



# Nebraska Language and Limited English Proficiency

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2021

Department of Health & Human Services  
Division of Public Health  
Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity

**NEBRASKA**

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



# Nebraska Language and Limited English Proficiency Report Card

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## Introduction

This report card focuses on Nebraska’s Limited English Proficient (LEP) population. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, LEP individuals are those who “do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.” The LEP population in Nebraska is continuously growing. From 2000 to 2018, the LEP population grew by almost 80% for foreign-born in Nebraska<sup>1</sup>.

The U.S. Census Bureau, through the annual American Community Survey (and via the decennial Census from 1890 to 2000), asks survey recipients if they speak a language other than English at home. If the answer is “Yes,” they were then asked about the language used, and “How well does this person speak English?” Any answer other than “Very well” defines the respondent as Limited English Proficient. The data presented in this report card were obtained mainly from the Census’s American Community Survey 2018 5-Year estimates and Nebraska Department of Education.

In Nebraska, English language knowledge is often essential in navigating the health care system. Research has shown that those with limited English proficiency are more likely to have difficulty understanding medical situations, more likely to have trouble understanding labels, and more likely to have adverse reactions to medications. The purpose of this report card is to highlight the disparities faced by LEP individuals to identify better ways to serve the population.

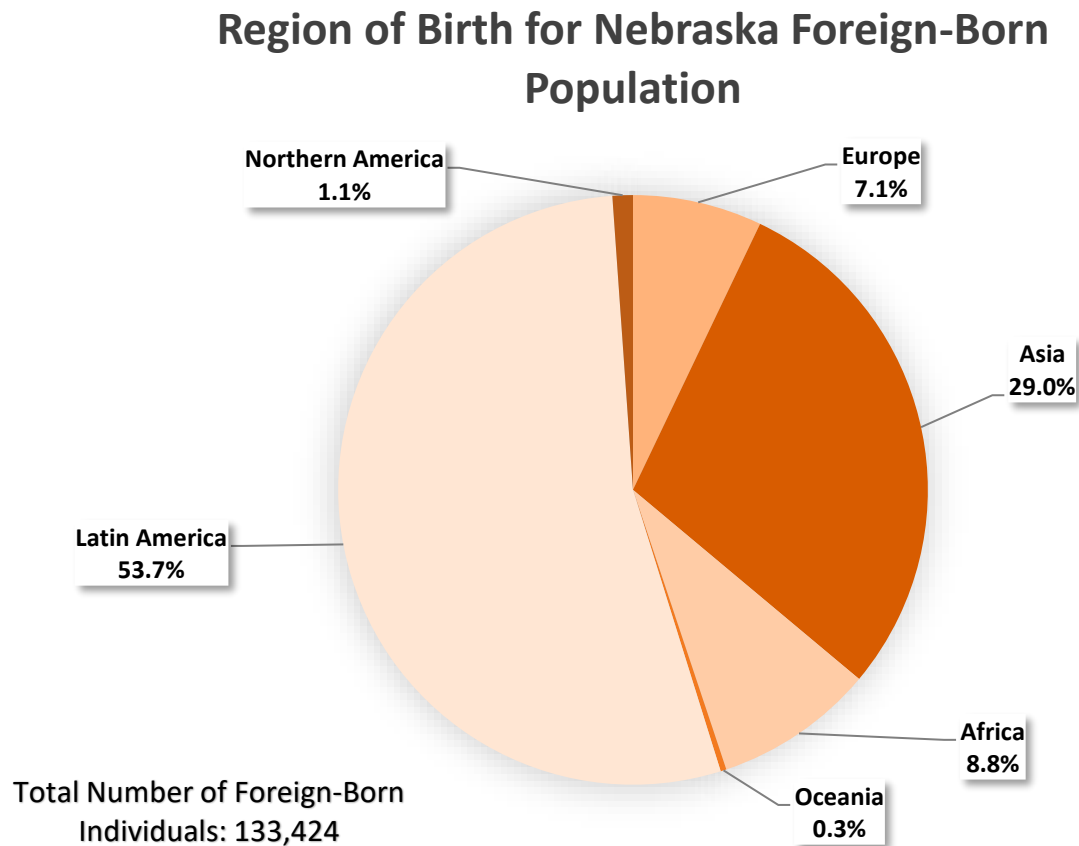
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<sup>1</sup> Migration Policy Institute tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) and Decennial Census. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) USA: Version 8.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V8.0>.

## Nebraska Foreign-Born Population

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 5-Year estimate in 2018, there were 15,674 native-born and 133,424 foreign-born residents in Nebraska. The native-born population includes anyone who is a U.S. citizen at birth, whereas the foreign-born population includes anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth, including those who become U.S. citizens through naturalization.<sup>2</sup> Foreign-born individuals represented 7% of Nebraska's overall population.

The top three regions of birth for the foreign-born population in Nebraska were Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Latin America accounted for over 50% of all foreign-born Nebraskans, whereas almost 30% of foreign-born Nebraskans were born in Asia.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau. (2020, October 16). About the Foreign-Born Population. The United States Census Bureau. [https://www.census.gov/topics/population/foreign-born/about.html#par\\_textimage](https://www.census.gov/topics/population/foreign-born/about.html#par_textimage)

# Language Spoken in Nebraska and the Country of Origin

Below are the languages spoken by individuals residing in Nebraska and the origin of each language listed.

Language(s)	Country of Origin	Language(s)	Country of Origin
Afrikaans, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa	South African	Native American Omaha-Ponca Dakota/Lakota Ho-chunk Algonquin Chiwere Others	Omaha and Ponca
Albanian	Albania		Santee Sioux
Amharic, Ethiopian	Ethiopia		Winnebago
Arabic, Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian	African and Middle Eastern Countries		Sac and Fox
Armenian	Armenia		Iowa
Bengali, Bangla	Bangladesh		...Tribes of Nebraska
Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian	Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia		
Burmese, Karen, Shan	Myanmar (Burma)		
Cambodian, Khmer	Cambodia		
Creole	Haiti		
Czech	Czechoslovakia (the Czech Republic)	Nepalese, Nepali, Maithili	Nepal
Dinka, Fur, Nuba, Nuer	Sudan	Pashto, Pashtu	Pakistan and Afghanistan
Dutch	Netherlands and Belgium	Polish	Poland
English	Most Countries	Portuguese	Portugal, Brazil, and Mozambique
Farsi, Persian, Dari	Iran and Afghanistan	Quechua, Aymara	Peru
Filipino, Tagalog	Philippines	Russian	Russia and the former Soviet Union
French	France and African	Samoan	Samoa
German	Germany	Setswana	Botswana
Greek	Greece	Sinhala	Sri Lanka
Hindi, Gujarati, Telugu, Hakha-Chin, Marathi	India	Slovak	Slovakia
Hmong	Laos and Thailand	Somali	Somalia
Indonesian	Indonesia	Spanish	Spain, North-Central-South Americas, Islands of the Caribbean
Italian	Italy	Swahili	Uganda
Japanese	Japan	Swedish	Sweden
Kanjobal	Guatemala	Tajik	Tajikistan
Kirundi	Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania	Thai, Tai, Thaiklang	Thailand
Korean	Korea	Tongan	Tonga
Kurdish	Iraq and Kurdistan	Turkish	Turkey
Lao, Laotian	Laos	Ukrainian	Ukraine
Latvian	Latvia	Urdu	Pakistan
Lingala	Democratic Republic of Congo	Vietnamese, Ba Ria	Vietnam
Lorma	Liberia	Zaghawa	Chad
Malay, Bahasa, Malaysian	Malaysia		
Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese	China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan		
Mongolian	Mongolia		

Sources: Nebraska Department of Education, Languages 2005/Sarpy County, NE – Languages for CDC 2007/Native Languages of the Americas website 1998-2009/Lincoln Public Schools – ELL Program Count for 2010-2011/Asian Community and Cultural Center Fusion Project, Lincoln, NE – Contacted June 4, 2010/UNL International Student and Scholar Statistical Data Spring 2011  
Compiled by DHHS Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity

# Language Spoken in Nebraska: Proportions

## (Language Spoken at Home)

Approximately 89% of the Nebraska population spoke only English. Spanish was the second most common language to be spoken at home. In Nebraska, 131,151 (7.4%) individuals spoke Spanish at home, compared to 37.6% of the nationwide population. The below chart includes all Nebraska residents ages five and older.

Languages Spoken	Number	Percent
Total	1,772,948	100.00%
Speak only English	1,574,067	88.78%
Spanish	131,151	7.40%
Vietnamese	6,961	0.39%
Other languages of Asia	6,224	0.35%
Arabic	5,387	0.30%
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	4,887	0.28%
German	4,337	0.24%
French (incl. Cajun)	3,879	0.22%
Amharic, Somali, or other Afro-Asiatic languages	3,505	0.20%
Nepali, Marathi, or other Indic languages	3,181	0.18%
Swahili or other languages of Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa	2,527	0.14%
Other Indo-European languages	2,309	0.13%
Hindi	1,973	0.11%
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	1,744	0.10%
Russian	1,661	0.09%
Thai, Lao, or other Tai-Kadai languages	1,644	0.09%
Telugu	1,604	0.09%
Korean	1,570	0.09%
Ukrainian or other Slavic languages	1,460	0.08%
Japanese	1,317	0.07%
Yoruba, Twi, Igbo, or other languages of Western Africa	1,138	0.06%



Portuguese	1,029	0.06%
Serbo-Croatian	978	0.06%
Persian (incl. Farsi, Dari)	930	0.05%
Ilocano, Samoan, Hawaiian, or other Austronesian languages	879	0.05%
Tamil	869	0.05%
Other Native languages of North America	828	0.05%
Malayalam, Kannada, or other Dravidian languages	652	0.04%
Italian	616	0.03%
Polish	600	0.03%
Yiddish, Pennsylvania Dutch or other West Germanic languages	583	0.03%
Other and unspecified languages	505	0.03%
Urdu	369	0.02%
Greek	324	0.02%
Bengali	324	0.02%
Hmong	225	0.01%
Gujarati	221	0.01%
Haitian	174	0.01%
Punjabi	130	0.01%
Hebrew	73	0.00%
Khmer	58	0.00%
Armenian	32	0.00%
Navajo	23	0.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Top 10 Most Spoken Language in Nebraska

### (Other than English)

Listed below are the most spoken languages other than English in Nebraska. Spanish was reported as the most spoken language in Nebraska at 7.4%, whereas Vietnamese ranked second at 0.39%.

Language	Estimate	Percent
Spanish	131,151	7.40%
Vietnamese	6,961	0.39%
Arabic	5,387	0.30%
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	4,887	0.28%
German	4,337	0.24%
French (incl. Cajun)	3,879	0.22%
Amharic, Somali, or other Afro-Asiatic languages	3,505	0.20%
Nepali, Marathi, or other Indic languages	3,181	0.18%
Swahili or other languages of Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa	2,527	0.14%
Hindi	1,973	0.11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# Language Spoken by County

## (Language Spoken at Home other than English)

Using individual-level responses from the 2018 5-Year Estimates American Community Survey, listed below are the most common languages spoken at home in each county, excluding English and its total speakers.

County	Spanish	French	German	Russian	Indo-European languages	Korean	Chinese	Vietnamese	Tagalog	Other Asian languages	Arabic	Other languages
Adams	2098	11	16	11	36	0	0	176	42	55	66	2
Antelope	154	0	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Arthur	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banner	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blaine	8	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boone	60	6	7	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Box Butte	591	6	39	7	3	0	21	0	7	0	0	50
Boyd	7	0	6	0	5	0	2	0	0	17	0	4
Brown	28	58	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
Buffalo	2468	109	109	49	169	73	76	103	7	199	79	120
Burt	127	0	15	0	4	0	0	0	9	2	0	0
Butler	237	6	18	102	3	0	0	13	20	16	0	13
Cass	383	0	38	60	34	2	0	9	0	0	9	0
Cedar	69	9	5	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Chase	393	0	14	0	5	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
Cherry	133	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Cheyenne	219	11	25	9	47	0	0	0	0	16	0	6
Clay	394	1	69	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colfax	3999	0	17	54	0	0	0	21	7	34	84	125
Cuming	646	0	11	0	12	0	0	0	2	7	0	0
Custer	292	6	3	21	49	0	0	0	0	10	2	0
Dakota	6208	1	6	2	125	1	61	25	4	273	76	559
Dawes	114	3	0	0	38	0	13	0	0	0	0	7
Dawson	5685	0	22	3	0	12	22	0	18	6	48	773
Deuel	43	0	5	0	5	0	4	0	3	0	0	1
Dixon	601	0	7	0	8	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Dodge	3471	5	116	15	119	0	15	20	0	124	15	20
Douglas	47889	2227	1210	1531	5841	475	1824	1055	555	8080	1864	4093
Dundy	311	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

County	Spanish	French	German	Russian	Indo-European languages	Korean	Chinese	Vietnamese	Tagalog	Other Asian languages	Arabic	Other languages
Fillmore	118	0	26	21	7	0	0	0	0	5	0	3
Franklin	43	0	12	4	0	0	0	2	1	10	0	0
Frontier	13	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0
Furnas	109	12	22	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Gage	301	7	126	38	0	0	32	0	11	59	2	0
Garden	73	3	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Garfield	2	8	0	3	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gosper	13	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greeley	35	0	13	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hall	10653	62	143	16	119	30	26	107	0	474	263	572
Hamilton	152	4	22	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	0
Harlan	108	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Hayes	70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hitchcock	20	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holt	346	0	7	43	22	0	0	5	0	4	6	7
Hooker	7	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Howard	78	2	17	6	28	0	0	0	4	4	0	0
Jefferson	154	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	0
Johnson	378	0	0	0	0	5	12	0	2	49	0	1
Kearney	224	0	1	0	8	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Keith	223	16	69	21	13	25	1	0	3	16	0	6
Keya Paha	9	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kimball	152	0	11	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knox	135	15	125	28	6	0	9	0	4	7	0	83
Lancaster	12112	692	1000	1688	3406	419	2252	4463	179	2585	2580	1108
Lincoln	963	24	62	34	29	0	13	0	0	10	0	90
Logan	16	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madison	3909	26	19	0	46	6	24	3	28	324	0	18
McPherson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Merrick	224	10	37	13	41	0	22	8	0	1	0	0
Morrill	407	0	2	0	1	0	10	2	0	0	0	3
Nance	9	0	16	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nemaha	106	0	8	18	2	3	2	0	44	0	0	0
Nuckolls	83	2	14	21	0	0	44	0	1	0	0	0
Otoe	810	2	2	2	20	33	7	0	0	0	6	33

County	Spanish	French	German	Russian	Indo-European languages	Korean	Chinese	Vietnamese	Tagalog	Other Asian languages	Arabic	Other languages
Pawnee	30	0	164	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Perkins	101	10	34	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phelps	207	20	18	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pierce	88	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	1
Platte	4725	0	64	53	15	0	0	0	17	104	0	9
Polk	252	15	9	0	5	0	3	0	5	0	0	21
Red Willow	150	0	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Richardson	34	3	5	11	15	12	0	0	0	0	0	2
Rock	19	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saline	2406	4	34	104	3	78	0	326	13	12	26	101
Sarpy	8605	522	488	416	796	307	297	592	686	852	212	453
Saunders	293	11	17	154	22	5	0	16	37	0	0	5
Scotts Bluff	3429	15	144	9	112	13	22	0	0	19	18	43
Seward	283	26	81	27	13	0	33	0	0	0	23	8
Sheridan	137	11	5	10	19	4	0	0	0	0	0	26
Sherman	71	3	0	14	2	5	0	3	0	1	0	0
Sioux	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stanton	277	3	2	0	0	9	0	0	0	4	0	32
Thayer	65	0	36	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Thomas	13	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thurston	91	7	2	0	0	3	0	4	0	24	0	119
Valley	28	10	4	11	11	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Washington	294	7	36	12	39	33	6	1	0	19	0	20
Wayne	336	8	18	1	87	0	0	0	6	16	0	21
Webster	46	3	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	7	1	0
Wheeler	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
York	442	24	93	0	0	3	0	6	0	6	0	14

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Languages Spoken in Nebraska by Ability to Speak English

Data for this table were derived from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. The data includes Nebraskans (age 5 years and over) who can speak a language. Respondents were instructed to print the name of the non-English language spoken at home and self-report their ability to speak English. If the person spoke more than one language, the person was to report the language spoken more often.

The percentages for this table were kept at 2 decimal places to ensure every smaller proportion of LEP population was counted.

	Estimate	Percent
<b>Nebraska Total</b>	1,772,948	100.00%
<b>Speak only English</b>	1,574,067	88.78%
<b>Spanish</b>	131,151	7.40%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	71,564	4.04%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	59,587	3.36%
<b>French (incl. Cajun)</b>	3,879	0.22%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	2,971	0.17%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	908	0.05%
<b>Haitian</b>	174	0.01%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	169	0.01%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	5	0.00%
<b>Italian</b>	616	0.03%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	518	0.03%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	98	0.01%
<b>Portuguese</b>	1,029	0.06%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	398	0.02%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	631	0.04%
<b>German</b>	4,337	0.24%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	3,886	0.22%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	451	0.03%
<b>Yiddish, Pennsylvania Dutch or other West Germanic languages</b>	583	0.03%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	498	0.03%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	85	0.00%
<b>Greek</b>	324	0.02%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	252	0.01%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	72	0.00%
<b>Russian</b>	1,661	0.09%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,058	0.06%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	603	0.03%

<b>Polish</b>	600	0.03%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	466	0.03%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	134	0.01%
<b>Serbo-Croatian</b>	978	0.06%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	705	0.04%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	273	0.02%
<b>Ukrainian or other Slavic languages</b>	1,460	0.08%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,057	0.06%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	403	0.02%
<b>Armenian</b>	32	0.00%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	32	0.00%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	0	0.00%
<b>Persian (incl. Farsi, Dari)</b>	930	0.05%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	535	0.03%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	395	0.02%
<b>Gujarati</b>	221	0.01%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	142	0.01%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	79	0.00%
<b>Hindi</b>	1,973	0.11%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,778	0.10%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	195	0.01%
<b>Urdu</b>	369	0.02%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	280	0.02%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	89	0.01%
<b>Punjabi</b>	130	0.01%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	95	0.01%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	35	0.00%
<b>Bengali</b>	324	0.02%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	293	0.02%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	31	0.00%
<b>Nepali, Marathi, or other Indic languages</b>	3,181	0.18%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,238	0.07%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	1,943	0.11%
<b>Other Indo-European languages</b>	2,309	0.13%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,723	0.10%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	586	0.03%
<b>Telugu</b>	1,604	0.09%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,239	0.07%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	365	0.02%

<b>Tamil</b>	869	0.05%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	701	0.04%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	168	0.01%
<b>Malayalam, Kannada, or other Dravidian languages</b>	652	0.04%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	494	0.03%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	158	0.01%
<b>Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)</b>	4,887	0.28%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	2,018	0.11%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	2,869	0.16%
<b>Japanese</b>	1,317	0.07%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	805	0.05%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	512	0.03%
<b>Korean</b>	1,570	0.09%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	732	0.04%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	838	0.05%
<b>Hmong</b>	225	0.01%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	159	0.01%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	66	0.00%
<b>Vietnamese</b>	6,961	0.39%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	2,356	0.13%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	4,605	0.26%
<b>Khmer</b>	58	0.00%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	51	0.00%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	7	0.00%
<b>Thai, Lao, or other Tai-Kadai languages</b>	1,644	0.09%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	904	0.05%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	740	0.04%
<b>Other languages of Asia</b>	6,224	0.35%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,104	0.06%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	5,120	0.29%
<b>Tagalog (incl. Filipino)</b>	1,744	0.10%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,146	0.06%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	598	0.03%
<b>Ilocano, Samoan, Hawaiian, or other Austronesian languages</b>	879	0.05%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	492	0.03%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	387	0.02%



<b>Arabic</b>	5,387	0.30%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	3,261	0.18%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	2,126	0.12%
<b>Hebrew</b>	73	0.00%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	34	0.00%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	39	0.00%
<b>Amharic, Somali, or other Afro-Asiatic languages</b>	3,505	0.20%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,177	0.07%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	2,328	0.13%
<b>Yoruba, Twi, Igbo, or other languages of Western Africa</b>	1,138	0.06%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	838	0.05%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	300	0.02%
<b>Swahili or other languages of Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa</b>	2,527	0.14%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	1,480	0.08%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	1,047	0.06%
<b>Navajo</b>	23	0.00%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	22	0.00%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	1	0.00%
<b>Other Native languages of North America</b>	828	0.05%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	735	0.04%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	93	0.01%
<b>Other and unspecified languages</b>	505	0.03%
<i>Speak English “very well”</i>	346	0.02%
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	159	0.01%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English and Age Group

The Census asks questions about language use at home to locate groups of people who speak a language other than English. Their isolation or integration into a primarily English-speaking community can be determined by their ability to speak English proficiently. The estimate and percentage of Nebraskans who speak a language other than English at home were listed below by age group.

Among the individuals aged 5-17 who reside in Nebraska, 35,114 individuals or about 2.0% speak Spanish at home. Referring to this estimate, almost a quarter of these individuals speak English less than “very well.” Although only 0.3% of Nebraskans in this age group reported speaking Asian and Pacific Islander languages at home, almost 50% speak English less than “very well”.

### Ages 5-17

Language Spoken at Home	Estimate	Percent
<b>Speak Spanish</b>	35,114	2.0
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	26,490	75.4
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	8,624	24.6
<b>Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages</b>	5072	0.3
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	2680	52.8
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	2392	47.2
<b>Speak Other Indo-European languages</b>	3459	0.2
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	2580	74.6
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	879	25.4
<b>Speak other languages</b>	2,913	0.2
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	1796	61.7
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	1117	38.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Approximately 5% of individuals ages 18-64 from Nebraska reported speaking Spanish at home. Over half of this population was considered as an LEP individual. Similarly, over 50% those who speak any Asian or other Pacific Islander languages reported speaking English less than “very well.” About 0.6% of Nebraskans in this age group speak other languages at home, but almost 44.8% of this population were LEP individuals.

### Ages 18-64

Language Spoken at Home	Estimate	Percent
<b>Speak Spanish</b>	90238	5.1
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	42284	46.9
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	47954	53.1
<b>Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages</b>	21440	1.2
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	9032	42.1
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	12408	57.9
<b>Speak Other Indo-European languages</b>	17317	1
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	12427	71.8
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	4890	28.2
<b>Speak other languages</b>	10569	0.6
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	5829	55.2
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	4740	44.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Nebraskans ages 65 and older who speak Asian or other Pacific Islander languages at home showed the highest percentage of the LEP population. About 77% of Nebraskans in this age group and speak these languages reported speaking English less than “very well.” In comparison, about 50% of those who speak Spanish and other languages in this age group were considered as LEP individuals.

### Ages 65 and older

Language Spoken at Home	Estimate	Percent
<b>Speak Spanish</b>	5799	0.3
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	2790	48.1
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	3009	51.9
<b>Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages</b>	2122	0.1
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	489	23
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	1633	77
<b>Speak Other Indo-European languages</b>	4334	0.2
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	3087	71.2
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	1247	28.8
<b>Speak other languages</b>	504	0
<i>Speak English only or speak English “very well”</i>	268	53.2
<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	236	46.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Limited English Proficient Population by County

The following table, based on data from ACS 2018 5-Year Estimates, shows the estimates and percentages of Nebraskans who self-report their ability to speak English “less than very well” by county. County-level data on English proficiency is crucial to better understand and address demographic diversity in a specific area.

To determine those who speak English “less than very well”, survey recipients were asked if they speak a language other than English at home. If the answer is “Yes,” they were then asked about the language used, and “How well does this person speak English?” Any answer other than “Very well” defines the respondent as a Limited English Proficient individual.

County	<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	
	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Adams	1,131	3.8
Antelope	87	1.5
Arthur	0	0
Banner	3	0.5
Blaine	6	1.3
Boone	29	0.6
Box Butte	108	1
Boyd	21	1.1
Brown	24	0.8
Buffalo	1,367	3
Burt	58	0.9
Butler	146	1.9
Cass	103	0.4
Cedar	31	0.4
Chase	274	7.7
Cherry	117	2.2
Cheyenne	67	0.7
Clay	209	3.6
Colfax	2,937	29.9
Cuming	271	3.2
Custer	158	1.6
Dakota	3,333	18
Dawes	12	0.1
Dawson	3,410	15.6
Deuel	31	1.7
Dixon	347	6.5
Dodge	2,312	6.8
Douglas	37,193	7.3
Dundy	57	3
Fillmore	50	0.9

County	<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	
	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Franklin	18	0.6
Frontier	7	0.3
Furnas	35	0.8
Gage	159	0.8
Garden	23	1.3
Garfield	0	0
Gosper	11	0.6
Grant	0	0
Greeley	13	0.6
Hall	5,911	10.4
Hamilton	71	0.8
Harlan	47	1.5
Hayes	27	3.1
Hitchcock	15	0.6
Holt	131	1.4
Hooker	0	0
Howard	36	0.6
Jefferson	124	1.8
Johnson	166	3.3
Kearney	90	1.5
Keith	108	1.4
Keya Paha	0	0
Kimball	31	0.9
Knox	142	1.8
Lancaster	13,488	4.7
Lincoln	206	0.6
Logan	14	1.7
Loup	0	0
Madison	0	0
McPherson	2,025	6.2
Merrick	133	1.8
Morrill	142	3.1
Nance	25	0.7
Nemaha	54	0.8
Nuckolls	79	2
Otoe	465	3.1
Pawnee	46	1.8
Perkins	35	1.3
Phelps	104	1.2
Pierce	45	0.7
Platte	2,366	7.7
Polk	90	1.8
Red Willow	63	0.6

County	<i>Speak English less than “very well”</i>	
	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Richardson	28	0.4
Rock	7	0.5
Saline	1,744	13
Sarpy	4,510	2.7
Saunders	222	1.1
Scotts Bluff	1,180	3.5
Seward	133	0.8
Sheridan	62	1.2
Sherman	24	0.8
Sioux	0	0
Stanton	174	3.1
Thayer	30	0.6
Thomas	4	0.7
Thurston	113	1.8
Valley	20	0.5
Washington	128	0.7
Wayne	139	1.6
Webster	9	0.3
Wheeler	3	0.4
York	162	1.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Conclusion

Nebraska is home to a population of diverse individuals who speak a variety of languages. While most non-native English speakers do speak English very well or with near-native fluency, there is still a proportion of the population considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). Based on this report card, a handful of different languages were seen to be spoken every day among Nebraskans, and a significant percentage of those who could not speak English well were identified in each age group and county.

The information about the proportion of LEP individuals from these different areas was essential to better target the individuals in need, especially the elderly and those who reside in smaller counties. As seen in this report card, about 77% of Nebraskans ages 65 and older who speak any Asian or Pacific Islander language at home reported speaking English less than “very well” or were considered LEP individuals.

In Nebraska, English language knowledge is often essential in navigating the health care system. Research has shown that those with limited English proficiency are more likely to have difficulty understanding medical situations and medication labels, which can lead to these individuals having an adverse reaction to medications.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wilson, E., Chen, A.H., Grumbach, K., Wang, F., Fernandez, A. (2005). Effects of limited English proficiency and physician language on health care comprehension. *J Gen Intern Med* (20). 800–806.

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