



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 offers you 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 at the top of the list. 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 prevalent language practiced. In the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) in 2022, 94.1% of Kentucky residents listed English as their preferred language. In Kentucky, 5.9% of all residents speak a language other than English at home, 2.8% speak Spanish at home, and 2.4% speak English “less than very well.”

A look at the health plan language interpreter requests may provide a better understanding of what the “unknown” category means. In 2022, the top three language service requests for WellCare of Kentucky enrollees were Spanish, Mandarin, and American Sign Language (ASL). When WellCare of Kentucky facilitated telephonic language services for enrollees, Spanish comprised 75% of those requests, with Mandarin (7.2%), and Korean (2.4%) rounding out the top three highest requested languages in 2022.

From 2022 to 2023, comparisons for Kentucky’s top three counties highlight everchanging community language needs.

2022 to 2023: Language Needs Comparison in the Top Three KY Counties

Top Three KY Counties	English		Spanish		Unknown	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
Jefferson	87.59%	93.17%	11.14%	93.77%	0.26%	0.31%
Fayette	92.80%	93.77%	5.60%	5.04%	0.25%	0.32%
Daviess	97.23%	97.76%	0.25%	0.32%	0.19%	0.28%

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 to better identify any emerging needs.

Census data, survey data, and local data sources aid in creating a demographic profile when enrollee-reported data is not sufficient.

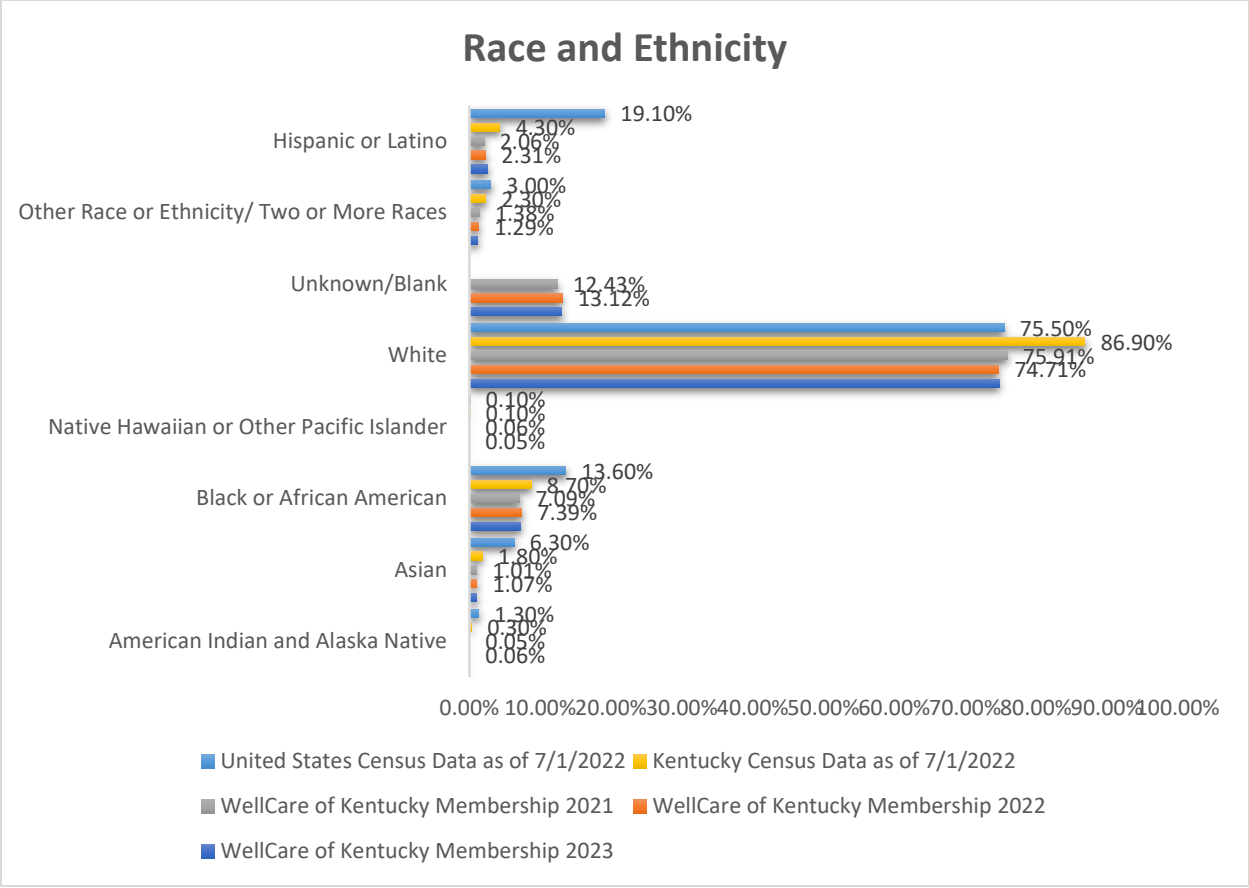
The Table below demonstrates the WellCare of Kentucky Enrollee Race and Ethnicity Composition for 2022:

N=4,505,836

WellCare of Kentucky Enrollee Race and Ethnicity	2022 (f)	%
Race		
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, not Hispanic or Latino	8,080	0.2%
Asian alone, not Hispanic or Latino	73,843	1.6%
Black or African American alone, not Hispanic or Latino	357,764	7.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone, not Hispanic or Latino	3,462	0.1%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	3,664,764	81.3%
Some Other Race alone, not Hispanic or Latino	14,706	0.3%
Two or More Races, not Hispanic or Latino	175,363	3.9%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	207,854	4.6%
Non-Hispanic or Latino	4,297,982	95.4%
Diversity Index		
Racial and Ethnic Diversity Index		32.8%

Source: WellCare Enrollee Demographics Dashboard

The Race and Ethnicity chart below shows our enrollee breakdown with variances within those categories for the past three years. It is our duty to become more aware of working with individuals whose customs, cultures, and practices vary from our own. This information will allow 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 may find out a patient’s language by logging on to our provider portal and downloading your patient’s primary language in their profile. You can access the provider portal by visiting our website at 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).
 - Face-to-face 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.

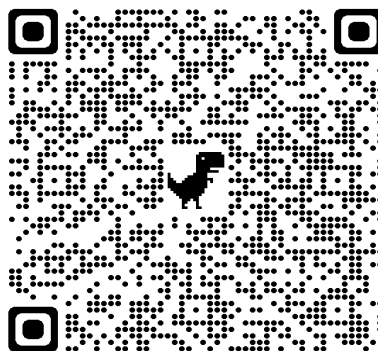
Providers can access language services for medical encounters as follows:

- **Non-urgent.** If an enrollee needs a sign language or foreign language interpreter for a medical appointment, the Customer Service Department arranges for 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 particular area.

Please request interpreter services at least five business days in advance by completing the [Interpreter Request Form](#) and emailing it to InterpreterRequests@wellcare.com.

- **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.

Scan this QR Code for the Requesting Interpreter Services Form:



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

Information is deemed to be critical for obtaining health insurance coverage or access to health care services if the material is required by law or regulation to provide the document to an individual. Obtain language services for an enrollee by contacting WellCare Provider Services. Face-to-face and American Sign Language services should be requested as soon as possible, or at least five business days before the appointment. All providers (Medical, Behavioral, Pharmacy, etc.) can request language services by calling our Provider Customer Contact Center at **1-855-538-0454** (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 can never be 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 not a qualified interpreter immediately available.
- An accompanying adult may interpret if the patient agrees and if is appropriate to the situation.

Providers that use bilingual staff to communicate with patients must ensure that bilingual staff can interpret effectively, accurately, and to and from the language of the patient and 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

[LEP.gov "I Speak" Booklet](#)

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

Link: lep.gov/sites/lep/files/media/document/2022-06/i-speak-booklet.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 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](tel:1-877-389-9457) for more information. Providers can also visit the [Provider Resources](#) page at wellcareky.com/providers to access manuals, forms, and resources.

WellCare's Cultural Competency Program educates providers on the Department's Cultural Competency requirements in an effort 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 Think Cultural Health website at thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/resources. [They can also contact the WellCare of Kentucky Provider Relation's team for additional training resources.](#)

Reference:

American Community survey, Why We Ask: Language Spoken at Home — census.gov. (n.d.). census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/qbyqfact/Language.pdf