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Language Access Index: 2016 Findings

1. Language Access Index Ranking & Scores
2. Comparison Chart: Score, LEP %, Population, Region
3. The 39 Language Access Indicators
4. Average Score by Region

*In this document the abbreviation "LEP" stands for "Limited English Proficiency.

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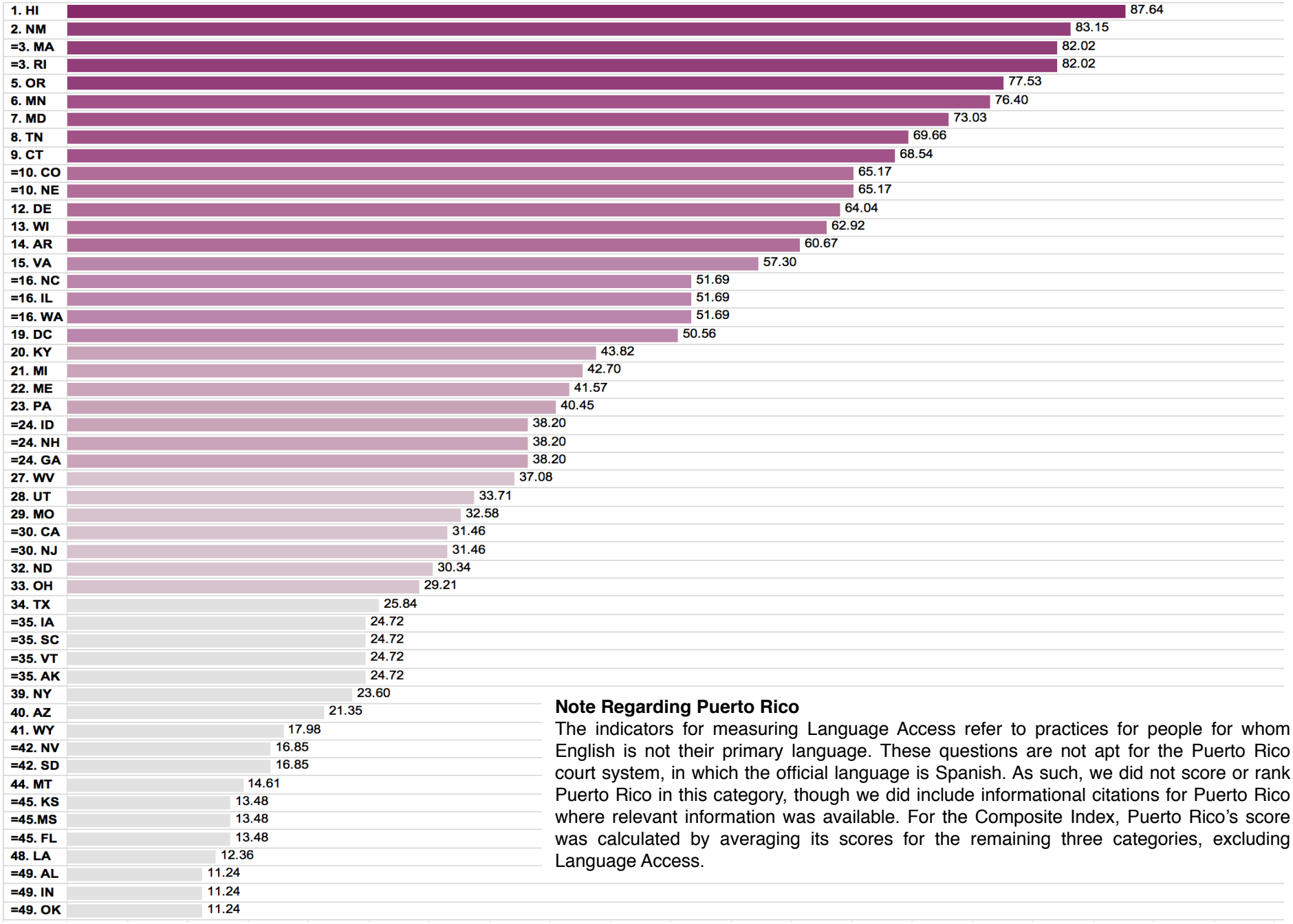
Access for People With Limited English Proficiency (Scores are on a 100-point Scale)



Note Regarding Puerto Rico

The indicators for measuring Language Access refer to practices for people for whom English is not their primary language. These questions are not apt for the Puerto Rico court system, in which the official language is Spanish. As such, we did not score or rank Puerto Rico in this category, though we did include informational citations for Puerto Rico where relevant information was available. For the Composite Index, Puerto Rico's score was calculated by averaging its scores for the remaining three categories, excluding Language Access.

Weights and Trends

Question Number	Question	Index Weight	Issue	Yes
Q1	CERTIFY COURT INTERPRETERS. Rely on an official process to issue a certification of court interpreters?	5	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	43
Q2	REQUIRE USE OF CERTIFIED INTERPRETERS. Require the use of certified court interpreters when they are available?	5	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	33
Q3	TRAIN JUDGES ON WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS. Hold a training event in the past 12 months for judges on how to work with interpreters?	1	Guidance for judges	32
Q4	TRAIN COURT STAFF ON WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS. Hold a training event in the past 12 months for court staff (other than judges) on how to work with interpreters?	1	Guidance for court staff	28
Q5	GIVE NOTICE OF FREE INTERPRETERS ON WEBSITE. On the state judiciary website, notify litigants that interpreting is available in all matters without charge to the litigant?	10	Website	21
Q6	USE OTHER LANGUAGES TO OFFER FREE INTERPRETER ON WEBSITE. Notify litigants on the state judiciary website in languages (other than English) that are commonly spoken in the state's courts that interpreting is available in all matters without charge to the litigant?	5	Website	13
Q7	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS AT CLERKS' COUNTERS. Require that clerks' counters in areas in which a significant number of people speak languages other than English have present during all hours of operation certified interpreters (where available) or bilingual staff, fluent in commonly spoken languages?	5	Communication outside the courtroom	10
Q8	INCLUDE CLERK-COUNTER INTEPRETERS IN LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN. Maintain a Language Access Plan to ensure that in areas in which a significant number of people speak languages other than English, clerk counter staff have resources available to assist with communication with LEP litigants?	10	State plan; Communication outside the courtroom	31
Q9	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS AT SELF-HELP CENTERS. Require that self-help centers in areas in which a significant number of people speak languages other than English have present during all hours of operation either certified interpreters (where available) or bilingual staff fluent in commonly spoken languages?	5	Self Help Centers; Communication outside the courtroom	3
Q10	INCLUDE SELF-HELP CENTERS IN LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN. Maintain a Language Access Plan that describes the resources that court self-help centers are expected to make available to assist with communication with LEP litigants?	1	Self Help Centers; Communication outside the courtroom	13
Q11	TRANSLATE WEBSITE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES. Provide on the state judiciary website "Instructions to self-represented litigants" in languages other than English commonly spoken by litigants?	5	Court Forms	26
Q12	TRANSLATE ON WEBSITE WHEN INTERPRETERS ARE PROVIDED. Explain on the state judiciary website the cases for which the state will provide certified interpreters, in the languages other than English that are commonly spoken by litigants?	1	Website	17
Q13	TRANSLATE ON WEBSITE HOW TO FILE INTERPRETER COMPLAINT. Explain on the state judiciary website in the languages other than English that are commonly spoken by litigants how court users may file a complaint regarding court interpreters (or other language access problems)?	1	Website	10
Q14A1	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, DIVORCE. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in divorce cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	26
Q14A2	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, CUSTODY. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in custody cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	27
Q14A3	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, CHILD SUPPORT. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in child support cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	26
Q14A4	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, SPOUSAL SUPPORT. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in spousal support cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	25
Q14A5	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in domestic violence cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	28

Count

3 43

Weights and Trends

Question Number	Question	Index Weight	Issue	Yes
Q14A6	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, PERMANENT NEGLECT. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in permanent neglect of a child cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	29
Q14A7	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, TEMPORARY NEGLECT. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in temporary neglect of a child cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	28
Q14A8	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, DEBT COLLECTION. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in debt collection cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	21
Q14A9	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, HOUSING. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in landlord/tenant cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	26
Q14A10	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, FORECLOSURE. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in foreclosure cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	24
Q14A11	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, FEDERALLY SUBSIDIZED HOUSING. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in federally subsidized housing cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	22
Q14A12	REQUIRE APPOINTED INTERPRETERS BE CERTIFIED, PUBLIC HOUSING. Require certified interpreters (where available) for LEP parties in public housing cases?	1	Certification of interpreters in the courtroom	22
Q14B1	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, DIVORCE. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in divorce cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	27
Q14B2	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, CUSTODY. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in custody cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	28
Q14B3	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, CHILD SUPPORT. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in child support cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	28
Q14B4	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, SPOUSAL SUPPORT. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in spousal support cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	26
Q14B5	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in domestic violence cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	30
Q14B6	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, PERMANENT NEGLECT. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in permanent neglect of a child cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	30
Q14B7	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, TEMPORARY NEGLECT. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in temporary neglect of a child cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	30
Q14B8	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, DEBT COLLECTION. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in debt collection cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	22
Q14B9	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, HOUSING. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in landlord/tenant cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	26
Q14B10	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, FORECLOSURE. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in foreclosure cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	24
Q14B11	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, FEDERALLY SUBSIDIZED HOUSING. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in federally subsidized housing cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	22

Count
3 43

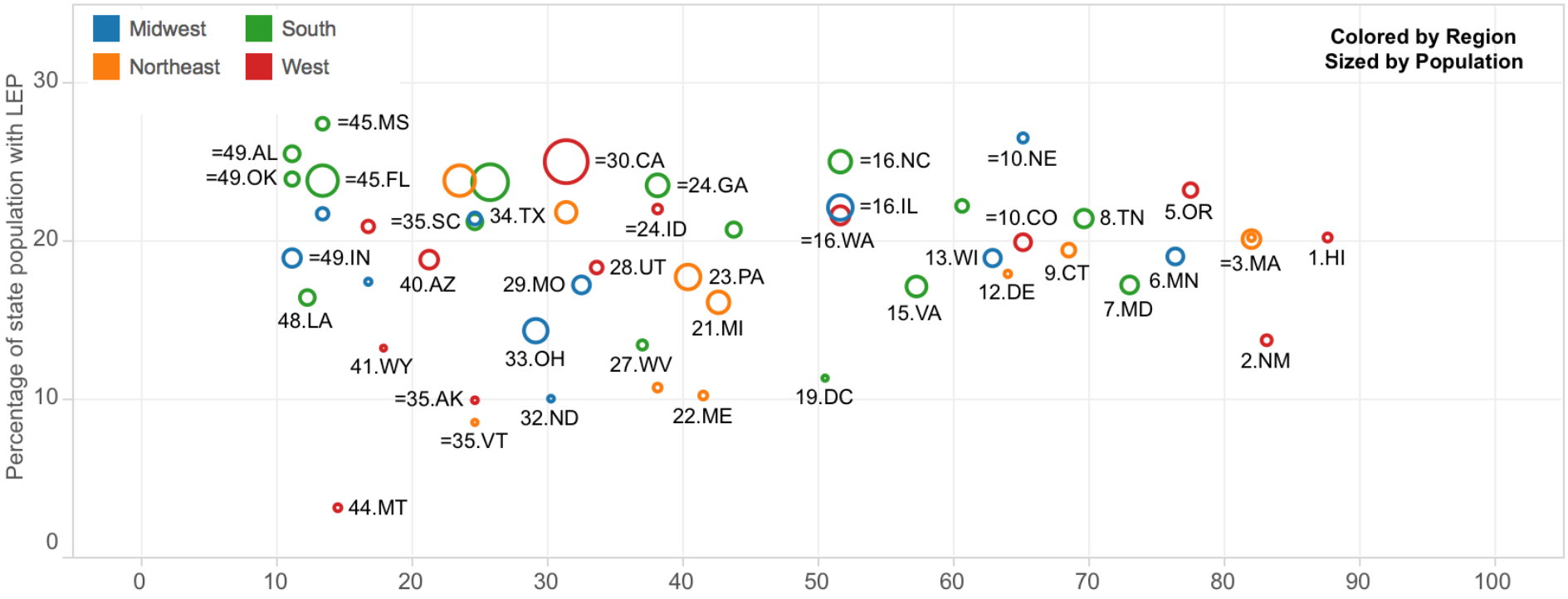
Weights and Trends

Question Number	Question	Index Weight	Issue	Yes
Q14B12	REQUIRE INTERPRETERS BE FREE-OF-CHARGE, PUBLIC HOUSING. Prohibit requiring payment (including fees, costs, or other expenses) for court-provided interpreters in public housing cases?	1	Prohibition on payment; Court services fees	23
Q15	TRANSLATE ON WEBSITE AVAILABILITY OF COURT FORMS. Describe on the state judiciary website, in languages (other than English) commonly spoken by litigants, the availability of self-help forms?	5	Court Forms; Website	23
Q16	POST TRANSLATED COURT FORMS ON WEBSITE. Make electronic forms available on the state judiciary website in languages (other than English) commonly spoken by self-represented litigants?	5	Court Forms; Website	30

Count

3 43

Comparison Chart: Index Score, LEP Population, Population, & Region



Most Prevalent 5-or-10-point Practices

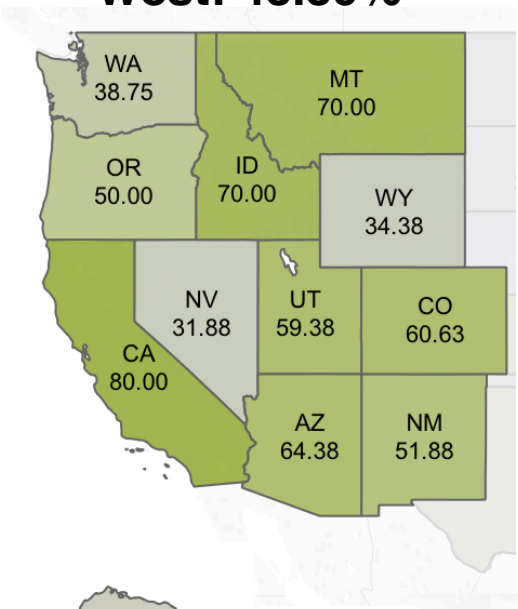
Certify Court Interpreters (43 of 52)
Require Certified Interpreters (33)
Clerk Counters in Language Access Plan (31)
Translate Court Forms on Website (30)

Least Prevalent 5-or-10-point Practices

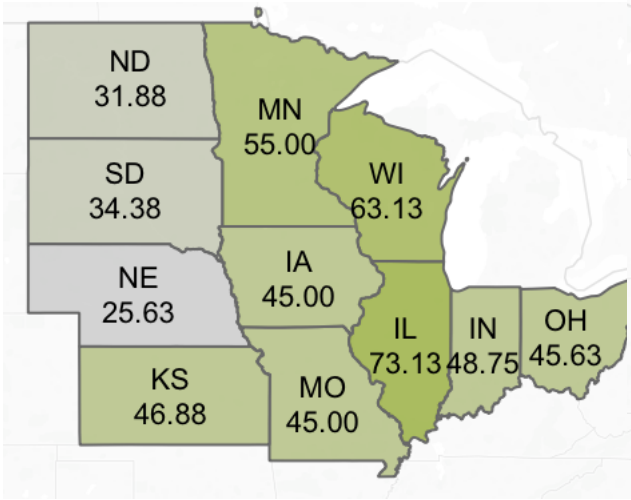
Require Interpreters at Self-Help Centers (3 of 52)
Require Interpreters at Clerk Counters (10)
Translate Online Notice of Free Interpreters (13)
Online Notice of Free Interpreters (21)

Self-Representation Access: Average Score by Region

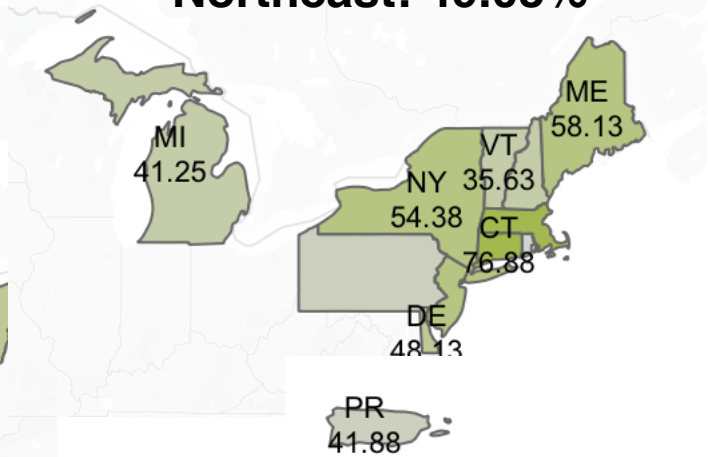
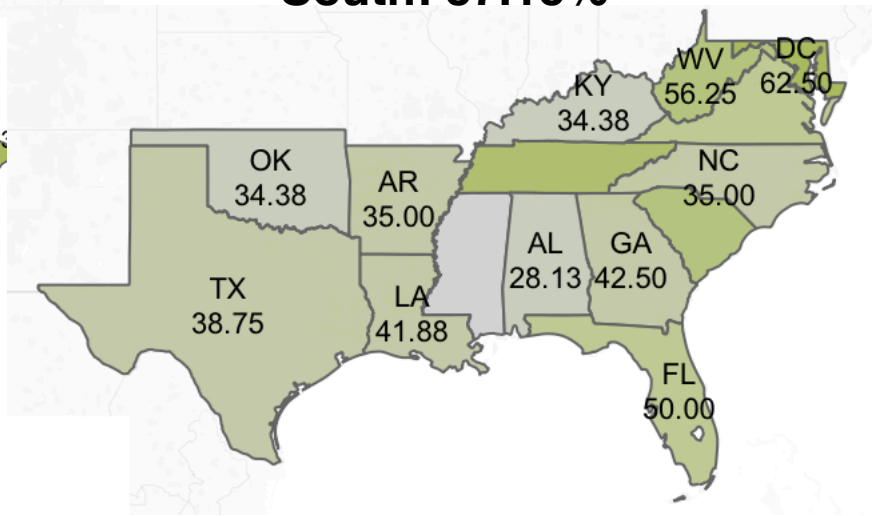
West: 43.39%



Midwest: 37.69%



Northeast: 49.03%



South: 37.15%