

UPDATE: STILL LOST IN TRANSLATION

IN NOVEMBER 2006, THE CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE AND THE SCHUYLER CENTER FOR Analysis and Advocacy released “Lost in Translation,” a report which found that while immigrants have been fueling the population growth of communities in nearly every corner of the state, from Suffolk County to Syracuse, the state-run English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program has not come close to keeping pace with the demand. An analysis of new data by the Center for an Urban Future reveals that the problem has gotten even worse in the past year. The new analysis finds:

In 2006, there were more than 1.75 million working-age adults across New York State with only limited English skills, but just 86,948 seats in state-run ESOL programs—serving only 5.0 percent of the estimated need.

- Orange County was home to 22,200 adults with limited English skills in 2006, but just 1,066 residents were enrolled in state funded ESOL programs that year.
- In Dutchess County, state-run ESOL classes served just 5.7 percent of the need. In Erie County, the percent age served was 8.1 percent; in New York City, just 3.4 percent; in Nassau County, 10.6 percent and in West chester, 9.7 percent.

Demand for English-language instruction continues to increase throughout the state.

- Statewide, the 1.75 million working-age adults with limited English proficiency represent a 7.5 percent increase since last year, or 122,889 more adults.
- In Albany County, the number of adults with limited English proficiency increased by 65 percent between 2005 and 2006.
- In Erie County, the number grew by 32 percent; in Nassau County, by 9 percent; in Suffolk County by 8 percent and in New York City by 7 percent.
- In 2006, 242,380 adult New Yorkers spoke no English at all.

Supply of state-funded ESOL hasn't kept pace with growing demand.

- There were 515 more adults enrolled in state-funded ESOL programs in 2006 than 2005 – a rise of just 0.6 percent despite the 7.5 percent increase in the number of adults in need of services.
- Even with this increase in overall adults enrolled, a smaller percentage of those in need were actually receiving ESOL services (5.0 percent in 2006, down from 5.3 percent the prior year).

Despite rising demand, 11 of the 15 largest counties outside of NYC saw a decline in ESOL enrollment.

- Orange County has seen huge spikes in immigration but ESOL enrollment shrunk by 40 percent.
- Erie County experienced a 32 percent increase in adults with limited English proficiency but lost 10 percent of their seats.

ESOL ENROLLMENT AND NEED FOR ESOL SERVICES IN NEW YORK'S 20 LARGEST COUNTIES

County	Enrollment in State-Funded Adult ESOL*, 2005-2006	Speak English "Less Than Very Well," Ages 18-64, 2006**	Percent Served
Albany	295	7,587	3.9
Broome	259	2,594	10.0
Dutchess	553	9,671	5.7
Erie	1,696	21,037	8.1
Monroe	1,929	18,922	10.2
Nassau	9,466	89,256	10.6
New York City***	44,307	1,321,295	3.4
Niagara	88	2,988	2.9
Oneida	427	7,086	6.0
Onondaga	1,215	8,964	13.6
Orange	1,066	22,200	4.8
Rockland	2,498	27,359	9.1
Saratoga	84	1,769	4.7
Suffolk	10,235	86,736	11.8
Ulster	203	4,344	4.7
Westchester	7,586	78,355	9.7
New York State	86,948	1,750,656	5.0

These numbers are based on the location of the agency offering services, not the participant's county of residence. Enrollment in programs administered by NYS Dept of Education: WIA Title II, EPE, WEP and ALE. Source: New York State Department of Education and Adult Literacy Information and Evaluation System (ALIES) data generated by the Literacy Assistance Center. **Source: United States Census, 2006 American Community Survey. *Includes all five boroughs of New York City.*

To read the 2006 "Lost in Translation" report, please click here.