THE VALUE OF LANGUAGES

There is perhaps no trait more unique to humanity than language. Language allows humans to exchange information, express complex thoughts and emotions, and collectively solve problems better. Each of the world’s 7,000 languages is its own unique cognitive filter for understanding the world. In the United States today, over 400 languages are used.

KEY FACTS

In 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau released the largest data set yet on speakers of languages other than English, providing a snapshot of multilingualism across the nation:

- 1 in 5 residents speak a language other than English.
- Between 100 and 200 languages are spoken in each of the 15 largest metro areas, which together account for over one-third of the U.S. population.

LANGUAGE USE IN THE U.S.

Upward of 350 languages are spoken in the U.S., although school districts estimate higher numbers. An estimated 40–50 million speakers of languages other than English are Spanish-speakers, making the U.S. the second-largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world, on track to become the largest by 2050.