

Health equity language assessment



Overview

The Aetna Better Health® of Oklahoma health equity language assessment reviews the languages spoken by the people it serves to help ensure fair access to health care and clear communication. This assessment supports compliance with federal and state regulations and informs the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Background

Aetna Better Health is committed to advancing health equity by identifying and addressing language barriers that may impact access to care. Understanding the primary languages spoken by members and the broader community allows Aetna Better Health to tailor its services, improve communication, and enhance member satisfaction and outcomes.

Methodology

This assessment integrates the various data sources below to provide a comprehensive view of language needs.

U.S. Census Bureau data

The American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (2019–2023) were used to understand the broader linguistic demographics of the region.

Member demographics

Internal member data as of January 2025 was analyzed to determine the primary languages spoken by Aetna Better Health members.

Interpretation service usage

Language line interpretation request data from 2024 was reviewed to identify real-time language support needs.

To ensure the assessment remains current and reflective of community trends, Aetna Better Health incorporates state-level or community-level language data at least every three years. This periodic review helps identify emerging language needs and supports strategic planning for language access services.



Assessment

United States census data

The United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year estimates, covering the period from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2023, provides a comprehensive overview of the languages spoken at home across the country.

According to the data, English remains the predominant language, spoken by approximately **88.7%** of the population. Spanish follows as the second most common language, spoken by **7.9%** of residents.

Although other language groups represent smaller portions of the population, they still contribute to the country's linguistic diversity. Indo-European languages, excluding Spanish and English, account for **1.0%** of the population. Within this group, German is the most widely spoken at **0.2%**, followed by French (including Cajun) at **0.1%**. Russian, Persian (including Farsi and Dari), and Nepali (including Marathi and other Indic languages) each represent smaller shares, ranging from **0.05%** to **0.07%**. Other languages in this category, such as Yiddish and Italian, contribute marginally to the total.

Asian and Pacific Islander languages make up **1.7%** of the population. Vietnamese is the most prevalent in this group, spoken by **0.5%** of the population. Chinese languages, including Mandarin and Cantonese, follow at **0.3%**. Other notable languages include Hmong (**0.2%**), Tagalog and Ilocano (each at **0.1%**), and Korean (**0.08%**). Smaller percentages are attributed to Thai, Lao, Hindi, Japanese, and other Austronesian and Tai-Kadai languages.

Health plan member demographic data

As of January 2025, our member demographic data reflects a similar linguistic pattern, with English being the primary language for **90.3%** of members. Spanish is the second most common language, spoken by **9.7%** of the membership.

Language line interpretation requests from 2024 provide further insight into the linguistic needs of Aetna Better Health members. Spanish was by far the most frequently requested language, accounting for **93.3%** of all interpretation calls. This high demand underscores the importance of Spanish-language services within the organization. Pashto emerged as the second most requested language, comprising **2.5%** of calls. Burmese and Vietnamese each accounted for **1.7%**, while Zo was requested in **1.6%** of cases. Other languages requested, though in smaller numbers, included Haitian Creole, Dari, Arabic, Hmong, and French.



Conclusion

Based on both U.S. census data, English is the preferred language for **88.7%** percent of the Oklahoma population. Spanish is officially designated as a threshold language for Aetna Better Health, as it is spoken by more than **5%** of the member population (**9.7%**) and represents the vast majority (**93.3%**) of interpretation service requests.

No other languages meet the criteria of being spoken by at least 1% of the population or 200 members. However, several languages—such as Pashto, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Zo — were requested through interpretation services, indicating emerging needs that may warrant monitoring for future support planning.