



Metropolitan Policy Program
at BROOKINGS

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Language Needs and Abilities in the Nation's Capital, 2007

***Language Access in the District:
Five Years in the Making***

Washington, DC

July 15, 2009

Language Ability and Needs in the Nation's Capital

I

Recent immigration to the region

II

Language diversity

III

English proficiency and linguistic isolation

Data & definitions

13

a. Does this person speak a language other than English at home?

☐

Yes

☐

No → *SKIP to question 14*

b. What is this language?

For example: Korean, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese

c. How well does this person speak English?

ACS, 2007

☐

Very well

☐

Well

☐

Not well

☐

Not at all

Data & definitions

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20

ey

2000 Census

Data & definitions

Who is considered “Limited English Proficient (LEP)?”

- Speak a language other than English at home
- Report speaking English “well”, “not well”, or “not at all.”

Who is considered “English proficient?”

- Speak a language other than English at home
- Report speaking English “very well.”
(Excludes those who speak English-only.)

Data & definitions

“*Foreign born*” refers to anyone not a US citizen at birth. Used interchangeably with “immigrant” in this presentation.

Limited English proficient persons can be either foreign-born or native-born

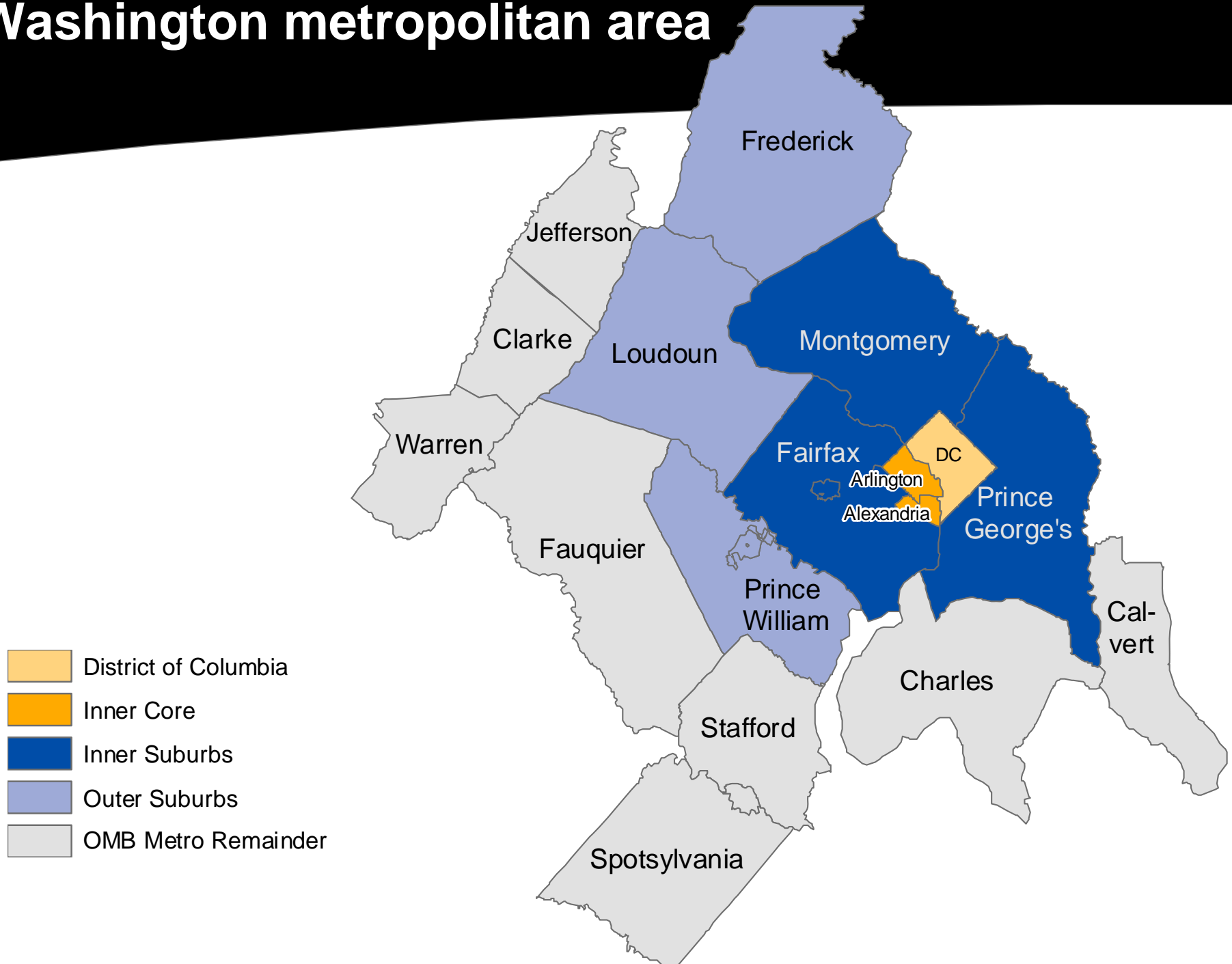
Linguistic isolation refers to households where no one over the age of 14 is proficient in English

Immigration to Washington: The Broader Context

Metropolitan Washington has more than 1 million foreign-born residents; 1-in-5 are immigrants

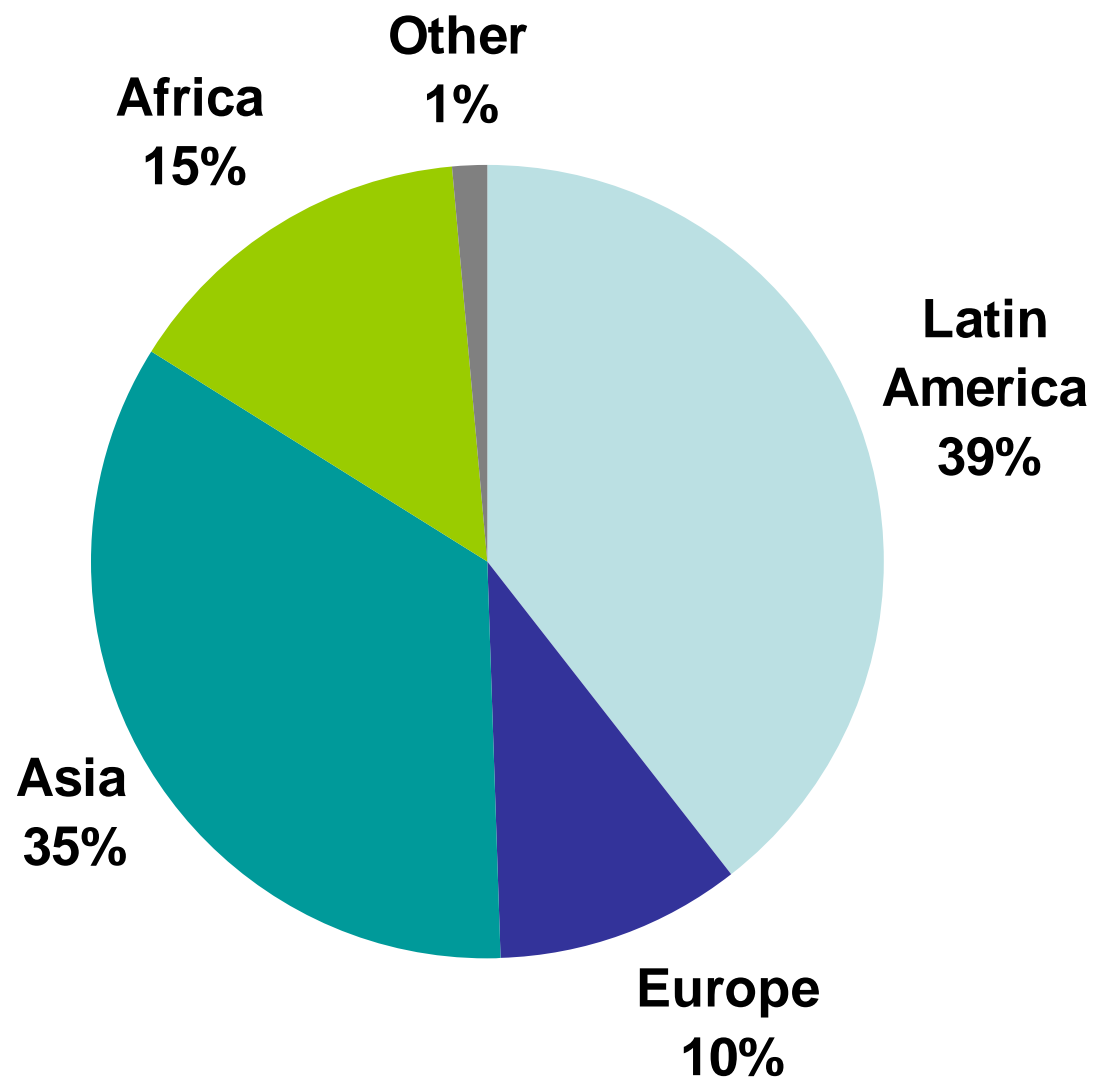
	<u>%FB</u>	<u>Millions</u>
New York	28.3	5,328,891
Los Angeles	34.9	4,488,563
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	37.0	2,005,178
Chicago	17.6	1,679,074
San Francisco-Oakland	29.6	1,245,007
Houston	21.4	1,204,817
Dallas-Fort Worth	17.8	1,092,361
<i>Washington</i>	20.5	1,088,949
Riverside-San Bernardino	22.3	911,982
Phoenix	17.6	736,068

Washington metropolitan area



Metropolitan Washington has similar shares of Latin American and Asian immigrants...

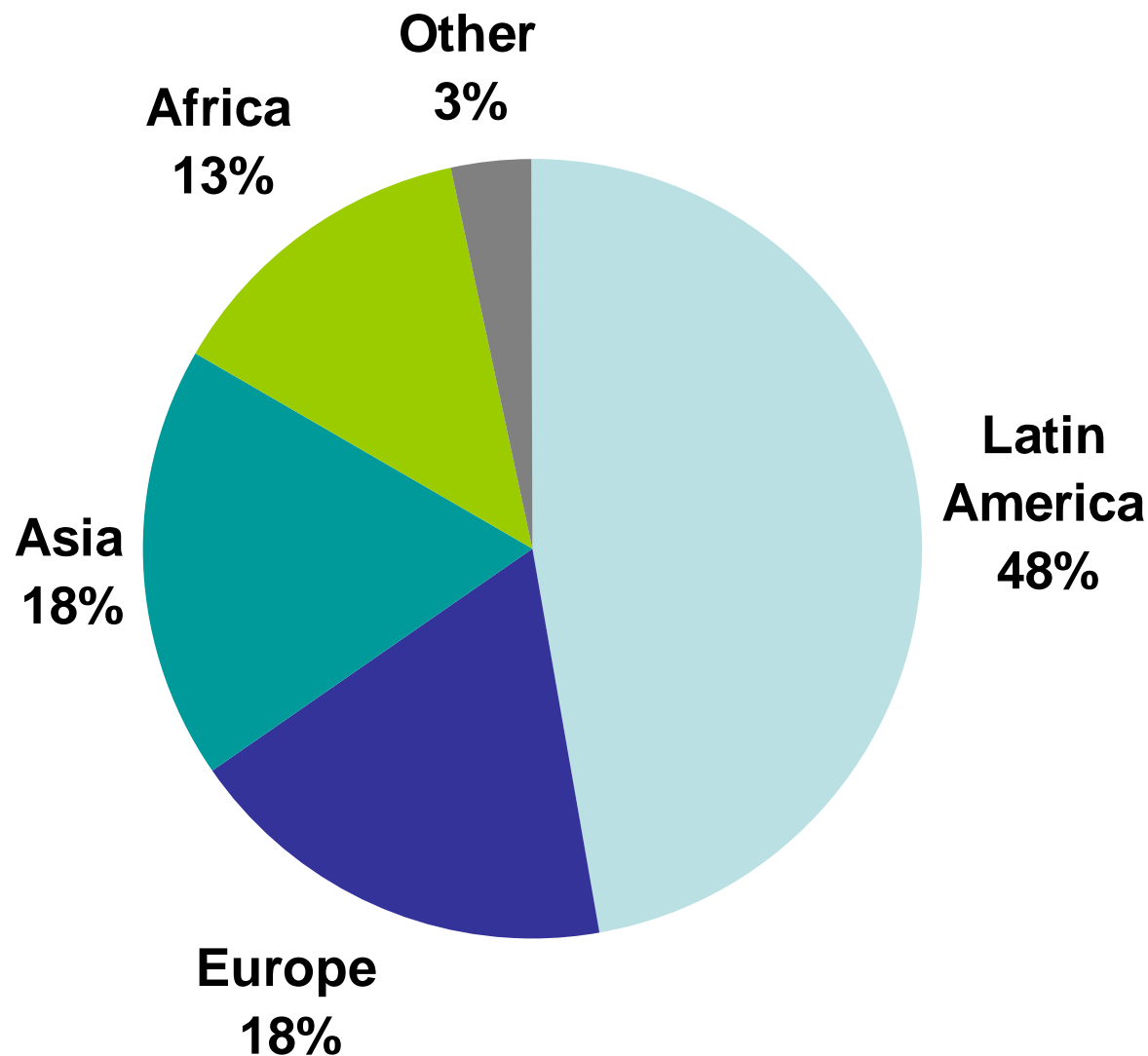
Region of Birth
for the foreign
born, Washington
metro, 2007



Source: ACS 2007

...however, nearly half of the District's immigrants come from Latin America

Region of Birth
for the foreign
born, District of
Columbia, 2007



Source: ACS 2007

Language Diversity

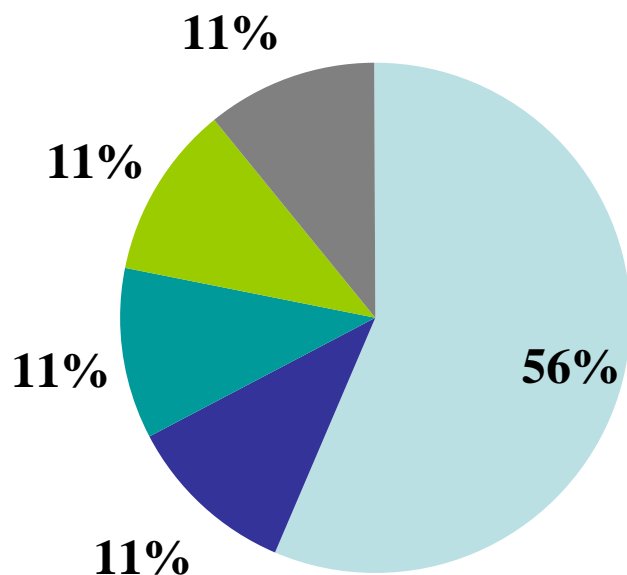
Metropolitan Washington has seen an increase in residents speaking a language other than English

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2007</u>
METRO Speaks a language other than English	21%	25%
DISTRICT Speaks a language other than English	17%	15%

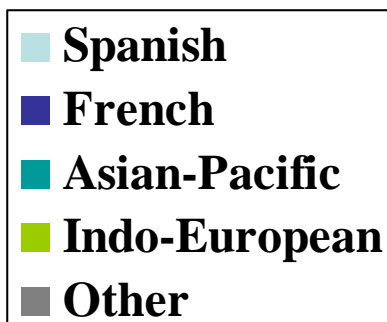
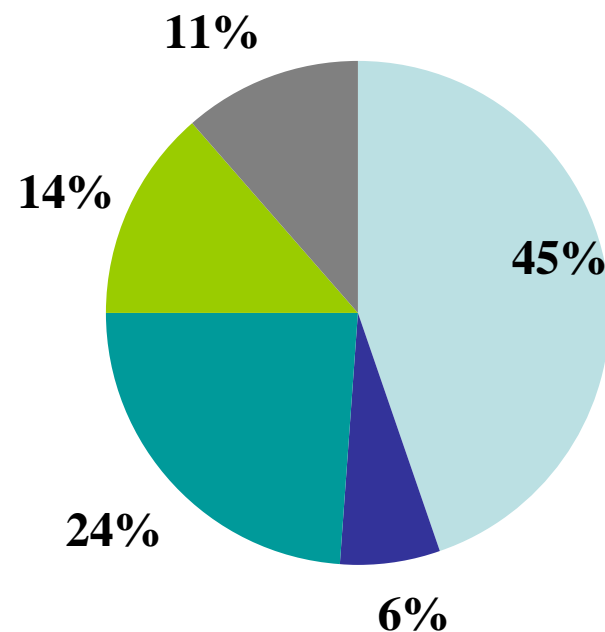
Differences in languages spoken at home reflect variation in immigrant settlement patterns in the region

Languages Spoken At Home, 2007

District of Columbia



Washington Metro Area



Spanish dominates households in the District and the region

TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN DISTRICT

Spanish, French, Amharic, and Italian

TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN METRO

Spanish, French, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese

English Proficiency and Linguistic Isolation

The limited English proficient population has increased regionwide, but has decreased in the District

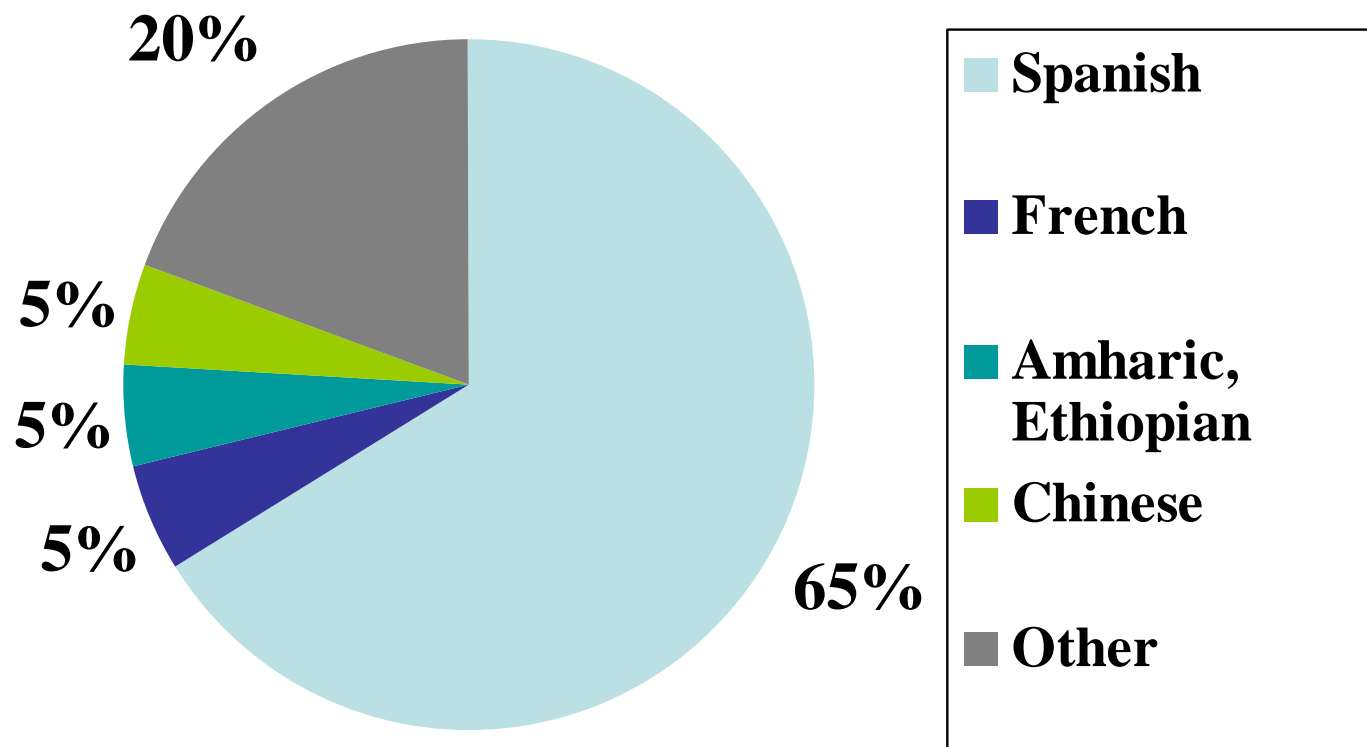
There are 500,000 LEP in the metro area as a whole, up from 408,000 in 2000, a 22% increase.

The LEP population in the District dropped 34% between 2000 and 2007, from 29,000 to 25,000.

The District was 4.6% LEP in 2007, compared to 7.1% in 2000. The metro area was 10.1% LEP in 2007 and 9.1% in 2000

Top languages spoken by LEP population in the District

Languages Spoken
by the Limited
English Proficient
Population, 2007



Limited English Proficient residents have lower educational attainment, among other characteristics

Percent of LEP
and non-LEP by
characteristic

	LEP	Non-LEP
Less than High School	43.1	8.4
BA or higher	25.7	66.9
Unemployed	5.4	4.7
Median income	\$15,786	\$35,417
Under age 18	10.1	14.4
Age 65 and over	13.4	7.6
Speak Spanish	66.0	48.1
Native born	16.3	48.3
Entered US since 2000	38.4	17.4

The number of households considered linguistically isolated has decreased since 2000 in the District

There are about 7,000 linguistically isolated households in the District, representing 3 percent of households.

In 2000, there were 10,300 LIHHs, making up 4.1% of households.

In the Washington metro, about 5% of households are linguistically isolated, compared to 4.4% in 2000.

The size of the Limited English Proficient population is affected by:

ADDITIONS

- **In-migration (domestic and from abroad)**
- **Children born into linguistically isolated households**

SUBTRACTIONS

- **Out-migration**
- **Death**
- **Acquisition of English language proficiency**

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www.brookings.edu/metro



METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM