



## **Serving WellCare of Kentucky Enrollees Better by Speaking Their Language**

Treating the whole patient — not only their conditions — is a major component of delivering quality healthcare. WellCare of Kentucky is sharing information and tools to help make that possible.

### **Language Demographics and Our Enrollees**

WellCare of Kentucky enrollees speak many languages, with English and Spanish ranking as most prevalent. As the plan's population grows more diverse each year, WellCare of Kentucky, at a minimum, conducts an annual language assessment to determine the current population's most practiced language. In the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) in 2024, 92.5% of Kentucky residents listed English as their preferred language. In Kentucky, 7.5% of all residents speak a language other than English at home, 3.7% speak Spanish at home, and 1.8% speak English "less than very well."

A review of health plan language interpreter requests may provide a better understanding of what the "unknown" category means. In 2024, the top three onsite language service requests for WellCare of Kentucky enrollees were Spanish, Zomi Chin, and Zo. When WellCare of Kentucky facilitated telephonic language services for enrollees, Spanish comprised 64.79% of those requests, with Mandarin (11.70%), and Zomi (3.82%) rounding out the top three highest requested languages in 2024.

From 2023 to 2024, comparisons of Kentucky's top three counties highlight the ever-changing language needs of their communities.

| <b>Language needs comparison 2023 to 2024 top 3 KY counties*</b> |                |             |                |             |                |             |
|--|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>Top 3 KY Counties</b>   | <b>English</b> |             | <b>Spanish</b> |             | <b>Unknown</b> |             |
|  | <b>2024</b>    | <b>2023</b> | <b>2024</b>    | <b>2023</b> | <b>2024</b>    | <b>2023</b> |
| <b>JEFFERSON</b>   | 78.62%         | 87.59%      | 18.31%         | 11.14%      | 0.20%          | 0.26%       |
| <b>DAVIESS</b>   | 95.56%         | 97.23%      | 2.52%          | 0.25%       | 0.21%          | 0.19%       |
| <b>BUTLER</b>  | 88.52%         | 94.37%      | 6.04%          | 0.07%       | 0.15%          | 5.56%       |

\*Source: WellCare Enrollee Demographics Dashboard

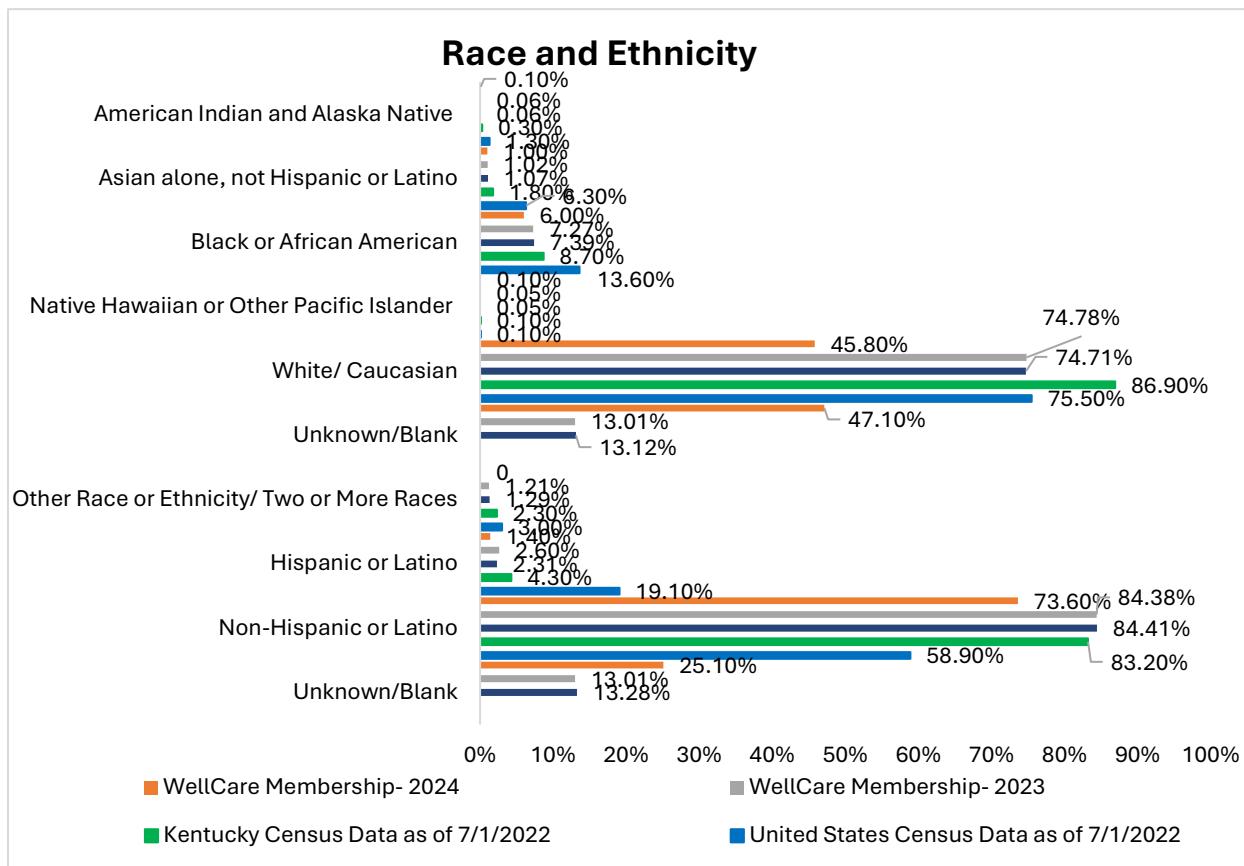
WellCare of Kentucky performs an annual evaluation of enrollee race and ethnicity to gain a deeper understanding of demographic composition and better identify any emerging needs. Census data, survey data, and local data sources help create a demographic profile when enrollee-reported data is insufficient.

| Report on Kentucky's State-level Race and Ethnicity Composition*        | Total     | %       |
|---|-----------|---------|
| <b>Race N** = 4,505,836</b>   |           |         |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone, not Hispanic or Latino         | 8,080     | 0.018%  |
| Asian alone, not Hispanic or Latino                                     | 73,843    | 0.016%  |
| Black or African American alone, not Hispanic or Latino                 | 357,764   | 0.079%  |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone, not Hispanic or Latino | 3,462     | 0.0008% |
| White alone, not Hispanic or Latino                                     | 3,664,764 | 81.33%  |
| Some Other Race alone, not Hispanic or Latino                           | 14,706    | 0.003%  |
| Two or More Races, not Hispanic or Latino                               | 175,363   | .039%   |
| <b>Ethnicity N = 4,505,836</b>  |           |         |
| Hispanic or Latino  | 207,854   | 4.61%   |
| Non-Hispanic or Latino  | 4,297,982 | 95.39%  |
| <b>Diversity Index</b>  |           |         |
| Racial and Ethnic Diversity Index                                       |           | 33%     |

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020

\*\*Total race population is the total population minus the Hispanic or Latino population

The Race and Ethnicity chart below shows our enrollee breakdown with variances within those categories for the past two years, compared to US and KY census data. It is our duty to become more aware of working with individuals whose customs, cultures, and practices vary from our own. This information will enable us to continue our journey to provide culturally competent care for our enrollees.



## Your Patient Demographics

Did you know that you have access to your patients' language needs? You can determine a patient's language by logging in to our provider portal and downloading your patient's primary language from their profile. You can access the provider portal by visiting our website at [provider.wellcare.com](http://provider.wellcare.com). You are also encouraged to reach out to your dedicated Provider Engagement Administrator to learn more about how this information can be used to strengthen your relationship with your patients.

## Working with Interpreters in Your Practice

At WellCare, we value everything you do to deliver quality care to our enrollees— your patients — and to ensure they have a positive healthcare experience. That's why we strive to see that enrollees who need language services have adequate communication support.

## We have resources available when you identify enrollees who have potential cultural or language barriers. Language services include:

- Interpreter services for languages other than English or for enrollees who have limited English proficiency.
  - Telephonic interpretation.

- Oral translation (reading of English material in an enrollee's preferred language).
- In person, non-English interpretation.
- Sign language interpreter services for the hearing impaired.
- Telephone system technology (TTY line) for the hearing impaired.
- Written translations for materials that are critical for obtaining health insurance coverage and access to healthcare services in non-English prevalent languages.

To obtain language services for an Enrollee, contact WellCare Provider Services. In person and American Sign Language services should be requested as soon as possible, or at least 5 business days before the appointment. All providers (Medical, Behavioral, Pharmacy, etc.) can request language services by calling our Provider Services at: 1-877-389-9457 (TDD/TTY 711). You may also call the toll-free number on the back of our Enrollee's ID card.

- **Non-urgent.** If an enrollee needs a sign language or foreign language interpreter for a medical appointment, the Customer Service Department arranges this service through a locally contracted vendor. Live, in-person translation is preferred to telephonic translation in non-urgent cases; the telephonic service will only be used when an interpreter for the required language cannot be found in or near the area.
- **Urgent/Emergent.** If an enrollee needs language translation at the time of an urgent or emergent encounter and the provider does not have bilingual staff, the provider should call Customer Service at **1-877-389-9457**. The Customer Service agent will work to patch in a translator for telephonic translation.
- Providers will identify enrollees who have potential linguistic barriers for which alternative communication methods are needed and will contact WellCare to arrange appropriate assistance.
- Enrollees may receive interpreter services at no cost when necessary to access covered Services through a vendor, as arranged by the Customer Service Department.
- Interpreter services available include verbal translation, plus verbal interpretation for those with limited English proficiency and sign language for the hearing-impaired. These services will be provided by vendors with such expertise and are coordinated by the WellCare Customer Service Department.
- Written materials are available for enrollees in large print format and certain non-English languages prevalent in WellCare service areas.

*Hearing-impaired, interpreter, and sign language services are available to WellCare enrollees through WellCare's Customer Service. PCPs should coordinate these services for WellCare enrollees and contact Customer Service if assistance is needed. Please refer to the Quick Reference Guide at [wellcareky.com/providers/medicaid](http://wellcareky.com/providers/medicaid) for Customer*

*Service telephone numbers. These services are available at no cost to the enrollee per federal law.*

Information is deemed critical for obtaining health insurance coverage or accessing health care services if the material is required by law or regulation to be provided to an individual. Obtain language services for an enrollee by contacting WellCare Provider Services. All providers (Medical, Behavioral, Pharmacy, etc.) can request language services by calling our Provider Customer Contact Center at **1-877-389-9457 (TDD/TTY 711)**.

**All WellCare of Kentucky providers are required to comply with certain interpreter requirements.**

- Providers must ensure that bilingual staff who act as interpreters are qualified and meet the quality standards. These include documentation that the staff member's proficiency was assessed.
- Patients are never required to bring their own interpreters.
- Minors may not interpret, even if their parent or other relative consents. The exception is if there is an emergency and there is no qualified interpreter immediately available.
- An accompanying adult may interpret if the patient agrees and if it is appropriate to the situation.

Providers using bilingual staff to communicate with patients must ensure that bilingual staff can interpret effectively, accurately, and from the language of the patient to English, using any necessary specialized vocabulary terminology and phraseology.

Providers are strongly encouraged to document in the medical record the use of family, friends, and minors as interpreters. If an interpreter is offered and the patient declines, the provider should also document this in the medical record.

Reach out to your provider relations representative with WellCare of Kentucky to learn more about these requirements and how you can use them to make your relationship with your patients stronger and more effective.

**Additional Language Resources**

You can print these preferred language booklets for your patients, which include many languages. These booklets can help your patients let you know they need an interpreter.

**DHS I Speak Booklet:**<https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/crci/crci-i-speak-booklet.pdf>

**Language Identification Guide:**[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/25\\_0709\\_bc\\_language-identification-guide-v01-508.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/25_0709_bc_language-identification-guide-v01-508.pdf)

## **Training Resources**

To help providers better understand how to communicate effectively and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) enrollees, we encourage you to visit our website at [wellcareky.com/providers/medicaid/training](http://wellcareky.com/providers/medicaid/training) for training and resources on the provisions of language services. WellCare of Kentucky also has provider training available on various topics, including Cultural Competency training. Providers are encouraged to obtain annual training to assist with enhancing competent care for our diverse Kentucky populations.

Providers interested in attending an upcoming provider training can call WellCare of Kentucky Customer Service at **1-877-389-9457** for more information. Providers can also visit the [Provider Resources](http://wellcareky.com/providers) page at [wellcareky.com/providers](http://wellcareky.com/providers) to access manuals, forms, and resources.

WellCare's Cultural Competency Program educates providers on the Department's Cultural Competency requirements to promote the delivery of services in a culturally competent manner to all enrollees, including those with limited English proficiency, diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, and regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. WellCare of Kentucky can also schedule Cultural Competency training for providers and the healthcare facility upon request.

Providers can also access Cultural Competency resources through national resources such as the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, and the Think Cultural Health website at [thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/resources](http://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/resources). They can also contact the WellCare of Kentucky Provider Relations team for additional training resources.

## **Reference:**

American Community Survey, Why We Ask: Language Spoken at Home — census.gov. 9n.d.). <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S1601>