How to communicate with a public that may have Low Literacy and Limited English Proficiency

- Anne Morris
  - PBS&J
  - Senior Project Manager
  - Community Impact Assessment Conference
  - Phoenix, Arizona       June 7, 2005
What is the regulatory basis?

- EO 12898 Environmental Justice – identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations
- EO 13166 Limited English Proficiency – provide meaningful access to decision-making information
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – prohibit discrimination based on race, color and national origin
What is literacy?

National Literacy Act that defined literacy as:
An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.
The state of literacy in the US

Percentage of adult population reading below 5th grade level

- **30% or greater**
- **20% to 30%**
- **15% to 20%**
- **10% to 15%**

Arizona Level 1 Low Literacy

- Apache County (41%)
- Navajo County (32%)
- Santa Cruz County (39%)
- Avondale City (30%)
- Douglas City (48%)
- Nogales City (49%)
- Sun City (30%)
What low literacy correlations were identified by the National Adult Literacy Survey (1992)

- **Poverty** – 43 percent of adults with Level 1 Literacy skills were living in poverty
- **Welfare** – 75 percent of Food Stamp recipients had Level 1 and Level 2 Literacy
- **Income** – Adults with Level 1 Literacy skills earned a median income that was approximately 35 percent of those with Level 5 Literacy
- **Employment Status** – Adults with Level 1 Literacy skills worked an average of 19 weeks per year, compared to 44 weeks per year for those with Level 5 Literacy skills.

- **Crime** – 70 percent of those in penal institutions had Level 1 and Level 2 Literacy skills.

These are also correlations for limited English proficiency.
The strongest correlation to low literacy and limited English proficiency is INCOME.
What percent are low-income?

2000 U.S. Census
How many are low-income?

- 15.4 million total
- 8.1 million white (nh)
- 7.8 million black
- 3.7 million hispanic
- 1.3 million asian/pi
- 0.6 million ai/al
- Other

2000 U.S. Census
How can you access reliable low literacy numbers/percentages at sub-state levels?

- National Institute for Literacy’s publication *The State of Literacy in America: Estimates at the Local, State and National Levels* (1998) provides information by county and municipalities over 5,000

  [http://www.nifl.gov/reders/reder.htm](http://www.nifl.gov/reders/reder.htm)
30% of adults (16 years old and older) read below 5th grade level

Red 30%+ (49)
Orange 20%-30% (28)
Yellow 15%-20% (2)
Gray not available (3)

National Institute for Literacy (1998)
Where do you find literacy indicators/surrogates?

- US Census
- US DOE National Center for Education Statistics
- Great Schools
- individual state “Report Cards”
- Modern Language Association
- individual state “Office of Research and Statistics”
- US DOA Food Stamp Program
- US DHUD Section 8 Housing
- US DHUD Public and Indian Housing
- Individual county and MPO initiatives
US Census

- www.census.gov
- race and ethnicity
- educational attainment
- below poverty families and individuals
- occupied units with zero vehicles
- those that speak a language other than English at home
- time leaving home to go to work for workers 16+ years
Persons 25 years old and older with less than 9 years of school

Percent of persons below poverty level

Percent of occupied housing units with no vehicles available

Ability to comprehend written material

Ability to own a computer or subscribe to a newspaper

Ability to get to a meeting

2000 U.S. Census
US DOE National Center for Education Statistics

  - race and ethnicity of students
  - students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals programs
  - migrant students

- Talk to the principal of the elementary schools in your project area about the literacy level of the parents
652 Students
548 Low-income
84.0 %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name: Alta Vista Elementary School</th>
<th>District Name: Washington Elementary District</th>
<th>County: Maricopa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Address: 8710 N 31st Ave Phoenix, AZ 85051-3998</td>
<td>Physical Address: 8710 N 31st Ave Phoenix, AZ 85051-3998</td>
<td>Phone: (602) 347-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCES District ID: 0409060</td>
<td>NCES School ID: 040906000916</td>
<td>State District ID: 070406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Characteristics**

- **Grade Span:** (grades KG - 6)
- **Total Students:** 652
- **Classroom Teachers (FTE):** 34.5
- **Student/Teacher Ratio:** 18.9
- **Type:** Regular school
- **Locale/Code:** Large Central City / 1
- **Status:** Currently operational
- **Charter:** no  **Magnet:** N/A  **Title I School:** yes  **Title I School-Wide Program:** yes

**Enrollment Characteristics**

- **Enrollment by Grade:**
  - KG: 81
  - 1: 84
  - 2: 88
  - 3: 90
  - 4: 95
  - 5: 92
  - 6: 88

- **Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity:**
  - **Amer Ind/Alaskan:** 31
  - **Asian:** 26
  - **Black:** 90
  - **Hispanic:** 228
  - **White:** 277

- **Enrollment by Gender:**
  - **Male:** 344
  - **Female:** 308
  - **Unknown:** 0

**Free lunch eligible:** 443  **Reduced-price lunch eligible:** 105  **Migrant Students:** 0
Great Schools

- www.GreatSchools.net
  - race and ethnicity of students
  - students eligible for Free and Reduced Meals Programs
  - limited English proficiency students
  - reading scores
  - detailed information on CA, AZ, TX, FL and WA schools

**Students**

**Student Ethnicity 2002-2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>This School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Economic Level 2003-2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of students participating in free or reduced price lunch</th>
<th>This School</th>
<th>State Average (Grades K-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance and Enrollment**

**Attendance and Enrollment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>This School</th>
<th>State Average (Grades K-6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance rate</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion rate</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers into this school</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students registered under open enrollment policy</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual State’s “report card”

- Each state is required to provide information on each public school and their students
Modern Language Association

- www.mla.org
- top 30 languages spoken by number of speakers in each county and zip code
- age of speakers for each of the top 30 languages spoken in each county and zip code
Spanish speakers

By county

By zip code
Individual State Agencies

- State agency that supplies research and statistics – medicaid, food stamp, supplementary Social Security and temporary assistance for needy families recipients by census tracts
Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO identified all single-family units assessed at $25,000 or less.
US DHUD Section 8 Housing

  - HUD apartment complexes that take Section 8 vouchers by county and city

- http://hud.esri.com/egis/
  - Public and Indian Housing
    - Maps with locations and information about all HUD apartment complexes
### Subsidized Apartment Search

#### Results

The following properties meet your search criteria:

- **City:** PHOENIX  
  **State:** ARIZONA

Found 59 entries, displaying records 1 - 20 of 59.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of bedrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BILTMORE PROPERTIES INC  
Phone: (602) 997-0013  
bpi@primenet.com | BROADWAY HOUSE  
2201-A E BROADWAY RD  
PHOENIX, AZ 85040-2663  
Phone: 6022766430 | Disabled  | x  
| | | | x |
| ManSerMar, Inc.  
Phone: (678) 330-2000 | BROADWAY TERRACE  
12815 N 28TH DR  
PHOENIX, AZ 85029-1313  
Phone: 6029930701 | Elderly  |  |
| Mercy Services Corporation  
Phone: 602-952-9525 | CAMELOT CASITAS  
1907 East Virginia  
PHOENIX, AZ 85006-1456  
Phone: 602-952-9525 | Disabled  | x  |
| DUNALP & MAGEE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, INC.  
Phone: (602)244-1006 | CASA BLANCA APARTMENTS  
2520 W MCLELLAN BLVD  
PHOENIX, AZ 85017-1323  
Phone: 6022424782 | Family  | x  
| TIIMPO INC  
Phone: (602) 252-0482 | CASA DE PRIMAVERA  
1617 N 45TH AVE  
PHOENIX, AZ 85035-4219  
Phone: 6022696245 | Elderly  |  |

[Information by State]  
[Print version]  
[Email this to a friend]
HUD projects

Multifamily, Elderly/Disabled and IRS Low Income Properties

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
USDA Food Stamps

- www.fns.usda.gov/cga/Contacts/FieldOffices/
- list of businesses and locations that take Food Stamps by county
Suggested Contacts

- Meet with representatives of
  - the county adult and community education agency
  - English as a Second Language agency
  - Social Services agency
  - Employment Security agency representatives
Where do you find local information

- county and city calendar of local events
- Chamber of Commerce membership list
- College international student associations
- military base Public Information Officer
- Yellow pages
  - Ministerial association
  - non-English faith-based services
  - ethnic restaurants
  - attorneys that provide immigration, green card and visa services
Surf the web

- http://www.shgresources.com/
  list radio stations, newspapers and television stations by city by type

- http://www.codetalk.fed.us/nationalmap.html
  list of all Native American tribes

- www.mobilehomeparkstore.com/list.htm
  list of manufactured home communities by city
What special approaches need to be used to achieve outreach with low literacy and limited English proficiency populations?
Look for clues that people can’t read English or another language.
Clues to look and listen for

- “I’ll sign us all in”
- “I left my glasses at home”
- “I need to take the comment sheet home and think about the project then I’ll mail it back”
- “I want to tell you what I think”
- “Tell me how this will affect me”
Recognize a sign-in sheet can be a barrier
Explain the project to small groups
Train staff members and use residents from the neighborhood
Use neighbors to talk to neighbors

Jumetta Posey – Neighborhood Solutions
Talk with the elders about history
Provide chairs, tables and food for the meetings
Ask neighbors to bring neighbors
Have a mobile set up ready with cookies and drinks
Turn a meeting into a social occasion
Be aware that public meetings may not even be a part of their culture and government may have a negative connotation
Use public involvement games
Have meetings in schools
Have meetings for individual groups
What are the best ways and locations to contact and interact with low literacy and limited English proficiency populations
Talk to local formal and informal leaders
Get local mayors to help
Talk to business owners and store managers
Talk with elementary principals
Form alliances with organizations already in the community
Visit a senior center
Get police to hand out brochures
Meet them in their churches
Piggyback on a volunteer fire station supper
Attend scheduled and special events, fairs and sporting activities
Piggyback on a PTA/PTO meeting
Piggyback on planned social events
Piggyback at a local fair
Identify grocery stores and discount stores
Go to grocery stores that take food stamps
Set up in Wal-Mart
Go to the local breakfast hangout
Visit the laundromat
Use word of mouth, radio, television, newspapers, magnets and the movies
Use targeted newspapers
Use radio call-in shows
Use local TV
Use local cable TV
Conduct one-on-one interviews
Sit with a bus driver
Use bilingual teams
Talk on their front steps
Visit the local service station
Sit in their living room
Stop at the playground
Talk by the side of the road
Visit their roadside stand
Talk in their garden
Talk on a front porch
Involve school students
Use 3rd graders to test surveys
Use 5th graders to bring back information from parents
Use 9th graders for long-range planning
Let the public choose the time, place and size of the meeting
Meet after Wednesday night prayer meetings
Have Spanish only meetings
Divide large meetings into small groups
Use interpreters and translated materials
Explain noise using blenders
Use headphones
Use native interpreters
Play public involvement games
Play Strings and Ribbons with a church group

Volusia County MPO
Play Strings and Ribbons with a visually handicapped group
Communicate the result of Transopoly with sign language
Use a variety of visual techniques
Use a colored T-shirt for project team visibility
Use a project T-shirt and ID badge for staff safety
Use a continuous loop video
Use symbols and let them write on your maps
Use color for the alternatives
Use typical section renderings
Use before and after photos
Use visualizations
Bottom line - We must establish communication at their level
Thank you