citizens were registered to vote or voted in the 1972 presidential election. If all three conditions are met, the covered area must provide all election materials, including assistance and ballots, in the language of the applicable minority group and is also subject to the VRA's special provisions, such as the preclearance laws of section 5.

Section 203 mandates that a political subdivision must provide translated election materials and assistance in a specific language when: (1) more than 5% of the citizens of voting age are members of a single language minority, are limited English proficient, and the illiteracy rate of the language minority citizens is higher than the national illiteracy rate or (2) more than 10,000 of the citizens of voting age are members of a single language minority, are limited English proficient, and the illiteracy rate of the language minority citizens is higher than the national illiteracy rate. Language determinations are decided by the Director of the Census and based on the most recent Census data. However, coverage is not always tied to specific languages, but rather to ethnic groups and thus, it may be up to the covered jurisdiction to determine what language(s) to provide. Currently, 248 jurisdictions throughout the Country are covered under section 203.

The requirements for minority language material and assistance in section 4(f)(4) and section 203 are essentially the same. The following are several of the Attorney General's guidelines regarding implementation of the minority language provisions of the VRA:



### **55.2 Standards for measuring compliance**

Materials and assistance should be provided in a way to allow members of applicable language minority groups to be effectively informed of and able to participate effectively in voting-connected activities; an affected jurisdiction should take all reasonable steps to achieve that goal.

### **55.9 Coverage of political units within a county**

Where a political subdivision (e.g., a County) is determined to be subject to section 4(f)(4) or section 203(c), all political units that hold elections within that political subdivision (e.g., cities, school districts) are subject to the same requirements as the political subdivision.

### **55.15 Affected activities**

The requirements of sections 4(f)(4) and 203(c) apply with regard to the provision of “any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots.”

### **55.16 Standards and proof of compliance.**

Compliance with the requirements of section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c) is best measured by results. A jurisdiction is more likely to achieve compliance with these requirements if it has worked with the cooperation of and to the satisfaction of organizations representing members of the applicable language minority group.

### **55.17 Targeting**

The term “targeting” is commonly used in discussions of the requirements of section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c). “Targeting” refers to a system in which the minority language materials or assistance required by the Act are provided to fewer than all persons or registered voters. It is the view of the Attorney General that a targeting system will normally fulfill the Act’s minority language requirements if it is designed and implemented in such a way that language minority group members who need minority language materials and assistance receive them.

### **55.18 Provision of minority language materials and assistance.**

(a) Materials provided by mail. If materials provided by mail (or by some comparable form of distribution) generally to residents or registered voters are not all provided in the applicable minority language, the Attorney General will consider whether an effective targeting system has been developed.

(b) Public notices. The Attorney General will consider whether public notices and announcements of electoral activities are handled in a manner that provides members of the applicable language minority group an effective opportunity to be informed about electoral activities.

(c) Registration. The Attorney General will consider whether the registration system is conducted in such a way that members of the applicable language minority group have an effective opportunity to register.

(d) Polling place activities. The Attorney General will consider whether polling place activities are conducted in such a way that members of the applicable language minority group have an effective opportunity to vote.

(e) Publicity. The Attorney General will consider whether a covered jurisdiction has taken appropriate steps to publicize the availability of materials and assistance in the minority language.



### **55.19 Written materials.**

- (a) Types of materials. It is the obligation of the jurisdiction to decide what materials must be provided in a minority language
- (b) Accuracy, completeness. It is essential that material provided in the language of a language minority group be clear, complete and accurate. In examining whether a jurisdiction has achieved compliance with this requirement, the Attorney General will consider whether the jurisdiction has consulted with members of the applicable language minority group with respect to the translation of materials.
- (c) Ballots. The Attorney General will consider whether a jurisdiction provides the English and minority language versions on the same document.
- (d) Voting machines. Where voting machines that cannot mechanically accommodate a ballot in English and in the applicable minority language are used, the Attorney General will consider whether the jurisdiction provides sample ballots for use in the polling booths. Where such sample ballots are used, the Attorney General will consider whether they contain a complete and accurate translation of the English ballots, and whether they contain or are accompanied by instructions in the minority language explaining the operation of the voting machine.

### **55.20 Oral assistance and publicity.**

- (a) General. Announcements, publicity, and assistance should be given in oral form to the extent needed to enable members of the applicable language minority group to participate effectively in the electoral process.
- (b) Assistance. The Attorney General will consider whether a jurisdiction has given sufficient attention to the needs of language minority group members who cannot effectively read either English or the applicable minority language and to the needs of members of language minority groups whose languages are unwritten.
- (c) Helpers. With respect to the conduct of elections, the jurisdiction will need to determine the number of helpers (i.e., persons to provide oral assistance in the minority language) that must be provided.

## **STATE MANDATES**

### **California Elections Code Section 12303**

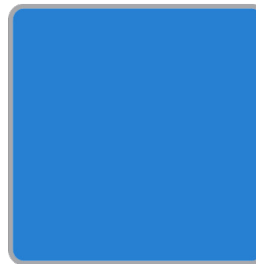
California Elections Code Sec. 12303 requires that if 3% or more of the voting age residents in a particular County or precinct are members of a single language minority and lack sufficient skills in English, reasonable efforts should be made to recruit bilingual election officials who can assist voters in the identified language.

### **California Elections Code Section 14201**

California Elections Code Sec. 14201 mandates that a sample ballot (with the ballot measure and instructions) be printed in Spanish or other applicable languages and posted in the affected polling places if 3% or more of the voting age residents in a particular county or precinct are members of a single language minority and lack sufficient skills in English.



# Services





The Department provides a variety of language assistance services that go above and beyond minimal compliance with the laws. From our language targeting system to community outreach, the Department focuses on serving the greatest number of limited English voters throughout the most linguistically diverse jurisdiction. In order to achieve this, the Department continues to make our multilingual program a priority and will continually improve upon its services in the future.

Below is a list of multilingual assistance services the Department offers.



### LANGUAGE TARGETING SYSTEM

To determine which areas should receive translated material and pollworker assistance in a certain language, the Department has developed a comprehensive language targeting database system that contains data from the following areas:

To request a targeted precinct list contact Julia Keh at [jkeh@rrcc.lacounty.gov](mailto:jkeh@rrcc.lacounty.gov)

- 2010 United States Census
- 2010 American Community Survey (ACS)
- Voter requests for translated material
- Community requests for language assistance
- Surname voter list
- Assisted Voter Tally Card



### TRANSLATED ELECTION MATERIALS

The Department translates and prints election material in nine different languages.

Below is a list of available translated information:

Request translated election material at [lavote.net](http://lavote.net) or call 1-800-481-8683

- Official Sample Ballot
- Voter Instructions
- Vote by Mail, Emergency Vote by Mail, and Permanent Vote by Mail Applications
- Voter Registration Forms
- Translated Election Materials Request Form
- Glossaries
- Bilingual Pollworker Flyers
- Documents requested through the Multilingual Hotline



### POLLING PLACE INFORMATION

Voting information and signs at each polling place are translated into the nine mandated languages.

Below is a list of the translated materials at the polls:

- Multilingual Translations of the Official Sample Ballot (each precinct receives Spanish, English, and any other targeted language specific to that precinct)

You can find your polling place on the back of your Sample Ballot or go to [lavote.net/LOCATOR/](http://lavote.net/LOCATOR/)

In all official languages:

- Multilingual translations of Provisional/Vote By Mail materials
- No "Electioneering" signs
- Pollworker language signs
- "Voter Bill of Rights"
- "Tampering" poster
- "Multilingual Audio Point To" card
- "Vote Here" polling place signs
- "Voter Instructions and Regulations"
- "Replacement Envelope"
- "We Speak" language signs
- "Curbside Voting" signs
- "Telephone Referral" cards
- "Voter Oath" translation page



### BILINGUAL POLLWORKERS

The Department provides bilingual pollworkers for those precincts targeted for language assistance. During a general election, the Department recruits over 9,000 multilingual pollworkers who can speak with voters in English and in one of the covered languages. These pollworkers answer questions at the polls, explain the ballot and voting procedures, and assist in using the voting machines in order to help language minority voters better understand and feel more comfortable with the process.

To volunteer as a bilingual pollworker, call (800) 815-2666 option 7 or apply online at [lavote.net](http://lavote.net)



The Department's website is [lavote.net](http://lavote.net)

### WEBSITE WITH TRANSLATED INFORMATION

The Department website provides several translated documents including:

- Vote By Mail, Permanent Vote By Mail, and Emergency Vote By Mail Applications
- Bilingual Pollworker Flyer
- Translated Election Materials Request Form

The website is currently being updated so that, in the near future, the entire Elections section of the website will be translated into the nine mandated languages.



The Department's Multilingual Hotline is 1-800-481-8683

### MULTILINGUAL HOTLINE

The Multilingual Assistance Hotline is a toll-free number offered by the Department that allows LEP residents to speak with someone in his/her own language regarding elections. Hotline staff members answer a wide range of calls, including requests for translated election materials, inquiries about voter registration, questions on vote by mail applications and ballots, and requests for polling place locations.



### AUDIO BALLOT

The Department records audio ballots in ten languages in order to provide an alternative means of voting for those with disabilities and language assistance needs. Recordings in specific languages are sent to the poll locations that have been targeted for assistance in that language. These ballots work in the Audio Ballot Booths (ABB) and assist voters through the use of a keypad and headset.

The languages offered are:

- English
- Cantonese
- Mandarin
- Hindi
- Japanese
- Khmer
- Korean
- Spanish
- Tagalog/Filipino
- Thai
- Vietnamese





## COMMUNITY AND VOTER OUTREACH

The Department's Community and Voter Outreach section participates in various activities that seek to educate, inform, and increase voter participation throughout the County. The Department conducts presentations and attends events in targeted areas in order to reach minority language communities. Translated voter education materials are provided at outreach events in all covered languages.

To request assistance or attendance at a community event, email [outreach@rrcc.lacounty.gov](mailto:outreach@rrcc.lacounty.gov)

These materials include:

- Voter registration forms
- Voter Bill of Rights
- League of Women Voters' "Easy Voter Guide" (Chinese, Spanish, Korean, and English)
- CA State Voter Information Pamphlet
- "Ready to Vote" flyer
- "Voter Registration" flyer
- "Provisional Voting" flyer
- "Translated Election Materials Request" Form
- "Permanent Vote By Mail" Application



## MINORITY MEDIA OUTLETS

The Department partners with various ethnic print and broadcast media outlets to disseminate information in the form of press releases and advertisements. Some of our partners are:

The Media and Communications Section can be reached at 562-462-2726 or [eknox@rrcc.lacounty.gov](mailto:eknox@rrcc.lacounty.gov)

- Channel 18
- Chinese Daily News
- El Gato
- Korea Daily
- La Opinión
- Super Estrella
- The Korea Times
- Univision
- Singtao Daily News



### POST ELECTION FEEDBACK

Voters are welcome to voice their concerns or suggestions by submitting written feedback to the Department. Comments from each election are investigated by the Department and then sent a response based on the findings or action taken.

Feedback regarding multilingual issues can be sent to Juila Keh at [jkeh@rrcc.lacounty.gov](mailto:jkeh@rrcc.lacounty.gov)



### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OTHER ELECTION JURISDICTIONS

Other election jurisdictions, such as King County (Washington), Harris County (Texas), and Arizona's Office of the Secretary of State, often ask our Department for assistance in the following issues:

- Identifying multilingual voters
- Identifying bilingual pollworkers
- Engaging with ethnic community groups
- Establishing a multilingual voter database
- Identifying materials to be translated



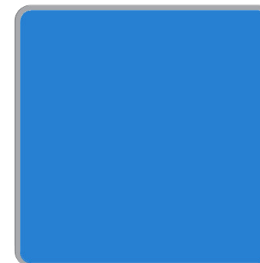
### ELECTION DAY POLL MONITOR PROGRAM

As part of the Registrar's ongoing efforts to improve the voting experience at the polls, the Department implemented an Election Day Poll Monitor program in 2008. The goal of this program is to ensure that problems at the polls are resolved on Election Day and do not interfere with a voter's ability to cast a ballot. Objectives of the program are:

- Provide an avenue for public observation of and input into the election process.
- Assist in ensuring the integrity of the election process.
- Encourage participation and build voter confidence in the election process.



## Detailed Description of Services





## LANGUAGE TARGETING SYSTEM

### Service

The Department has developed a comprehensive targeting system that integrates demographic data and language assistance requests from multiple sources. In order to produce a complete and current view of the County's language minority electorate, the Department created a data-driven system that takes pertinent information and transforms it into a report that prioritizes precincts based on language assistance needs. With this system, the Department is able to target voting precincts that contain a large number of minority language residents and identify which language(s) to provide assistance in.

### How It Works

The Department has developed a language targeting database system that includes data from the 2010 United States Census, the 2010 ACS, voter registration requests for materials in a language other than English, language assistance requests from community groups, and the Assisted Voter Tally Cards. The system also includes a record of estimated counts of bilingual voters by precincts/poll locations which was developed in partnership with the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) by comparing its existing voter database against ethnic name lists. While the ACS and APALC data are updated every five years, translated material and community requests are continually updated in the system as new requests are received.

For an election, the system creates a report that shows the languages needed in each precinct and ranks them in priority of assistance. When a precinct receives over 100 voter registration requests for materials in Spanish or over 50 requests for any other language, that precinct will be placed in priority 1A and will receive two pollworkers. A precinct that receives 20 requests or more for any language or a request by a community group, will be in priority 1B and receive one bilingual pollworker. In addition, if data shows that 10% or more of voting age citizens in a particular area speak a certain language, that area will be in priority 2 and 3% or more will be priority 3. Reasonable efforts will be made to provide one pollworker for each of these last priorities.



## TRANSLATED ELECTION MATERIAL

### Service

In order to provide residents with the opportunity to fully engage in the electoral process, the Department transliterates candidate names and provides translated election materials in the covered languages to those who request it. Among others, these materials allow



residents to register to vote, inform them of voting procedures, and help them vote by mail. Materials are translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog/Filipino, Vietnamese, Hindi, Khmer, and Thai. During a general election, the Department oversees the translation and review of around 1,370,600 words and the transliteration and review of about 4,200 words. Below is a list of materials that are translated into the nine mandated languages:

- Sample Ballot Booklets
- Voter Instructions
- Vote by Mail, Emergency Vote by Mail, and Permanent Vote by Mail Applications
- Voter Registration Forms
- Translated Election Materials Request Form
- Glossaries
- Bilingual Pollworker Flyers
- Documents requested through the Multilingual Hotline

### **How It Works**

The Department's Translation Services Unit, under the Ballot Management Section, consists of both permanent and temporary employees who are hired to assist with translation services, document review, and calls from the multilingual hotline. While a few small jobs are translated by our staff, most of the documents our Department produces are translated by a vendor called CTS Language Link. After the vendor has returned the translated documents to our office, our bilingual staff reviews, corrects and approves them before they are finalized and printed.

In addition to translation, the Sample Ballot Booklets are also printed and mailed out by the vendor. Translated Sample Ballot Booklets are provided two weeks before the election to voters who request it. During a primary election, about 332,500 translated Sample Ballot Booklets are mailed out to multilingual voters in nine languages and 323,700 during a general election.

The vendor also transliterates candidate names in those languages that do not use Roman Characters. These transliterations are then reviewed and corrected by our staff before being printed.



## POLLING PLACE INFORMATION

### Service

The Department provides signs, forms, and other translated information at all of our polling sites in the nine covered languages. All of the translated documents that are available at the polls are bundled together with the translated Sample Ballot Booklets and sent to the polls where it is known as the Multilingual Kit. These materials inform voters of the languages offered at the site for pollworker assistance, notify them of their rights as voters, and provide them with ballot information in order to make minority language voters better able to cast an accurate ballot.

Translated information at the polling place (including the Multilingual Supply Kit):

- Multilingual Translations of the Official Sample Ballot (each precinct receives Spanish, English, and any other targeted language specific to that precinct)

In all official languages:

- Multilingual translations of Provisional/Vote By Mail materials
- No "Electioneering" signs
- Pollworker language signs
- "Voter Bill of Rights"
- "Tampering" poster sign
- "Multilingual Audio Point To" card
- "Vote Here" polling place signs
- "Voter Instructions and Regulations"
- "Replacement Envelope"
- "We Speak" language signs
- "Curbside Voting" signs
- "Telephone Referral" cards
- "Voter Oath" translation page

### How It Works

The Department's Election Operations Center (EOC) handles all the ordering and dissemination of multilingual polling place information. Once the materials have been translated and approved by the Ballot Management Section, the EOC then requests the list of ballot group consolidations. Large and complex documents are sent to a vendor for printing while smaller projects are printed by the Department's own Printing Services Unit. When the outside vendor delivers the translated Sample Ballot Booklets, they are sorted by Check in Center (CIC) and sequence number to make it easier to locate and package in their corresponding kit. The other multilingual material in the kits are non-precinct specific and are sent to the precincts in all nine languages and thus, do not need to be sorted.



During major elections, it takes five to 15 days with eight to 15 EOC employees to assemble the bags with all the necessary materials. The kits are then placed in tubs in order of CIC and sequence number and are ready for the Inspector Supply Pick-Up 10 days before the election.



## **BILINGUAL POLL WORKERS**

### **Service**

During a general election, the Department recruits over 9,000 multilingual pollworkers who can speak with voters in a certain language. These pollworkers answer questions at the polls, explain the ballot and voting procedures, and assist in using the voting machines in order to help language minority voters better understand and feel more comfortable with the process.

Multilingual pollworkers are hired for the following languages:

- Armenian
- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese
- Cantonese
- Gujarati
- Cambodian/Khmer
- Hindi
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mandarin
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tagalog/Filipino
- Thai
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Farsi

### **How It Works**

Recruitment of multilingual pollworkers are handled by the Department's Pollworker Services Section. The process for this recruitment begins 92 days before a major election when the finalized targeted list is received and the number of multilingual pollworkers for each precinct is determined. The section then reviews the current pool of pollworker applicants who have either previously served as a pollworker or have newly applied. Recruiters then call those who meet the required language or area needed. During the call, the recruiter speaks to the person in both languages to assess their bilingual ability and explains the process of being a pollworker.



When there is difficulty hiring a bilingual pollworker for a specific language, the Department recruits multilingual interpreters. These interpreters are not registered voters, which means they cannot handle the official ballots, but they can greet and assist voters needing language assistance. In addition to interpreters, a group of multilingual reservists are hired as an emergency pool to help cover positions in case of no-shows or any other last minute changes on Election Day.

Once a voter agrees to serve as a multilingual pollworker, an appointment notice package is sent with the precinct location and class schedule. Pollworker trainings take place 3-5 weeks before an election, depending on the size of the election, and is coordinated by the Department's Pollworker Training Section. Although trainings are not required for clerks, they are highly recommended and pollworkers receive a \$25 stipend for attending a class. In a major election, the Department provides over 490 classes throughout the County. Every pollworker receives the same training, whether bilingual or not, however the Department provides interpreters at several of the trainings that are located in targeted areas. For general elections, the Section usually provides interpreters at 10 different trainings. During the classes, the instructors discuss cultural sensitivity for minority language voters and stress the importance of the audio ballot for those that need assistance.

In addition, the Department partners with members of our Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and Community and Voter Outreach Committee (CVOC) for advice and assistance with our trainings. During a major election, the Section offers a preview of our class for partners and community groups. These previews are conducted about two to three weeks before the actual trainings begin and are a way to give the community a voice in the process and content of our trainings.



### **WEBSITE WITH TRANSLATED INFORMATION**

#### **Service**

Translated information is not only available by mail and at the polls, but also online through the Department's website. The site currently offers several election documents that can be downloaded and printed in the nine covered languages.

These documents are :

- Vote By Mail, Permanent Vote By Mail, and Emergency Vote By Mail Applications
- Bilingual Pollworker Flyer
- Translated Election Materials Request Form





The Department is also presently updating its website, which should be available in the near future. On the new site, all of the Department's election information will be translated in each of the nine languages. Thus, a user will soon be able to navigate throughout the entire Elections section of the website in one of the covered languages. Additionally, this new site will also allow multilingual users to apply for a Vote By Mail Ballot directly online.



### **MULTILINGUAL HOTLINE**

#### **Service**

The Multilingual Assistance Hotline is a toll-free number offered by the Department that allows LEP residents to speak with someone in his/her own language regarding elections. Hotline staff members answer a wide range of calls, including requests for translated election materials, inquiries about voter registration, questions on Vote by Mail Applications and ballots, and requests for polling place locations. This service allows residents to receive verbal assistance in multiple languages before and after an election. Leading up to the November 2012 General Election, the hotline received 25,712 calls within September and October of that year. The hotline is available year-round at 1-800-481-8683.

#### **How It Works**

The hotline is housed within the Election Information section of the Department. When a resident calls the number, a staff member within the Section will either take the call or direct it to one of the bilingual staff members in the Translation Services Unit. During the 2012 General Election, 1,655 calls were received by the Translation Services Unit.

However, if a call comes in and no one in the Department is available, the hotline staff member will call the Department's contracted interpreter service, Open Communications International, Inc. This company provides translators for numerous languages. When a staff member calls this service, a three-way call is activated with the caller, translator, and staff member. These calls are then coded in the system so that the caller receives future information in his/her specific language. The majority of the calls coming into the hotline during a major election begin after the sample ballot booklets are sent out.



### **AUDIO BALLOT**

#### **Service**

The Department records audio ballots in 10 languages in order to provide an alternative means of voting for those with disabilities and language assistance needs. Recordings in specific languages are sent to the poll locations that have been targeted for assistance



in that language. These audio ballots work in the Audio Ballot Booths (ABB) and assist voters through the use of a keypad and headset. One ABB is located at every poll site and is offered to not only voters who are blind, visually impaired, or request assistance in another language, but to all voters. Audio ballots are available in Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Khmer, Spanish, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, Hindi, Tagalog/Filipino, and English.

### **How It Works**

Audio ballots are recorded by CTS Language Link and reviewed and corrected by our bilingual staff. Ballots must be delivered to the vendor 50 days before an election and it takes about 20 days for the completion of the recordings. The recording of the ballot must be finished at least 30 days before an election in order for it to be imported onto the ABB and ready for distribution to the polls. However, during small elections, Department staff can translate and record the ballot on their own.



## **COMMUNITY AND VOTER OUTREACH**

### **Service**

The Department's Community and Voter Outreach section participates in various activities that seek to educate, inform, and increase voter participation throughout the County. Outreach activities include making presentations to community groups, staffing booths and handing out information at local fairs, registering residents at cultural events, and attending community meetings. Education and outreach activities are focused on areas with low-voter turnout or low-voter registration and minority communities with historically low-voter turnout. While conducting outreach, staff members provide translated materials to those areas with a large number of minority language residents. The Department usually attends around six events per month during a non-election period and 15 events per week during a major election.

Translated voter education materials are provided at outreach events in all mandated languages. These materials include:

- Voter registration forms
- Voter Bill of Rights
- League of Women Voters' "Easy Voter Guide" in Chinese, Spanish, Korean, and English.
- CA State Voter Information Pamphlet
- "Ready to Vote" flyer
- "Voter Registration" flyer
- "Provisional Voting" flyer
- "Translated Election Materials Request" Form
- "Permanent Vote By Mail" Application



The Department also participates in the Community Voter Outreach Committee (CVOC), which is a partnership involving the Department, citizens, community groups, and advocacy organizations. Members of the Committee play an active and collaborative role in working with county election officials to ensure that elections are fair, accessible and transparent for all voters. The mission of the committee is to facilitate communication between the community and the Registrar of Voters about ways to educate, engage, and provide quality service to all voters. Since its inception in 1998, the committee has been a model of citizen participation in government. The Department hosts CVOC meetings quarterly at its headquarters in Norwalk.

CVOC contains a Multilingual Outreach Subcommittee as well. The purpose of this subcommittee is to discuss and advise the Department on various issues regarding multilingual elections and assist in coordinating outreach activities in minority language communities.

Additionally, this Section partners with government agencies, schools, and over 20 national and community organizations to reach minority language communities. Some of the organizations that have a close relationship with the Department include the League of Women Voters, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), California Participation Project, Korean Resource Center, APALC, and Rock the Vote. The Section also works closely with schools like California State University, Los Angeles, California State University, Northridge, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Southern California, and East Los Angeles College.

### **How It Works**

During election time, the Department hires up to seven temporary staff members to assist with the Outreach Section's large amount of activities. Since most of the permanent staff in this section are bilingual in Spanish, the Department strives to hire temporary staff who are fluent in the other covered languages. In order to recruit temporary bilingual staff members, the Section works with community partners who can refer someone within that language. In addition, the Department's Human Resources Division recruits multilingual workers by creating job bulletins that specify which languages are needed for the position and placing job announcements on language specific job sites.



### **COMMUNICATION THROUGH MINORITY MEDIA OUTLETS**

#### **Service**

The Department's Media and Communications Section disseminates election information to various print and broadcast ethnic media outlets to inform voters of Vote By Mail deadlines, voter registration dates, random drawings, voting on Election Day and other



election-related information. The Section has released advertisements on Spanish language broadcast, mobile, and online sites including El Gato, Super Estrella, and Univision and, in the past, has partnered with Channel 18 to release 30-second commercials in Korean, Chinese, and Tagalog/Filipino. Additionally, pertinent voting information in the form of press releases are disseminated to a number of print outlets such as La Opinion, Korea Times, Korean Daily News, Chinese Daily News and Singtao Daily News.



## POST ELECTION FEEDBACK

### Service

Voters and community organizations can send the Department complaints and/or feedback after an election and the Department will make every effort to look into the situation and send a response back to the voter. Voter inquiries are important not only because it provides an outlet for voters to voice their concerns and receive a response but it also helps the Department identify problems that are occurring and evaluate areas that can be improved. One of the organizations that consistently send feedback after every major election is APALC. Their poll monitoring report provides the Department with the opportunity to improve services for multilingual voters in future elections

### How It Works

Election feedback is distributed to the Section associated with the issue and investigated. Action is then taken if one is needed and a response letter is sent back to the voter or organization.



## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OTHER ELECTION JURISDICTIONS

### Service

The Department provides other election jurisdictions, such as King County (Washington), Harris County (Texas), and Arizona's Office of the Secretary of State, with assistance in the following issues:

- Identifying multilingual voters
- Identifying bilingual pollworkers
- Engaging with ethnic community groups
- Establishing a multilingual voter database
- Identifying materials to be translated

In addition, representatives from the Department have served on the federal Election Assistance Commission's Asian and Pacific Islander Language Task Force and Hispanic Language Task Force and given advice on assisting limited English proficiency voters.



## ELECTION DAY POLL MONITOR PROGRAM

### Service

Representatives from civic and community organizations who will be visiting polling places are invited to participate in this program by reporting any problems that arise on Election Day to the Department. Participants are provided with a hot line number, a dedicated email address, and a FAX number that can be used to communicate directly with Department staff. Through direct contact with the poll monitors, staff are able to quickly resolve concerns at specific polling places.

### How It Works

On Election Day, Department staff field reports from community poll monitors. Issues that are reported are followed up on and resolved by election staff throughout the day. This program has helped ensure that translated election materials are properly displayed and that voters who need language assistance receive quality customer service. The following is a list of examples of the issues that are resolved through the use of this program:

- No bilingual pollworker at targeted precinct
- A precinct that needs an additional bilingual pollworker
- Language ability of some bilingual pollworkers was not proficient
- Translated election materials were not displayed at a polling location

This program has assisted the Department in its continued efforts to improve the voting experience for voters that may need language assistance and ensure their rights are protected at all poll locations on Election Day.



"This right to vote is the basic right without which all others are meaningless. It gives people, people as individuals, control over their own destinies."

Lyndon Johnson



# Department Goals





### **Increase Communication and Build Partnerships with Minority Language Communities**

The Department is committed to addressing language barriers and ensuring that all voters have accessible information about the voting process, regardless of English ability. One way of accomplishing this is through the use of outreach staff. Bilingual staff who can reach out to minority voters and build relationships in those communities are essential in achieving the Department's goal of attaining 100% participation of eligible voters in every election. These staff members form partnerships in targeted communities, disseminate information about the services that are offered to language minority residents, educate people about the process, and encourage residents to participate in elections.

### **Increase Distribution of Information**

Another way to reach our diverse communities and provide them with translated election assistance is through ethnic media outlets. Investing in advertisements, articles, and press releases in various print and broadcast media outlets that cover minority language communities increases our visibility and expands our target range of voters. Thus, the Department is committed to continuing and building upon our close relationships with the local media in order to publicize election information and notices to all of our minority language communities.

### **Expand Use and Application of Data**

Determining language categories and areas to target for language assistance presents nuanced challenges to developing and implementing language assistance programs. In order to deal with this task and prioritize assistance needs based on quantitative data, the Department has developed a language targeting database system. This database will soon be accessible to Department staff and can be used to refine the County's targeting system for future elections. Data is an important aspect in understanding the linguistic diversity within our immense County and therefore, the Department will continue to invest in better technology that assists in obtaining and analyzing necessary demographic information.

### **Identify and Eliminate Barriers to Participation**

The Department is committed to not only maintaining its comprehensive language assistance program, but also continually improving upon it. Through feedback, data, and research, the Department will look for ways to increase its productivity and achieve success of 100% participation. One area where we are working on improvement is the website. The Department is currently in the process of updating applications on the site so that in the future, voters will be able to submit a Vote by Mail Ballot Application and a Translated Election Materials Request Form online in multiple languages.



# Measurements







## Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

The Department is committed to evaluating the quality of our work and progress in reaching our goals with respect to multilingual services. We seek to achieve the highest standard of service by proactively investing in practices that go above and beyond compliance with federal and state regulations. Therefore, our office will conduct an internal annual evaluation of our multilingual activities in order to assess our accomplishments and areas to improve upon.



*"Whenever any State or political subdivision provides registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language."*

**Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act**



# APPENDIX 1

## Los Angeles County Multilingual Services and Compliance

Multilingual Services	Federal Regulation <sup>2</sup>	State Regulation <sup>3</sup>
Election material, voter education information, and polling place information are translated into 9 different languages, including Official Sample Ballot, registration cards, Vote By Mail Applications, voter instructions, and notice of elections	X 55.2, 55.9, 55.15, 55.18, 55.19	X 14201
Over 9,000 bilingual pollworkers provide assistance at polling locations	X 55.2, 55.20	X 12303
Multilingual Hotline	X 55.20	
Notice of elections and other election information are published in minority language newspapers and also uploaded on our website.	X 55.15, 55.18	
Outreach to minority media outlets	X 55.18, 55.20	
Outreach and relationship building with community organizations and members of language minority groups	X 55.16	
Audio recording of ballot in 10 different languages	X 55.20	
Bilingual staff help in translating materials and assist citizens on the hotline	X 55.2, 55.18, 55.20	

<sup>2</sup>United States Code of Federal Regulations, Title 28 – Judicial Administration, Chapter 1 – Department of Justice, Part 55 – Implementation of the Provisions of the Voting Rights Act Regarding Language Minority Groups, [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec\\_203/28CFRPart55.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/28CFRPart55.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>California Elections Code Section 12303, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=elec&group=12001-13000&file=12300-12327>

California Elections Code Section 14201, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=elec&group=14001-15000&file=14200-14203>



## APPENDIX 2

### Bilingual Poll Workers November 2012

<b>Language</b>	<b># of Poll Workers</b>
Armenian	375
Arabic	65
Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin)	814
Cambodian/Khmer	96
Asian Indian (Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali)	223
Japanese	121
Korean	442
Russian	113
Spanish	6,206
Tagalog/Filipino	511
Thai	95
Vietnamese	256
Farsi	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,377</b>



## APPENDIX 3

### Citizenship of Voting Age Residents by Race/Ethnicity<sup>4</sup>

Los Angeles County, California

	White alone	Asian Indian alone	Cambodian alone	Chinese (except Taiwanese) alone	Filipino alone	Japanese alone	Korean alone	Thai alone	Vietnamese alone	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Total:	4,961,910	77,866	32,201	370,841	324,581	109,564	210,866	23,803	90,431	4,599,258
18 years and over:	3,815,139	62,746	24,117	308,937	264,472	98,350	173,671	20,345	71,977	3,094,193
Native	2,490,244	10,650	5,436	53,597	50,570	60,330	22,873	3,385	10,943	1,188,261
Foreign born:	1,324,895	52,096	18,681	255,340	213,902	38,020	150,798	16,960	61,034	1,905,932
Naturalized U.S. citizen	616,718	27,414	12,296	173,201	137,663	12,561	84,289	10,019	48,948	643,109
Not a U.S. citizen	708,177	24,682	6,385	82,139	76,239	25,459	66,509	6,941	12,086	1,262,823

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey



## APPENDIX 4

The following table shows the number of calls received by the Translation Services Unit and the number of minutes used to answer the call during the 2012 General Election:

Language	No. of Calls Received	No. of Minutes Providing Service
Chinese	274	2,080
Hindi	5	35
Japanese	12	143
Khmer	3	40
Korean	217	1,283
Spanish	982	15,818
Tagalog/Filipino	35	598
Thai	13	96
Vietnamese	59	897
English	55	342
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>21,332</b>

The following shows the number of Official Sample Ballot Booklets printed during the 2012 Primary and General Election:

Language	Booklets Printed for Primary Election	Booklets Printed for General Election
Chinese	28,316	28,819
Hindi	17	18
Japanese	2,035	2,071
Khmer	4	71
Korean	24,221	24,500
Spanish	135,955	137,602
Tagalog/Filipino	7,027	7,074
Thai	9	90
Vietnamese	7,559	7,647
<b>Total</b>	<b>205,143</b>	<b>203,833</b>

The following shows the number of words translated and reviewed by language during the 2012 General Election:

Language	No. of Words Translated & Reviewed
Chinese	152,050
Hindi	153,188
Japanese	152,127
Khmer	153,315
Korean	152,254
Spanish	151,504
Tagalog/Filipino	151,504
Thai	153,181
Vietnamese	151,537
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,370,660</b>

The following shows the number of words transliterated and reviewed by language during the 2012 General Election:

Language	No. of Words Transliterated & Reviewed
Chinese	704
Hindi	704
Japanese	704
Khmer	704
Korean	704
Spanish	0
Tagalog/Filipino	0
Thai	704
Vietnamese	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,224</b>