

## Translated Election Materials

To assist voters with limited English proficiency (LEP), New Hampshire should consider translating election materials into additional languages. The 2020 Census identified nearly 30,000 LEP citizens in New Hampshire who speak Spanish as their primary language. Another 20,000 LEP citizens in the state speak a variety of Asian languages (including Chinese, Hindi, and Korean). Without translated registration and voting materials, these voters are forced to rely on friends, family, and other translators for assistance, or simply review and complete documents (including ballots and registration forms) without full translation of the content.

New Hampshire can assist these voters at limited cost by providing translated versions of ballots, websites, and voter registration materials. Most easily, these materials could be made bilingual to accommodate Spanish-speaking citizens, and additional languages could be offered in communities where other LEP citizens are clustered. More than 30 states offer translated election materials, most in response to Section 203 of the Voting Rights, which requires bilingual materials when LEP voters reach a sufficient threshold. Although New Hampshire is not covered by Section 203, it can proactively offer translated materials to assist LEP voters for a variety of reasons.

- **Reduced lines on election day:** With translated materials, LEP voters have less need to rely on outside translators or poll workers to understand the ballot or same-day registration process, and likely need less time in the voting booth or at the registration table, resulting in reduced lines and delays at the polls.
- **Meaningful election mailings:** An election mailing that a voter cannot read or comprehend is a wasted expense. By contrast, a bilingual mailer can effectively reach an LEP voter, avoiding wasted effort on behalf of election officials.
- **Improved opportunities for list maintenance:** Translated registration materials and list maintenance mailings improve opportunities for LEP voters to update their registration data when they move, ensuring accurate voter rolls.
- **Reduced risk of coercion:** Bilingual materials allow more voters to understand the ballot themselves, without the need for poll workers or outside help, thereby limiting the potential for coercion or intimidation of the voter.
- **Fewer errors:** Translated materials increase comprehension and reduce errors like registration forms with missing or incorrect information, or ballots with overvotes, saving election officials money and time on follow-up.