



# Languages Spoken at Behavioral Health Agencies Serving Children and Youth in Washington State

## Report from the 2020 Behavioral Health Provider Survey

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The Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) of the Washington State Health Care Authority has contracted with the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) to conduct the 2020 Behavioral Health Provider Survey. The survey aims to assess agency characteristics, quality improvement efforts, and behavioral health (BH) clinical staff demographics.

The target population for the survey consists of Department of Health certified, community-based mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment agencies providing publicly funded services in Washington state.

The online survey was conducted from April through September 2020. Agency directors or administrators received a paper introduction letter by first-class mail announcing the project and providing information on how to access the online survey. Non-respondents received email reminders. Non-respondents were also contacted once by telephone to encourage them to complete the survey and to also confirm that the agency was still in operation.

Originally, the sample included 723 agencies since each location is a unit of analysis. However, agencies were given the option to consolidate sites into one survey. The adjusted population size is 578 agencies. Responses were received from 352 agencies resulting in a response rate of 60.9%.

Respondents were asked "How many of your behavioral health clinical staff are bilingual or multi-lingual and are able to provide BH services in a non-English language?"

That question was followed up with "How many of your behavioral health clinical staff speak a language other than English?" The survey listed 46 different languages plus an 'Other' category.

Overall, 213 agencies indicated they provide BH services to children and youth represents 60.5% of the agencies responding to the survey (213/352). *These 213 agencies are the focus of this report.*

## Languages Spoken by BH Clinical Staff

The 213 children and youth serving BH agencies that responded to our survey reported having 8,671 total BH staff and 6,326 BH clinical staff. Of the 6,326 BH clinical staff, 665, or approximately 10.5%, were reported to be bilingual or multi-lingual.

**Table 1. Total number of BH clinical staff who speak the following languages**

Language	Total	% of bilingual	Language	Total	% of bilingual
American Sign Language	8	1.2%	Malay	2	0.3%
Arabic	10	1.5%	Mien	5	0.8%
Chinese	60	9.0%	Native American	3	0.5%
Dutch	1	0.2%	Persian (Farsi)	5	0.8%
Finnish	2	0.3%	Portuguese	2	0.3%
French	11	1.7%	Romanian	2	0.3%
German	13	2.0%	Russian	8	1.2%
Greek	2	0.3%	Somali	6	0.9%
Hebrew	1	0.2%	Spanish	390	58.7%
Hindi	6	0.9%	Swahili	1	0.2%
Ilocano	2	0.3%	Swedish	1	0.2%
Indonesian	1	0.2%	Tagalog	17	2.6%
Italian	1	0.2%	Thai	11	1.7%
Japanese	16	2.4%	Turkish	2	0.3%
Khmer	3	0.5%	Ukrainian	1	0.2%
Korean	14	2.1%	Vietnamese	24	3.6%
Laotian	11	1.7%	Other	59	8.8%

- Spanish is by far the most common language spoken other than English with 390 BH clinical staff.
- Chinese is spoken by 60 out of 665 bilingual BH staff
- Vietnamese (3.6%), Tagalog (2.6%), Japanese (2.4%), Korean (2.1%), German (2.0%), Thai (1.7%), Laotian (1.7%), French (1.7%), Arabic (1.5%), American Sign Language (1.2%), and Russian (1.2%) are the next most common languages spoken.

**Table 2. Responses in the "Other" category\***

1 staff who speaks Cambodian
Afghan, Amharic
Amharic
Blackfeet, Hopi
Bosnian
Bhutanese/Nepali
Cantonese
Farsi
Kannada, Chaozhounese, Hakka, Malay, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Cham, Dzongkha, Hmong, Mien, Nepali, Samoan, Taiwanese, Tigrinya, Toisanese, Urdu
Punjabi
Punjabi, Samoan.

Taiwanese
Tigrinya, Oromo, Amharic
UNKNOWN
We have 1 staff who also speaks Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa, Shona and Sesotho
We have 1 staff who speaks Samoan; 1 staff who speak Patwa, 1 who speaks Cambodian
We have one staff who speaks Cambodian
Yoruba (west Africa, Nigeria) Tibetan
Zambia

\*Languages spelled as provided by respondent. 'Other' languages were not recoded into previous categories.

## Agencies with Bilingual/Multi-lingual Capabilities

Out of the 213 agencies that serve youth or children, 134 indicated they have at least one staff member who is bilingual or multi-lingual and able to provide BH services in a non-English language (62.9%).

**Table 3. Agencies with Bilingual/Multi-lingual Capabilities**

Number of agencies	# of bilingual staff	% of agencies
35	1	26.1%
31	2	23.1%
22	3	16.4%
8	4	6.0%
6	5	4.5%
10	6	7.5%
5	7	3.7%
3	8	2.2%
3	10	2.2%
1	11	0.7%
2	12	1.5%
1	14	0.7%
1	18	0.7%
1	20	0.7%
1	22	0.7%
2	24	1.5%
1	25	0.7%
1	109	0.7%
134	665	100.0%

- Two-thirds of these agencies have 3 or fewer bilingual staff members.
- Thirty-five agencies have 1 bilingual staff member, 31 agencies have 2 bilingual staff members and 22 agencies marked that they have 3 bilingual staff members.

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