

A Profile of Limited English Speaking Older Adults in Metropolitan Chicago



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A Profile of Limited English Speaking Older Adults in Metropolitan Chicago

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Marta Pereyra, Executive Director of CLESE and Beth O'Grady, Consultant to CLESE, overviewed the data and helped with data analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The report you hold in your hands is supported by a grant to the Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE) by the Retirement Research Foundation and the Alphawood Foundation as part of a larger strategic planning project. The data assembled herein is an examination of current available Census data compiled by Rob Paral and Associates. The report answers the following questions: what are the largest groups of limited English speaking elderly? Where do they live? What are some of the defining characteristics of their lives, such as poverty rates, living situations, and receipt of Social Security? How do they compare with mainstream, U.S. born elderly? The answers are critical to CLESE, its fifty one member organizations and the thousands of older adults they serve. Older members of the metropolitan Chicago community face many challenges in maintaining their independence, economic security and active relationships with their friends and families.

Older adults who do not speak English well face these same barriers in combination with the problem of adequately communicating with society. Lack of English in combination with the strains that often accompany coming to the U.S. late in life mean that special efforts must be made to serve limited-English seniors. This includes communicating with them in their own language and ensuring that they have equitable access to government programs and services.

CLESE was formed in 1989 by bi-lingual, bi-cultural leaders as a result of an extensive ethnic elderly needs assessment conducted in the city of Chicago which clearly showed that older adults needed services, were eligible for them, but were not receiving them as a result of barriers of language and culture. The mission of CLESE is to improve the lives of limited English speaking elderly through leadership, education and advocacy.

As part of its efforts to better serve limited English-speaking older adults, CLESE has commissioned this report to provide objective information on their demographic, social and economic characteristics. This portrait of the community reveals a highly diverse population representing numerous languages and places of origin. Service providers, advocates, policy makers and others will note that limited English-speaking older adults are important to the fabric of our region and their needs deserve careful consideration from us all.

CLESE member organizations, located over the larger Chicago metropolitan area, serve thousands of older adults every day, with services such as assistance with benefits applications, in-home care, adult day service, transportation, learning English, congregate meals, interpretation, and assistance with citizenship. The organizations help older adults not just acculturate, but thrive in their new country, enabling them to continue contributing to their families and their communities.

Our communities are enriched by our diversity, from immigrants who choose to come, often waiting a long time for permission, to refugees who are granted a new home as a relief from war, persecution and torture; people who come at young ages and learn to speak English at school and through employment; and those who come as older adults and have a much more difficult adjustment. CLESE has a successful history of managing programs to ease adjustment, diminish barriers to service and ensure a full and productive life for all limited English speaking older adults.

Marta Pereyra, Executive Director
Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THIS REPORT PROFILES THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS IN METROPOLITAN CHICAGO, USING RECENT U.S. CENSUS BUREAU DATA. THE FINDINGS INCLUDE:

The 172,000 limited English-speaking older adults in metro Chicago are a substantial portion of all older adults and of all limited English-speaking persons

Limited-English older adults are 13 percent of all older adults in the region. They are also 16 percent of all limited English-speaking persons in the area.

Many groups have over 1,000 limited English-speaking older adults

There are 18 major limited-English groups with at least 1,000 members. Numerically the largest groups are Mexican (47,000), Polish (21,000), Puerto Rican (11,000) and Chinese (9,000).

Limited English-speaking older adults are concentrated in Chicago, but found throughout the region

Nearly half or 46 percent of the limited English-speaking older adults reside in the city of Chicago, and another 30 percent are in the suburban portions of Cook County. DuPage County is home to 8.1 percent of the population.

Living arrangements of limited English-speaking older adults are noticeably different

Limited English-speaking older adults are about half as likely as other older adults to live alone.

Limited English-speaking older adults have a poverty rate that is double the rate for other older adults

Some 16.2 percent of limited English-speaking older adults are in poverty, compared to 8.0 percent of other older adults.

Large portions of the population pay too much for housing

Housing costs are burden for many older adults, who often lived on fixed incomes. Nearly half or 47 percent of limited English-speaking older adults pay 30 percent or more of their monthly income on housing.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

The information in this report is derived from the *American Community Survey* for years 2005–2009. The ACS surveys about one percent of the entire population each year. For this report we aggregate five years of survey records to improve data reliability. (Data on health insurance and disability are for the 2008–2009 period because those topics are not covered in each year of 2005–2009.)

Metro Chicago is defined as an eight-county region including Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties.

Limited-English refers to persons who do not speak English “very well.” Persons who speak English only or who speak English “very well” are referred to as **Not limited English** in the tables in this report. This definition is used in recent Census Bureau reports, and it based on self-reporting of English ability by the persons responding to the survey. The American Community Survey asks respondents if they speak a language other than English at home. Persons who respond affirmatively are then asked how well they speak English. The response options are “Very well,” “Well,” “Not well,” and “Not at all.” Questionnaires are available in various languages for persons who do not speak English.

Older adults in this report includes persons aged 60 years or more.

GROUPS INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

We sought to include *as many groups as possible* while recognizing the limitations of a sample survey like the ACS.

We developed a set of discrete groups for analysis using the definitions available to us in the American Community Survey. We used race to distinguish different Asian groups because it is the key distinguishing feature used by the Census Bureau for persons from that part of the world. For European groups we used person’s ancestry for the same reason. For Latinos, we used their national origin (i.e., Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc.).

We developed a set of discrete population groups based on ancestry, race and Latino ethnicity, and included groups that had at least 35 survey records. The small number of survey records prevented us from including some groups that have arrived in metro Chicago in noticeable numbers in recent years such as Bosnians though, in the case of this group, we did develop a **Yugoslavian (former)** category.

Central America in this report includes persons reporting a national origin referring to Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

South America in this report includes persons with a national origin referring to the countries of that continent.

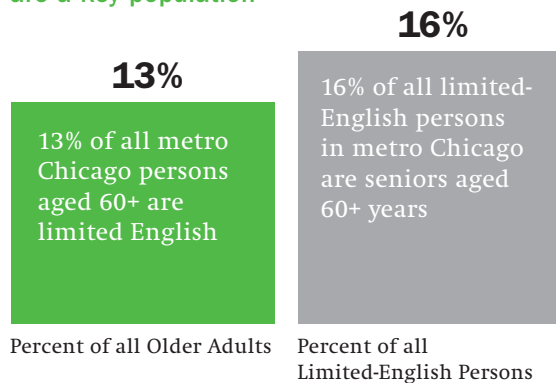
Assyrian includes persons reporting Assyrian or Chaldean ancestry.

SITUATING LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS WITHIN THE LARGER CONTEXT

THERE ARE 172,000 LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS IN METRO CHICAGO; THEY ARE A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF ALL OLDER ADULTS AND OF ALL LIMITED-ENGLISH PERSONS

There are about 171,581 persons in metropolitan Chicago who have limited English and who are at least 60 years of age, according to the American Community Survey of 2005–2009.¹ These individuals are a large portion of both the older adult population and the limited-English population. Limited English-speaking older adults are 13 percent of all older adults in the region.² They are also 16 percent of all limited-English persons in the area.³

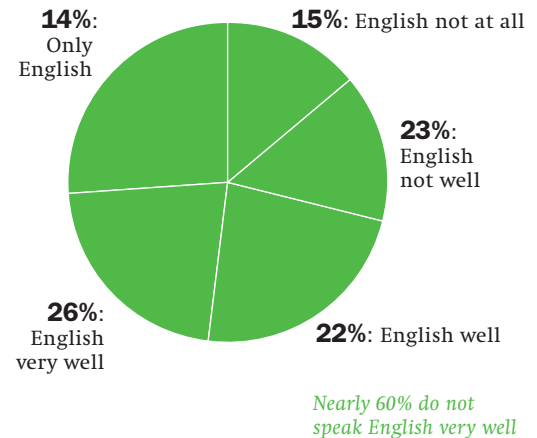
Limited English-speaking older adults are a key population



PERSONS OF LIMITED ENGLISH ARE THE MAJORITY OF IMMIGRANT, REFUGEE AND PUERTO RICAN OLDER ADULTS

There are 267,076 older adults who were either born abroad or are Puerto Rican. The great majority of these persons may be assumed to have a native language other than English. In fact, nearly 60 percent of these individuals do not speak English very well.

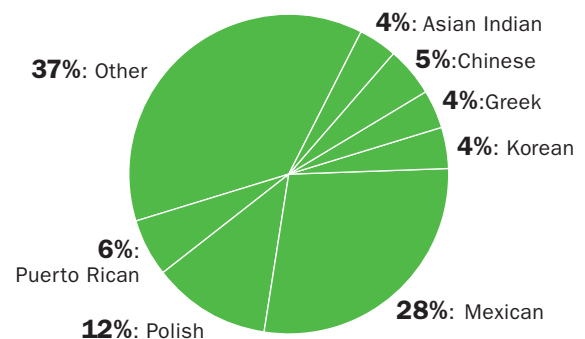
Most older adult immigrants and Puerto Ricans speak English less than very well



THE LEP OLDER ADULT POPULATION IS DIVERSE, WITH SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS FROM ASIA, EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA

Multiple groups are represented among the limited English-speaking older adult population. The single largest group is comprised of persons born in Mexico (28 percent of the population), followed by Polish persons (12%) and Puerto Ricans (6%). Four groups comprise four or five percent of the older adult LEP population: Asian Indians, Chinese, Greeks and Koreans.

Major Groups of Limited English Elderly



1.) The ACS has replaced the decennial census as a source of information on socioeconomic characteristics of communities.
 2.) There were 1,285,124 older adults in metro Chicago in the 2005-2009 period.
 3.) There were 1,051,511 Limited-English persons (LEPs) in metro Chicago in the 2005-2009 period.

MANY GROUPS HAVE OVER 1,000 LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS

There are many groups in metro Chicago with at least 1,000 limited English-speaking older adults. The limited English-speaking older adults are often the majority of older adults within their group. The highest percentage of any population that is limited English involves Central Americans, of whom 79 percent have limited English ability. Other groups for whom persons with limited English are at least 70 percent of the older adult population include Koreans (78 percent), Chinese (73 percent) and Vietnamese (73 percent).

Persons of Limited English Aged 60+ Years in Metro Chicago: 2005–2009

	Total Population	Limited English	Pct. Limited English
Total	1,285,124	171,581	13%
Arab	4,325	2,523	58%
Asian Indian	14,694	7,585	52%
Assyrian	2,696	1,728	64%
Central American	5,176	4,106	79%
Chinese	12,059	8,853	73%
Filipino	17,589	5,937	34%
Greek	16,418	6,078	37%
Japanese	2,794	797	29%
Korean	7,903	6,174	78%
Lithuanian	13,782	1,500	11%
Mexican	71,318	47,225	66%
Polish	126,798	20,511	16%
Puerto Rican	16,567	10,952	66%
Romanian	4,340	2,231	51%
Russian	23,789	3,538	15%
South American	5,131	3,484	68%
Ukrainian	6,943	2,750	40%
Vietnamese	1,776	1,301	73%
Yugoslavian (former)	14,411	3,889	27%
All Others	916,615	30,419	3%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

SOME MAJOR GROUPS HAVE ESPECIALLY LARGE NUMBERS OF PERSONS WITH NO ENGLISH SKILLS

Older Adults with no English language skills are at least 20 percent of four populations in metro Chicago. As stated earlier, people with no English skills are defined as people who respond as speaking English “not at all” in the American Community Survey. Some 29 percent of Central American and Chinese older adults do not speak English, and about 25 percent of Mexican and 20 percent of Korean older adults are without English.

Altogether, seven major groups have at least 1,000 older adults who do not speak English at all. These include Mexicans (17,626 persons), Chinese (3,471), Polish (3,053), Puerto Ricans (1,677), Asian Indians (1,583), Koreans (1,575) and Central Americans (1,479).

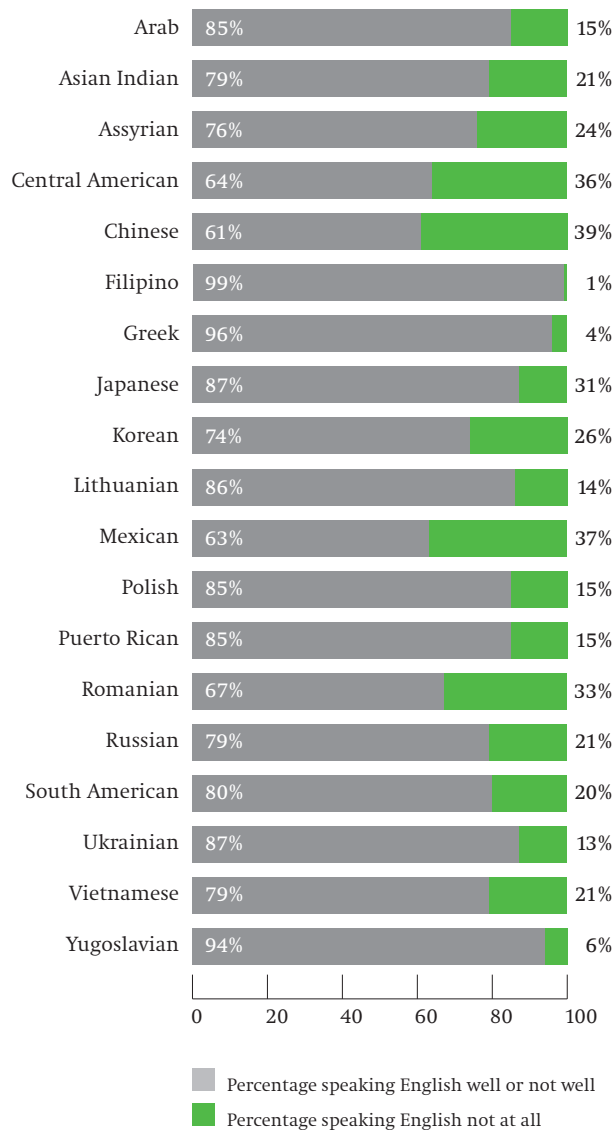
Persons with No English Aged 60+ Years in Metro Chicago: 2005–2009

	Total Population	No English at All	Pct. No English
Total	1,285,124	39,696	3%
Arab	4,325	368	9%
Asian Indian	14,694	1,583	11%
Assyrian	2,696	416	15%
Central American	5,176	1,479	29%
Chinese	12,059	3,471	29%
Filipino	17,589	53	0%
Greek	16,418	266	2%
Japanese	2,794	107	4%
Korean	7,903	1,575	20%
Lithuanian	13,782	206	1%
Mexican	71,318	17,626	25%
Polish	126,798	3,053	2%
Puerto Rican	16,567	1,677	10%
Romanian	4,340	731	17%
Russian	23,789	755	3%
South American	5,131	704	14%
Ukrainian	6,943	353	5%
Vietnamese	1,776	277	16%
Yugoslavian (former)	14,411	917	6%
All Others	916,615	4,079	0%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

The graphic below displays the percentages of older adults who speak some English and who speak no English at all. (The graphic is based on the limited-English population, not the entire population.)

English Ability of Limited English-Speaking Older Adults



LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS ARE 13% OF ALL OLDER ADULTS IN THE REGION.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS

LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS ARE CONCENTRATED IN CHICAGO, BUT FOUND THROUGHOUT THE REGION

Limited English-speakers are defined as persons who speak English less than “very well” in the American Community Survey. The great majority of limited English-speaking older adults live in Cook County. Nearly half or 46 percent reside in the city of Chicago, and another 30 percent are in the suburban portions of Cook County. DuPage County is home to 8 percent of the limited English-speaking older adult population. In contrast to the limited English-speaking older adults, only 29 percent of other older adults live in Chicago.

Place of Residence of Older Adults in Metro Chicago: 2005–2009

	Limited English proficient	Not limited English proficient
Total	100%	100%
Chicago	46%	29%
Suburban Cook County	30%	35%
DuPage County	8%	11%
Lake County	6%	8%
Kane, McHenry, Kendall counties	6%	10%
Will, Grundy counties	4%	7%

Source: American Community Survey: 2005–2009

LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS PREDOMINATE IN CERTAIN SUB-REGIONS

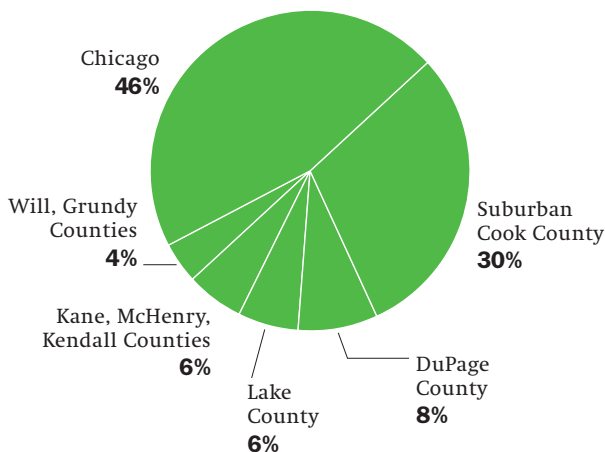
The maps on the next page locate the limited English-speaking older adult population by Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). These are geographic areas for which the Census Bureau makes certain types of survey data available. As seen in the map, the largest numbers of limited English-speaking older adults are in the northwest and southwest portions of the city of Chicago, as well as in the north central area of suburban Cook County. The table below displays the percentage of older adults in each region of the metro area who have limited English ability.

Place of Residence of Older Adults in Metro Chicago: 2005–2009

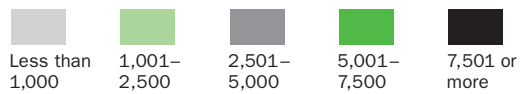
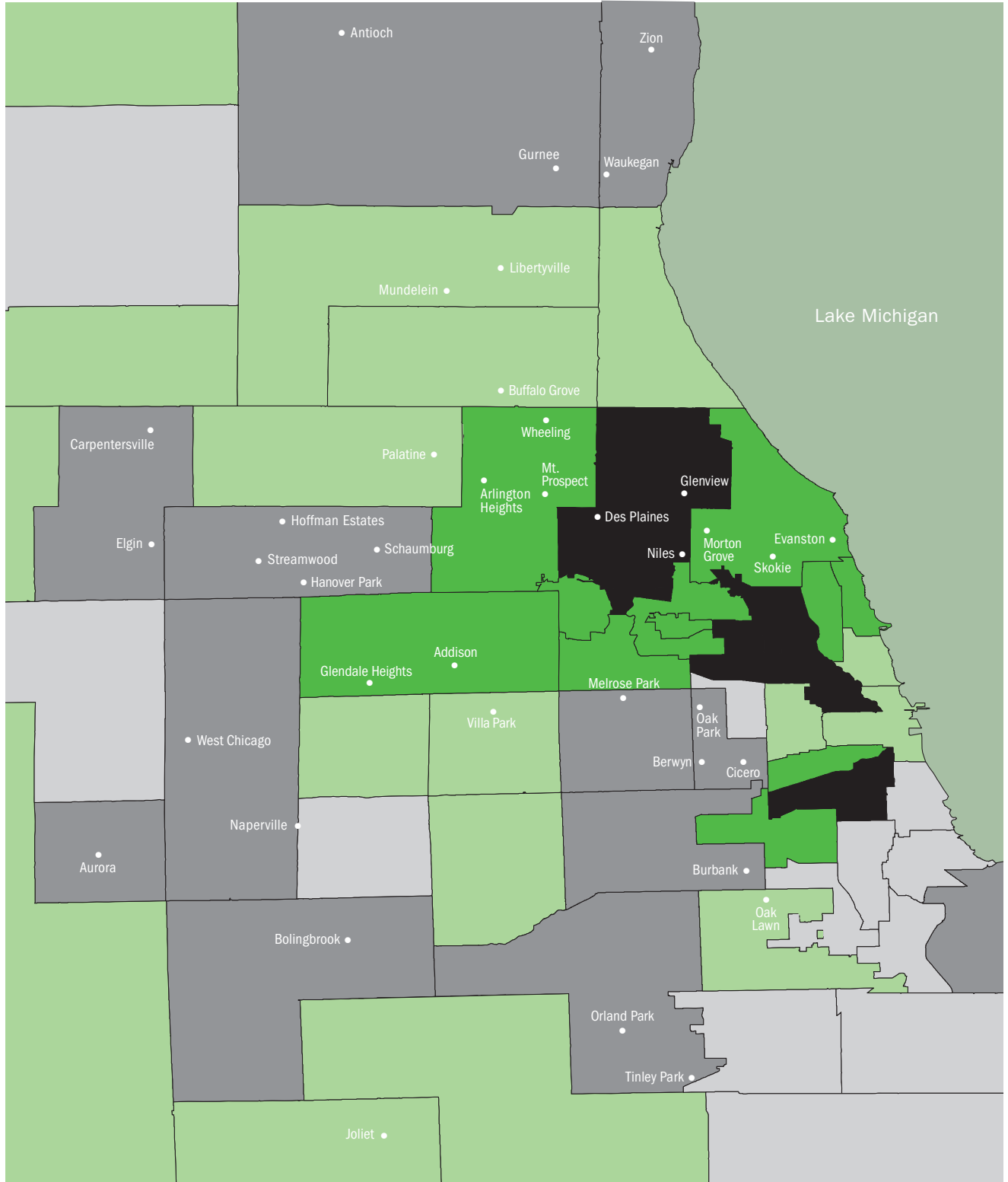
	Total Older Adult Population	Limited English Older Adults	Percent Limited English
Total	1,285,124	171,581	13%
Chicago	402,698	79,086	20%
Suburban Cook County	437,347	51,342	12%
DuPage County	141,894	14,310	10%
Lake County	96,619	10,287	11%
Kane, McHenry, Kendall counties	116,931	9,791	8%
Will, Grundy counties	89,635	6,765	8%

Source: American Community Survey: 2005–2009

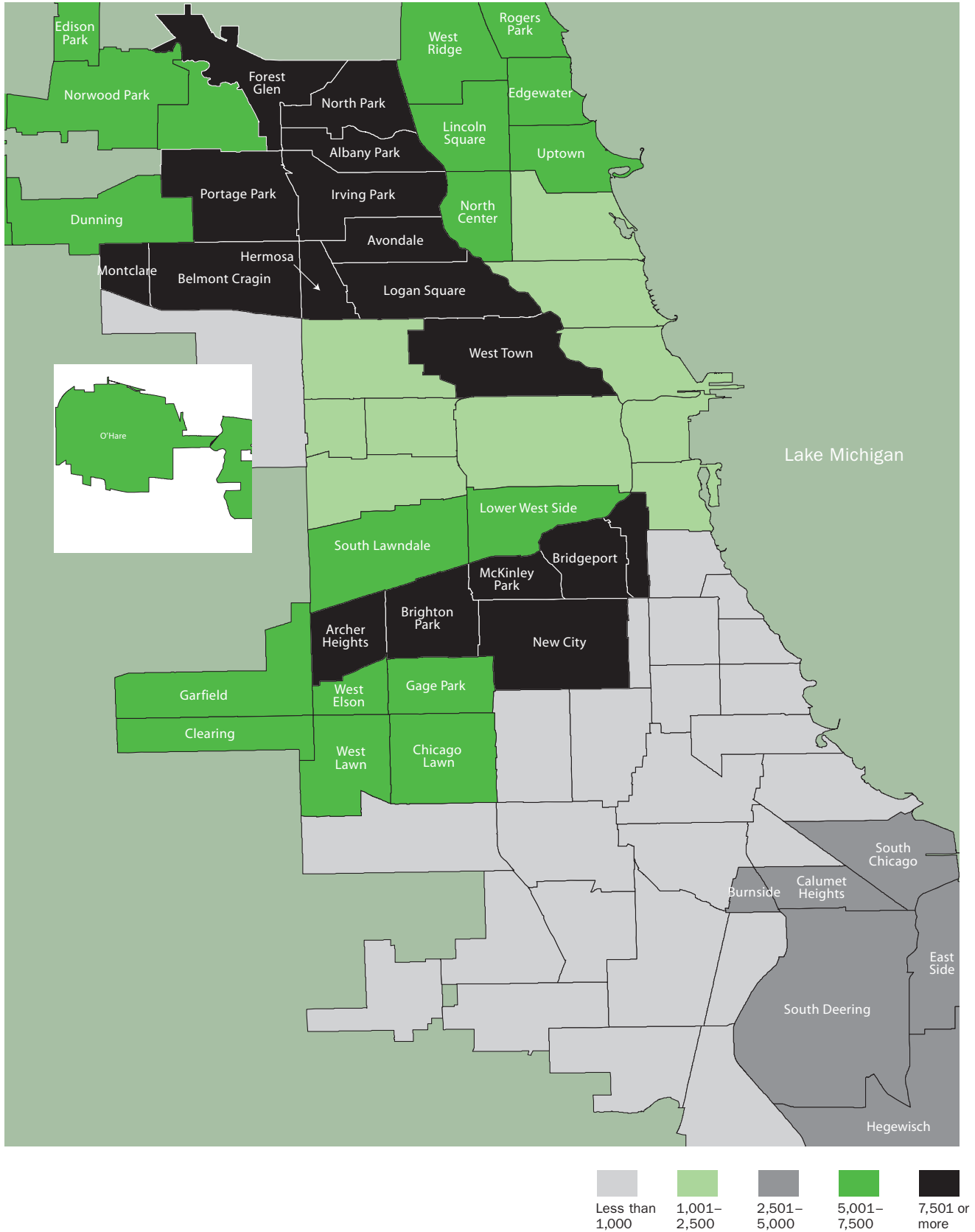
Where do LEP older adults live?



Residential Patterns of Limited-English Seniors in the Metro Chicago: 2005–2009



Residential Patterns of Limited-English Seniors in the City of Chicago: 2005–2009



DISPERSION ACROSS THE REGION VARIES AMONG MAJOR GROUPS

While 46 percent of all limited English-speaking older adults are in Chicago, large portions of some groups are in the Cook County suburbs or the collar counties. Some 61 percent of Assyrians are in suburban Cook County, for example. DuPage County is home to 31 percent of Asian Indians, and 22 percent of Vietnamese. Nineteen percent of Japanese limited English-speaking older adults are in Lake County, and ten percent of Mexicans are in the Kane-McHenry-Kendall County area.

Residential Patterns of Limited English-Speaking Older Adults

	Total Population	Percent Distribution Across the Metro Region						
		Total	Chicago	Cook County	Suburban DuPage County	Lake County	Kane McHenry, Kendall Counties	Will, Grundy Counties
Total	1,285,124	100%	31%	34%	11%	8%	9%	7%
Not Limited English	1,113,543	100%	29%	35%	11%	8%	10%	7%
Total Limited-English	171,581	100%	46%	30%	8%	6%	6%	4%
Arab	2,523	100%	34%	45%	10%	4%	2%	5%
Asian Indian	7,585	100%	17%	32%	31%	8%	3%	8%
Assyrian	1,728	100%	32%	61%	0%	4%	2%	2%
Central American	4,106	100%	63%	21%	3%	8%	5%	0%
Chinese	8,853	100%	60%	16%	10%	10%	2%	2%
Filipino	5,937	100%	39%	26%	18%	7%	8%	3%
Greek	6,078	100%	29%	57%	9%	4%	1%	1%
Japanese	797	100%	54%	12%	8%	19%	7%	0%
Korean	6,174	100%	28%	47%	9%	10%	4%	2%
Lithuanian	1,500	100%	30%	40%	11%	0%	1%	18%
Mexican	47,225	100%	53%	21%	4%	6%	10%	6%
Polish	20,511	100%	51%	34%	7%	4%	2%	3%
Puerto Rican	10,952	100%	76%	9%	4%	3%	5%	3%
Romanian	2,231	100%	43%	33%	6%	11%	4%	4%
Russian	3,538	100%	41%	38%	6%	12%	3%	0%
South American	3,484	100%	55%	27%	7%	0%	9%	2%
Ukrainian	2,750	100%	51%	34%	8%	4%	1%	1%
Vietnamese	1,301	100%	46%	20%	22%	6%	6%	0%
Yugoslavian	3,889	100%	39%	38%	10%	5%	4%	3%
All Others	30,419	100%	34%	40%	10%	6%	6%	5%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

WOMEN ARE 53 PERCENT OF OLDER ADULTS UNDER AGE 75, BUT 61 PERCENT OF OLDER ADULTS AGED 75 OR MORE YEARS.

MOST LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS ARE LESS THAN 75 YEARS OF AGE

The great majority, 70 percent, of limited English-speaking older adults are under the age of 75 years. The portion of individual groups who are above or below 75 years, however, varies substantially. About 88 percent of Vietnamese limited English-speaking older adults are under 75, as are at least three-quarters of Arabs, Asian Indians, Central Americans, Koreans and Mexicans. On the other hand Lithuanians have the largest portion of their population at age 75 or over: 61 percent.

Age Breakdown of Limited English Groups

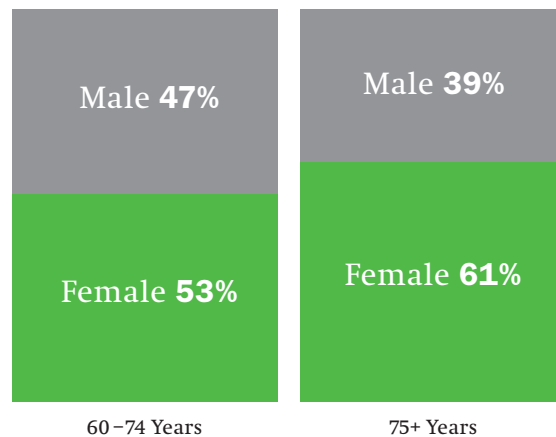
	Total	60 to 74 years	75 years and over
Total	100%	70%	30%
Arab	100%	79%	21%
Asian Indian	100%	76%	24%
Assyrian	100%	65%	35%
Central American	100%	76%	24%
Chinese	100%	65%	35%
Filipino	100%	67%	33%
Greek	100%	61%	39%
Japanese	100%	56%	44%
Korean	100%	75%	25%
Lithuanian	100%	39%	61%
Mexican	100%	79%	21%
Polish	100%	71%	29%
Puerto Rican	100%	74%	26%
Romanian	100%	55%	45%
Russian	100%	59%	41%
South American	100%	71%	29%
Ukrainian	100%	58%	42%
Vietnamese	100%	88%	12%
Yugoslavian (former)	100%	66%	34%
All Others	100%	60%	40%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

WOMEN ARE THE CLEAR MAJORITY OF LEP OLDER ADULTS

About 56 percent of the limited English-speaking older adult population is comprised of women. This proportion increases with age. As seen in the chart, women are 53 percent of older adults under age 75, but 61 percent of older adults aged 75 or more years.

Older LEP adults are more likely to be female



FEMALE-MALE BREAKDOWN VARIES BY GROUP

Women are the overall majority of limited English-speaking older adults, but some groups have relatively high percentages of men. Males are 50 percent of the Mexican and Vietnamese populations. Ukrainians, meanwhile, have the highest female percentage: 69 percent. In other words, there are more than two Ukrainian older adult LEPs who are women for every man.

Gender Breakdown of Major Groups

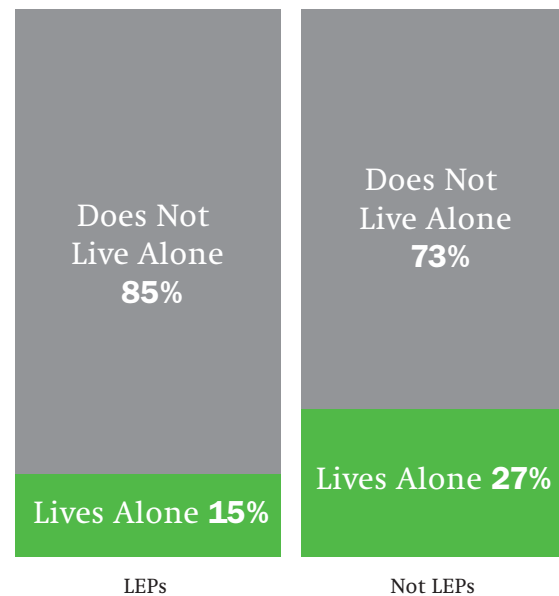
	Male	Female
Total Older Adult Population	43%	57%
Not Limited English-speakers	43%	57%
Limited English-speakers	44%	56%
Arab	44%	56%
Asian Indian	42%	58%
Assyrian	38%	62%
Central American	35%	65%
Chinese	48%	52%
Filipino	36%	64%
Greek	47%	53%
Japanese	41%	59%
Korean	45%	55%
Lithuanian	37%	63%
Mexican	50%	50%
Polish	40%	60%
Puerto Rican	43%	57%
Romanian	48%	52%
Russian	41%	59%
South American	37%	63%
Ukrainian	31%	69%
Vietnamese	50%	50%
Yugoslavian (former)	43%	57%
All Others	42%	58%

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS ARE NOTICEABLY DIFFERENT

Limited English-speaking older adults are much less likely to be living alone than the rest of the older adult population. Only about 15 percent of limited English-speaking older adults do not live with family members or other persons, compared to well over a quarter, or 27 percent of other older adults.

Limited English-speaking older adults are less likely to live alone



PERSONS FROM EASTERN EUROPE AND FORMER SOVIET UNION ARE MOST LIKELY TO LIVE ALONE

The percentage of limited English-speaking older adults who live alone varies from a low of four percent among Asian Indians to as much as 41 percent among Ukrainians. Indeed, persons from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are the most likely to live alone. Some 37 percent of Lithuanians live alone as do 33 percent of Russians and 22 percent of Poles.

Percentage of Limited English-Speaking Older Adults Who Live Alone: 2005–2009

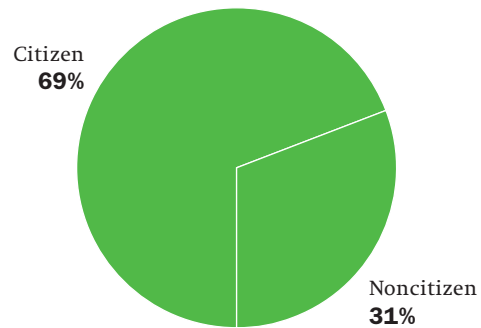
	Lives Alone	Does Not Live Alone
Total Older Adult Population	25%	75%
Not Limited English-Speaking	27%	73%
Limited English-Speaking	15%	85%
Arab	9%	91%
Asian Indian	4%	96%
Assyrian	13%	87%
Central American	8%	92%
Chinese	10%	90%
Filipino	5%	95%
Greek	18%	82%
Japanese	22%	78%
Korean	16%	84%
Lithuanian	37%	63%
Mexican	7%	93%
Polish	22%	78%
Puerto Rican	21%	79%
Romanian	22%	78%
Russian	33%	67%
South American	15%	85%
Ukrainian	41%	59%
Vietnamese	9%	91%
Yugoslavian (former)	16%	84%
All Others	19%	81%

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009

MOST LEP OLDER ADULTS ARE U.S. CITIZENS

About 69 percent of LEP older adults are citizens. The lowest citizenship rates are among Mexican older adults (49 percent), Japanese (50 percent) and Central Americans (52 percent).

Most LEP older adults are U.S. citizens



Citizenship Rates of LEP Older Adults

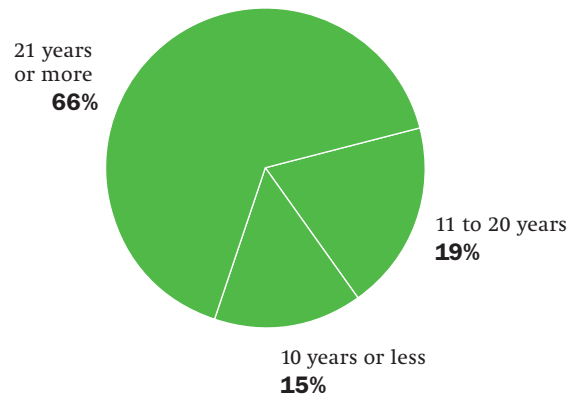
	Citizen
Total	69%
Arab	78%
Asian Indian	58%
Assyrian	72%
Central American	52%
Chinese	65%
Filipino	68%
Greek	90%
Japanese	50%
Korean	82%
Lithuanian	71%
Mexican	49%
Polish	73%
Puerto Rican	99%
Romanian	71%
Russian	85%
South American	71%
Ukrainian	85%
Vietnamese	74%
Yugoslavian (former)	77%
All Others	79%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

MOST FOREIGN-BORN, OLDER ADULT LEPS ARE LONG-TERM IMMIGRANTS

Nearly all limited English-speaking older adults in the metropolitan area are immigrants, with the principal exception of Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens by birth. Older adults in some groups, such as Vietnamese, Arab, Assyrian, Russian and Ukrainian came to the U.S. as refugees. Many naturalize after they become eligible. The great majority of the foreign-born older adults—66 percent—have been in the U.S. for at least 21 years. (Note that the graphic below is based solely on the immigrant population.)

Most Foreign-Born, Limited English-speaking Older Adults Been in U.S. at Least 20 Years



Length of Residence in U.S. of Foreign-Born, Limited English-Speaking Older Adults

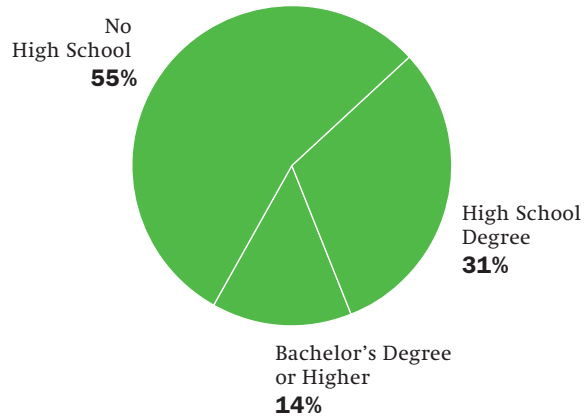
	10 years or less	11 to 20 years	21 years or more	Total
Total	15%	19%	66%	100%
Arab	21%	24%	55%	100%
Asian Indian	33%	32%	35%	100%
Assyrian	17%	16%	68%	100%
Central American	12%	19%	70%	100%
Chinese	24%	28%	48%	100%
Filipino	22%	25%	53%	100%
Greek	0%	1%	99%	100%
Korean	7%	13%	80%	100%
Lithuanian	7%	20%	73%	100%
Mexican	16%	13%	71%	100%
Polish	10%	26%	64%	100%
Romanian	19%	29%	52%	100%
Russian	25%	37%	39%	100%
South American	6%	21%	74%	100%
Ukrainian	10%	46%	44%	100%
Vietnamese	5%	55%	40%	100%
Yugoslavian (former)	13%	19%	68%	100%
All Others	11%	14%	75%	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009. Table excludes Japanese, Puerto Ricans and Other Race due to small sample size.

MORE THAN HALF OF LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS HAVE NOT COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL

A majority of limited English-speaking older adults have not completed high school. Mexicans are the group least likely to have high school education (82 percent do not have a high school degree). Some forty percent of Filipino and Japanese older adults, however, have a college education.

Educational Attainment of Limited English-speaking Older Adults



Educational Attainment of Limited English-Speaking Older Adults

	No High School	High School Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Total
Total Older Adults	23%	53%	24%	100%
Not Limited English-Speaking	18%	57%	26%	100%
Limited English-Speaking	55%	31%	14%	100%
Arab	65%	28%	7%	100%
Asian Indian	37%	32%	31%	100%
Assyrian	56%	37%	7%	100%
Central American	73%	21%	7%	100%
Chinese	44%	26%	29%	100%
Filipino	24%	36%	40%	100%
Greek	66%	30%	4%	100%
Japanese	9%	51%	40%	100%
Korean	19%	47%	34%	100%
Lithuanian	23%	49%	27%	100%
Mexican	82%	16%	2%	100%
Polish	40%	49%	11%	100%
Puerto Rican	76%	22%	2%	100%
Romanian	50%	37%	13%	100%
Russian	18%	45%	36%	100%
South American	31%	56%	13%	100%
Ukrainian	30%	37%	33%	100%
Vietnamese	30%	46%	23%	100%
Yugoslavian (former)	51%	41%	9%	100%
All Others	46%	36%	18%	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

THE AVERAGE POVERTY RATE FOR THE METROPOLITAN CHICAGO AREA WAS 11.8 PERCENT IN THE 2005–2009 PERIOD, BUT AMONG THE LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS SOME 16.2 PERCENT WERE BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING MEASURES

LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS HAVE A POVERTY RATE THAT IS DOUBLE THE RATE FOR OTHER OLDER ADULTS

The average poverty rate for the metropolitan Chicago area was 11.8 percent in the 2005–2009 period, but among the limited English-speaking older adults some 16.2 percent were below the poverty level. Older adults who are not limited English-speaking had a poverty rate of only 8.0 percent.

Among the major limited English-speaking older adult groups, poverty rates range from a low of 0.0 percent for Japanese to 33.4 percent for Russians. Six groups

had poverty rates that affected at least a quarter of the population, including Arabs (28.6 percent), Koreans (25.4), Puerto Ricans (26.8), Romanians (27.2), Russians (33.4) and Ukrainians (30.9).

The table below shows the ratio of a group’s income to the federal poverty threshold. This is a standard calculation widely used to understand where a household stands in relation to the poverty level for similarly sized households. The limited English-speaking older adult groups. If the ratio is under 100% then the household has less income than the federal poverty level for that household. Thus, the higher the ratio of income to poverty (e.g., 150% or 200%) the more well-off the household is financially.

Ratio of Income to Poverty

	Total	Under 100% of poverty	100% to 149% of poverty	150% to 199% of poverty	200% or more of poverty
Total Older Adult Population	100.0%	9.2%	8.6%	8.7%	73.5%
Not Limited English-Speaking	100.0%	8.1%	8.1%	8.3%	75.4%
Limited English-Speaking	100.0%	16.2%	11.8%	11.1%	60.9%
Arab	100.0%	28.6%	13.2%	7.6%	50.6%
Asian Indian	100.0%	7.1%	8.1%	8.5%	76.2%
Assyrian	100.0%	11.9%	18.7%	3.7%	65.7%
Central American	100.0%	16.7%	14.2%	13.1%	56.0%
Chinese	100.0%	22.5%	15.9%	10.9%	50.7%
Filipino	100.0%	4.6%	5.0%	4.8%	85.5%
Greek	100.0%	7.7%	9.3%	13.7%	69.2%
Japanese	100.0%	0.0%	4.4%	6.0%	89.6%
Korean	100.0%	25.4%	10.7%	3.3%	60.6%
Lithuanian	100.0%	6.5%	11.9%	19.1%	62.5%
Mexican	100.0%	15.3%	12.6%	16.0%	56.1%
Polish	100.0%	11.8%	8.9%	9.1%	70.3%
Puerto Rican	100.0%	26.8%	15.6%	9.3%	48.2%
Romanian	100.0%	27.2%	11.3%	6.5%	55.0%
Russian	100.0%	33.4%	23.1%	5.8%	37.8%
South American	100.0%	15.7%	11.1%	9.3%	64.0%
Ukrainian	100.0%	30.9%	15.3%	9.7%	44.1%
Vietnamese	100.0%	10.8%	6.2%	5.4%	77.6%
Yugoslavian (former)	100.0%	14.7%	6.3%	13.3%	65.7%
All Others	100.0%	16.2%	11.9%	9.6%	62.2%

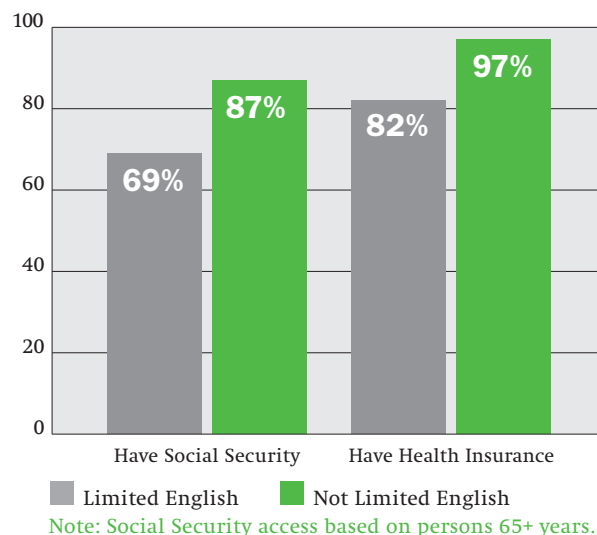
Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

THE MAJORITY OF OLDER ADULTS HAVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND HEALTH INSURANCE, BUT SOME GROUPS LAG BEHIND THE AVERAGE

Social Security and health insurance (including Medicare) are key programs needed by older adults to maintain their independence. Because nearly all limited English-speaking older adults are immigrants, many of them do not have access to these programs because they have not lived in the U.S. long enough or in some cases they may be undocumented. Refugees⁴ receive certain benefits upon arrival, but only for a fixed length of time. Only 69 percent of limited English-speaking older adults receive social security, compared to 87 percent of other older adults who speak English very well.⁵ Less than half of Asian Indians and Filipinos receive Social Security, compared to nine of ten Greeks and Japanese.

Some 82 percent of limited English-speaking older adults have health insurance compared to nearly all, 97 percent, of older adults who speak English very well. Health insurance rates are relatively higher for all groups. The lowest rate of having health insurance is found among Romanian limited English-speaking older adults, 61 percent of whom are covered.

Limited English-speaking Older Adults Have Less Access to Social Security or Health Insurance



Access to Social Security and Health Insurance

	With Social Security ¹	With Health Insurance ²
Total Older Adult Population	84%	96%
Not Limited English-speakers	87%	97%
Limited English-speakers	69%	82%
Arab	72%	76%
Asian Indian	44%	84%
Assyrian	75%	97%
Central American	56%	83%
Chinese	60%	71%
Filipino	45%	80%
Greek	91%	96%
Japanese	90%	78%
Korean	67%	81%
Lithuanian	80%	79%
Mexican	63%	73%
Polish	76%	80%
Puerto Rican	80%	90%
Romanian	61%	61%
Russian	59%	95%
South American	73%	92%
Ukrainian	63%	81%
Vietnamese	72%	91%
Yugoslavian (former)	75%	90%
All Others	75%	93%

¹ American Community Survey 2005–2009; includes only persons aged 65+ years

² American Community Survey 2008–2009

4.) Refugees are defined by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement as “Any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”

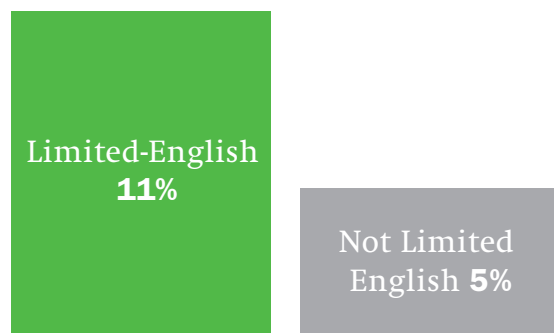
5.) Data for Social Security use is based on persons aged 65 years and older.

LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS HAVE A POVERTY RATE THAT IS DOUBLE THE RATE FOR OTHER OLDER ADULTS.

ABOUT ONE IN TEN OF THE LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS RECEIVE SSI: TWICE THE RATE FOR OTHER OLDER ADULTS

Supplemental Security Income is an income assistance program for low-income older adults, most of whom do not have access to Social Security. SSI is a vital program for immigrants and refugees because many of them have not been in the U.S. for sufficient time to have worked the necessary amount of quarters to be vested in the Social Security program. Thus the use of SSI is relatively high among the limited English-speaking older adults. Eleven percent of the limited English-speaking older adults get SSI compared to 5 percent of older adults who speak English very well. Use of SSI is especially high among groups that include many refugees, such as Russians and Ukrainians.

Receive Supplemental Security Income or Public Assistance



Receive SSI or Public Assistance

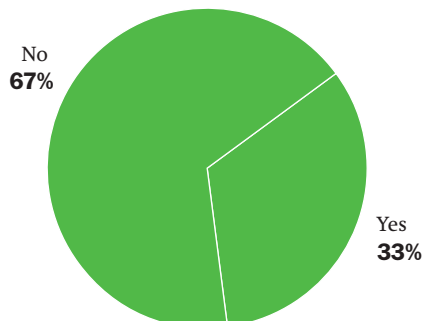
	Yes	No
Total Older Adult Population	5%	95%
Not Limited English-Speaking	5%	95%
Limited English-Speaking	11%	89%
Arab	22%	78%
Asian Indian	14%	86%
Assyrian	20%	80%
Central American	16%	84%
Chinese	12%	88%
Filipino	16%	84%
Greek	3%	97%
Japanese	0%	100%
Korean	15%	85%
Lithuanian	5%	95%
Mexican	6%	94%
Polish	4%	96%
Puerto Rican	16%	84%
Romanian	14%	86%
Russian	47%	53%
South American	7%	93%
Ukrainian	29%	71%
Vietnamese	11%	89%
Yugoslavian (former)	18%	82%
All Others	13%	87%

Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS HAVE A DISABILITY

A third of limited English-speaking older adults report having a disability. (Note that information on disability is self-reported in response to a set of questions in the American Community Survey.) Among major ethnic groups, the percent with a disability ranges from 16 percent among Vietnamese to 62 percent of Arabs.

Disability of LEPs



Disability Status of Limited English-Speaking Older Adults

	Yes	No
Total Older Adult Population	33%	67%
Not Limited English-speakers	33%	67%
Limited English-speakers	33%	67%
Arab	62%	38%
Asian Indian	32%	68%
Assyrian	60%	40%
Central American	43%	57%
Chinese	27%	73%
Filipino	28%	72%
Greek	35%	65%
Japanese	0%	100%
Korean	20%	80%
Lithuanian	35%	65%
Mexican	28%	72%
Polish	28%	72%
Puerto Rican	44%	56%
Romanian	46%	54%
Russian	36%	64%
South American	36%	64%
Ukrainian	49%	51%
Vietnamese	16%	84%
Yugoslavian (former)	44%	56%
All Others	38%	42%

Source: 2008–2009 American Community Survey

MANY LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS HAVE ACHIEVED HOME OWNERSHIP

The majority of older adults within every major limited English-speaker group lives in an owner-occupied housing unit. The table below shows the percentage of each group that owns or rents their home. Homeownership exceeds 80 percent among Filipinos, Polish, Asian Indians, Vietnamese, Greeks and Lithuanians.

Homeownership Rates Among Limited English-Speaking Older Adults

	Pct in Owner Occupied Unit	Pct in Renter Occupied Unit	Pct in Occupied without Payment of Rent Unit
Total Older Adults	81%	17%	1%
Not Limited English-speakers	83%	16%	1%
Limited English-speakers	75%	23%	2%
Arab	67%	33%	0%
Asian Indian	84%	12%	4%
Assyrian	73%	25%	1%
Central American	66%	34%	0%
Chinese	71%	25%	4%
Filipino	84%	14%	2%
Greek	87%	13%	0%
Japanese	60%	40%	0%
Korean	67%	32%	1%
Lithuanian	89%	8%	2%
Mexican	77%	22%	1%
Polish	84%	14%	2%
Puerto Rican	58%	40%	1%
Romanian	72%	27%	1%
Russian	40%	60%	0%
South American	70%	25%	4%
Ukrainian	49%	45%	6%
Vietnamese	86%	9%	5%
Yugoslavian (former)	71%	24%	5%
All Others	75%	23%	2%

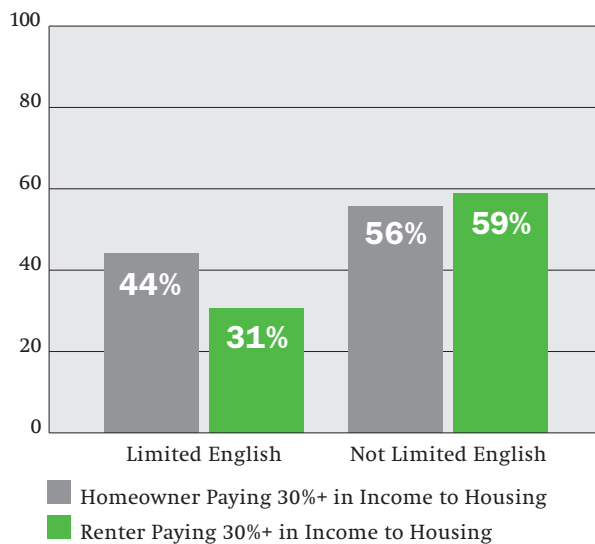
Source: American Community Survey 2005–2009

LARGE PORTIONS OF THE POPULATION PAY TOO MUCH FOR HOUSING

The fixed incomes on which many older adults live make it hard to pay for their housing costs, which include mortgage or rent, utilities or fuels. Some 44 percent of limited English-speaking older adults are homeowners paying more than 30 percent of their income to housing (and the limited English-speaking older adult homeowners are much more likely to be burdened with housing than other older adults). Among renters, 56 percent of limited English-speaking older adults pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. Paying 30 percent or more of one's income to housing costs is a widely used measure of housing that is costly.

The table below includes both home owners and renters and shows the percent of persons paying too much for housing. As may be seen, large percentages of nearly all groups are burdened by housing costs.

Housing Burden on Limited English-Speaking Older Adults



Percent of Persons Burdened by Homeowner or Renter Costs

Total Older Adult Population	37%
Not Limited English-speakers	36%
Limited English-speakers	47%
Arab	61%
Asian Indian	43%
Assyrian	57%
Central American	61%
Chinese	43%
Filipino	37%
Greek	47%
Japanese	35%
Korean	46%
Lithuanian	36%
Mexican	51%
Polish	39%
Puerto Rican	58%
Romanian	56%
Russian	58%
South American	59%
Ukrainian	33%
Vietnamese	45%
Yugoslavian (former)	37%
All Others	41%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009

ASSESSING ISOLATION AND INDEPENDENCE OF LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING OLDER ADULTS

Limited English-speaking older adults have had a wide variety of experiences in terms of integrating into U.S. society. The older adults have come from many different countries and may have entered with or obtained multiple types of immigration statuses (refugees, legal immigrants, undocumented, etc.). Some older adults came with high levels of education and others with little formal education, etc., etc.

The different experiences of limited English-speaking older adults have led to each major group having their own average income level and their own level of integration into U.S. society. In order to meet the needs of the older adults it would be helpful to understand how the different groups compare to one another in terms of integration into U.S. society. Two major aspects of integration are economic and social. Economic integration can be measured by the income levels of older adults in terms of the ratio of their income to the poverty level. Social integration may be measured by factors that heavily influence social mobility, such as their level of English ability, household structure (whether they live alone or not), disability, and education.

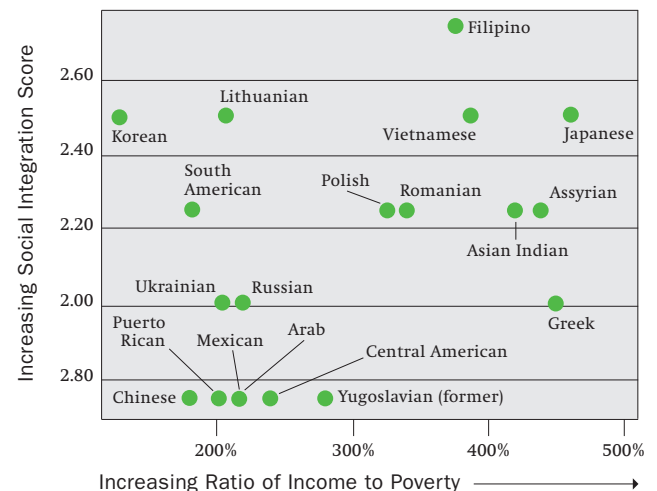
Measuring the income level of older adults in terms of the ratio of their income to poverty is a straightforward exercise, as the Census Bureau provides this data directly. To understand social integration, however, we developed a score that incorporates English, household structure, disability and education. This score ranges from a low of 1 to a high of 3, with a higher score implying more integration.⁶

6.) Limited English-speaking older adults were given a score consisting of the weighted sum of four sub-scores. Possible sub-score for English ability was 1=speaks English not at all, 2=speaks English not well, or 3=speaks English well; sub-score for living alone was 1=live alone or 2=does not live alone; sub-score for education was 1=less than nine years, 2=9-12 years but no high school, 3=high school but no college, 4=some college, or 5=B.A. degree or higher; sub-score for disability was 1=with a disability or 2=no disability. Sub-scores were equally weighted at 25% of total score, and summed to a total score for each person. Final group scores represent the median for each group.

The graphic below shows where the limited English-speaking older adults of metro Chicago fall in terms of these measures. As may be seen, a set of groups have both low income and low social integration scores. These include Arabs, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, and to some extent Central Americans, Chinese, Ukrainians and Russians. Another set of groups have relatively high incomes and high levels of social integration. Filipinos have both the highest incomes and the highest integration score. But other groups with high income and integration scores include Vietnamese, Japanese and Asian Indians.

This display of older adults and their integration is merely an attempt to understand the relative rankings of groups. A different pattern of integration might be obtained if different factors were included in the integration score, or if a different measure of economic progress were used. But the data nevertheless provide a useful portrait of the highly diverse limited English-speaking older adult population of metro Chicago.

Assessing Integration of Limited English-speaking Older Adults in Metropolitan Chicago: 2008-2009



DISCUSSION

The information contained in this report combines to present a portrait of an important community in metropolitan Chicago. The 172,000 limited English-speaking older adults are numerous, live in many areas of the metro region, and have substantial needs for services to ensure they have adequate nutrition, housing, income and other basic standards of living. The statistics contained here show that limited English-speaking older adults tend to have greater needs than the average older adult. Their incomes are lower, they have less access to safety net programs like Social Security and health insurance, and they are burdened with the costs of paying for their housing.

The report also makes clear the diversity of the limited English-speaking older adult population. They have origins in countries around the world, and within the

older adults are groups that on average are doing relatively well and others in serious need. These facts highlight the need for human services that are substantial in number, of high quality, and accessible to the limited English-speaking older adults. Accessibility for these persons means not only that many languages need to be employed in serving these individuals, but non-profit, for-profit and governmental organizations need to exercise sophisticated cultural competence and awareness when they seek to improve the lives of the older adults. The information in these pages makes it clear that adequately serving limited English-speaking older adults is of critical importance to raising the overall standard of living of metropolitan Chicago.

COALITION OF LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ELDERLY HISTORY OF CLESE

The Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE) was founded by twelve leaders of ethnic organizations in 1989 as a result of a comprehensive ethnic elderly needs assessment conducted in the city of Chicago that examined the needs of immigrant, refugee and migrant older adults. The purpose of the study was to find out why ethnic elderly were under-represented in the utilization of traditional social services. The needs assessment conducted 1,500 personal interviews in ten languages with older adults from twelve ethnic groups. The results showed that ethnic elderly needed services, were eligible for services, but were not receiving them due to barriers of language and culture.

To guide the needs assessment process, the Chicago Department on Aging and Disability (at that time the area agency on aging for the city of Chicago) formed an advisory committee whose tasks were to identify interviewers, assist in training them, translate the assessment tool and most important, to identify at least 150 older adults in each group who would be able to engage in the one and a half hour interview. In the process of meeting together, the advisory committee members realized that they had much more in common than what might be assumed given that they were from very different countries. All were bi-lingual, bi-cultural and all had experienced difficulties themselves in adjusting to life in a new country. One ethnic agency executive director said that she was afraid to give public testimony on the needs of the elders in her community because she spoke with an accent and worried that people would hear her accent and not her words. Everyone else at the table understood. They came to see that by speaking with one voice, they would be heard. The results of the ethnic elderly needs assessment spurred them into action and the members of the advisory committee incorporated as the Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly with the mission to improve the lives of limited-English-speaking elderly through leadership, education and advocacy.

From the beginning, CLESE membership reflected the ethno-linguistic diversity of the Chicago metropolitan area. Members represent countries from all parts of the globe. As new groups of refugees and immigrants arrive, they form new organizations and they ask to join CLESE. In the second year of its existence, CLESE had 26 organizational members; presently, it has 51. Critical to the success of the coalition is that all members are welcome at the table. While there may be occasional competition between different organizations within the same ethnic community, CLESE members have always appreciated and worked well with representatives from other ethnic groups. The 20-member CLESE Board of Directors is solely comprised of executive or program directors of agencies serving ethno-linguistic communities and its composition corresponds to the number of diverse ethnic groups in the area.

The ethnic elderly needs assessment was widely distributed among the aging network leadership. In response to the documented gap in services to limited-English speaking elderly, the Illinois Department on Aging changed its rules for the home and community based services program funded by a Medicaid waiver and Illinois General Revenue funds. The first two contracts targeted to specific populations were awarded to two communities, one Chinese and one Korean, in 1991. The new homemakers were trained at an established provider organization that served both mainstream and Spanish-speaking clients, with appropriate interpreters supplied by the new providers. CLESE provided technical assistance to new provider organizations, including writing a homecare training manual and helping new providers understand homecare program regulations. Presently, 12,000 limited-English speaking elderly (out of eighty thousand statewide) receive adult day and/or in-home services in Illinois from twenty-four CLESE member organizations.

Other major programs over the years have either addressed a demonstrated need in the limited-English speaking populations or have been an exploration of a particular need. CLESE has received funding for health screening fairs and several health education programs,

translation of health and safety information, citizenship preparation, English instruction for older adults, elder abuse and neglect identification and intervention, services specifically for refugees, Alzheimer's disease awareness, combating depression, and a number of capacity-building projects. CLESE has received grants and contracts from city, state and federal government, from area agencies on aging and from various foundations.

In order to ensure continued program relevance and attention to critical issues, CLESE checks updated Census data, discusses issues of concern at Board meetings, researches issues in specific ethnic populations, conducts surveys of member organizations and has recurring conversations with major funders, officials and other aging, immigrant, and refugee network leaders. For example, ten years ago, CLESE convened focus groups in 15 ethnic communities with older adults; a total of 550 elders discussed their needs and voted on priorities for changing public policies. CLESE then convened a Multicultural Senior Conference that enabled 220 older adults to talk with elected officials and authorities.

CLESE has advocated on a variety of issues, all addressing the disparity of services and benefits or seeking to inform mainstream officials about particular needs of immigrant, refugee and migrant elderly. For example, CLESE honored family caregivers at an event attended by 200 ethnic older adults. CLESE has given public testimony, sent press releases, been interviewed for various publications and on radio, and has coordinated public events. CLESE has sought recognition for successful individual limited-English speaking elderly and for ethnic service providers.

CLESE speaks on behalf of the 51 ethno-linguistic member organizations to the general public and to specific officials, decision-makers and funders. CLESE represents ethnic communities on committees, advisory councils and other vehicles that foster an improved

understanding of and access to limited English-speaking elderly. CLESE presents at state and national conferences, in addition to speaking at many meetings, seminars, and workshops, always with the intent to educate the attendees.

CLESE programs follow a similar pattern: CLESE researches a problem, need or issue and decides whether to pursue funding; the Board is involved in making the decision. If yes, CLESE writes and submits the proposal, developing the program plan in consultation with Board members or other leaders. CLESE chooses the participating organizations based upon the extent of the specific problem within the community, the relative size of the elderly population speaking a language, by the willingness of an agency to participate, and or by geographic considerations. CLESE coordinates orientation and training, often with experts in the particular program, designs the data collection forms for compliance and ease of use, modifies the project as needed, collects the data, and reimburses each participating agency upon submission of documentation for work successfully performed. CLESE writes the reports and publicizes the findings. Some programs may have as few as three participating CLESE members and some as many as twenty-five.

Many evidenced-based programs, proven successful with mainstream elderly, cannot be replicated in ethnic communities without significant modification. One example: in the Alzheimer's disease project, CLESE learned that Alzheimer's disease could not be translated, there was a tremendous amount of stigma in having a "mental illness," ethnic families did not designate one primary "caregiver;" there were many obstacles of language and culture in obtaining a comprehensive medical assessment to rule out other causes of dementia. CLESE is engaged with several universities and individual researchers in exploring how to adjust evidence-based practices without losing fidelity to the original program.

ABOUT CLESE

CLESE HAS WON NUMEROUS AWARDS AND RECEIVED NATIONAL ATTENTION IN RECOGNITION OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS:

- *Brookdale Award* for its pioneering work in developing homecare training material and in serving ethnic clients with ethnic homecare workers.
- Health Care Financing Administration for success in improving the lives of older adults.
- *Innovations in Caregiving Award* from the National Council on Aging.
- CLESE was highlighted as the first “spotlight” on the Administration on Aging’s website.
- The CLESE Executive Director was named a delegate to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging.
- The American Society on Aging gives the *Healthcare and Aging* award.
- The American Society on Aging gives the *NOMA Award for Excellence in Multicultural Aging*.
- The Grantmakers in Aging gives the *John Feather Diversity Award*.

For more information, see the CLESE website, www.clese.org.

CLESE

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