ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN INTERACTING WITH THE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) COMMUNITY

Background and Methodology

In October 2007, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) was asked by the Governor's Highway Safety Office (GHSO) to help them assess the needs of law enforcement in their ability to effectively interact with the Limited English Proficient (LEP) community. In response, OCJS designed and implemented an online survey to capture these needs. E-mails that included a link to the survey were sent to 510 Ohio law enforcement agencies. Of these, 203 agencies responded, a response rate of 40 percent. See Appendix A for a listing of the questions included in the survey.

Rank of Responding Officers	
Accreditation Manager	1
Administrative Clerk/Assistant	2
Captain	10
Chief	79
Chief Deputy	3
Colonel	3
Corporal	1
Deputy	2
Detective	1
Director	1
Lieutenant	33
Officer/Patrolman	9
Ranger	1
Sergeant	24
Sheriff	1

Type of LEP Population Encountered

Of the 203 agencies that responded to the survey, 160 agencies (79 percent) reported encountering LEP populations in their jurisdictions. Spanish was by far the most frequently reported language encountered, reported in 96 percent of the agencies.

Language Reported by Agencies	Number of Agencies Reporting
Spanish	154
Chinese	6
Russian	5
Japanese	4
Arabic	2
Other	11
'Several'	3
No LEP populations	43

*Note that 'Number of Agencies Reporting' will not add to 203 because some agencies reported the presence of multiple languages in their jurisdictions.

Frequency of Interaction with LEP Population

Of the 160 agencies that reported interacting with the LEP population, the frequency of such interaction varied. Twenty-eight percent reported interacting with an LEP individual at least once a week, while 64 percent reported at least monthly interactions with LEP individuals. Thirty-six percent reported interacting with LEP individuals on an infrequent basis — less than once a month. Appendix B indicates the frequency with which each agency interacts with the LEP population.

Frequency of Interaction with LEP Persons	Percent of Agencies Reporting
Daily	10%
At least once a week	18%
At least once every two weeks	12%
At least once a month	23%
Every other month	9%
Every six months	14%
Rarely, if ever	13%

*Does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Resources Currently Used

Of the 203 agencies that responded, 70 percent (143 agencies) reported having access to at least one resource to help communicate with an LEP individual. Sixty-three agencies reported having access to multiple resources. Thirty percent (60 agencies) responded that they have no access to LEP resources.[1]

Type of Resource Available to Agencies	Number of Agencies Reporting
We have access to interpreter services, such as Language Line	55
We have a bilingual staff member	51
We work with a non-staff community member who assists us	86
We use a language translating device, such as Phraselator	7
We have no access to LEP resources and do the best we can	60[1]
Other[2]	20

*Note that agencies do not add to 203 because some agencies reported more than one type of resource used.

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[1] 68 agencies reported they have no access to resources; however, despite indicating having no resources available to them, they also identified one or more resources they use.

[2] 'Other' examples include: obtaining assistance from someone in the foreign language department at a local university or from another law enforcement agency, seeking assistance from an acquaintance of the LEP person, or seeking assistance online.

Training Needs

Eighty-one percent of agencies reported a need for training on one or more LEP-related issues. Trainings were grouped into the following categories: foreign language training, training on cross-cultural issues, training on the use of interpreters and interpreter services, and training on recruitment techniques for hiring bilingual staff. Foreign language training was identified most frequently as the type of training needed. Thirty-eight agencies reported no need for training.

Type of Training Needed by Agencies	Number of Agencies Reporting
Foreign language training	136
Training on cross-cultural issues	105
Training on the use of interpreters and interpreter services	109
Training on recruitment techniques for hiring bilingual staff	52

*Agencies do not add to 203 because some agencies reported more than one type of training needed.

Forty-four agencies reported that their officers have received language or cross-cultural training in the last 12 months. Most of these trainings focused on 'survival' Spanish (also called conversational Spanish, street Spanish, or introductory Spanish), while a few concentrated on cultural diversity/sensitivity. These trainings were offered by a variety of entities, including local colleges, state agencies (including OCJS and ODH), OPOTA, and online and computer sources. Several law enforcement agencies noted that they conducted their own trainings.

Agencies were asked to report on their willingness to send staff for various types of training, ranging from a one-day basic foreign language/cross-cultural training to a five-day in-depth foreign language/cross-cultural training. Of the 191 agencies that responded, 55 percent reported their willingness to send staff to a one- or two-day training.[3] Appendix C contains a breakdown of agencies' training interests.

Type of Training Provided	Percent of Agencies Indicating a Willingness to Send Staff
One-day basic foreign language and cross-cultural training	26%
Two-day foreign language and cross-cultural training	26%
Five-day in-depth foreign language and cross-cultural training	19%
Would not be able to send staff for such training	10%
Other	12%
Left blank	6%

*Does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

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[3] It is important to note that these responses reflect the views of the individual participating in the survey, and may not be reflective of the attitudes of those in charge of making such decisions.

Twenty-one agencies indicated that they would not be able to send staff for LEP-related training. Seventy percent of these stated that they do not have the manpower or other resources to commit to this training, while 25 percent indicated that LEP issues are not relevant to their jurisdiction. One agency simply reported that there was 'no need' for such training in his jurisdiction.

Appendix A: LEP Survey

Cover letter

Dear Law Enforcement Community,

The work of law enforcement depends on fast, accurate communication of information, directives and instructions. With the Ohio population expanding in diversity not only within major metropolitan areas but also in our suburbs and rural areas, law enforcement officers may need language assistance in their interactions with victims, witnesses or suspects who do not speak English or are limited English proficient (LEP). The manner in which these interactions are handled has an impact on safety, investigations, and the effective administration of justice.

We are asking for your agency's input to help us evaluate ways in which we can assist agencies and officers to better interact with individuals who do not speak English or who are limited English proficient.

Thank you for your participation. We greatly appreciate your time and your help.

Survey Questions

Of the limited English proficiency (LEP) populations you encounter in your jurisdiction, what language(s) do they primarily speak?

[ ]

How frequently do LEP issues, such as interacting with a victim, witness, or suspect, impact officers in your agency?

◯ Daily
◯ At least once a week
◯ At least once every two weeks
◯ At least once a month
◯ Every other month
◯ Every six months
◯ Rarely, if ever

When you do need to interact with an LEP individual, what resources do you use to help you communicate with the individual? Check all that apply.

☐ We have access to interpreter services, such as Language Line
☐ We have a bilingual staff member
☐ We work with a non-staff community member who assists us
☐ We use a language translating device, such as Phraselator
☐ We have no access to LEP resources and do the best we can
☐ Other (please specify)
[ ]

Does your agency have a need for LEP training in the following areas:

	Yes	No
Foreign language training	○	○
Training on cross-cultural issues	○	○
Training on the use of interpreters and interpreter services	○	○
Training on recruitment techniques for hiring bilingual staff	○	○

Has anyone in your agency attended or received any language or cross-cultural training in the last 12 months?

○ Yes

○ No

If training was received, specify the type of training received, and if possible, the agency that conducted the training.

Would your agency be willing to send staff to the following types of training:

○ One-day basic foreign language and cross-cultural training

○ Two-day foreign language and cross-cultural training

○ Five-day in-depth foreign language and cross-cultural training

○ Would not be able to send staff for such training

○ Other (please specify)

In what language(s) would you be most interested to receive training?

If you are unable to send staff for training, please specify the reasons why (check all that apply).

○ LEP issues are not relevant to our jurisdiction

○ Do not have the manpower or other resources to commit to this training

○ Other (please specify)

Please provide additional comments or suggestions regarding LEP issues for law enforcement agencies.

Agency Characteristics

Department Name:

Total number of officers:

Rank of reporting officer:

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

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Appendix B. Frequency of Law Enforcement Interaction with LEP Individuals

Daily Interaction with LEP Individuals
City of Montgomery Police Department
City of Norton Police Department
Clinton Township Police Department
Mifflin Township Police Department
Norton Police Department
Norwood Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Norwalk
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Elyria
South Bloomfield Division of Police
Springdale Police Department
Strasburg Police Department
Toledo Police Department
Union County Sheriff's Office
Union Township Police Department
Westerville Police Department
Whitehall Police Department
Willard Police Department

Interaction with LEP Individuals at Least Once a Week
Akron Police Department
Amelia Police Department
Apple Creek Police Department
Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office
Belmont County Sheriff's Office
Brimfield Police Department
Butler Township Police Department
Clay Township Police Department
Colerain Police Department
Columbus Metro Parks Police Department
Cridersville Police Department
Fostoria Police Department
Fremont Police Department
Gahanna Division of Police
Golf Manor Police Department
Kettering Police Department
Marion City Police Department
Miami Township (Clermont County) Police Department
Monroe Police Department
Monroeville Police Department
Ontario Police Department
Perry Police Department
Plymouth Police Department
Riverside Police Department
Sandusky County Sheriff's Office
Shawnee Hills Police Department
Wauseon Police Department
Wyandot County Sheriff's Office

Interaction with LEP Individuals at Least Once Every Two Weeks

Bloomdale Police Department
Botkins Police Department
Bowling Green Police Division
Cairo Police Department
Carey Police Department
Carroll Township Police Department
Columbus Grove Police Department
Crawford County Sheriff's Office
Delhi Township Police Department
Donnelsville Police Department
Franklin County DUI Task Force
Logan County Sheriff's Office
McComb Police Department
Mentor Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ottawa County Sheriff's Office
Richfield Police Department
St. Mary's Police Department

Interaction with LEP Individuals at Least Once a Month

Bluffton Police Department
Bucyrus Police Department
Celina Police Department
Cuyahoga Falls Police Department
Defiance County Sheriff's Office
Edison Police Department
Erie County Sheriff's Office
Fort Shawnee Police Department
Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Greenville Police Department
Grove City Police Department
Guernsey County Sheriff's Office
Johnny Appleseed Ranger Department
Lithopolis Police Department
London Police Department
Lynchburg Police Department
Lyndhurst Police Department
Madeira Police Department
Mansfield Division of Police
Mercer County Sheriff's Office
New London Police Department
Northwest Ohio Developmental Center Police Department
Oberlin Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Payne Police Department
Perry Township Police Department
Pierce Township Police Department
Richland County Sheriff's Office
Springboro Police Department
St. Henry Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Findlay
Sylvania Police Department
Tiffin Police Department
Upper Arlington Police Division

Village of Rockford Police Department
Wadsworth Police Department
Walbridge Police Department
Wapakoneta Police Department

Interaction with LEP Individuals Every Other Month
Castalia Police Department
Coitsville Township Police Department
Coldwater Police Department
Fort Recovery Police Department
Galion Police Department
Grafton Police Department
Green Springs Police Department
Logan Police Department
Medina Township Police Department
Miami University Police Department
Perrysburg Police Department
Port Clinton Police Department
Putnam County Sheriff's Office
Shawnee Township Police Department
Warren Police Department

Interaction with LEP Individuals Every Six Months
Auglaize County Sheriff's Office
Austintown Police Department
Bath Police Department
Bay View Police Department
Blakeslee Police Department
City of Canfield Police Department
Clyde Police Department
Erie County Sheriff's Office
Felicity Police (Clermont Co.) Department
Findlay Police Department
Huron Police Department
Lima Parks and Recreation
London Police Department
Marlboro Police Department
Maumee Police Division
New Washington Police Department
Pandora Police Department
Perrysburg Township Police Department
Republic Police Department
Richland County Sheriff's Office
Rocky Ridge Police Department
Russell's Point Police Department
Sylvania Township Police Department
Village of Batavia Police Department
Wittenberg University Police Department

Interaction with LEP Individuals Rarely, If Ever

Arcanum Police Department
Bay View Police Department
Bellville Police Department
Berlin Heights Police Department
Boston Heights Police Department
Braceville Township Police Department
Buchtel Police Department
Butler Police Department
Covington Police Department
Crestline Police Department
Creston Police Department
Delphos Police Department
Edgerton Police Department
Forest Police Department
Hardin County Sheriff's Office
Marion Township (Allen County) Police Department
Millersport Police Department
Montville Township Police Department
New Middletown Police Department
Northwood Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Athens
Ottoville Police Department
Silver Lake Police Department
South Zanesville Police Department
University of Toledo Police Department
Wellston Police Department
Williams County Sheriff's Office

Appendix C. Agency Willingness to Send Staff to Training

One-day Basic Foreign Language and Cross-cultural Training
Amelia Police Department
Arcanum Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Athens
Bay View Police Department
Bellville Police Department
Berlin Heights Police Department
Botkins Police Department
Braceville Township Police Department
Bucyrus Police Department
Butler Township Police Department
Cairo Police Department
Carey Police Department
Carroll Township Police Department
City of Canfield Police Department
City of Norton Police Department
Delhi Township Police Department
Donnelsville Police Department
Edison Police Department
Erie County Sheriff's Office
Fostoria Police Department
Franklin County DUI Task Force
Fulton County Sheriff's Office
Grafton Police Department
Huron Police Department
Maumee Police Division
Mifflin Township Police Department
Millersport Police Department
Monroe Police Department
New Middletown Police Department
Northwood Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Elyria
Ottawa County Sheriff's Office
Pandora Police Department
Payne Police Department
Perry Township Police Department
Perrysburg Police Department
Putnam County Sheriff's Office
Silver Lake Police Department
South Zanesville Police Department
Springboro Police Department
Springdale Police Department
St. Henry Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Findlay
Village of Rockford Police Department
Wapakoneta Police Department
Wellston Police Department

Two-day Foreign Language and Cross-cultural Training

Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office
Austintown Police Department
Bath Police Department
Bloomdale Police Department
Bluffton Police Department
Boston Heights Police Department
Bowling Green Police Division
Coldwater Police Department
Colerain Police Department
Columbus Grove Police Department
Columbus Metro Parks Police Department
Crestline Police Department
Creston Police Department
Cridersville Police Department
Fort Shawnee Police Department
Galion Police Department
Golf Manor Police Department
Logan County Sheriff's Office
Logan Police Department
London Police Department
Lynchburg Police Department
Mansfield Division of Police
Medina Township Police Department
Miami University Police Department
Monroeville Police Department
New London Police Department
New Washington Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol
Ontario Police Department
Ohio State Highway Patrol - Norwalk
Republic Police Department
Richland County Sheriff's Office
Russells Point Police Department
Sandusky County Sheriff's Office
St. Marys Police Department
Sylvania Police Department
Sylvania Township Police Department
University of Toledo Police Department
Upper Arlington Police Division
Village of Batavia Police Department
Wadsworth Police Department
Warren Police Department
Whitehall Police Department
Wittenberg University Police Department

Five-day In-Depth Foreign Language and Cross-cultural Training

Belmont County Sheriff's Office
Brimfield Police Department
Buchtel Police Department
Butler Police Department
City of Montgomery Police Department
Clinton Township Police Department
Covington Police Department
Defiance County Sheriff's Office
Fremont Police Department
Gahanna Division of Police Department
Greenville Police Department
Grove City Police Department
Guernsey County Sheriff's Office
Hardin County Sheriff's Office
Johnny Appleseed Ranger Department
Kettering Police Department
Madeira Police Department
McComb Police Department
Mentor Police Department
Mercer County Sheriff's Office
Northwest Ohio Developmental Center Police Department
Norton Police Department
Norwood Police Department
Oberlin Police Department
Perry Police Department
Richfield Police Department
Riverside Police Department
Shawnee Hills Police Department
South Bloomfield Division of Police
Strasburg Police Department
Tiffin Police Department
Wauseon Police Department
Westerville Police Department
Willard Police Department
Williams County Sheriff's Office
Wyandot County Sheriff's Office