

# Minority Languages Report For St. Lucie County

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Date: July 27, 2017  
Prepared for: Gertrude Walker, Supervisor of Elections  
Subject: Minority Language Requirement for Election Materials

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## **Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to analyze US Census Bureau data for St. Lucie County to ensure compliance with section 203 of the Voting Rights Act which requires that all election materials be translated into minority language(s) if certain thresholds are met. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act dictates the following:

- If more than 5% of the voting age citizens in a minority group speak English in a limited capacity **or** if more than 10,000 voting age citizens speak English in a limited capacity **and** the total rate of voting age citizens who speak English in a limited capacity that have less than a 5<sup>th</sup> grade education rate is higher than the national average, then all election materials must be translated into the applicable language(s).

The current notice of determination from the Census Bureau for the jurisdictions across the country that are required to have election materials in another language was published in the Federal Register on December 5, 2016 and can be viewed at the Justice Department's website; <https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/927231/download>.

At this time, the counties in Florida that are required to have election materials in a language other than English are:

- Broward County
- DeSoto County
- Hardee County
- Hendry County
- Hillsborough County
- Lee County
- Miami-Dade County
- Orange County
- Osceola County
- Palm Beach County
- Pinellas County
- Polk County
- Seminole County

Per the 2011 – 2015 American Community Survey (Language Spoken at Home report) published by the Census Bureau, Spanish is the highest percentile of all minority group languages captured in St. Lucie County. There is an estimated total of 39,700 residents of St. Lucie County that speak Spanish.

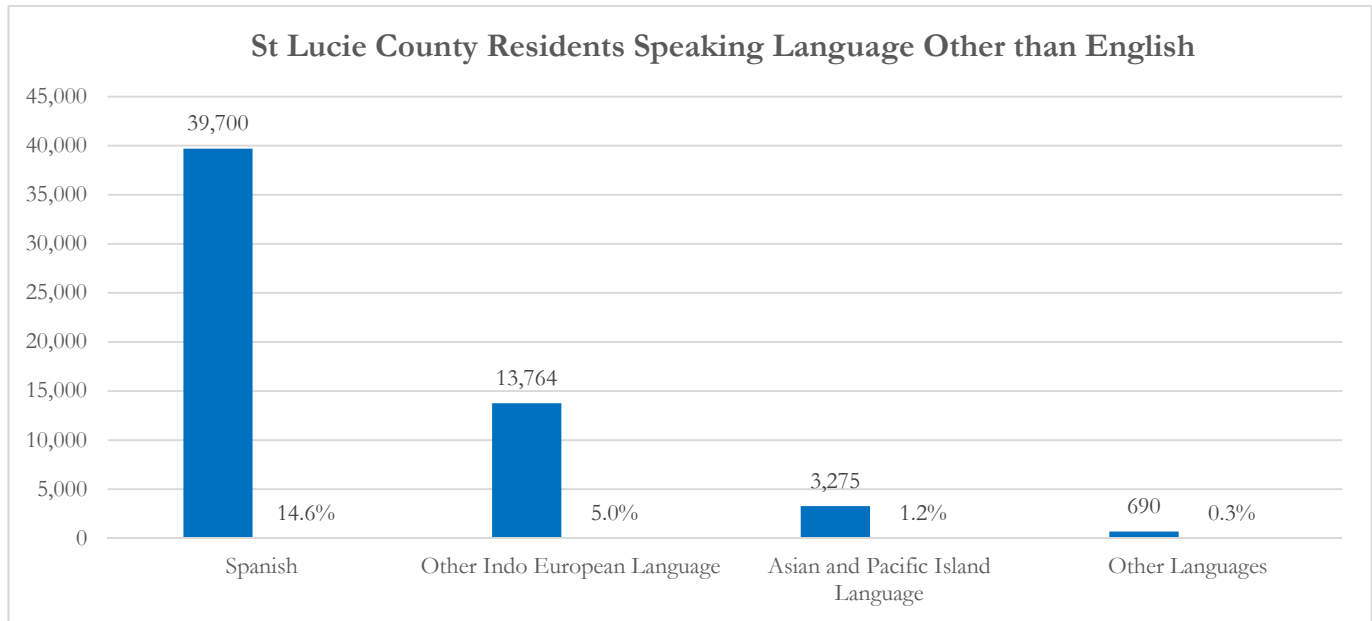


Chart provides estimated total amount of St. Lucie County residents that speak a language other than English in the home. Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015 5 Year Estimates

According to the Public Use Data File and Technical Documentation published by the Census Bureau on December 5, 2016, it is estimated that there are 23,170 voting age citizens that speak Spanish in St Lucie County. Of this subset, 6,345 are limited in English proficiency.

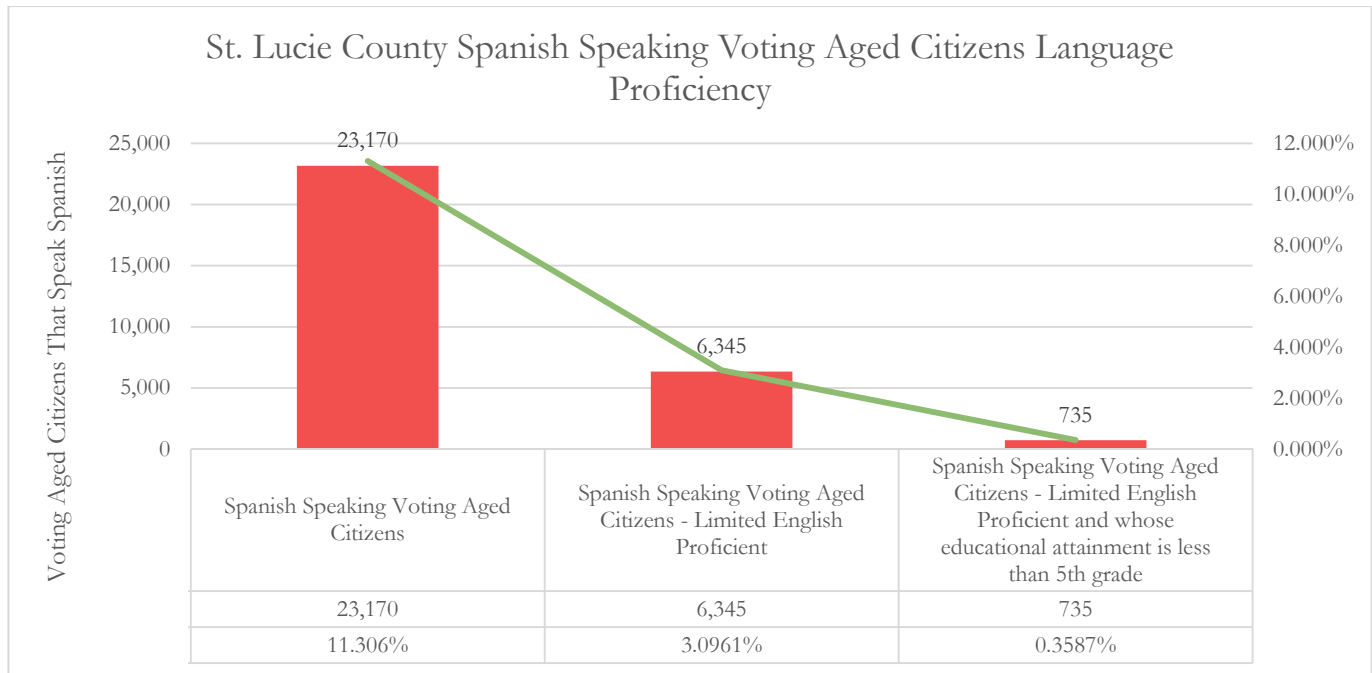


Chart provides estimated total amount of Spanish speaking voting aged citizens and percentages based on the estimated total amount of all St. Lucie County voting aged citizens (204,935) which represents part of the equation utilized to determine Section 203 covered areas. \*Data source: Census Bureau Public Use Data File and Technical Documentation December 5, 2016 (Updated July 25, 2017).

Based on data compiled by the Census Bureau, the percentage of voting age citizens that speak Spanish and are limited in English proficiency is currently at 3.09%. Therefore, St. Lucie County has not met the threshold described in section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. However, the St. Lucie County Supervisor of Elections office has already implemented the following protocols to assist voters with limited English proficiency:

- Translation service provided via (Language Link) during Early Voting and Election Day (implemented since 1989)
- St. Lucie County Supervisor of Elections website has Spanish translation which includes but is not limited to the following; voter registration, Vote-by-Mail information, voter education, voting locations and election dates
- Sample ballots are printed in Spanish and are available at the polling place during Early Voting and Election Day
- Sample ballots are printed in Creole and are available at the polling place during Early Voting and Election Day
- Sample ballots are published in Spanish newspapers in St. Lucie County
- Supervisor of Elections provides voter education on minority radio programs
- Bilingual election staff are available that speak: Spanish, French, and Creole
- Spanish Voter Registration Applications

Upon completion of research, although St. Lucie County is not considered a covered jurisdiction under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, several proactive measures have been instituted to assist those who speak minority languages. In addition, Census data will continue to be reviewed periodically to gauge the minority group language needs of the county.