



RESEARCH REPORT

A publication providing statistical information on Howard County demographics, socioeconomic and employment trends and patterns. Available from the Department of Planning and Zoning by calling (410) 313-4370.

Limited English Proficiency in Howard County

The following summarizes the extent, rate of growth, and location of Howard County residents with limited English proficiency. Languages spoken and the country of origin of the foreign born population are also summarized. Most of the information comes from U.S. Census data although references to other reports and sources are also included.

Limited English Proficiency -- Past and Current Trends

The best source available in determining the numbers of those with limited English proficiency comes from the decennial Census surveys that asks the question of how well one speaks English. The results of this are shown in the table below.

English Proficiency of Howard County Population 5 years and Over - 1990 and 2000

	1990		2000		Percent Growth
Speak only English	158,161	91.8%	197,631	86.0%	25%
Speak other languages	14,188	8.2%	32,166	14.0%	127%
Speak English very well	9,678	5.6%	21,103	9.2%	118%
Speak English well	2,620	1.5%	6,077	2.6%	132%
Speak English not well or not at all	1,890	1.1%	4,986	2.2%	164%
Total	172,349	100.0%	229,797	100.0%	33%

Source: U.S Census Bureau

In 1990, an estimated 1.1% of the population in Howard County indicated that they speak English “not well” or “not at all.” This is out of 8.2% of the population that speak a language other than English. In 2000, the percentage doubled to 2.2% out of 14% of the population that speak a language other than English. This points out three things: 1) *the percentage of the Howard County population with limited English proficiency is very small*, 2) *however, this group of residents has grown significantly since 1990*, and 3) *only a small subset of individuals who speak a language other than English are limited in their English proficiency.*

Is this trend continuing? Unfortunately, accurate data regarding those who speak English “not well or not at all” since 2000 is not available. However, data on race and the foreign born population are available. The table and chart below show data on race for 2000 and 2005.

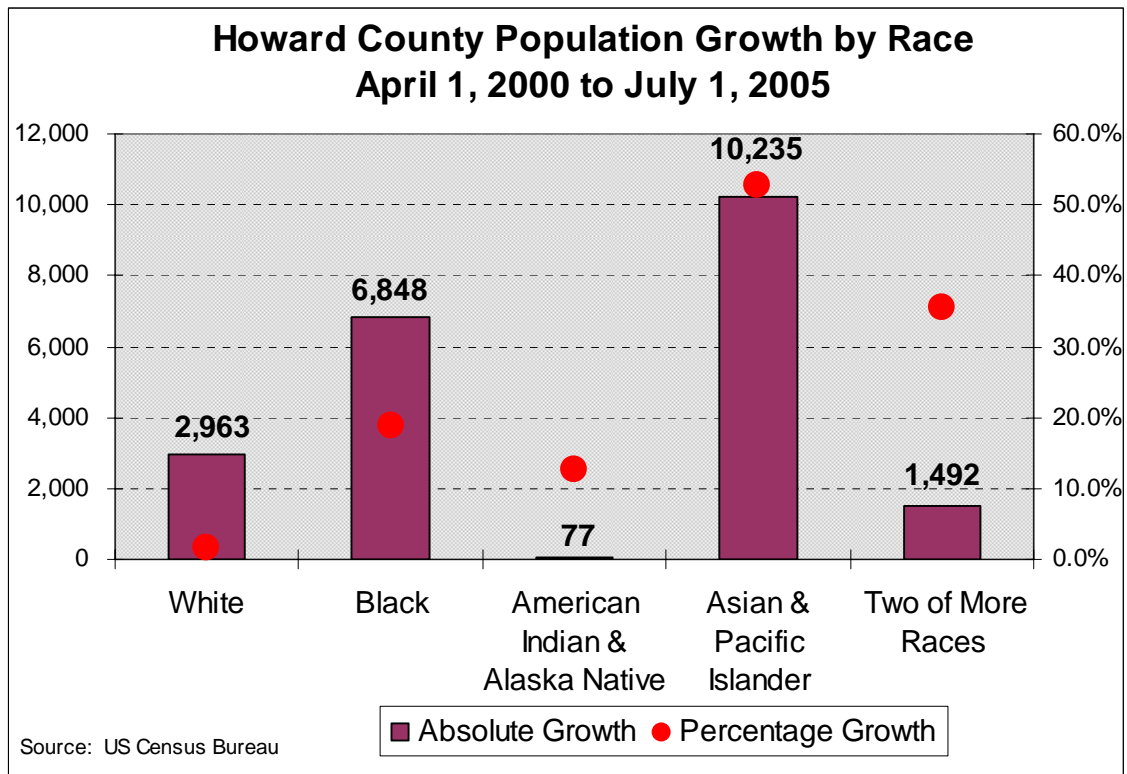
Howard County Population by Race -- 2000 to 2005

	2000		2005		Growth	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Population of One Race Alone	243,649	98.3%	263,772	97.9%		
White	187,145	75.5%	190,108	70.6%	2,963	1.6%
Black	36,496	14.7%	43,344	16.1%	6,848	18.8%
American Indian & Alaska Native	604	0.2%	681	0.3%	77	12.7%
Asian & Pacific Islander	19,404	7.8%	29,639	11.0%	10,235	52.7%
Population of Two or More Races (1)	4,193	1.7%	5,685	2.1%	1,492	35.6%
TOTAL POPULATION	247,842	100.0%	269,457	100.0%	21,615	8.7%
Total Hispanic Population (2)	7,490	3.1%	10,687	4.1%	3,791	42.7%

(1) This option was available for the first time in the 2000 Census.

(2) Hispanic Origin can be from any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



It should be noted that there is not a direct correlation between race and ability to speak English. For example, many Hispanic and Asian residents – even those that are foreign born – do not have limited English proficiency. That said, however, it can be assumed that a subset of those populations would be so. The data above clearly show a dramatic increase in the Asian and Hispanic populations. Whereas the overall population of the County grew by 8.7% between 2000 and 2005, the Asian population grew by 53% and the Hispanic by 43%. A portion of this minority growth is from foreign born residents, so it is a fair assumption that the overall percentage of County residents with limited English proficiency is likely to have increased since 2000.

This is further evidenced by the table below, which shows the percentage of foreign born population between 1990 and 2005. The foreign born population increased from 6.1% in 1990 to 11.3% in 2000 and it is estimated to have increased to an even higher level in 2005 based on the Census Bureau's new American Community Survey.

Foreign Born Population in Howard County - 1990 to 2000

	1990		2000		2005 (1)
Native	175,961	93.9%	219,729	88.7%	
Foreign Born	11,367	6.1%	28,113	11.3%	13.6% to 15.9%
Total	187,328	100.0%	247,842	100.0%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Note: 2005 data comes from the American Community Survey - given small sample size and margins of error a range needs to be used based on a 90% confidence interval. Also, American Community Survey is based just on household population and does not include group quarters as does the 1990 and 2000 Census results.

Limited English Proficiency -- Location within Howard County

The table below summarizes the numbers of those who speak English “not well” or “not at all,” by area of the County. The two maps on the following page show this information thematically at the smaller Census Tract level. The more broad areas (7 regional planning districts) in the table are defined by the red borders in the maps.

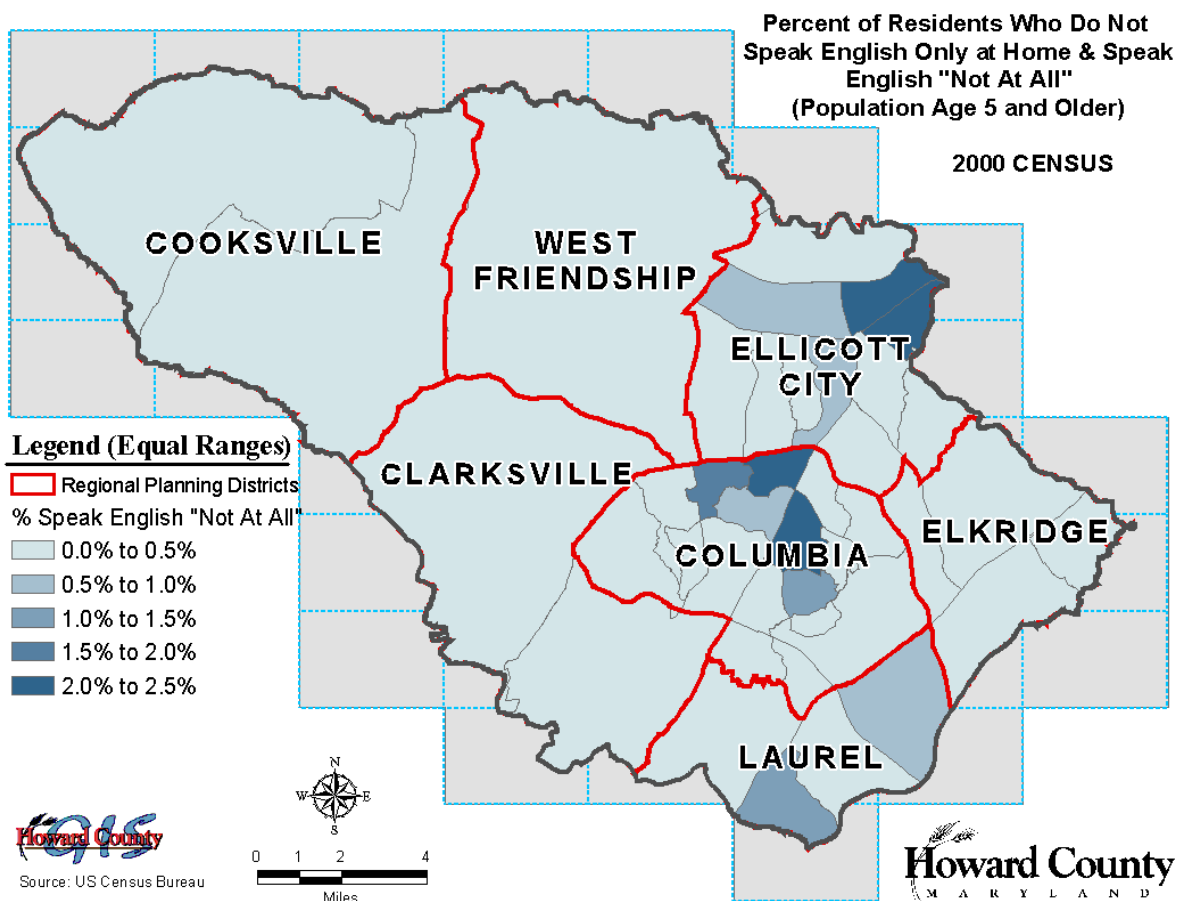
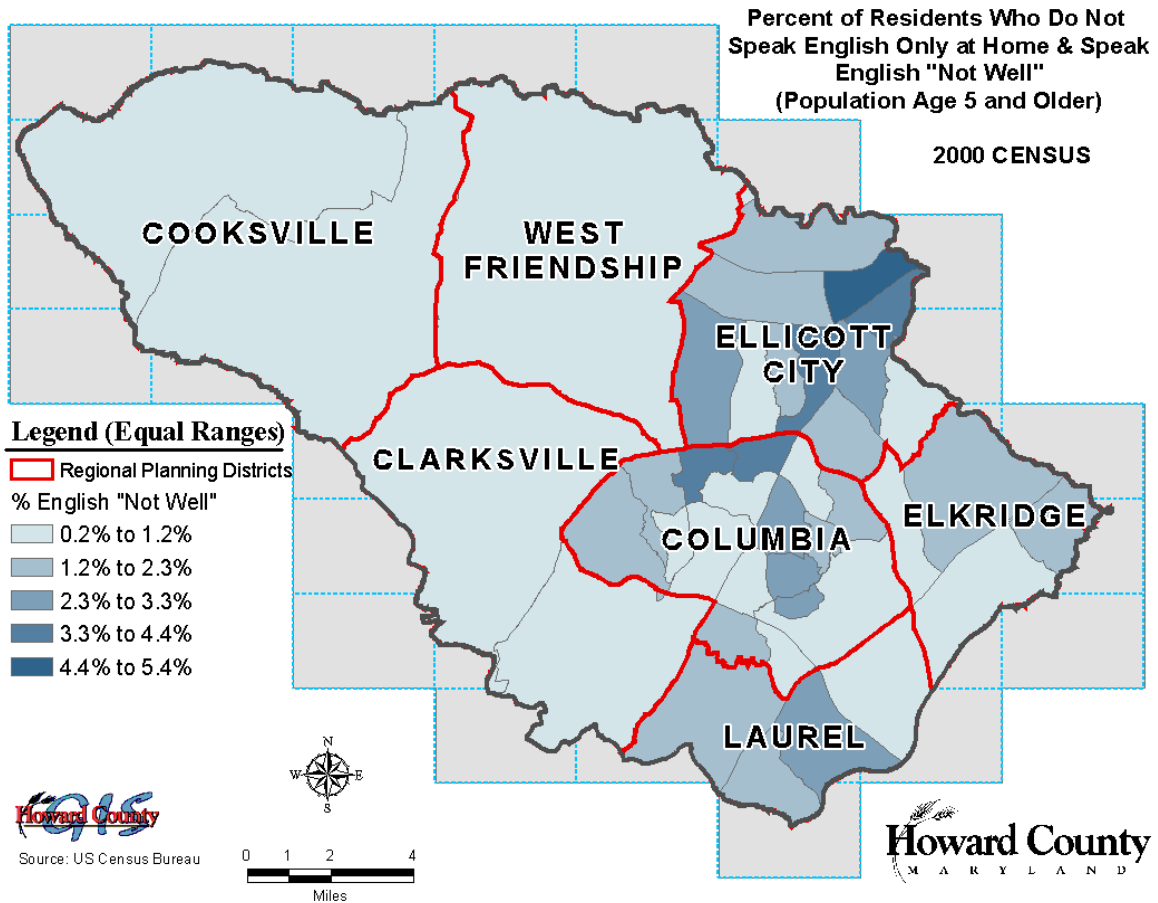
As indicated earlier, the numbers are small, around 2% of the population Countywide. Of the total 4,986 residents of Howard County in 2000 who speak English “not well or not at all,” about 44% of them live in Columbia (2,177) and 30% live in Ellicott City (1,510). Ellicott City has the greatest concentration at 3%. Columbia has the next greatest concentration at 2.5% followed by Laurel at 2.1%. The maps show the locations within these areas with the greatest concentrations.

English Proficiency of Howard County Population 5 years and Over in 2000 by Regional Planning District

	Elkridge		Ellicott City		West Friendship		Cooksville	
Speak only English	25,245	87.6%	41,118	82.8%	9,075	91.3%	10,380	95.2%
Speak other languages	3,585	12.4%	8,516	17.2%	868	8.7%	525	4.8%
Speak English very well	2,519	8.7%	5,185	10.4%	644	6.5%	351	3.2%
Speak English well	715	2.5%	1,821	3.7%	151	1.5%	94	0.9%
Speak English not well or not at all	351	1.2%	1,510	3.0%	73	0.7%	80	0.7%
Total	28,830	100.0%	49,634	100.0%	9,943	100.0%	10,905	100.0%

	Clarksville		Columbia		Laurel		TOTAL	
Speak only English	11,670	88.8%	73,688	84.4%	26,455	87.9%	197,631	86.0%
Speak other languages	1,474	11.2%	13,570	15.6%	3,628	12.1%	32,166	14.0%
Speak English very well	1,158	8.8%	8,961	10.3%	2,285	7.6%	21,103	9.2%
Speak English well	156	1.2%	2,432	2.8%	708	2.4%	6,077	2.6%
Speak English not well or not at all	160	1.2%	2,177	2.5%	635	2.1%	4,986	2.2%
Total	13,144	100.0%	87,258	100.0%	30,083	100.0%	229,797	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Languages Spoken and Country of Origin

The table below shows the languages spoken at home in Howard County by rank in 2000. The top five include Spanish, Korean, Chinese, French and African Languages. These top five account for 8% of total Howard County residents, and represent more than half of the 14% who do not speak only English at home.

Languages Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over in Howard County - Year 2000

Rank	Language	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Speak only English	197,631	86.0%	
1	Spanish or Spanish Creole	7,373	3.2%	3.2%
2	Korean	5,131	2.2%	5.4%
3	Chinese	3,217	1.4%	6.8%
4	French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	1,414	0.6%	7.5%
5	African languages	1,314	0.6%	8.0%
6	German	1,171	0.5%	8.5%
7	Hindi	1,092	0.5%	9.0%
8	Other Asian languages	1,077	0.5%	9.5%
9	Urdu	953	0.4%	9.9%
10	Arabic	926	0.4%	10.3%
11	Tagalog	853	0.4%	10.7%
12	Persian	816	0.4%	11.0%
13	Other Indic languages	810	0.4%	11.4%
14	Russian	804	0.3%	11.7%
15	Italian	715	0.3%	12.0%
16	Vietnamese	637	0.3%	12.3%
17	Gujarathi	622	0.3%	12.6%
18	French Creole	349	0.2%	12.7%
19	Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	343	0.1%	12.9%
20	Polish	330	0.1%	13.0%
21	Greek	321	0.1%	13.2%
22	Hebrew	311	0.1%	13.3%
23	Other Slavic languages	282	0.1%	13.4%
24	Other Indo-European languages	260	0.1%	13.5%
25	Scandinavian languages	240	0.1%	13.6%
26	Other West Germanic languages	174	0.1%	13.7%
27	Japanese	154	0.1%	13.8%
28	Thai	119	0.1%	13.8%
29	Serbo-Croatian	117	0.1%	13.9%
30	Other Pacific Island languages	79	0.0%	13.9%
31	Yiddish	49	0.0%	13.9%
32	Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	42	0.0%	14.0%
33	Hungarian	38	0.0%	14.0%
34	Armenian	18	0.0%	14.0%
35	Other and unspecified languages	15	0.0%	14.0%
	TOTAL	229,797	100%	

Source: US Census Bureau

The table below summarizes the country or region of origin of the foreign born population in 2000. The top five include Latin America, Korea, India, China and Africa. There is a clear correspondence between these locations and the top five languages outlined in the table above, noting that there are a multitude of languages spoken in India including Hindi and Urdu, among others, and the fact that French is spoken in large parts of Africa.

Country/Region of Origin of Foreign Born Residents in Howard County - Year 2000

Rank	Origin	Number	Percent	Cumulative %
1	Latin America	5,265	18.7%	18.7%
2	Korea	4,706	16.7%	35.5%
3	India	3,098	11.0%	46.5%
4	China	2,673	9.5%	56.0%
5	Africa	2,225	7.9%	63.9%
6	South Eastern Asia	2,037	7.2%	71.2%
7	Other South Central Asia	1,818	6.5%	77.6%
8	Eastern Europe	1,428	5.1%	82.7%
9	Northern Europe	1,273	4.5%	87.2%
10	Western Europe	1,122	4.0%	91.2%
11	Western Asia	753	2.7%	93.9%
12	Canada	633	2.3%	96.2%
13	Southern Europe	626	2.2%	98.4%
14	Oceania	231	0.8%	99.2%
15	Other Asia	225	0.8%	100.0%
	Total	28,113	100.0%	

Source: US Census Bureau

These languages and origins are further supported by a 2002 report published by the Foreign Information Referral Network, Inc. (FIRN) entitled, Connecting Across Cultures: Improving Access to Health and Human Services for the Foreign Born in Howard County, Maryland. According to that report:

“A Brookings study reported in March 2002 that the number of LEP students enrolled in public schools in the Washington, D.C. area has soared. Public Schools in D.C., Maryland and Virginia collectively reported a 16.2 percent increase in 2001 alone for a total of 53,990 students enrolled in ESOL classes in these three jurisdictions. The average annual growth from 1993 to 2000 was 9.6 percent.

In Howard County Public Schools, the increases are also striking. In the 2001-2002 school year, Howard County schools served over 1,551 LEP students. They came from 88 countries and spoke 64 languages. In all, the schools' ESOL population has increased by 77.5 percent in the last six years. At the high school level, the increase in just two years was 98 percent.

The top languages spoken by Howard County ESOL students in 2001 were Korean (spoken by 27 percent of the ESOL population), Spanish (25 percent),

Chinese (9 percent) and Urdu (6 percent), followed by Vietnamese, Russian, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Arabic, Japanese, Farsi, French Creole, Twi and Thai.”

Another source reporting languages spoken in Howard County comes from a recent survey conducted by Howard Transit of their ridership in 2005. According to the report entitled, Howard Transit On Board Passenger Survey:

“A new question this year was ‘If English is not your first language, what is?’ Forty-four percent of the 122 who answered the question indicated that Spanish is their first language followed by French (11%), Chinese (7%), Korean and Farsi (2% each). Thirty-four indicated they speak another language other than those listed above.”¹

The table below summarizes LEP status specifically by language category spoken. About 22 percent of those who speak Spanish in 2000 reported that they “speak English not well or not at all.” The percentage is 20% for those who speak Asian languages and a much smaller 8.5% for those that speak other Indo-European languages. (Indo-European includes European, Russian, Indic and some Middle Eastern languages.)

English Proficiency of Howard County Population 5 years and Over in 2000 by Language Category

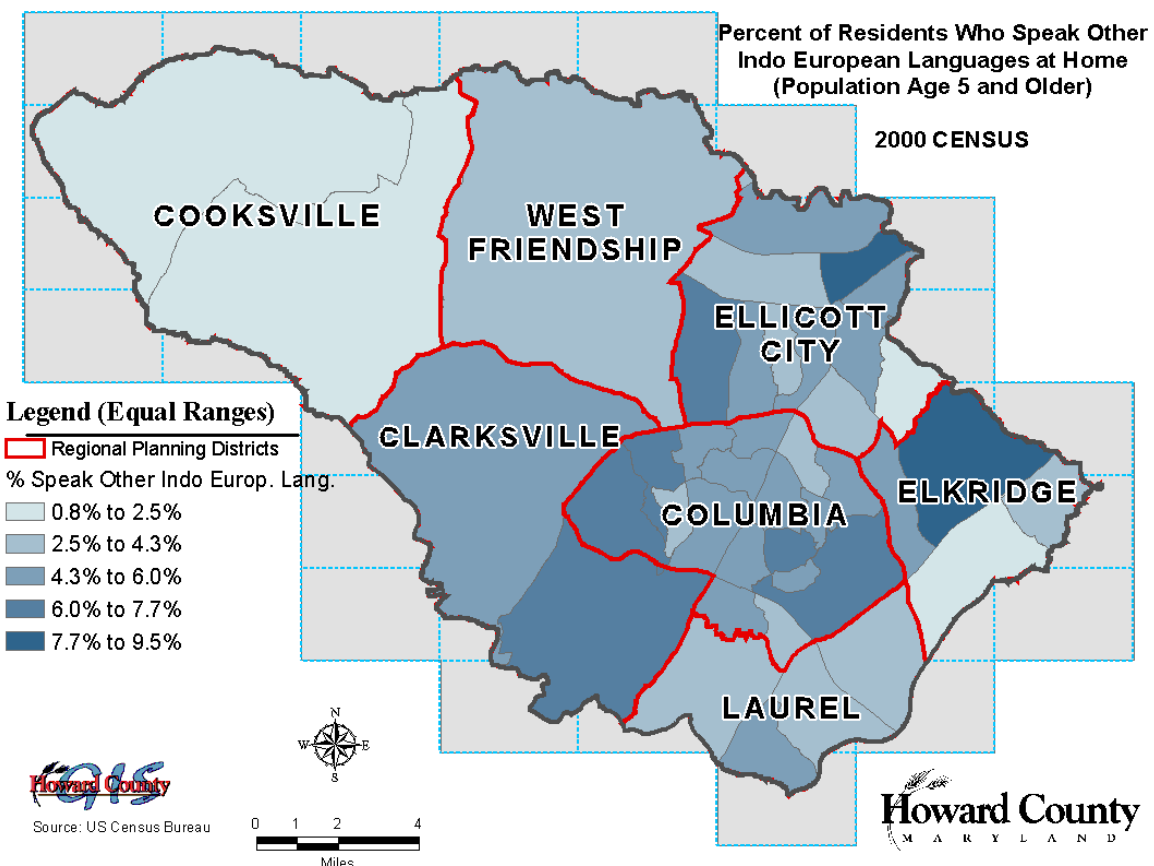
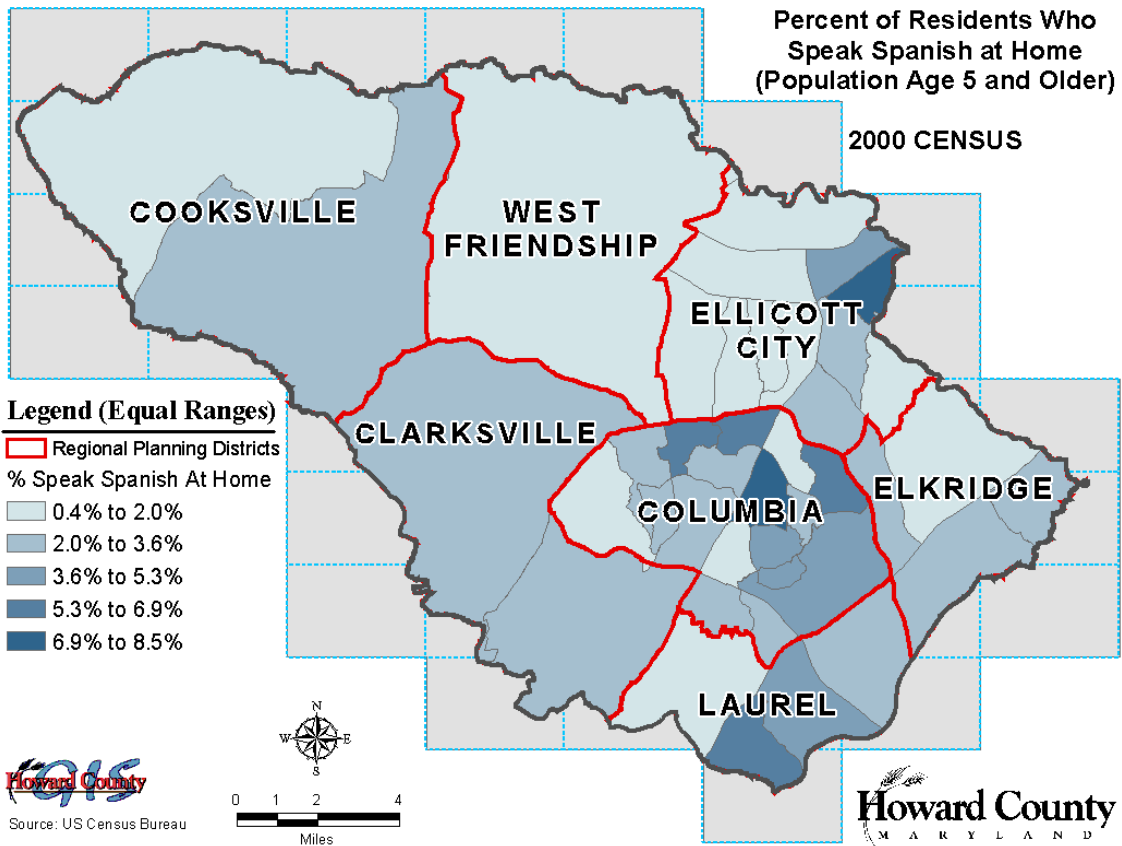
Category	Number	Percent of Category	Percent of Total
Speak only English	197,631		86.0%
Speak Spanish:	7,373	100.0%	3.2%
Speak English very well or well	5,757	78.1%	2.5%
Speak English not well or not at all	1,616	21.9%	0.7%
Speak other Indo-European languages:	10,880	100.0%	4.7%
Speak English very well or well	9,960	91.5%	4.3%
Speak English not well or not at all	920	8.5%	0.4%
Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages:	11,309	100.0%	4.9%
Speak English very well or well	9,002	79.6%	3.9%
Speak English not well or not at all	2,307	20.4%	1.0%
Speak other languages:	2,604	100.0%	1.1%
Speak English very well or well	2,461	94.5%	1.1%
Speak English not well or not at all	143	5.5%	0.1%
TOTAL	229,797		100.0%

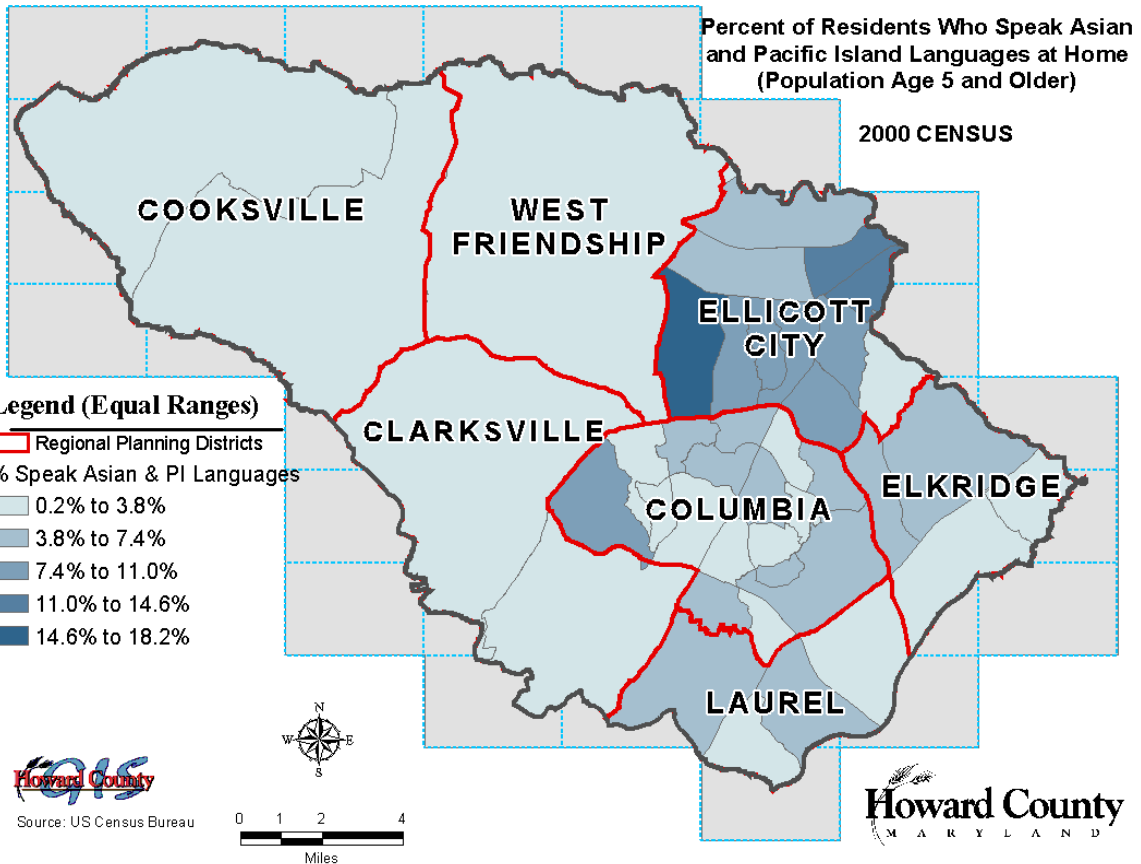
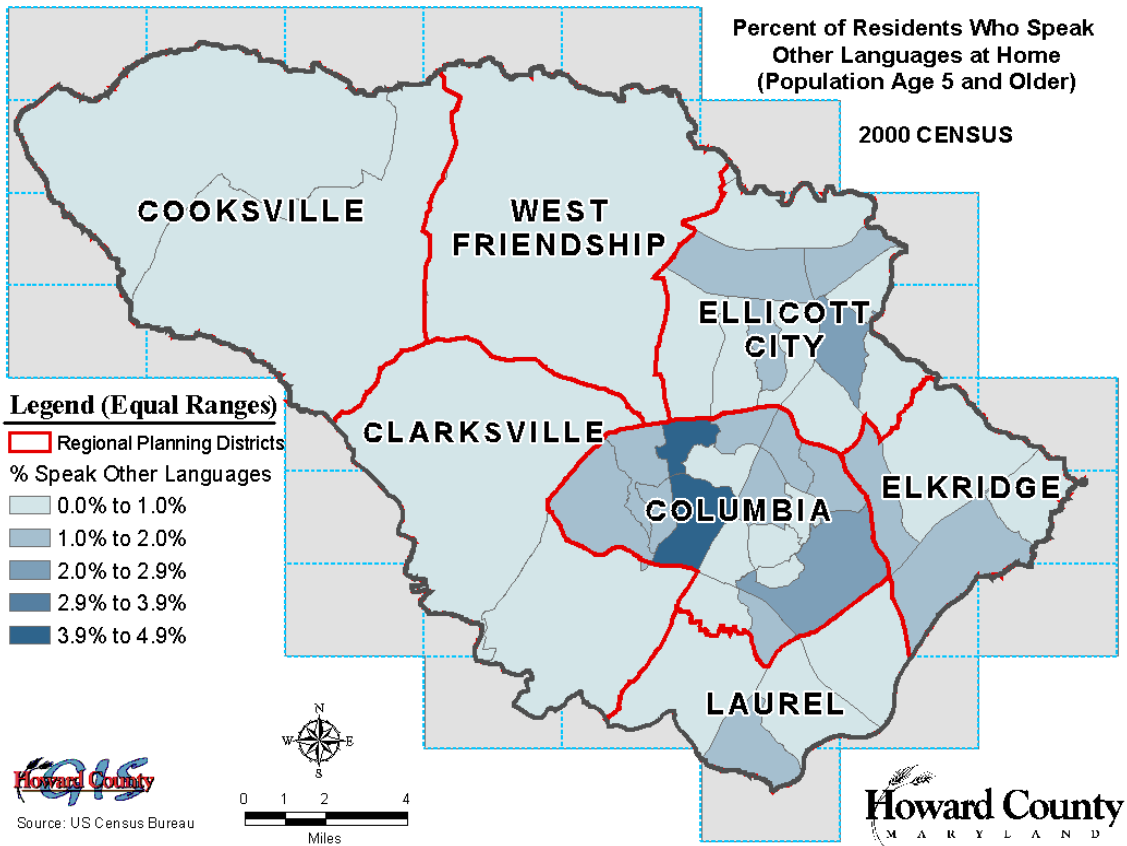
Source: US Census Bureau

Languages Spoken – Location Within Howard County

The maps below show concentrations languages spoken within Howard County by Census Tract. The data is from the 2000 Census.

¹ According to a pie chart shown later in the same report the other languages include Bengali, Creole, German, Russian, Swahili and Urdu.





Conclusion

The following major points can be concluded from the above information:

1. According to 2000 Census data, the percentage of the Howard County population with Limited English Proficiency is small, only around 2.1% or close to 5,000 people.
2. However, it is evident that this group of residents has grown and continues to grow significantly. Those with limited English proficiency have increased by more than 150% between 1990 and 2000. This trend is clearly continuing as indicated by the increase in foreign born and minority populations between 2000 and 2005, as well as information provided in the FIRN and Howard Transit reports.
3. It should be noted that only a small subset of individuals who are of minority races and/or speak a language other than English have limited English proficiency.
4. The top three languages of those with limited English proficiency in Howard County are: Spanish, Korean and Chinese. These are likely followed by African, Indian, and other Asian languages. Even though French and German are high on the list, the data indicate that the rate of limited English proficiency among those who speak Indo-European languages is less than half that of those who speak Spanish and Asian languages.
5. Parts of Columbia, Ellicott City and the Laurel area have the greatest concentrations of residents with limited English proficiency. Spanish and Asian language speakers are primarily located in these three areas of the County.