

King County's Top Languages Ranked into Three Tiers

The language tiers reflect the language needs of Limited-English Proficient populations in King County and they are guidelines for document translation.

Five different sources were used to identify the 20 most common language needs in King County. These languages are ranked into three tiers. Spanish is alone in Tier 1, as it is clearly the most prevalent of the non-English languages spoken in King County. Eight other languages are clustered and ranked in Tier 2 and are the next most frequently-spoken languages. Eleven additional languages make up Tier 3.

Programs, if they have a known need, can translate Public Communication Materials and Vital Documents into languages other than those in the three tiers.

When targeting audiences that live in a specific geographic region, refer to the language maps (available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Chinese, Korean, and African languages only, due to limited data).

	Language	Avg Rank	Tier
First Tier: Materials Shall be Translated	Spanish	1	1
Second Tier: Translation Recommended	Vietnamese	2	2
	Russian	4	2
	Somali	4	2
	Chinese	4	2
	Korean	6	2
	Ukrainian	7	2
	Amharic	8	2
	Punjabi	9	2
Third Tier: Translation Encouraged	Tagalog	10+	3
	Cambodian	10+	3
	Laotian	10+	3
	Japanese	10+	3
	Hindi	10+	3
	Arabic	10+	3
	Farsi	10+	3
	Tigrinya	10+	3
	Oromo	10+	3
	French	10+	3
	Samoan	10+	3

Key:

- First Tier:** "Public Communication Materials" shall be translated into target language as soon as feasible within available resources.
- Second Tier:** Translation of Public Communication Materials is recommended, depending on target audience.
- Third Tier:** Translation of Public Communication Materials is encouraged, depending on target audience.

King County's Top Languages

How Were The Tiers of Languages Determined? Five sources of Limited English Proficiency Data

Tiers are based on relative numbers of King County residents speaking each language with limited English proficiency.

Source:	A	B	C	D	E
Rank	Census ACS: English "less than very well" 2006-8	OSPI: Limited English Proficiency 2008-9	District Court 2007 (case count)	KC WIC 2007 (Total)	Public Health Clinic Visits 2007
1	Spanish 52,000	Spanish 12,600	Spanish 7,900	Spanish 14,500	Spanish 56,200
2	Chinese 28,100	Vietnamese 2,100	Russian 1,100	Vietnamese 1,400	Vietnamese 5,000
3	Vietnamese 19,400	Somali 2,100	Vietnamese 800	Somali 1,300	Russian 4,000
4	Korean 12,100	Chinese 1,200	Korean 500	Russian 800	Somali 3,500
5	"African Lang" 11,900 ¹	Russian 1,000	Chinese 400	Ukrainian 600	Chinese 700
6	Tagalog 9,300	Korean 900	Somali 200	Chinese 600	Ukrainian 600
7	Russian 9,200	Ukrainian 900	Samoan 200	Amharic 200	Amharic 600
8	"Other Slavic" 4,800 ²	Tagalog 700	Amharic 200	Arabic 200	Korean 300
9	"Other Indic" 4,500 ³	Punjabi 600	Punjabi 100	Korean 100	Arabic 300
10	Japanese 4,300	Cambodian 400	Farsi 100	Cambodian 100	Punjabi 300

	First Tier
	Second Tier
	Third Tier

Tier 3 Languages:

Tagalog, Cambodian, Laotian, Japanese, Hindi, Arabic, Farsi, Tigrinya, Oromo, French, Samoan.

Sources:

- A. US Census Bureau, "American Community Survey" data for King County WA, language spoken at home, 2006-8. number of persons reporting a home language other than English and who do not speak English "very well."
- B. WA Superintendent of Public Instruction, Limited English Proficiency students in King County, 2008-9.
- C. King County District Court data of court cases requesting interpretation, 2007.
- D. Seattle-King County Public Health Women-Infant-Children program, 2007 cases requesting interpretation.
- E. Seattle-King County Public Health clinic visits, 2007 cases requesting interpretation.

- Notes
1. Census does not distinguish African languages; based on other sources, probably chiefly Somali, Amharic.
 2. Census lumps other Slavic languages; based on other sources, probably chiefly Ukrainian.
 3. Census lumps other Indic languages; based on other sources, probably chiefly Punjabi.
 4. In overall ranking, Russian, Somali and Chinese are all tied for 3rd place.