Office of the State Court Administrator
Guidelines for Using Translated Forms

Why have forms translated?

The Supreme Court Task Force on Racial and Ethnic Issues in the Judicial System, as well as the subsequent Implementation Committee and the Oregon Supreme Court's Access to Justice Committee, has identified the translation of common court forms as a method of "opening the doors" to making court services more accessible and understandable to the non-English speaker.

But don't forms filed with the court have to be in English?

Yes.

ORS 1.150 states that "any writing in any action, suit or proceeding in a court of justice of this state or before a judicial officer, shall be in English." The statute goes on to say a writing may be submitted in English and accompanied by a translation and a statement from the translator that the form/item was translated to be an accurate and true translation.

Since the law specifies that writings filed with the court must be in English, the parties are responsible for providing an English translation of any information written in the non-English language.

By providing a non-English-speaking person with the form or instruction in the person's native language, the Oregon Judicial Department is removing the mystery of the form, the instructions, and helping to remove the barrier to the person's understanding and accessing court services.

So, can't we just have anyone translate our forms?

Translating is a specialized profession, different than interpretation and requires different skills and knowledge.

While some courts have had some forms translated on their own, ORS 1.150 states that the State Court Administrator may establish policies and procedures governing the implementation of the translations of forms. OSCA has held that the courts should use an American Translator's Association accredited translator for any translations. An ATA accredited translator has passed the test for translating, producing a document written in one language into a written document in another language.

So, who is doing these translations for OSCA?

The initial translations have been done by ATA accredited translators, staff and free-lance, and then proofread by Oregon Certified Court Interpreters.

English language forms are here too, but we have our own local form. Can we just use our own English form and the Spanish translation?

No, unless your English form *matches* the English language form posted here. Legally, if you used your English language form and the OSCA translated form (which is a translation based on another form), the two will not match and the person will not have been provided with the same information and would not have answered the same questions.

How do we use the forms?

Download the forms into your WordPerfect. Print the English language form. Print the Spanish language form. Page 1 of the English version matches page 1 of the Spanish version. You can copy them, double

siding them, with English on one side and Spanish on the other. The person would read the Spanish and then turn the page over and fill out the English side.

If you have problems formatting or downloading the forms into your PC, contact Sandy Hilfiker, Administrative Services Unit Supervisor, Office of the State Court Administrator, at (503) 986-5511.

If the non-English-speaking person has another person translate his/her answers back into English for completion of the English language form so that it may be filed with the court, the translation done in English must be accompanied by a statement that the translation of the person's words into English has been done to the best of the translator's abilities.

Who do I contact for more information:

On the Spanish translations themselves: Ed Alletto, Interpreter Supervisor, 503.731-3277

On the guidelines: Kelly Mills, CIS Program Manager, 503.986.7004

On formatting or downloading   Jenn McQuain, Administrative Services Manager,
Forms into your PC: 503/986-5511

We hope that providing the forms electronically will allow us to easily update and add to the bank of forms. We may have some difficulties to work out as we learn more about using electronic access, and we beg your patience.