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# **FORMS AND LEGAL EDUCATION MATERIALS FOR LEP COURT-USERS**

*Report and Recommendations for the Translation and Distribution of  
Legal Materials for Hmong, Somali and Spanish Speaking Minnesotans*

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Disclaimer

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# Introduction

The following report was developed by the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition to assist the Minnesota Judicial Branch in its efforts to increase and improve legal education materials and court forms available to Minnesotans with Limited English Proficiency. In particular, the findings and recommendations are intended to guide the Judicial Branch in its decisions about the types of materials to translate and means of distributing them.

The recommendations were arrived at by researching the needs of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) community through surveys and other methods between June and December 2007, as detailed in the report below. The specific LEP groups studied include those whose primary languages are Hmong, Somali, and Spanish.

## **About the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition**

The Minnesota Legal Services Coalition (MLSC) is an association of seven Minnesota regional legal services programs that provide civil legal services to low-income Minnesotans. MLSC was formed in 1981 to enhance cooperation and coordination between the programs, and provides an array of support services to accomplish this.

Relevant to the aims of the Judicial Branch, MLSC's State Support office engages in numerous community legal education efforts. MLSC creates legal education booklets and other materials, maintains a website for legal information and free legal assistance, and coordinates a community legal education workgroup, consisting of representatives from each of the seven programs that comprise the Coalition.

## **Components of the Research**

The primary means of gathering the data set out below was through a survey distributed to Hmong, Somali, and Spanish speakers with limited English proficiency. The survey, described in detail below, was distributed in Minneapolis and St. Paul to legal services offices, courthouse self-help centers, and community centers serving the target populations.

Another survey was created and distributed online to legal services casehandlers statewide. The casehandler survey, also described below, sought the perspective of casehandlers who serve a significant number of LEP clients.

Court pro se assistance staff and other legal services programs were also queried through two listservs. The “Self-Help Center Support Mailing List” includes primarily persons employed by courthouse Pro Se or Self-Help Centers. The “LawHelp” listserv includes website administrators within legal services programs that use the LawHelp platform for a public statewide website.

Finally, MLSC analyzed the use of resources in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish posted on its website for low-income Minnesotans with civil legal needs – LawHelpMN.org. Use of those resources was compared with use of the English versions of the same resources.

### **Components of the Report**

The Findings section below sets out the research results in detail, and includes tables of specific results. The Recommendations summarize the findings of MLSC’s research and provide specific suggestions for the Minnesota Judicial Branch regarding its efforts to enhance its services to LEP court-users. Appendices are also provided to include specific attachments.

# Findings

## I. ABOUT THE SURVEYS

Two surveys were used to gather information about the best ways to reach the Limited English Proficient (LEP) community with translated legal information resources, to determine whether translated court forms would be useful to the community, and to determine whether video is a viable format for providing legal information resources to these communities.

### A. LEP Community Survey

The LEP community survey was translated into Hmong, Somali, and Spanish. The people surveyed fell into three groups: (1) legal services clients and applicants, (2) court-users (surveyed at the Hennepin County Self-Help Center), and (3) other LEP individuals (surveyed at community centers with Hmong and Somali speaking patrons).

The organizations at which surveys were administered or distributed are listed below, with the exception of those that did not return any completed surveys.

- Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis – Immigration Unit
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services – Refugee, Immigrant and Migrant Services
- Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
- Hennepin County Self-Help Center
- Hennepin County Self-Help Center – Family Justice Center
- Hmong Cultural Center
- Lao Family Community of Minnesota
- Mt. Airy Community Center

In all, 152 persons answered the survey. The results below, however, focus on the answers provided by the 92 respondents whose answers indicated that they have Limited English Proficiency. The Limited English Proficiency Federal Interagency Website, [www.LEP.gov](http://www.LEP.gov), defines LEP individuals as follows:

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English Proficient, or “LEP.”<sup>1</sup>

Using the above definition and an approach used by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries<sup>2</sup> to ascertain through a survey whether an individual is LEP, the survey asked respondents what their first language is and how well they speak, understand, read, and write English. Those whose first language is other than English, and who speak, understand, read, or write English “not well” or “not at all” are considered LEP for purposes of this survey, and their responses are included in the data below. Those whose first language is English and/or who speak, understand, read, and write English “well” or “very well” are not considered LEP for purposes of this report, and their responses are not included in the results below (unless otherwise noted).

The survey and its translated versions are attached as Appendices A through D.

## **B. Legal Services Provider Survey**

The second survey was created electronically and submitted by electronic mail to all casehandlers from MLSC programs. These programs include the following:

- Anishinabe Legal Services
- Central Minnesota Legal Services
- Judicare of Anoka County
- Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota
- Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota
- Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services

The survey asked respondents to answer questions similar to those posed to LEP individuals. The primary difference between the surveys is that the casehandlers were asked to provide their observations and beliefs about their LEP clients.

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<sup>1</sup> “Who is a Limited English Proficient (LEP) individual?” Available at: <http://www/lep.gov/faq.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Limited English Proficiency Report and Language Assistance Plan,” Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Socioeconomic Research and Development Section. Available at: <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/pdfs/education/limitedlanguagegareport.pdf> on page 51.

Casehandlers were asked to provide this information with respect to Hmong, Somali, and/or Spanish speaking LEP clients, to the extent that one or more of those groups made up at least ten percent of their LEP clients. If this was true of more than one group, they were asked to answer the questions for each applicable LEP group.

In all, 65 legal services providers answered the survey. Ten of those respondents indicated that none of the three LEP groups make up 10% of their LEP clients. However, 33 of the remaining 55 respondents selected more than one LEP category, including 13 who selected each of the three categories. As a result, there were 101 aggregated responses as follows:

- Hmong: 22
- Somali: 36
- Spanish: 43

The advocate survey is attached as Appendix E.

### **C. National Listservs**

Questions were also submitted to the “Self-Help Center Support” and “LawHelp” listservs, described in the introduction above. The self-help center list-members were asked whether it is helpful to have translated court forms online, preferred formats for translated forms, and for data supporting any answers. The LawHelp list-members were asked about where LEP court-users are best reached, the best format for legal education materials, whether translated court forms are a good use of resources, and how they should be formatted. LawHelp members were also asked whether their state had engaged in a study on LEP court-users and legal materials.

The results from these queries were limited. Only a few people responded and none had done a survey of this nature. Some who responded did so only to indicate an interest in this study. A few others provided some useful information based on their experiences. Information germane to the topics addressed below is included in footnotes. Unless otherwise noted, the information is based on individual experience and anecdote rather than formal study, and should be considered in that light.

## II. SURVEY RESULTS

The results below are grouped into three categories: how best to reach LEP communities with translated materials, comparing the efficacy of print and video formats, and regarding translated court forms.

**All of the numbers provided in the tables are percentages, unless otherwise noted.**

### A. Distributing Translated Materials to LEP Communities

The first set of survey results concerns the most effective way of distributing legal education materials and court forms to LEP communities, as well as the most effective way of informing LEP communities about the existence of the materials. LEP individuals were asked four questions on this topic and casehandlers were asked one.

#### SURVEY QUESTIONS

First, LEP individuals were asked how often they use the Internet. The objective was to determine how effective the Internet is for LEP persons for distributing and publicizing legal education materials and court forms.

*How often do you use the Internet?<sup>3</sup>*

	At least once per day	1-2 times per week	Less often	Never
All LEP	4	14	7	75
Hmong	6	15	3	76
Somali	11	21	16	53
Spanish	0	13	5	83

Similarly, legal services providers were asked to estimate how frequently their clients use the Internet.

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<sup>3</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the four options.

*How many of your [Hmong/Somali/Spanish] speaking clients regularly use the Internet?<sup>4</sup>*

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Don't Know
All LEP	38	8	10	0	44
Hmong	50	6	0	0	44
Somali	42	6	12	0	39
Spanish	23	12	25	0	50

LEP individuals were next asked where they used the Internet. Only 21 LEP survey-respondents answered this question, which is consistent with the high percentage of respondents who indicated they never use the Internet.

*Where do you use the Internet?<sup>5</sup>*

	Home	Library	Work	Community Center	Café	Other
All LEP	48	33	14	14	10	5
Hmong	75	38	13	0	25	13 <sup>6</sup>
Somali	25	38	13	25	0	0
Spanish	33	33	17	17	0	0

The final two questions in this group were also posed to LEP persons. They were designed to determine the best places to make translated legal education materials and court forms available to LEP communities.

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<sup>4</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the five options.

<sup>5</sup> The numbers represent the percentage of those who chose each response among those who answered the question. Since survey-takers were allowed to provide more than one answer to this question, the aggregate percentages total more than 100 percent.

<sup>6</sup> One answer was provided in the *Other* category: "college."

*If you had a legal problem, where would you go to learn about your rights in your first language?<sup>7</sup>*

	Legal Aid / Law Office	Community Center / Advocate	Courthouse	Family / Friend	Library	Internet
All LEP	55	31	27	26	2	2
Hmong	44	25	31	44	3	0
Somali	13	7	47	20	7	7
Spanish	78	45	18	13	0	3

*If you need to file a form in court to get help with your legal problem, where would you get the form?<sup>8</sup>*

	Legal Aid / Law Office	Courthouse	Community Center	Internet	Library	I don't know	Other
All LEP	52	30	15	6	3	26	2
Hmong	42	24	18	6	3	39	0
Somali	12	65	0	0	6	18	0
Spanish	77	21	18	8	3	18	5 <sup>9</sup>

## ANALYSIS

The results from the Internet survey question strongly indicate that Internet usage among LEP individuals is quite limited. Seventy-five percent of those polled indicated that they never use the Internet, and only four percent use it daily. The numbers provided by casehandlers are similar. Among those who did not indicate that they do not know how often their LEP clients use the Internet, 68 percent believed that zero to 25 percent of their LEP clients regularly go online.

When LEP survey-takers are compared against the 60 non-LEP survey-takers not included in the tables above, LEP status appears to be a strong indicator of reduced Internet use. The non-LEP group, 88 percent of which is comprised of persons whose

<sup>7</sup> The numbers represent the percentage of those who chose each response among those who answered the question. Since survey-takers were allowed to provide more than one answer to this question, the aggregate percentages total more than 100 percent.

<sup>8</sup> The numbers represent the percentage of those who chose each response among those who answered the question. Since survey-takers were allowed to provide more than one answer to this question, the aggregate percentages total more than 100 percent.

<sup>9</sup> Two answers were provided in the *Other* category: "my wife" and "friend."

first language is other than English, includes only 31 percent who never use the Internet. In fact, 49 percent of the non-LEP group use the Internet at least one to two times weekly.

An interesting discrepancy is that LEP persons whose first language is Somali are significantly more likely to be Internet users. Only 53 percent (versus 75 percent overall) never use the Internet, and 32 percent use it at least once or twice weekly. This result is consistent with the results of a Wilder Foundation telephone survey of persons residing in Minneapolis or St. Paul and who were born outside the United States. That survey found that Somali persons were far more likely to use the Internet as a source of news than the other three ethnic groups surveyed – Hmong, Russian, and Hispanic/Latino.<sup>10</sup>

The two questions that asked where LEP persons would go to learn about their legal rights and acquire court forms also support the conclusion that the Internet is not the best way to reach these groups. Although respondents could select more than one answer, only two percent said they would go online to learn about their legal rights in their first language, and only six percent said they would do the same to acquire court forms.<sup>11</sup> Instead, legal aid and other law offices, courthouses, and community centers were the places most LEP persons would go to obtain this information.

The value of the data that indicates that legal aid offices and courthouses would be likely places for LEP individuals to acquire legal information may be viewed with some doubt, since most of those surveyed were either at a legal services office or a self-help center. This would indicate an inclination among the survey group to use these services, which may not be present among the larger community. However, even when LEP respondents who answered the survey at a legal services office or self-help center are filtered out of the results, strong preferences for going to legal aid or a law office for legal information and forms are still present. Fifty-seven percent of the filtered respondents would go to legal aid or a law office for court forms, up from 52 percent of the unfiltered results. Forty-six percent of the filtered respondents would go to legal aid or a law office for legal information in their own language, down only slightly from 55 percent overall. The

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<sup>10</sup> "Speaking for Themselves: A survey of Hispanic, Hmong, Russian, and Somali immigrants in Minneapolis-Saint Paul." Wilder Foundation. November 2000. Available at: <http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=1151>.

<sup>11</sup> Somewhat relatedly, the director of California's ACCESS (self-help) Center indicated in a response to the query sent to the Self-Help Center Support Mailing List that use of the Spanish language self-help website has been low. The most recent numbers, from March 2007, indicate that the Spanish website had about four percent of the page views of its English counterpart.

results for the courthouse are mixed. Thirty-six percent of the filtered respondents would go to a courthouse for forms, up from 27 percent overall. However, only 13 percent of the filtered group indicated that they would go to the courthouse for native language legal information, down from 30 percent overall.

Libraries may be another viable place for distribution of, and publicity for, legal education materials and court forms, because libraries were the place that most LEP respondents used the Internet other than the home. However, as indicated above, the number of LEP respondents who go online is quite low. Further, very few LEP persons indicated that they would go to a library for court forms or native language legal resources.<sup>12</sup>

### **B. Video versus Print Materials**

The next group of questions was designed to determine whether video is a viable or even preferable format for educating legal consumers about their rights and obligations. LEP persons and legal services casehandlers were each asked two questions on this topic.

#### SURVEY QUESTIONS

First, LEP individuals were asked about their reading ability in their first language.

*How well do you read in your first language?<sup>13</sup>*

	Very well	Well	Not Well	Not at all
All LEP	40	27	17	20
Hmong	27	12	33	33
Somali	47	11	16	26
Spanish	49	46	5	5

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<sup>12</sup> In a response to MLSC’s query of other legal services programs, the LITC Coordinator at South Carolina Legal Services, indicated that churches are another viable option for distributing legal education materials among their LEP communities.

<sup>13</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the four options. The percentages for the “All LEP,” “Hmong,” and “Spanish” categories total more than 100 because four of the 92 survey-takers checked more than one box. One chose “well” and “not well,” one chose “very well” and “well,” and two chose “not well” and “not at all.”

Legal services casehandlers were also asked to estimate how many of their LEP clients read in their native languages.

*In your estimation, how many of your [Hmong/Somali/Spanish] speaking clients read in [Hmong/Somali/Spanish]?<sup>14</sup>*

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Don't Know
All LEP	16	21	23	18	22
Hmong	28	33	11	6	22
Somali	21	27	15	6	30
Spanish	0	4	42	42	12

LEP individuals were next asked whether they would learn more from a video than print materials. The objective was to determine whether, given high rates of illiteracy among Hmong and Somali speakers in their native languages, video is a preferable format for legal education materials.

*In your first language, do you learn more from reading about your legal rights or watching a video?<sup>15</sup>*

	I learn more from reading	I learn more from a video	About the same
All LEP	38	33	30
Hmong	39	36	25
Somali	31	44	25
Spanish	38	27	35

Similarly, casehandlers were asked which format would be better for educating their clients.

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<sup>14</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the five options.

<sup>15</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the three options.

*In your estimation, would your [Hmong/Somali/Spanish] speaking clients learn more from a fact sheet in their primary language or from watching a video in their primary language?<sup>16</sup>*

	Fact Sheet	Video
All LEP	18	82
Hmong	0	100
Somali	6	94
Spanish	46	54

## ANALYSIS

The results indicate that native language reading ability is quite low for Hmong speakers, with 66 percent reading not well or not at all in Hmong. The number of Somali speakers who do not read in their native language is also high, with 42 percent reading not well or not at all. The trend does not follow for Spanish speakers; only ten percent read not well or not at all in their native language.

Results from the legal services casehandlers are generally consistent with the notion that Hmong clients are the least likely to read in their native language, followed by Somali clients, with Spanish clients far more likely to read in Spanish. There is some discrepancy between the two sets of results, however, as casehandlers seem to slightly underestimate the number of their LEP clients who don't read in their native language. Still, by both accounts there are a high percentage of Hmong speakers who do not read Hmong well or at all. The percentage of Somali speakers who fall into that category is smaller but still significant. Spanish speakers, by both accounts, are more likely to read in Spanish.

Given the low rates of native language literacy for Hmong and Somali speakers, one would predict that many in these groups would expect to learn more from a video than print material. Although the results do not overwhelmingly favor videos as a legal education format, there are substantial percentages in each group who favor videos. However, the results do not correspond precisely with the percentage of those unable to read in their native languages. For instance, the percentages of respondents who

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<sup>16</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the two options.

indicated that they learn more from reading than a video are roughly equivalent between the three language groups.

Interestingly, legal services providers felt very strongly that video resources would be better than print materials for educating their Hmong and Somali clients. One-hundred percent felt that way with respect to Hmong clients, and 94 percent did with respect to Somali clients. The percentage for Spanish speaking clients was significantly lower, with 54 percent favoring videos and 46 percent favoring fact sheets. However, even the Spanish client results indicate a general preference for video education materials among casehandlers, since they are preferred by a majority.

In addition, several casehandlers submitted comments supporting the use of videos to educate court-users about their legal rights. Relevant portions of those comments follow:<sup>17</sup>

- “Somali videos are a brilliant idea. Many of my clients ... are not literate in any language.”
- “Video would be helpful. A lot don’t read or write Hmong.”
- “Many people learn more from seeing a video .... I think this increases with lower education levels, regardless of language ability.”
- “I think it is vital to have both written and verbal materials available to our non-English speaking populations.”<sup>18</sup>

### **C. Translating Court Forms**

The final group of questions concerns the translation of court forms. They are intended to assess how valuable translated forms would be to LEP court-users. LEP individuals and legal services providers were each asked four questions regarding court forms.

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<sup>17</sup> Casehandler comments, in their entirety, are attached as Appendix G.

<sup>18</sup> The LITC Coordinator at S. Carolina Legal Services, mentioned in FN 12 above, also supports a multimedia approach to educating clients. According to SCLS, South Carolina’s largest LEP group, Spanish speakers, rely heavily on radio and television broadcasts in their native language to get information. The Coordinator also recommends verbal presentations at outreach events, as he has found that fact sheets and basic information brochures are generally not helpful to LEP persons. Similarly, staff at the Vancouver, BC, Self-Help Centre, indicates that their foreign language brochures are not often picked up, because LEP persons prefer in-person explanations.

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

LEP persons were first asked about their ability to fill out court forms written in English. The question was written to assess whether an untranslated court form could be filled out at all and, for those who could complete the form, whether they would need to do so in their first language.

*If the court form you needed was in English, could you fill it out on your own?<sup>19</sup>*

	Yes		No
	I could fill it out in English	If I could answer the questions in my first language	I could not fill it out at all
All LEP	9	23	69
Hmong	9	12	79
Somali	6	17	78
Spanish <sup>20</sup>	11	34	58

LEP persons were then asked whether they could fill out a court form written in their first language without assistance. The question was intended to assess whether an inability to complete court forms is in part due to the nature of court forms themselves.

*If the Court form you needed was in your first language, could you fill it out on your own?<sup>21</sup>*

	Yes	No <sup>22</sup>
All LEP	40	60
Hmong	15	85
Somali	56	44
Spanish	55	45

<sup>19</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the three options (two for "yes" and one for "no").

<sup>20</sup> The aggregate percentages for the Spanish category total 103 because one survey-taker checked both "Yes, if I could answer the questions in my first language" and "No, I could not fill it out at all."

<sup>21</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the two options.

<sup>22</sup> Note: Survey-takers who answered "no" also indicated whether they would get help from a lawyer or from a friend or community member. Fifty-seven percent of those who answered "no" would get help from a lawyer and 50 percent would seek assistance from a friend or community member (with four respondents marking both).

As noted above, the previous question was intended to determine whether court forms are so inherently complicated that having them available in the native language of court-users would be largely unhelpful. Casehandlers were then asked to provide their opinion and experience about how well LEP clients understand court forms and about whether translated forms could be completed by their LEP clients with little or no assistance.

*In your estimation, how well do your [Hmong/Somali/Spanish] speaking clients understand court forms?<sup>23</sup>*

	Very well	Moderately well	Poorly	Not at all
All LEP	0	16	71	13
Hmong	0	6	72	22
Somali	0	13	68	19
Spanish	0	27	73	0

*In your estimation, what percentage of your [Hmong/Somali/Spanish] speaking clients could complete court forms unaided or with very little outside help if they were available in their primary language?<sup>24</sup>*

	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
All LEP	65	25	8	1
Hmong	83	17	0	0
Somali	84	16	0	0
Spanish	31	42	23	4

LEP persons were then asked to indicate who would translate answers provided on court forms from their primary language into English.

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<sup>23</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the four options.

<sup>24</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the four options.

*Answers on court forms need to be in English before the form goes to the court. Who would translate your answers for you, if needed?<sup>25</sup>*

	Legal Aid/ Law Office	Community Member/Advocate	Friend/ Family	I can fill it out in English	I don't know	Other
All LEP	56	25	25	2	9	3
Hmong	55	24	27	3	9	3 <sup>26</sup>
Somali	61	11	17	0	6	6 <sup>27</sup>
Spanish	56	31	26	3	10	3 <sup>28</sup>

Legal Aid/Law Office was the most popular choice given for translated answers provided on court forms. Legal services providers were asked whether they have staff available to translate court forms.

*If someone brought a court form in [Hmong/Somali/Spanish] to your office, would your staff be available to translate it?<sup>29</sup>*

	Yes	No
All LEP	79	21
Hmong	61	39
Somali	77	23
Spanish	92	8

Finally, LEP persons and legal services casehandlers were asked whether, and how, having translated court forms available would assist each group.

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<sup>25</sup> The numbers represent the percentage of those who chose each response among those who answered the question. Since survey-takers were allowed to provide more than one answer to this question, the aggregate percentages total more than 100 percent.

<sup>26</sup> One answer was provided by a Hmong speaker in the *Other* category: "a translator from the court."

<sup>27</sup> One answer was provided by a Somali speaker in the *Other* category: "Self-Help Center."

<sup>28</sup> One answer was provided by a Spanish speaker in the *Other* category: "Self-Help Center."

<sup>29</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the two options.

*If a court form was in your first language, how would this help you?<sup>30</sup>*

	I would have a better understanding of what I need to do, and be more likely to seek help.	I would understand the legal process better.	I would be better prepared for court.	I would feel more comfortable about going to court.	A form in my language would not really help me.
All LEP	52	44	37	32	16
Hmong	67	36	42	33	12
Somali	25	19	25	19	44
Spanish	51	59	36	36	8

*Would court forms available in your clients' primary language help you to better serve your [Hmong/Somali/Spanish] speaking clients?<sup>31</sup>*

	Yes		No	
	Very much	Somewhat	This would not impact me	This would create extra problems
All LEP	20	51	24	5
Hmong	11	50	28	11
Somali	16	55	23	6
Spanish	31	46	23	0

## ANALYSIS

The results above indicate that the ability of LEP court-users to complete untranslated forms is quite limited. Only nine percent of LEP persons could fill out the forms in English. A higher number, 23 percent, could complete an English form with answers in their native language. The numbers are quite low, however, for Hmong and Somali survey-takers, at 12 and 17 percent, respectively. These numbers are unsurprising given that survey-takers determined to be LEP indicated difficulty with reading, writing, speaking or understanding English.

<sup>30</sup> The numbers represent the percentage of those who chose each response among those who answered the question. Since survey-takers were allowed to provide more than one answer to this question, the aggregate percentages total more than 100 percent.

<sup>31</sup> The numbers provided represent the percentage of respondents who chose each of the four options (two for "yes" and two for "no").

The results are less clear when it comes to determining whether making translated court forms available to LEP persons would greatly benefit them. Only 40 percent of LEP respondents indicated that they could complete a translated court form. The numbers were not consistent, however, across language groups. Only 15 percent of Hmong respondents indicated an ability to fill out a translated court form, while the percentage was 56 and 55 for Somali and Spanish speakers, respectively.

These results are somewhat consistent with the first question discussed under part B above, regarding the ability of LEP persons to read in their first language. For instance, 58 percent of Somali speakers can read well or very well in Somali, a number similar to the 56 percent who indicated an ability to complete a translated court form. On the other hand, while 34 percent of Hmong speakers and 90 percent of Spanish speakers read well or very well in their first language, only 15 percent and 55 percent, respectively, indicated an ability to complete a translated court form.

A plausible explanation for this discrepancy is that the language of the court form is not the only factor impacting an LEP person's supposed ability to complete a translated form. The inherent complexity of legal concepts and court forms also seems to play a role. This explanation is supported by several comments from legal services providers, a few of which follow:

- “I serve seniors.... Very few would be able to manage on their own, even if forms were in their language. Many elderly Hmong and Somali are uneducated or have minimal education.”
- “...translated applications and report forms are not 100% helpful. It depends on education of the client ... client's ability to read, etc.”
- “We have many, many people in our service area that speak English and they cannot fill out the court forms, so I don't see any difference for LEP clients, even if the form was in their primary language.”<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, 84 percent of casehandlers indicated that their LEP clients understand court forms poorly or not at all. The number is higher for Hmong and Somali speakers, at 94 percent and 87 percent, respectively. Similarly, casehandlers believed that few of their Hmong and Somali LEP clients could complete translated court forms with little or no assistance. The large majority thought that only zero to 25 percent of these clients could

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<sup>32</sup> Some of the listserv respondents also expressed skepticism about the value of translated court forms. Staff at the California Courts indicated that their translated forms have not been widely used and that, from a practical standpoint, are difficult to keep up-to-date.

do so. A higher percentage of casehandlers believed that Spanish speaking clients could complete translated court forms with little or no outside assistance, presumably due in part to the much higher likelihood of Spanish speaking LEP clients to be literate in Spanish.

Skepticism about the value of translated court forms was not universal, however. According to one legal services casehandler, “Offering court forms in languages other than English is so beneficial to so many of the clients we serve.”<sup>33</sup> Further, a majority of casehandlers for each language group believed that having translated court forms available would at least *somewhat* help them better serve their LEP clients. In addition, 52 percent of LEP survey respondents indicated that the availability of translated forms would give them a better understanding of what they need to do, and would increase the likelihood that they would seek assistance.<sup>34</sup>

Assuming translated court forms were made available, another issue would be the need to present the form with answers in English to the court. Most LEP persons surveyed would go to a legal aid or other law office for this service. Many others would use a community center, advocate, friend or family member. Although not a listed option, a few mentioned the court or a self-help center. Notable in this regard is the fact that nearly all of the comments provided by LEP survey-takers, responding to the question about how courts can better serve LEP persons, indicated the need to provide (or provide more) translators, interpreters, or bilingual persons.<sup>35</sup>

Given the number of survey-takers who indicated that they would seek assistance from a legal aid or other law office in translating court forms, the question about legal services offices’ ability to provide that assistance is notable. Seventy-nine percent of casehandlers said that staff would be available to translate answers provided on court forms.<sup>36</sup> The percentage was significantly higher for Spanish, at 92 percent, and significantly lower for Hmong, at 61 percent.

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<sup>33</sup> Notably, that casehandler added: “It would also be so helpful if there was a self-help attorney available to help these clients fill out their forms pro se in their own language.”

<sup>34</sup> Somali speakers were a notable exception. Forty-four percent believed that having court forms available in their language would not help them.

<sup>35</sup> All answers to this question are attached as Appendix F.

<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that a “yes” answer does not mean that any particular legal services program has an official policy of translating forms or are always available to do so. Program policies were not reviewed as part of this research.

### III. LAWHELPMN.ORG USAGE

LawHelpMN.org (LawHelp) is a website for low-income Minnesotans with civil legal needs, and is administered by MLSC. The website includes hundreds of legal information resources pertaining to 18 civil law topics. The most popular topics include Family, Housing, Consumer and Employment. Many resources were created by legal services attorneys and uploaded onto the website, while many others are links to outside resources.

Many of the resources have been translated into other languages. The following chart shows the number of legal information resources on LawHelp in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish as of December 18, 2007:

	English	Hmong	Somali	Spanish
Hosted Resources	228	8	14	84
Links	435	19	16	127
<b>Totals</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>211</b>

Following is a comparison and analysis of the usage of English versus other language resources on LawHelp over the last two years. Not all of the translated resources currently on LawHelp were there for the duration of each of those years. As such, we only compare resources that had another language version for the entirety of each year, in order to prevent the usage statistics from being distorted.

When looking at the frequency with which other language resources have been viewed, it should be noted that the navigation required to access translated resources is in English, so a certain amount of English proficiency is necessary to reach the resources. Each LawHelp page includes a “Resources in other languages” area in the lower right portion.<sup>37</sup>

The only exception to English navigation is a Spanish mirror version of the website, available at [www.LawHelpMN.org/espanol](http://www.LawHelpMN.org/espanol), which has been in place since September 2007. Our expectation is that usage of Spanish resources will increase with the availability of Spanish site navigation. We have analyzed the difference between Spanish

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix H for a webpage image that shows how users access other language resources on LawHelp.

resource usage before and after launch of the mirror site below. However, the existence of the Spanish site may be too new to draw reliable conclusions from that comparison.

### A. 2006 Usage

For resources that had an English and a Hmong, Somali, or Spanish version for the entirety of 2006, the frequency with which each was viewed is provided in the charts below. The charts include the aggregate number of views of the resources for each language, along with the percentage of the total views for English and the other language.

English vs. Hmong<sup>38</sup>

	English	Hmong
Views of Resources	726	37
Percentage of Total Views	95.15%	4.85%

English vs. Somali<sup>39</sup>

	English	Somali
Views of Resources	2649	122
Percentage of Total Views	95.60%	4.40%

English vs. Spanish<sup>40</sup>

	English	Spanish
Views of Resources	16691	584
Percentage of Total Views	96.62%	3.38%

### B. 2007 Usage (through November 30)

For resources that had an English and a Hmong, Somali, or Spanish version for the entirety of the period beginning January 1, 2007 and ending November 30, 2007, the frequency with which each was viewed is provided in the charts below.

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<sup>38</sup> There were nine legal information resources that had English and Hmong versions throughout 2006.

<sup>39</sup> There were 15 legal information resources that had English and Somali versions throughout 2006.

<sup>40</sup> There were 81 legal information resources that had English and Spanish versions throughout 2006.

English vs. Hmong<sup>41</sup>

	English	Hmong
Views of Resources	466	20
Percentage of Total Views	95.88%	4.12%

English vs. Somali<sup>42</sup>

	English	Somali
Views of Resources	2184	73
Percentage of Total Views	96.77%	3.23%

English vs. Spanish<sup>43</sup>

	English	Spanish
Views of Resources	15735	573
Percentage of Total Views	96.49%	3.51%

**C. Spanish Resource Views Before and After Mirror Site**

The chart below splits the numbers above into two groups: resource views before the launch of the Spanish mirror website (January 1, 2007 through August 31, 2007) and resource views after the launch (September 1, 2007 through November 30, 2007).

	January – August		September – November	
	English	Spanish	English	Spanish
Views of Resources	9833	336	5902	237
Percentage of Total Views	96.70%	3.30%	96.14%	3.86%

<sup>41</sup> There were nine legal information resources that had English and Hmong versions throughout the period beginning January 1, 2007 and ending November 30, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> There were 15 legal information resources that had English and Somali versions throughout the period beginning January 1, 2007 and ending November 30, 2007.

<sup>43</sup> There were 82 legal information resources that had English and Spanish versions throughout the period beginning January 1, 2007 and ending November 30, 2007.

## D. Usage Analysis

Overall, the percentage of views of Hmong, Somali and Spanish resources, as compared with views of the English versions of the same resources, fluctuated between 3.23 percent and 4.85 percent. Those numbers may seem surprisingly high, given that the populations of Hmong, Somali and Spanish speakers vis-à-vis English speakers are significantly lower. According to 2005 census data, 0.92 percent of Minnesotans speak Hmong at home, 0.85 percent speak African languages, and 3.5 percent speak Spanish.<sup>44</sup> The percentages are even lower when looking at those who speak English “less than very well.” Minnesotans who speak Hmong at home and speak English less than very well represent 0.48 percent of the population. The corresponding percentages for African language and Spanish speakers are 0.40 percent and 1.57 percent, respectively.<sup>45</sup>

There are a number of factors that help explain the seemingly high ratio of non-English to English resource views as compared to Minnesota population statistics. First, many of the English resources that had Hmong and Somali versions throughout 2006 and 2007 may be of particular interest to non-English speakers. Three of the Hmong and Somali resources pertained to citizenship or rights to an interpreter. A fourth Somali resource pertained to housing discrimination. Second, the percentages used in the tables compare each non-English language only to English, and so do not take into account other non-English languages. Third, the percentage of Hmong, Somali and Spanish speakers who are low-income, and thus likely to use LawHelp, is higher than the percentage of English speakers who are low-income.<sup>46</sup>

Interestingly, the percentage of Hmong versus English and Somali versus English resource views decreased between 2006 and 2007, from 4.85 percent to 4.12 percent for Hmong and from 4.40 percent to 3.23 percent for Somali. The cause of this change is not clear, although it is notable that the numbers of Hmong and Somali resources being compared with their English counterparts are only nine and 15, respectively. A larger sample may have yielded different results.

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<sup>44</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Minnesota: *S1601. Language Spoken at Home*. Data Set: 2005 American Community Survey. Available at: <http://www.lawhelpmn.org/link.cfm?2058>. Data specifically concerning the Somali language is not available in the American Community Survey.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> See, e.g., U.S. Census Bureau. Minnesota: *S1703. Selected Characteristics of People at Specified Levels of Poverty in the Past 12 Months*. Data Set: 2006 American Community Survey. Available at: <http://www.lawhelpmn.org/link.cfm?2057>. Data shows that Minnesota communities of color have far higher incidents of poverty than white communities.

Spanish resource views, as compared with the views of English versions of the same resources, increased between 2006 and 2007, from 3.38 percent to 3.51 percent. This seems to be due to the increase in Spanish resource views brought about by the launch of a website navigable in Spanish. Prior to that launch, the percentage of Spanish versus English views had decreased slightly between 2006 and 2007, from 3.38 percent to 3.30 percent. However, the three months in which the mirror site was available more than made up for that slight decrease, as Spanish resource views were up to 3.86 percent versus English views during that period.

It is notable that this increase was realized despite the fact that the number of times the English versions of resources that also had Spanish versions were viewed jumped substantially, requiring a greater increase in Spanish views to keep pace. Given the number of times English resources that had Spanish versions were viewed between January and August (9833 times), they would be projected to be viewed 3682 times between September and November. Instead, the English resources were viewed 5902 times during that period.

It should be noted, with respect to the comparison of Spanish and English resources before and after the launch of the mirror site, that much of the outreach and promotion around the Spanish website was ongoing or had yet to take place as this report was prepared. Spanish television and radio advertisements, for instance, are still planned. As a result, the increases may be far higher in the coming months.

# Recommendations

The recommendations offered below are intended to assist the Minnesota Judicial Branch in its ongoing efforts to serve the needs of Limited English Proficient court-users among Minnesota's largest language minorities – Hmong, Somali, and Spanish speakers. The recommendations are based on the findings detailed above.

## **1. The Internet should not be the primary means of making legal materials available to the LEP community.**

The findings indicate that LEP persons are significantly less likely to go online than others. However, several important caveats should be considered:

- LEP persons may be less likely to go online because the large majority of websites are not presented in their native language. If translated materials were presented on a website that is also navigable in non-English languages, more LEP persons may go to that website. There is some support for this proposition in the increase in Spanish resource views MLSC has seen in the initial months of its Spanish LawHelp site.
- Although age was not asked of survey-takers, it is reasonable to assume that most or all were adults. Children are likely much more frequent Internet users. As such, the issue of reaching LEP persons online should be reviewed periodically.
- Somali speakers among the LEP community appear to be somewhat of an exception to the low rate of Internet use for LEP persons.
- LEP persons are not coextensive with all persons whose first language is other than English. Results indicate that non-LEP persons whose first language is other than English, many of who are likely more comfortable in their first language, have significantly higher rates of Internet usage.

As part of a multi-faceted approach to reaching the LEP community with legal materials, online posting may make sense. However, survey results clearly indicate that legal services offices, courthouses, and community centers should be the focus of outreach efforts.

**2. Video is a viable format for presenting legal education materials to the LEP community, especially for Hmong and Somali speakers.**

Native language reading ability is quite low for Hmong and Somali speakers. While many survey respondents indicated a preference for print format, significant numbers of each language group, including a majority of Somali speakers, expect to learn more from video. In addition, legal services casehandlers overwhelmingly prefer video to print as a legal education format, especially for Hmong and Somali speakers.

**3. Translated court forms are of some value to the LEP community, but native language self-help assistance may be more beneficial.**

The data gathered regarding translated court forms was mixed and open to debate, and the value of translated forms to LEP court-users should continue to be explored. Translated court forms appear to be of some value to LEP persons and the advocates who serve them. However, several casehandlers expressed concerns about the complexity of court forms and a majority of survey respondents indicated that they could not fill out translated court forms on their own. Together, these concerns suggest that translated court forms may be most effective if based on low-literacy or “plain language” translations of the English originals. Alternatively, in-person help with filling out forms may be a better use of resources than form translation.

# SURVEY (ENGLISH)

Minnesota Courts want to help people going to court who do not speak or read English. Your answers to this survey will tell the courts how to help more. Thank you for taking the time to do the survey.

## I. English Ability

1. What is your first language? If you check Other, please fill in your language.

English       Spanish       Somali       Hmong       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*If you checked English, you do not need to complete the rest of the survey.*

2. How well do you speak and understand English?

Speaking	Understanding
<input type="checkbox"/> Very well	<input type="checkbox"/> Very well
<input type="checkbox"/> Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Well
<input type="checkbox"/> Not well	<input type="checkbox"/> Not well
<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all

3. How well do you read and write English?

Reading	Writing
<input type="checkbox"/> Very well	<input type="checkbox"/> Very well
<input type="checkbox"/> Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Well
<input type="checkbox"/> Not well	<input type="checkbox"/> Not well
<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all

## II. Internet Use

4. How often do you use the Internet?

At least once per day       1-2 times per week       Less often       Never

5. Where do you use the Internet? (you can choose more than one)

Home     Work     Library     Community Center     Café     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## III. Information About Your Legal Rights

6. If you had a legal problem, where would you go to learn about your rights in your first language? (you can choose more than one)

Internet       Library       Courthouse       Community Center/Advocate  
 Legal Aid/Law Office       Family/Friend       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. How well do you read in your first language?

Very well       Well       Not well       Not at all

8. In your first language, do you learn more from reading about your legal rights or watching a video?  
 I learn more from reading       I learn more from a video       About the same

**IV. Translated Court Forms**

9. If you need to file a form in court to get help with your legal problem, where would you get the form? (you can choose more than one)  
 Courthouse       Internet       Community Center       Library  
 Legal Aid/Law Office       I don't know       Other: \_\_\_\_\_
10. If the court form you needed was in English, could you fill it out on your own?  
 Yes, I could fill it out in English.  
 Yes, if I could answer the questions in my first language.  
 No, I could not fill it out at all.
11. If the Court form you needed was in your first language, could you fill it out on your own?  
 Yes, I would fill it out on my own.  
 No, I would try to get help from a lawyer.  
 No, I would try to get help from a friend or community member.
12. Answers on court forms need to be in English before the form goes to the court. Who would translate your answers for you, if needed?  
 I can fill it out in English       Friend/Family       Legal Aid/Law Office  
 Community Member/Advocate       I don't know       Other: \_\_\_\_\_
13. If a court form was in your first language, how would this help you? (you can choose more than one)  
 I would understand the legal process better.  
 I would have a better understanding of what I need to do, and be more likely to seek help.  
 I would feel more comfortable about going to court.  
 I would be better prepared for court.  
 A form in my language would not really help me.

**V. Other Questions**

14. Have you been to court before?       Yes       No
15. How do you think the courts can help people who don't speak English?

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**THANK YOU!**

# SOJ NTSUAM (HMONG)

Minnesota Cov Tsev Hais Plaub xav pab cov neeg tsis txawj hais thiab nyeem lus Askiv uas mus rau hauv tsev hais plaub. Koj cov lus teb yuav pab cov tsev hais plaub kom txawj pab ntxiv. Ua tsaug rau koj lub sij hawm siv los teb cov lus soj ntsuam no.

## I. Kev Peev Xwm Paub Lus Askiv

1. Koj thawj yam lus yog haiv lus dab tsi? Yog koj kos Lwm Yam, thov sau qhia yam lus.  
 Askiv     Mev     Xausmavlim     Hmoob     Lwm Yam: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Yog koj kos Askiv, koj tsis tag teb ntxiv cov lus soj ntsuam lawm.*

2. Koj hais thiab to taub lus Askiv zoo npaum li cas?

Hais Lus	To Taub
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo heev	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo heev
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo
<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo pes tsawg	<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo pes tsawg
<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo hlo li	<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo hlo li

3. Koj nyeem thiab sau ntawv Askiv tau zoo npaum li cas?

Nyeem Ntawv	Sau Ntawv
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo heev	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo heev
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoo
<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo pes tsawg	<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo pes tsawg
<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo hlo li	<input type="checkbox"/> Tsis zoo hlo li

## II. Kev Siv Internet

4. Koj siv Internet heev npaum li cas?  
 Tsaug kawg ib hnuv ib zaug     1-2 zaug twg ib lim piam     Tsaug zaus     Tsis siv hlo li
5. Koj siv Internet qhov twg? (koj xaiv tau ntau tshaj ib qhov chaw)  
 Hauv tsev     Hauj lwm     Tsev qib ntawv     Chaw Community Center     Khw haus kasfes  
 Lwm qhov chaw: \_\_\_\_\_

## III. Cov Lus Txog Koj Cov Kev Cai Lij Choj

6. Yog koj ntsib ib qho teeb meem cuam tshuam kev cai lij choj, koj siv koj thawj yam lus uas koj hais thaum koj mus kawm txog koj cov kev cai lij choj nyob rau qhov twg? (koj xaiv tau tshaj ib qho chaw)  
 Internet     Tsev qib ntawv     Tsev hais plaub     Chaw Community Center/Chaw pab tswv yim  
 Chaw pab tswv yim kev cai lij choj/Kws lij choj chaw khiav dej num  
 Tsev neeg/Phooj ywg     Lwm qhov chaw: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Koj nyeem koj thawj yam lus zoo npaum li cas?  
 Zoo heev     Zoo     Tsis zoo pes tsawg     Tsis zoo hlo li
8. Ua koj kawm tau ntau tshaj yog koj nyeem ntawv los yog saib yeeb yaj duab ua koj thawj yam lus?  
 Kuv kawm tau ntau tshaj yog nyeem     Kuv kawm tau ntau tshaj ntawm yeeb yaj dua  
 Kawm tau sib npaug zos

#### IV. Cov Ntawv Txhais Hauv Tsev Hais Plaub

9. Yog koj yuav ua ib tsab ntawv rau hauv tsev hais plaub kom pab koj qhov teeb meem, koj yuav mus muab tsab ntawv qhov twg? (koj xaiv tau tshaj ib qho chaw)
- Tsev hais plaub     Internet     Chaw Community Center     Tsev qiv ntawv
- Chaw pab tswv yim kev cai lij choj/Kws lij choj chaw khiav dej num
- Kuv tsis paub     Lwm qhov chaw: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Yog tsab ntawv koj xav tau hauv tsev hais plaub sau ua lus Askiv, ua koj sau puas tau koj tus kheej?
- Tau, kuv sau tau lus Askiv.
- Tau, yog tias kuv sau tau ua kuv thawj haiv lus.
- Tsis tau, kuv sau tsis tau hlo li.
11. Yog tsab ntawv koj xav tau hauv tsev hais plaub sau ua koj thawj yam lus hais, koj sau puas tau koj tus kheej?
- Tau, kuv yeej sau tau.
- Tsis tau, kuv yuav tsum muaj tus kws lij choj pab.
- Tsis tau, kuv yuav tsum tau tus phooj ywg los yog neeg hauv zej zog pab.
12. Cov lus teb rau cov ntawv hauv tsev hais plaub yuav tsum teb ua lus Askiv ua ntej muab tau tsab ntawv mus sib hais hauv chaw hais plaub. Leej twg thiaj txhais koj cov lus teb rau koj yog tias yuav tsum tau txhais xwb?
- Kuv teb tau ua lus Askiv     Phooj ywg/Tsev neeg
- Chaw pab tswv yim kev cai lij choj/Kws lij choj chaw khiav dej num
- Neeg Hauv Zej Zog/Neeg pab tswv yim     Kuv tsis paub     Lwm cov: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Yog ib tsab ntawv hauv tsev hais plaub sau ua koj yam lus hais, yuav pab tau koj li cas? (koj xaiv tau tshaj ib qho)
- Kuv yuav to taub cov kev cai lij choj zoo dua.
- Kuv yuav to taub txog yam kuv yuav tau ua thiab muaj feem yuav nrhiav kev pab.
- Kuv yuav tso siab dua rau txoj kev mus hauv tsev hais plaub.
- Kuv yuav npaj mus hauv tsev hais plaub tau zoo dua.
- Tsab ntawv sau ua kuv haiv lus los yuav tsis pab tau kuv.

#### V. Lwm Cov Nqe Lus Nug

14. Koj puas tau mus txog hauv tsev hais plaub dua los?     Tau     Tsis tau
15. Koj xav tias cov tsev hais plaub pab tau cov neeg tsis txawj lus Askiv li cas?

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**UA KOJ TSAUG!**

# BAARID (SOMALI)

Maxkamadaha Minnesota waxay rabaan in ay caawinan dadka maxkamada aadaya aanan ku hadli karin ama akhrinkarin Ingriiska. Jawaabahaaga baaritaankan waxay u sheegayaan maxkamadaha siday u caawin lahaayeen dadkaas. Waad ku mahadsan tahay wakhtigaad siisay inaad buuxiso baaritaanka.

## I. Awooda Ingriiska

1. Waa maxay luqadaada koowaad? Hadaad saxdo kuwo kale, fadlan qor luqadaada.  
 Ingriiso     Spanish     Soomaali     Hmong     Kuwo kale: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hadii aad saxday Ingriis, *uma baahnid inaad buuxiso baaritaanka oo idil.*

2. Ilaa intee baad ku hadashaa si fiican ama aad fahantaa Ingriisla?

Ku hadalka	Fahamka
<input type="checkbox"/> Aad u fiican	<input type="checkbox"/> Aad u fiican
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiican	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiican
<input type="checkbox"/> Ma fiicna	<input type="checkbox"/> Ma fiicna
<input type="checkbox"/> Kumaba hadlo marnaba	<input type="checkbox"/> Ma fahmo marnaba

3. Ilaa inteed qorikartaa ama akhrinkartaa Ingriiska?

Akhriska	Qoraalka
<input type="checkbox"/> Aad u fiican	<input type="checkbox"/> Aad u fiican
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiican	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiican
<input type="checkbox"/> Ma fiicna	<input type="checkbox"/> Ma fiicna
<input type="checkbox"/> Ma akhrin karo marnaba	<input type="checkbox"/> Ma qori karo marnaba

## II. Isticmaalida Internetka

4. Ilaa intee baad isticmaashaa Internetka?  
 Ugu yaraan hal mar maalintii     1-2 jeer-asbuucii     Wax yar     Maba isticmaalo
5. Xageebaad ka isticmaashaa Internetka? (hal ka badan ayaad dooran kartaa)  
 Guriga     Shaqada     Libraryga     Xarunta Bulshada     Caféga     Meelo kale: \_\_\_\_\_

## III. Macluumaadka ku saabsan sharciyada aad xaqa u leedahay

6. Hadii aad qabto dhibaato sharciga la xiriira, meesha aad aadi lahayd oo aad ka baran lahayd xuquuqdaada oo ku qoran luqadaada? (waxaad dalban kartaa hal iyo wixii ka badan)  
 Internetka     Libraryga     Guriga Maxkamada     Xarybta Bulshada/Doodaha  
 Sharci Caawiyaha/Xafiiska Sharciga     Reerka/Saaxiibada     Wixii Kale: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Ilaa inteed ayaad si fiican u akhrisaa luqadaada koowaad?  
 Aad u fiican     Fiican     Ma fiicna     Ma akhrin karo marnaba
8. Luqadaada koowaad, ma waxaad aad wax uga barataa akhriska ku saabsan xuquuqdaada sharciga ama adigoo fiidiyowga daawanaya?  
 Waxaan waxbadan wax uga baran karaa wax akhriska  
 Waxaan waxbadan wax uga baran karaa fiidiyowga     Waa iskugu kay mid

#### IV. Formanka Maxkamada oo Turjuman

9. Hadii aad u baahan tahay inaad ku xarayso maxkamada form aad dalbanayso caawimaad ku saabsan dhibaatooyinkaaga la xiriira sharciga, xageebaad ka helayaa formka? (waxaad ka dooran kartaa hal wixii ka badan)
- Guriga Maxkamada     Internetka     Xarunta Bulshada     Libraryga  
 Sharci Caawiyaha/Xafiiska Sharciga     Ma aqaano     Meelo Kale: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Hadii uu ahaa formka aad u baahnayd Ingriis, ma buuxsan kartaa kaligaa?
- Haa, waan ku buuxsankaraa Ingriis.  
 Haa, hadii aan ugaga jawaabi karo su'aalaha luqadayda koowaad.  
 Maya, maba buuxin karo marnaba.
11. Hadii uu ahaa formka aad u baahnayd luqadaada koowaad,, ma buuxsan kartaa kaligaa?
- Haa, waan buuxsankaraa laligay.  
 Maya, waxaan rabaa inuu abukaate igu caawiyo.  
 Maya, waxaan rabaa inuu saaxiib ama qof ka mid ah bulshada igu caawiyo.
12. Jawaabaha formanka maxkamada waa inay ahaadaan Ingriis intaynan fomanka u tagin maxkamada. Yaa kuu turjumaya jawaabahaaga, hadii loo baahdo?
- Aniga ayaa ku buuxin kara Ingiriis     Saaxiib/Reerka     Sharci Caawiyaha/Xafiiska  
 Sharciga     Qof ka mid ah bulshada/Doode     Ma'aqaano     Kuwo kale: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Haduu formka ahaa luqadaada koowaad, sidee bay kuu caawin lahaayeen, sidee buu kuu caawinayaa? (waxaad ka dooran kartaa hal wixii ka badan)
- Waxaan u fahmi lahaa sida sharciga u socdaan si ka fiican.  
 Si fiican ayaan u fahmi lahaa waxaan rabo inaan sameeyo, waxaana raad san lahaa caawimaad.  
 Waxaan dareemi lahaa qanacsanaan aadida maxkamada.  
 Waxaan ahaan lahaa inaan si fiican isugu diyaariyo maxkamada.  
 Formka luqadayda ima caawinayo run ahaantii.

#### V. Wixii Su'aalo oo Kale

14. Maxkamada ma timaaday hadda ka hor?     Haa     Maya
15. Sideed u malaynaysaa in ay maxkamadaha u caawin karaan dadka aanan ku hadli karin Ingriisiga?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**WAAD MAHADSAN TAHAY!**

# ENCUESTA (ESPAÑOL)

Las Cortes en Minnesota quieren ayudar a las personas que no hablan o escriben en inglés a ir a las cortes. Sus respuestas en esta encuesta le proporcionarán a las cortes con información en cómo ayudarle más eficientemente. Gracias por tomar el tiempo de llenar esta encuesta.

## I. Habilidad en Inglés

1. ¿Cuál es su primer idioma? Si usted marca Otro, por favor escriba cual es ese idioma.

Inglés     Español     Somalí     Hmong     Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

*Si usted marca inglés, usted no necesita llenar el resto de la encuesta.*

2. ¿Qué tan bien habla y entiende inglés?

Habla	Entiende
<input type="checkbox"/> Muy bien	<input type="checkbox"/> Muy bien
<input type="checkbox"/> Bien	<input type="checkbox"/> Bien
<input type="checkbox"/> Mal	<input type="checkbox"/> Mal
<input type="checkbox"/> Nada	<input type="checkbox"/> Nada

3. ¿Qué tan bien lee y escribe inglés?

Lee	Escribe
<input type="checkbox"/> Muy bien	<input type="checkbox"/> Muy bien
<input type="checkbox"/> Bien	<input type="checkbox"/> Bien
<input type="checkbox"/> Mal	<input type="checkbox"/> Mal
<input type="checkbox"/> Nada	<input type="checkbox"/> Nada

## II. Uso del Internet

4. ¿Con qué frecuencia usa usted el Internet?

Al menos una vez al día     1-2 veces a la semana     Menos frecuente     Nunca

5. ¿Dónde usa usted el Internet? (puede marcar más de una opción)

Casa     Trabajo     Biblioteca     Centro comunitario     Café     Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

## III. Información Acerca de sus Derechos Legales

6. ¿Si usted tuviera un problema legal, dónde iría para averiguar cuáles son sus derechos en su idioma nativo? (puede marcar más de una opción)

Internet     Biblioteca     Corte     Centro Comunitario y de Abogacía  
 Oficina de Ayuda Legal     Familia/Amigo     Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

7. ¿Qué tan bien puede usted leer en su idioma nativo?

Muy bien     Bien     Mal     Nada

8. ¿En su idioma nativo, usted puede aprender más acerca de sus derechos legales leyendo o viendo un video?
- Yo aprendo más leyendo       Yo aprendo más viendo un video       Lo mismo

#### IV. Planillas de Corte Traducidas

9. ¿Si usted necesita introducir una planilla en la corte para obtener ayuda con su problema legal, dónde obtendría usted esa planilla? (puede marcar más de una opción)
- Corte                       Internet                       Centro Comunitario       Biblioteca  
 Oficina de Ayuda Legal       No sé                       Otro: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Si la planilla que usted necesita estuviera en inglés, ¿podría llenarla usted mismo?
- Si, Yo podría llenarla en inglés.  
 Si, si pudiera hacer las preguntas en mi idioma nativo.  
 No, Yo no podría llenarla en lo absoluto.
11. Si la planilla de la Corte que usted necesita estuviera disponible en su idioma nativo, ¿podría llenarla por su cuenta?
- Si, Yo la llenaría sin ayuda.  
 No, Yo trataría de obtener ayuda de un abogado.  
 No, Yo trataría de obtener ayuda de un amigo o miembro de la comunidad.
12. Respuestas en las planillas de corte necesitan ser en ingles antes que las mismas vayan a la corte. ¿Quién traduciría sus respuestas si es necesario?
- Yo puedo llenarlas en inglés                       Amigo-familiar       Oficina de Ayuda Legal  
 Miembro de la Comunidad /Abogado       No sé       Otro: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Si una planilla de corte estuviera disponible en su idioma nativo, ¿cómo esto le ayudaría? (puede marcar más de una opción)
- Entendería el proceso legal mejor.  
 Tendría más conocimiento de lo que necesito hacer, y tendería a buscar más ayuda.  
 Me sentiría más comfortable acerca de ir a la corte.  
 Estaría más preparado para la corte.  
 Una planilla en mi idioma no me ayudaría.

#### V. Otras Preguntas

14. ¿Ha asistido a la corte anteriormente?       Si                       No
15. ¿Cómo cree usted que la corte puede ayudar a aquellos que no hablan inglés?

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Thank you for helping us and for participating in this survey. We are working with Minnesota Courts to learn about how to best reach your Limited English Proficient (LEP) clients with translated legal educational materials and court forms. This survey is for casehandlers working with clients. We are also surveying clients using similar questions.

For purposes of this survey, we are only interested in LEP clients, who we define as clients:

- (a) whose primary language is a language other than English, and
- (b) who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

### Language Information

**1. Check all primary languages that represent at least 10% of your LEP clients. (You may check more than one)**

- Hmong
- Somali
- Spanish
- None of these

### Literacy Information

These questions are meant to gauge how well your LEP clients can read and obtain information.

**1. How many of your Hmong-speaking clients regularly use the Internet?**

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%
- I don't know

**2. In your estimation how many of your Hmong-speaking clients read in Hmong?**

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%
- I don't know

**3. In your estimation would your Hmong-speaking clients learn more from a fact sheet in their primary language or from watching a video in their primary language?**

- Fact Sheet
- Video

## Literacy Information

These questions are meant to gauge how well your LEP clients can read and obtain information.

### 1. How many of your Somali-speaking clients regularly use the Internet?

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%
- I don't know

### 2. In your estimation how many of your Somali-speaking clients read in Somali?

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%
- I don't know

### 3. In your estimation would your Somali-speaking clients learn more from a fact sheet in their primary language or from watching a video in their primary language?

- Fact Sheet
- Video

## Literacy Information

These questions are meant to gauge how well your LEP clients can read and obtain information.

### 1. How many of your Spanish-speaking clients regularly use the Internet?

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%
- I don't know

**2. In your estimation how many of your Spanish-speaking clients read in Spanish?**

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%
- I don't know

**3. In your estimation would your Spanish-speaking clients learn more from a fact sheet in their primary language or from watching a video in their primary language?**

- Fact Sheet
- Video

**Court Forms Information**

These questions are designed to show how well your LEP clients understand court forms

**1. In your estimation, how well do your Hmong-speaking clients understand court forms?**

- Very well
- Moderately well
- Poorly
- Not at all

**2. In your estimation, what percentage of your Hmong-speaking clients could complete court forms unaided or with very little outside help if they were available in their primary language?**

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%

**3. Would court forms available in your clients' primary language help you to better serve your Hmong-speaking clients?**

- Yes, very much
- Yes, somewhat
- No, this would not impact me
- No, this would create extra problems

**4. If someone brought a court form in Hmong to your office, would your staff be available to translate it?**

- Yes
- No

## Court Forms Information

These questions are designed to show how well your LEP clients understand court forms

**1. In your estimation, how well do your Somali-speaking clients understand court forms?**

- Very well
- Moderately well
- Poorly
- Not at all

**2. In your estimation, what percentage of your Somali-speaking clients could complete court forms unaided or with very little outside help if they were available in their primary language?**

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%

**3. Would court forms available in your clients' primary language help you to better serve your Somali-speaking clients?**

- Yes, very much
- Yes, somewhat
- No, this would not impact me
- No, this would create extra problems

**4. If someone brought a court form in Somali to your office, would your staff be available to translate it?**

- Yes
- No

## Court Forms Information

These questions are designed to show how well your LEP clients understand court forms

**1. In your estimation, how well do your Spanish-speaking clients understand court forms?**

- Very well
- Moderately well
- Poorly
- Not at all

**2. In your estimation, what percentage of your Spanish-speaking clients could complete court forms unaided or with very little outside help if they were available in their primary language?**

- 0 to 25%
- 26% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- 76% to 100%

**3. Would court forms available in your clients' primary language help you to better serve your Spanish-speaking clients?**

- Yes, very much
- Yes, somewhat
- No, this would not impact me
- No, this would create extra problems

**4. If someone brought a court form in Spanish to your office, would your staff be available to translate it?**

- Yes
- No

**You're almost done!**

Please answer this question so that we can get complete information about your LEP clients.

**1. Does your office also represent Somali or Spanish-Speaking clients?**

- Yes, both Somali and Spanish-speakers
- Yes, Somali-speaking clients
- Yes, Spanish-speaking clients
- No, neither

**Almost there...**

Please answer this question so we can get complete information about your LEP clients

**1. Are Spanish-speakers also at least 10% of your LEP clients?**

- Yes  
 No

**You're done!**

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey!

**1. Optional: Please let us know if you have other thoughts about legal education materials and court forms for LEP clients.**

## LEP Community Survey

### Responses to:

#### “How do you think the courts can help people who don’t speak English?”

1. If we do not know where to get the appropriate assistance, please have lawyer find where to get the help because I do not know English.
2. I would like one who can speak English well if we do not know how to select a lawyer.
3. More Spanish interpreters.
4. With a bilingual person.
5. That they explain very well what’s going to happen so the person has that information.
6. Providing more help in Spanish. Thank you.
7. Words translated should be of the same exact meaning of the English term so there will be no mistakes.
8. For the attorneys/lawyers to please have English translated into Hmong for the individuals who do not speak English.
9. If there are interpreters who know how to speak Hmong well. That will help out better.
10. My lawyers need to make sure ALL my words are being translated as needed to the Court.
11. I feel attorneys/lawyers should be able to help out the ones who do not understand English as well as the ones who do.
12. I do not know English at all. Will need a translator because I do not understand words.
13. I don’t know English at all so will need to find a translator.
14. Need a Hmong interpreter to help.
15. I would like there to be a good interpreter who also needs to be honest.
16. I would like to learn ways Hmong people can be helped. Lawyers/attorneys should help.
17. Need a Hmong interpreter to be able to help Hmong people.
18. When it comes to us Hmong, please find interpreters to come when there are conflicts so understanding of the issue is better and result with closure. Because the elders do not understand English so what to do with no option, but take pills and just die so then Hmong are dumb.
19. I would like an interpreter with me to help out.
20. If going to Court I would like to see the interpreter so I would have a better understanding.
21. Have more Hmong speaking staff. Maybe signs in Hmong. Although a form in my language would not really help me (I read and write English very well), I believe it would greatly benefit people who are more proficient in Hmong.
22. Lots of help for Somali people at the courthouse.
23. More Spanish interpreters.
24. More Spanish interpreters.
25. Provide interpreters to fill out forms.

26. No.
27. Provide more cultural appropriate staff.
28. Having an interpreter.
29. Trying to have personnel to translate who are certain about what they are translating and who don't change the terminology.
30. Having an interpreter.
31. Having interpreters.
32. Very important to have interpreter.
33. Very important to have interpreter
34. Interpreters are always necessary - to fill out forms and to understand the proceedings.
35. Have an interpreter.
36. You're welcome.
37. Having more bilingual people.
38. Having bilingual people.
39. Help from translators.
40. Having interpreters.
41. Having interpreters available.
42. To understand us better and help us understand the steps.
43. With interpreters.
44. With an interpreter.
45. It would help us a lot to be able to better resolve our legal problems.
46. By having someone to translate.
47. By having translators.
48. Those of us who don't speak much English should request an interpreter. That's what I think.
49. Yes.
50. Understanding your rights better.
51. With translators.
52. With help from interpreters who speak the language of every person that needs help.
53. With an interpreter.
54. Having interpreters.
55. Having an interpreter so I can correctly understand everything.
56. Have more Spanish translators.
57. More information in Spanish.
58. Having assistance in the native language with people who speak their language.
59. With a translator.
60. Having people who speak Spanish.
61. Lots and lots of kindness.
62. They should translate into the English language.
63. Translator.
64. Should have someone to help who is bilingual.
65. They should try to help us.
66. Translator.
67. Court translator.

68. Interpreter or someone from their staffs.
69. [*answer written in Thai and not translated*]
70. Need certified interpreter who specialize with the court system for those that don't speak English, and where or how to contact these people.
71. N/A
72. Interpreter.
73. Yes.
74. It's hard to say. Probably "yes"?
75. Someone who knows the language I speak.
76. That the staff is not insulting or rude when we need help.
77. Have an interpreter present so that it would be easier for both parties right along w/ the court but make sure that the interpreter is employed by the county.
78. They do help a lot because they have translator for the people.
79. Have a translator available for them.
80. I don't think they will help that much because we wouldn't be understanding each other.
81. The courts can help people.
82. I think the courts can seek the interpreter for us.
83. Yes. If they have an interpreter.
84. Having interpreters available is something I think the courts can help.
85. Interpreters in Spanish.
86. With interpreters.

## Legal Services Provider Survey

### Responses to:

**“Please let us know if you have other thoughts about legal education materials and court forms for LEP clients.”**

1. A comprehensive program in conjunction with legal aid and public defenders in schools may help to prepare LEP students in the future. Also, a joint presentation project between the Court and legal aid (and the MSBA) in trying to better educate major LEP adult populations may be worth undertaking in terms of helping LEP populations to better understand and access the justice system and ultimately to help themselves more in reading justice-related materials and in preparing forms.
2. I serve seniors, 60 and older. Very few would be able to manage on their own, even if forms were in their language. Many elderly Hmong and Somali are uneducated or have minimal education.
3. Sometimes translations are not accurate and produce more confusion among clients. Perhaps the forms should be reviewed by professionals from different countries to check if words are understood and translated in a manner understood by the general population since there are very different dialects and use of words among Hmong, Somali and Spanish speaking clients.
4. Offering court forms in languages other than English is so beneficial to so many of the clients we serve. It would also be so helpful if there was a self-help attorney available to help these clients fill out their forms pro se in their own language.
5. I work more in the welfare area but translated applications and report forms still are not 100% helpful. It depends on education of the client, proper translation of the forms, the client's ability to read, etc.
6. Somali videos are a brilliant idea. Many of my clients, who spent all of their school years in Kenyan refugee camps, are not literate in any language. Moreover, the court process is often mystifying.
7. Legal education materials such as the handbooks/pamphlets previously published by the Attorney General's office – in Somali, Spanish and Hmong – would be very helpful, also.
8. The instructions are necessary but perhaps could be aided by a one or two page flow chart of documents and timelines. For example: Step 1 - list the documents to begin a case; Step 2 - service and list the document; Step 3 - filing or waiting for a response; etc.

9. Many people learn more from seeing a video than from something they have been given to read. I think this increases with lower education levels, regardless of language ability.
10. I think it is vital to have both written and verbal materials available to our non-English speaking populations. LEP persons are at a disadvantage when it comes to asserting their rights and representing themselves in court due to the lack of translated materials and small number of interpreters.
11. I have a significant number of clients who speak Arabic, Russian, other Eastern European languages at this time. In the past, I have had more Somali and Sudanese clients. I do have some Spanish speaking clients, as well as occasional Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong and Ethiopian clients.
12. Video would be helpful, a lot don't read or write Hmong.
13. I think while having court forms available for LEP clients, it is us at the Legal Services that will more than likely be assisting this client anyway, so what is the purpose of the form? We have many, many people in our service area that speak English and they cannot fill out the court forms, so I don't see any difference for LEP clients, even if the form was in their primary language.



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- Adoption
- Child Abuse and Protection (CHIPS)
- Child Support
- Custody and Visitation
- Divorce (Dissolution)
- Domestic Violence / Spousal Abuse
- Family Law Fact Sheets
- Grandparent Visitation Rights
- Paternity
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