



Native Language Speakers Have Voting Rights!

In Indian Country, our votes impact our community resources, and whether elected officials respect Native people and Native rights. It is essential that people who speak our traditional languages have a say. That is why section 203 of the Voting Rights Act requires several voting areas or “jurisdictions” in Arizona to provide language assistance to speakers of traditional Native languages.

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

Language assistance must allow Native language speakers who are not comfortable speaking and reading in English to effectively participate in voting. Election officials cannot provide less information to Native language speaking voters than they provide to English-speaking voters.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SHOULD INCLUDE:

- ✓ Translation of election information on websites
- ✓ Translation of voter guides and other written materials
- ✓ Translation of voter registration forms and ballots
- ✓ Language assistance by phone and where you go to cast your vote (your “polling location”)

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED FOR SPEAKERS OF THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGES:

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| • Aleut | • Nez Pierce |
| • Apache | • Paiute |
| • Choctaw | • Seminole |
| • Ho-Chunk | • Shoshone |
| • Hopi | • Ute |
| • Iñupiaq | • Yup'ik |
| • Navajo | • Zuni |



NATIVE LANGUAGE RIGHTS WIN IN COURT!

Election officials in one state provided a 100-page election pamphlet to English-speaking voters but, to Native language speakers, only provided a one-page document with the date, time, and location of the election and a notice that language assistance was available. A federal court ruled that this was a violation of section 203 of the Voting Rights Act because Native language speakers were provided less election information than English-speakers.

**FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT NARF STAFF ATTORNEY
ALLISON NESWOOD AT NESWOOD@NARF.ORG**

WHERE IS LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE?

“Covered jurisdictions” must provide language assistance. A federal agency called the Census Bureau determines which voting jurisdictions are covered jurisdictions. To make its determinations the Census Bureau looks at “language-minority” populations in each jurisdiction (or reservation with land in a jurisdiction) and considers two things:

- ✓ **The size of the language minority population that is not proficient in English; and**
- ✓ **Low literacy rates among the language-minority population resulting from discrimination in education**

All covered jurisdictions are listed in federal regulation at [86.F.R. 69611](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-54-chapter-I-subchapter-B-section-696.11).

A NOTE ABOUT “HISTORICALLY UNWRITTEN” NATIVE LANGUAGES:

Many Native languages are historically unwritten, as our cultures are rooted in oral traditions. Under section 203, jurisdictions may not have to provide materials that are **written** in historically unwritten Native languages. However, language assistance must still allow Native-language speakers to **effectively** participate in voting and election officials cannot make less information available for Native-language speakers than they do for English-speakers.

To help Native communities across the county enforce the rights of their members to language assistance, the remainder of this guide lists the voting areas or “jurisdictions” that are required to provide language assistance, by language. Language assistance must allow members of your community who are not comfortable using English to effectively participate in the election and cast an informed vote. If you think your community’s right to language assistance has been violated, reach out NARF staff Attorney, Allison Neswood at neswood@narf.org.

The list of jurisdictions that are required to provide language assistance is updated every five years. Jurisdictions with an asterisk (*) are on the 2022 list but were not on the 2016 list for the specified language.

ALEUT:

Aleut speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Lake and Peninsula Borough, Alaska*

APACHE:

Apache speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Gila County, Arizona
- ✓ Graham County, Arizona
- ✓ Pinal County, Arizona

CHOCTAW:

Choctaw speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ✓ Attala County, Mississippi | ✓ Neshoba County, Mississippi |
| ✓ Carroll County, Mississippi* | ✓ Newton County, Mississippi |
| ✓ Jackson County, Mississippi | ✓ Noxubee County, Mississippi |
| ✓ Jones County Mississippi | ✓ Scott County, Mississippi |
| ✓ Kemper County, Mississippi | ✓ Winston County, Mississippi |
| ✓ Leake County, Mississippi | |

HO-CHUNK:

Ho-Chunk speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ✓ Houston County, Minnesota* | ✓ Black River Falls city, Wisconsin* |
| ✓ Adams town, Wisconsin* | ✓ Brockway town, Wisconsin* |
| ✓ Albion town, Wisconsin* | ✓ Byron town, Wisconsin* |
| ✓ Bangor town, Wisconsin* | ✓ Cranmoor town, Wisconsin* |
| ✓ Birnamwood town, Wisconsin* | ✓ Dellona town, Wisconsin* |

HO-CHUNK (continued):

- ✓ Delton town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Dewhurst town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Eaton town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Elderon town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Ferryville village, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Franzen town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Freeman town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Friendship village, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Germania town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Germantown town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Greenfield town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Holland town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Komensky town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ La Grange town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Lemonweir town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Loen town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Levis town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Lyndon town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Madison city, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Manchester town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Mead town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Millston town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Oakdale town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Onalaska town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Port Edwards town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Preston town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Reid town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Seneca town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Seven Mile Creek town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Stark town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Sumpter town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Whitestown town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Wilson town, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Wittenberg village, Wisconsin*
- ✓ Wittenberg town, Wisconsin*

HOPÍ:

Hopi speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Coconino County, Arizona*
- ✓ Navajo County, Arizona*

IÑUPIAQ:

Iñupiaq speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ North Slope
- ✓ Borough, Alaska
- ✓ Northwest Atlantic Borough, Alaska
- ✓ Yukon-Koyukuk, Alaska

NAVAJO:

Navajo speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Apache County, Arizona
- ✓ Coconino County, Arizona
- ✓ Navajo County, Arizona
- ✓ Bernalillo County, New Mexico
- ✓ Cibola County, New Mexico
- ✓ McKinley County, New Mexico
- ✓ Rio Arriba County, New Mexico
- ✓ Sandoval County, New Mexico
- ✓ San Juan County, New Mexico
- ✓ Socorro County, New Mexico
- ✓ San Juan County, Utah

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NEZ PIERCE:

Nez Pierce speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Clearwater County, Idaho*
- ✓ Lewis County, Idaho*
- ✓ Idaho County, Idaho*
- ✓ Nez Pierce County, Idaho*

PAIUTE:

Paiute speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Coconino County, Arizona*
- ✓ Mohave County, Arizona*

SEMINOLE:

Seminole speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Glades County, Florida*

SHOSHONE:

Shoshone speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Nye County, Nevada*

UTE:

Ute speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ La Plata County, Colorado
- ✓ San Juan County, New Mexico
- ✓ Montezuma County, Colorado
- ✓ San Juan County, Utah

YUP'IK:

Yup'ik speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Aleutians East Borough, Alaska
- ✓ Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska
- ✓ Bethel Census Area, Alaska
- ✓ Kuslivak Census Area, Alaska*
- ✓ Bristol Bay Borough, Alaska
- ✓ Lake and Peninsula Borough, Alaska
- ✓ Dillingham Census Area, Alaska
- ✓ Nome Census Area, Alaska
- ✓ Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska

ZUNI:

Zuni speakers are entitled to language assistance in

- ✓ Apache County, Arizona*
- ✓ Cibola County, New Mexico*
- ✓ Catron County, New Mexico*
- ✓ McKinley County, New Mexico*



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