

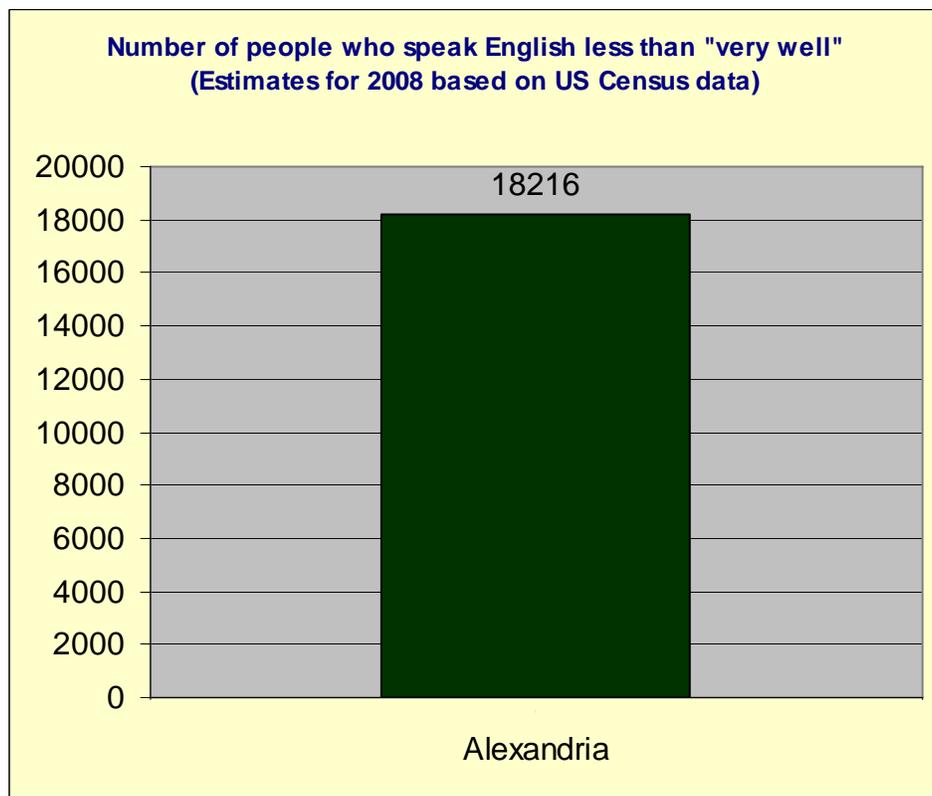
2010 LANGUAGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT: ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DISTRICT

(Areas covered: City of Alexandria)

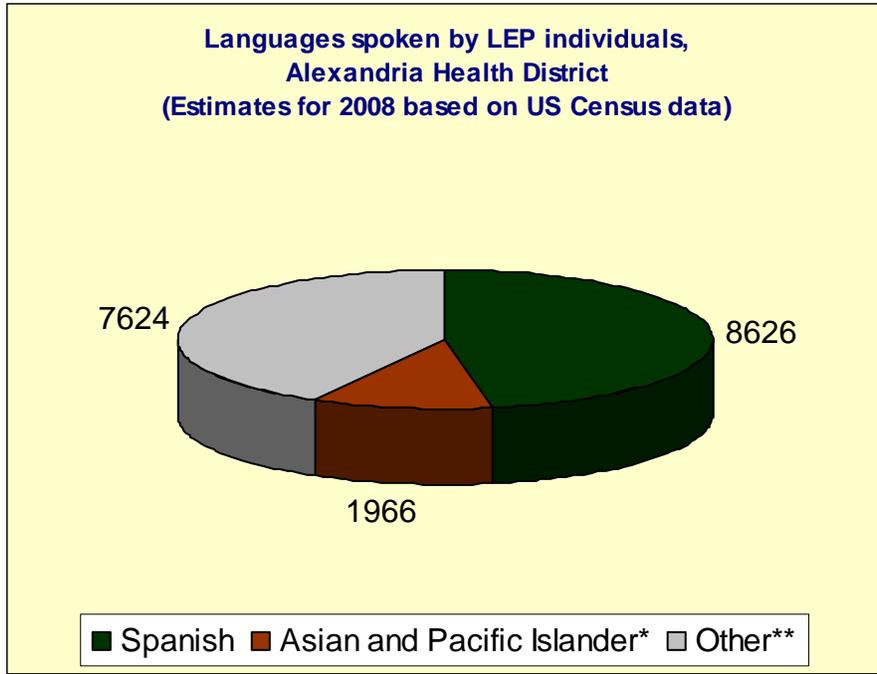
HOW DOES THE CLAS REQUIREMENTS IMPACT THE ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DISTRICT?

The obligation to provide meaningful access is fact-dependent and starts with an individualized assessment that balances the following four factors:

1. The number or proportion of limited English proficient (LEP)¹ persons within this district:



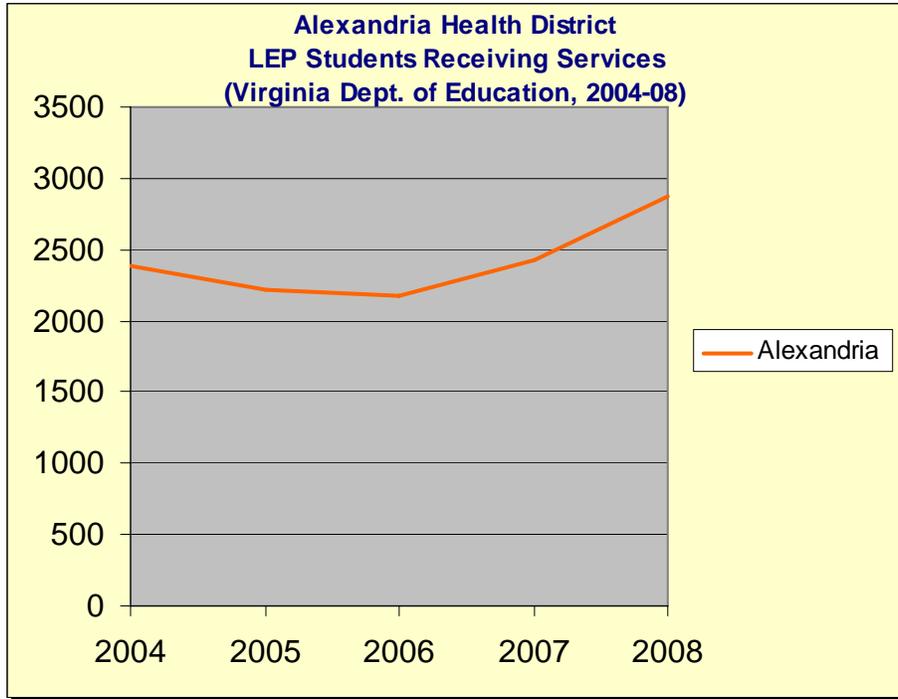
¹ Individuals are considered limited English proficient (LEP) if they “do not speak English as their primary language and...have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.” (From www.lep.gov.)



*Based on US Census language designations. Asian and Pacific Islander languages include, but are not limited to: Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese.

**Based on US Census language designations. Other languages include, but are not limited to: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali-Bengla, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Kurdish, Nepali, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Sudanese, Tigrinya, Ukranian and Urdu.

Based on 2008 estimates from US Census data, 18,216 of the residents of Alexandria Health District are considered LEP. Of the LEP residents in the Alexandria Health District, about half (47%) speak Spanish as their primary language.



Based on data from the Virginia Department of Education, the number of LEP students receiving educational services in the Alexandria Health District has increased by 21% over the last five years. This indicates that the overall LEP population in the area is growing.

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the program:

The following is patient level data for the Alexandria Health District as reported in the Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) Web Vision, January- December 2008*:

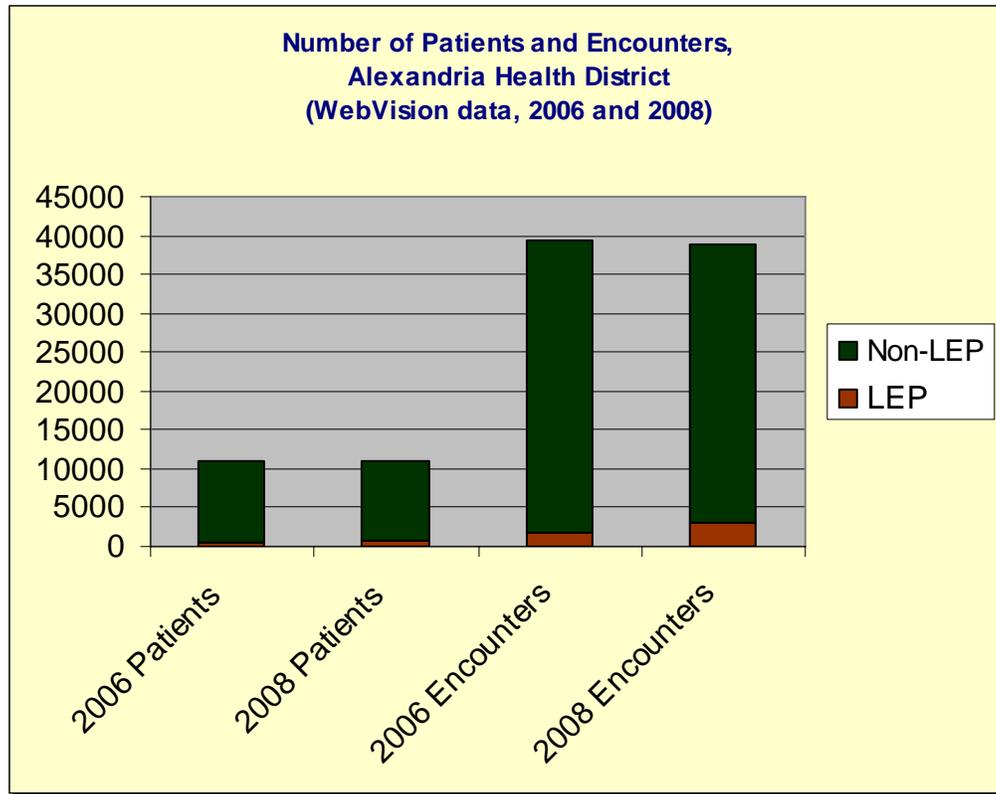
Primary Language**	Patients (unduplicated count)		Patient encounters	
	#	%	#	%
English	9,740	89.34%	33,417	85.84%
Spanish	652	5.98%	2,960	7.60%
Amharic	12	0.11%	48	0.12%
Arabic	11	0.10%	40	0.10%
Mongolian	5	0.05%	8	0.02%
Korean	3	0.03%	6	0.02%
French	2	0.02%	26	0.07%
Thai	2	0.02%	4	0.01%
Turkish	2	0.02%	5	0.01%
Chinese	1	0.01%	3	0.01%
Hindi	1	0.01%	1	0.00%
Hungarian	1	0.01%	2	0.01%
Nauru	1	0.01%	1	0.00%
Nepali	1	0.01%	6	0.02%
Norwegian	1	0.01%	2	0.01%
Polish	1	0.01%	13	0.03%
Slovak	1	0.01%	1	0.00%
Tigrinya	1	0.01%	8	0.02%
Alexandria Health District	10,902	100.00%	38,928	100.00%

* The listed languages may not equal 100% because of the exclusion of rarely encountered languages and non-English speakers who are not Limited English Proficient.

** By need for an interpreter (responses of "yes" & "unknown")

According to this data, for the Alexandria Health District:

- ◆ 6.48% of all patients are LEP
- ◆ 8.10% of all encounters involve LEP patients.



Since the most recent language needs assessment in 2007, there has been an increase in percentage of both LEP patients and encounters. The 2007 report showed that 5% of all patients and encounters involved LEP patients. Comparing this data from the 2007 report with more recent data, it is evident that the number of LEP patients and encounters in the Alexandria Health District has increased, while the total number of district patients and encounters essentially remained the same.

3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the recipient (VDH) to its beneficiaries.

The agency should consider the importance and urgency of its program, activity or service. If the activity is important and urgent, immediate language services are needed. If the activity is important but not urgent, language services are needed but can be delayed for a reasonable period of time. (See [Title VI federal guidelines](#) or the language needs assessment home page for more guidance on this matter.)

4. The resources available to the grantee/recipient (VDH) and the costs of interpretation/translation services.

Agencies should carefully explore the most cost-effective means of delivering competent and accurate language services due to resource concerns. In many cases it is more cost-effective to hire staff or take other appropriate measures, thereby improving the quality of service. Resource limitations must be well-substantiated before using this factor as a reason to limit language assistance. (See [Title VI federal guidelines](#) or the language needs assessment home page for more guidance on this matter.)

Based on the federal requirements, the following processes should be in place at the Alexandria Health District to ensure compliance:

- **Notification of Rights:** Both verbal offers and written notices informing clients of their right to receive language assistance services at no cost to them. For this purpose, VDH has designed a language identification poster that informs patients in 32 languages of their rights to a trained interpreter at no cost. Copies of this poster should be displayed at all offices of the health district and as appropriate in multiple locations within offices. This poster is available online at <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/healthpolicy/healthequity/documents/8x11languagecard.pdf>.
- **Interpretation Services:** Interpretation services should be provided to all LEP patients at no cost and at all points of contact in a timely manner during all hours of operation. LEP persons cannot be required to bring their own interpreters nor should they use family members or friends as interpreters, unless specifically requested by the patient/consumer after receiving notification of their rights to receive language assistance services at no cost to them. On-site interpretation should be provided in any language whose speakers are at least 500 of the district's patient encounters.
 - Based on the four factor assessment, it is recommended that the Alexandria Health District provide on-site interpreters either through a contractual arrangement with a language service agency, the use of in-house interpreters and/or the use of bilingual staff for the following language(s): **Spanish**. The on-site interpretation can be provided by part-time trained interpreters (estimated cost²: \$56,240) or by bilingual employees who have been trained in medical interpreting (estimated cost³: \$3,000 - \$9,000). The use of bilingual employees who have been trained in medical interpreting is preferred, as it is the more cost-effective option.
- **Assurance of Competence:** have a mechanism for assuring the competence of the language assistance provided.
 - It is recommended that the Alexandria Health District utilize interpreters and translators (whether they are in-house, bilingual professional staff, or contract interpreters and translators) who:
 - have been screened and tested for proficiency in both English and the target language(s)
 - have received a minimum of 40 hours of training as professional medical/health care interpreters (the training should include, but not be limited to, the following topic areas: ethics and confidentiality, medical

² Calculation based on the Bureau of Labor's national median wage (\$19.00/hr.) for interpreters and the estimation that each LEP encounter is equivalent to one hour of work for an interpreter.

³ Calculation based on the estimated need of one bilingual employee per 500 LEP encounters in target language. Cost will vary based on the amount of the bonus given; range of recommended bonus for bilingual employees: \$500 - \$1,500.

terminology, basic anatomy and physiology, roles, and cultural competence)

- adhere to an interpreter and translator Code of Ethics, a statement of confidentiality, and are aware of and comply with HIPAA related privacy guidelines
 - participate in ongoing medical/healthcare interpreter and translator continuing education
 - have subject matter expertise in medical and health care and prior experience translating medical/health documents
 - are able to write at an appropriate reading level for the target audience
 - have been screened and tested for proficiency in both written English and the target language(s) with affiliation/accreditation by the American Translators Association preferred
 - are able to act as a cultural bridge, providing VDH with feedback not only on grammatical and linguistic accuracy, but also on cultural appropriateness
 - do not rely on software-based translation programs
 - are covered by liability insurance
- ◆ **Translated Materials:** make available easily understood patient-related materials and post signage in the languages of the commonly encountered group and/or groups, including written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. It is recommended that Alexandria Health District provide written translation for all vital documents into **Spanish**.

In order to help health districts comply with the culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services (CLAS) requirements, VDH has contracted with Language Services Associates (LSA), a provider of telephonic interpretation and translation by trained and certified professionals. The following chart reflects Alexandria’s telephonic usage of LSA services.

Language	# of Calls	Minutes	Total Charge
Spanish	584	4,604	\$5,466.85
Amharic	96	1,457	\$2,236.85
Arabic	61	996	\$1,460.10
Cantonese	15	157	\$240.55
French	15	60	\$95.10
Turkish	8	84	\$122.70
Bengali	5	73	\$107.95
Tigrinya	4	44	\$66.80
Farsi	3	36	\$52.20
Romanian	2	30	\$43.50
Russian	2	29	\$42.05
Korean	2	6	\$8.70
Somali	1	25	\$36.25
Serbian	1	21	\$30.45
Hindi	1	20	\$29.00
Thai	1	9	\$13.05
Mandarin	1	8	\$11.60
Urdu	1	7	\$11.95
Albanian	1	2	\$2.90
Alexandria Health District	804	7,668	\$10,078.55

Summary

Culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services (CLAS) requirements obligate each health district to provide suitable language access for all services at no additional cost to the patient. The determination of the district’s language needs is made based on data from the US Census, the Virginia Department of Education (DOE), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Language Services Associates (LSA), the telephonic interpreting provider for VDH.

According to 2008 estimates, 18,216 limited English proficient (LEP) individuals reside in the Alexandria Health District, comprising 13% of the total population in the district. 47% of the LEP population in Alexandria speaks Spanish as its primary language. DOE data indicates that the LEP population is growing: the number of LEP students receiving services has increased 21% over the last five years.

In the Alexandria Health District 6% of all patients and 8% of all encounters were LEP patients in 2008. These figures represent an increase in the number and proportion of LEP patients served as compared to the 2007 language needs assessment. This increase occurred despite minimal change in the number of total patients and encounters in the district.

This report makes no new compliance recommendations for the Alexandria Health District. As in 2007, it is recommended that the Alexandria Health District provides on-site interpretation and translation services in **Spanish**. All other patients should be notified of their right to a trained interpreter at no cost; LSA telephonic interpretation may be utilized for this purpose.

Note: Health service providers should note that the use of untrained medical interpreters, such as family and friends of the patient, is unacceptable when a trained interpreting service (including telephonic interpreting) is available.

There is a notable percentage of LEP individuals in Alexandria that comprise 13% of the total LEP population but only 6% of LEP patients and 8% of LEP encounters in the district. This difference may be due to overestimated census data regarding the LEP population or that this population is not in need of health department services. It is recommended that Alexandria Health District identify specific LEP populations, particularly non-Spanish populations such as Amharic or Arabic, and target these groups for health department outreach. Doing so will assure that the needs of all potential LEP patients are met.