



## **Basic court documents to be translated**

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The price: 20 cents per word. The project: 30,000 words. The total expenses: \$25,669.50

The goal: Translate civil and self-represented litigant forms into Spanish, Vietnamese and Arabic to help eliminate language barriers new Americans face when dealing with Nebraska's court system.

The project, Nebraska Efforts to Ensure Equal Access to Justice, will help the court system serve those who don't speak English — or those who speak limited English — in civil and self-represented court issues, said Liz Neeley, a project organizer.

Before this project, perhaps a dozen court documents were translated into Spanish, said Neeley, project director for the Minority and Justice Implementation Committee of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center in Lincoln.

And those existing documents predate a requirement that translators be certified, so quality was inconsistent. They also were available only in counties that had requested a translation, she said.

The newly translated documents — including simple divorce forms (23), requests for child support forms (20), and name changing forms — should be available statewide early next year, Neeley said.

The forms will be made available through the courts and on the Nebraska Judicial Branch Web site at [www.supremecourt.ne.gov](http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov).

Robert Roos, a Nebraska Supreme Court certified interpreter and president of Nebraska Association of Translators and Interpreters, interprets Spanish and is one of the project's certified translators.

"It should have been done sooner," he said. "But I think it took people a while to realize it."

Starting next month, three teams of certified court interpreters will provide translations: a Spanish team, Vietnamese team and Arabic team.

Out-of-state translators will handle the Vietnamese and Arabic translations because Nebraska doesn't have certified translators for those languages.

With help from groups such as the Woods Charitable Fund Inc., which donated \$25,000 to this project, Neeley said, Nebraska will be ahead of the curve in providing quality translated court documents.

The Woods fund has given money to many translation initiatives, said Executive Director Pam Baker. This grant will help new Americans navigate the court system.

"It just makes sense to have this available, and a relative small donation can help," Baker said.

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