

2015 Language Access Plan

Appendix B:

How to calculate primary languages

Every year, the primary languages in Minneapolis are calculated using a formula that extrapolates data from the Minneapolis Public Schools and the most recent census. The formula is used to identify which languages are spoken by at least 1,000 Minneapolis residents as their primary language.

The formula, $X/Y \times Z$, is used where Y = the number of Minneapolis public school students (33,505 in for the 2014-2015 school year), X = the total population of Minneapolis (400,070 in 2014), and Z the number of Minneapolis school students who report speaking a specific language other than English at home. (Both the Y and Z variables are available at: <http://cfl.state.mn.us/datactr/language/index.htm> and the X variable are available at the U.S. Census and American Community Survey websites).

Once the number of LEP residents is computed by language, the language groups can be listed in order of size and the 1,000 resident cut off can be applied. For instance, 251 students reported speaking Vietnamese at home, so $400,070/33,505 \times 251$, or an estimated 3,003 Minneapolis residents speak Vietnamese as their primary language. Since this is over 1,000 residents, Vietnamese would be included. Conversely, 78 students said they speak Lao at home. So, an estimated $400,070/33,505 \times 78 = 931$ Cambodian-speaking residents live in Minneapolis and therefore, Lao would not be included.

This formula is used because it can be updated annually (the two main variables are recounted at the beginning of each school year) and it is more directly tied to language rather than the other population-based data sources that are based on ethnicity or country of origin. It is not, however, an exact measure of the LEP community, because of the recognized undercounting of minority populations in the US Census. Further, some immigrant groups (such as Russians, who are on average, older at immigration) might have fewer children in the Minneapolis school system than other groups.