

# What is a Language Barrier?

It is professional jargon used to describe the difficulties people have when they need to communicate with people or systems that do not speak their language.



Illustration by K. A. Hawk for Texas Mutual Insurance Company

# Language Barrier Issues

- Unlike many countries, U.S. public education is designed for people who are monolingual in English. Therefore, most of the people born in the U.S. only speak English.
- There are social attitudes that all people should only speak English.
- Language is an essential aspect of one's culture.

# Misconceptions about LEP Individuals

- **They don't understand anything that has been said**  
For some LEP individuals it is easier to understand English than speak it. Also, LEP individuals are often highly aware of other people's body language.
- **They don't have any education**  
LEP individuals may have had access to all levels of education in their country of origin.
- **They don't care about learning English**  
Economic challenges are one of the main reasons that LEP individuals are prevented from learning English.
- **They are asking for special treatment**  
LEP individuals who are DV and/or SA survivors have the right to be treated fairly. They are victims who are facing specific barriers and issues that are complicated by language barriers.