

Nebraska Judicial Branch



Nebraska Supreme Court
Interpreter Project

Language Access Report for 2013

Trial Court Services Director, Sheryl Connolly

“These individuals come before our courts as victims, witnesses, defendants, and parents of juveniles. Not only is it important that these individuals be heard, but it is equally important that judges, attorneys, and jury members understand the testimony and arguments of non-English speakers so that justice can be served.”

Chief Justice of the
Nebraska Supreme Court
Michael Heavican
2014 State of the Judiciary
Speech

Chief Justice Michael Heavican, during his State of the Judiciary Speech to the Nebraska Legislature on January 17, 2014, recognized that providing equal access to justice to the increasing number of individuals who speak little or no English is one of the many challenges facing the Judicial Branch.



The Nebraska Supreme Court’s Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation, with support and direction from the Supreme Court’s Interpreter Advisory Committee, has made significant steps in 2013 toward improving language access to Nebraska court and probation users.

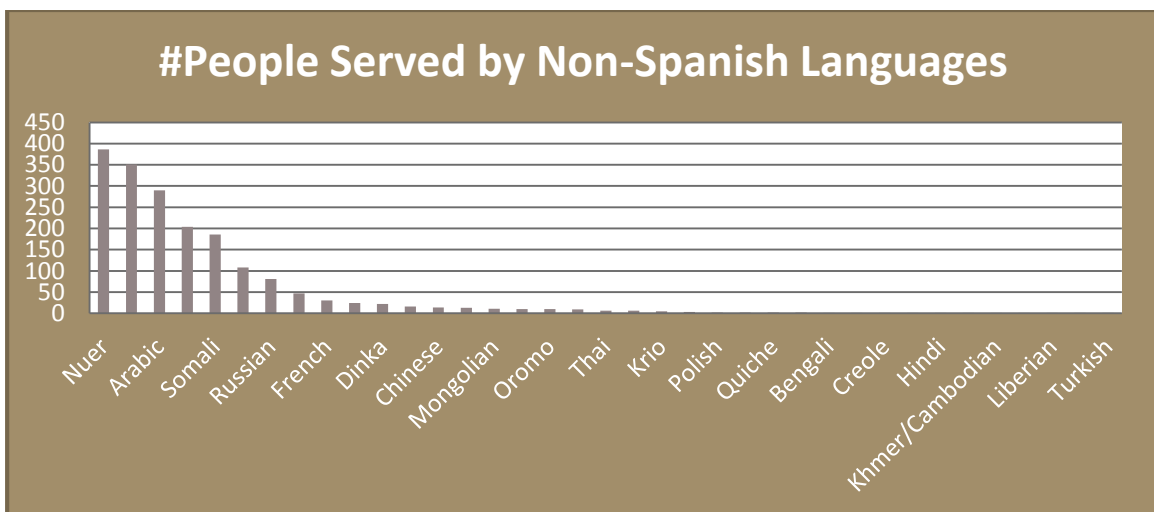
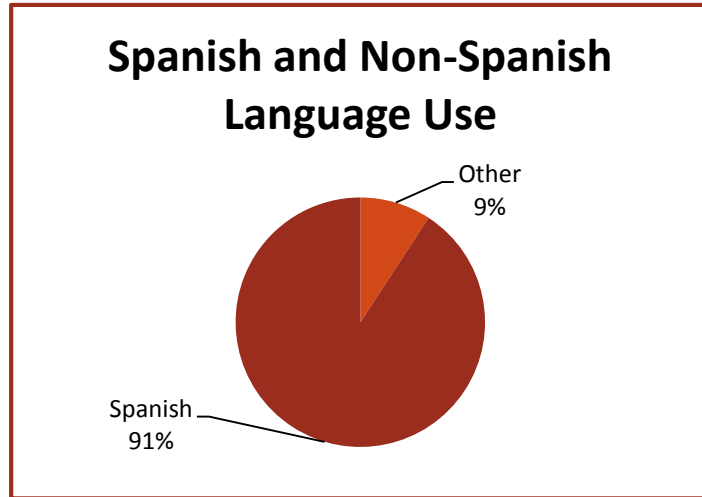
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Scope of Services

The Nebraska Supreme Court’s Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation provided interpreters in 41 languages for court and probation users in 2013. While Spanish remains the most frequently requested language needing interpretation, often languages such as Nuer, Arabic, and Somali were also needed across the state.



- Nuer – South Sudan
- Arabic – Parts of Africa/Parts of Europe/Parts of Middle East
- Somali – Somalia/Ethiopia/Kenya
- Russian – Russia/Ukraine
- French – France/Parts of Africa/Canada
- Dinka – South Sudan
- Chinese - China
- Mongolian - Mongolia
- Khmer/Cambodian - Cambodia
- Turkish - Turkey

- Oromo - Ethiopia
- Thai - Thailand
- Krio – Sierra Leone
- Polish - Poland
- Quiche - Guatemala
- Bengali - Bangladesh
- Creole - Caribbean
- Hindi - India
- Liberian - Liberia



The statistics for interpreter services in 2013 outline interpreter usage in the Judicial Branch by language, judicial district, court and probation. (See appendix)

Increased responsibilities under the Judicial Branch, including the expansion of Juvenile Justice services outlined in LB561 passed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2013, are expected to increase the need for, and cost of, interpreter services in the coming years. The Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation is expanding analysis of interpreter data to ensure that interpreters and funding are available to provide needed services.

Identifying Interpreter Resources

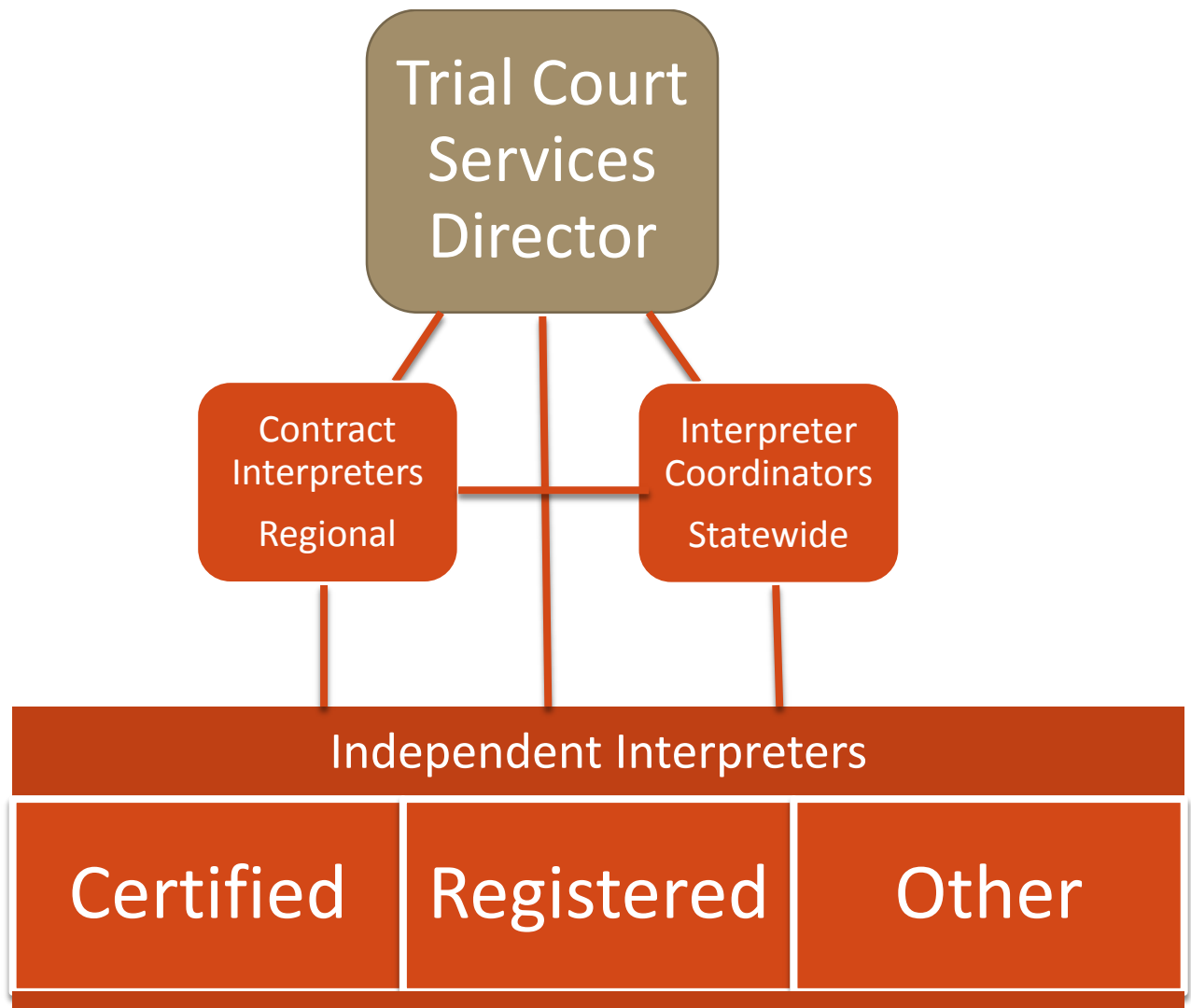


In November 2012, the Nebraska Judicial Branch hired its first two interpreter employees. Adriana Hinojosa, Omaha, and Raul Escobar, Lincoln, assumed the newly created positions of Interpreter Coordinators. In addition to providing and coordinating interpreter services in their home courts, the

interpreter coordinators are charged with statewide responsibilities for identifying, recruiting, mentoring, and educating interpreter candidates in needed languages. The coordinators also help facilitate scheduling of interpreters, both in person and via video and teleconference services, for other districts statewide.

Expansion of Court Interpreter Contracts

In response to the needs of the courts and probation offices in Nebraska's south central corridor, a contract for certified Spanish interpreter services was established to cover the courts and probation offices in Hall County and the 10th Judicial District. Following the models currently in use in the 2nd Judicial District, and District 4 and 4J Probation, the contractor will provide Spanish interpretation and coordinate interpreter services in other needed languages.



Education of Interpreters and Interpreter Candidates

A two day orientation is the first step toward qualifying interpreters for Nebraska courts. Orientation is offered bi-annually, once in Lincoln and once in Omaha. Scholarships are available for interpreters who need financial assistance if they travel in from outstate Nebraska, or speak languages for which Nebraska interpreters are not available. In 2013, 69 interpreters speaking nine different languages attended orientation.

Interpreters who have attended orientation are eligible to take the written English comprehension examination. Eighteen interpreters passed this multiple choice English vocabulary test, the second step in the program.

Skills Building classes were offered to provide interpreters with information and support to help them improve their skills in sight translation, and consecutive and simultaneous interpreting.

The oral exam is the final step toward certification. Twenty-one interpreters took the oral exam in 2013, and Nebraska added three Spanish certified interpreters, as well as registered interpreters in Vietnamese, Bosnian/Serbian Croatian, and French to the roster of interpreters.

In 2012, the Nebraska Supreme Court adopted rules requiring continuing education for certified and registered interpreters. The Administrative Office of the Courts shares information about interpreter education opportunities with a contact list of interpreters and interpreter candidates as opportunities become available. Skills Building workshops offer one option for meeting interpreters continuing education requirements. The Nebraska Association for Translators and Interpreters (NATI) also offers valuable educational opportunities to court, medical, and community interpreters. Online and out-of-state education is also available to interpreters.

Language Access Plan

The Nebraska Judicial Branch published the Language Access Plan on the Judicial Branch website in January 2014, after working with courts, interpreters, and the Department of Justice throughout 2013. The plan includes an overview of services currently provided, the authority upon which those services are based, the needs of the state for language access, and plans for meeting the ongoing needs of the Nebraska Judicial Branch.

<http://supremecourt.ne.gov/sites/supremecourt.ne.gov/files/reports/courts/language-access-plan.pdf>

The Minority Justice Committee supported and supplemented the Judicial Branch's Language Access Plan through its release of a Language Access Needs Assessment, which included information gathered through surveys and interviews of judges, attorneys, court and probation staff, and court and probation users.

<http://nebar.com/associations/8143/files/Final%20Report%20Language%20Access%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>

Nebraska Interpreter Protocol

The Nebraska Supreme Court updated its Interpreter Protocol in 2013. The Protocol provides the basis on which courts and probation make decisions on providing interpreter services.

<http://supremecourt.ne.gov/sites/supremecourt.ne.gov/files/misc/protocol-2013.pdf>

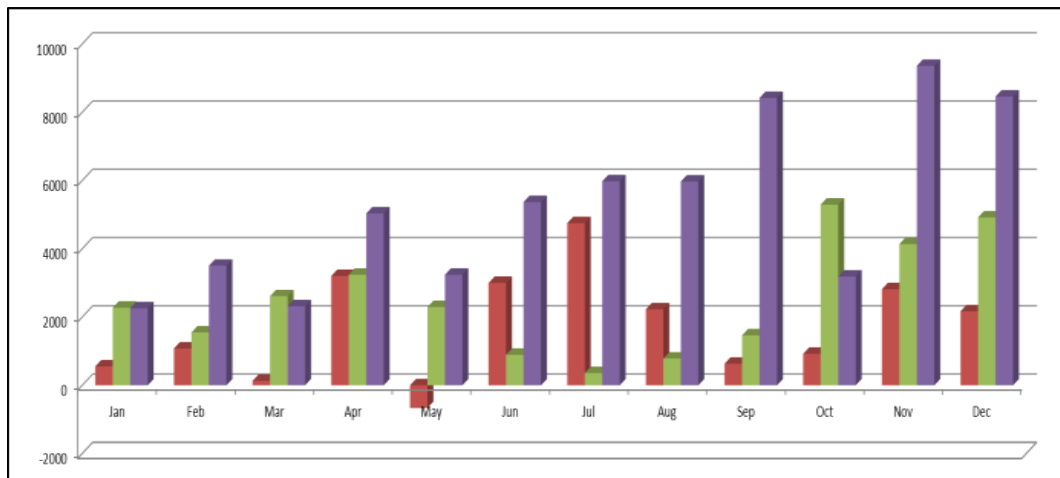
Remote Interpreting

The Nebraska Judicial Branch continued to expand availability of remote interpreters through Cisco JABBER videoconferencing. On-call Spanish interpreters are available daily to provide support for courts and probation offices.

On-call Interpreter Savings

	2011	2012	2013
Jan	556	2,275	2,256
Feb	1,082	1,549	3,505
Mar	133	2,612	2,316
Apr	3,205	3,242	5,035
May	(663)	2,291	3,239
Jun	3,000	896	5,371
Jul	4,754	358	5,977
Aug	2,230	785	5,973
Sep	635	1,464	8,421
Oct	927	5,296	3,184
Nov	2,816	4,140	9,360
Dec	2,171	4,920	8,460
Total	\$ 20,846	\$ 29,828	\$ 63,097

Savings from on-call interpreters seen here are computed by determining the time and distance required in order to provide an interpreter on-site for the assignment by the closest available certified court interpreter.



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Interpreters for many languages have been assigned Jabber accounts, or have access to the Jabber system through interpreter coordinators or court staff in their communities. Remote interpretation increases availability of qualified interpreters statewide, and provides significant savings of taxpayer dollars by eliminating travel time and mileage.

Translations

On-call Spanish interpreters expanded their services to the Judicial Branch in 2013 when they added the translation of forms and documents to their on-call duties, working on the translations only when they were not interpreting calls. The program produced 26 translated documents, including protection order forms and instructions, divorce forms and instructions, and probation forms and informational materials.

The Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation, in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Aging, secured a grant for translation of Nebraska guardianship and conservatorship forms and information. Translations are expected to be completed in 2014.

A Somali translation of Nebraska County Court rights advisement was completed in 2013, and will be available on the Nebraska Judicial Branch website, along with the Spanish translation made available the previous year.

<http://supremecourt.ne.gov/4859/interpreter-project>

Language Access Basic Training: Education for Court Staff

In addition to webinars and live education opportunities, Nebraska was one of six states that consulted in, and piloted Language Access Basic Training developed by the New Mexico Court Administrators Office and New Mexico Language Access Center through a grant by the State Justice Institute. Twenty court staff from across the state participated in education for monolingual and bilingual staff. Trial Court Services Director Sheryl Connolly was among the court professionals whose quotes were featured in the training.

Interpreter Advisory Committee: Projects and Priorities

The Interpreter Advisory Committee advises the Supreme Court on the needs of the courts, probation and limited English Proficient (LEP) court users.

<http://supremecourt.ne.gov/2545/interpreter-advisory-committee>

Current priorities of the Committee and/or AOC include:

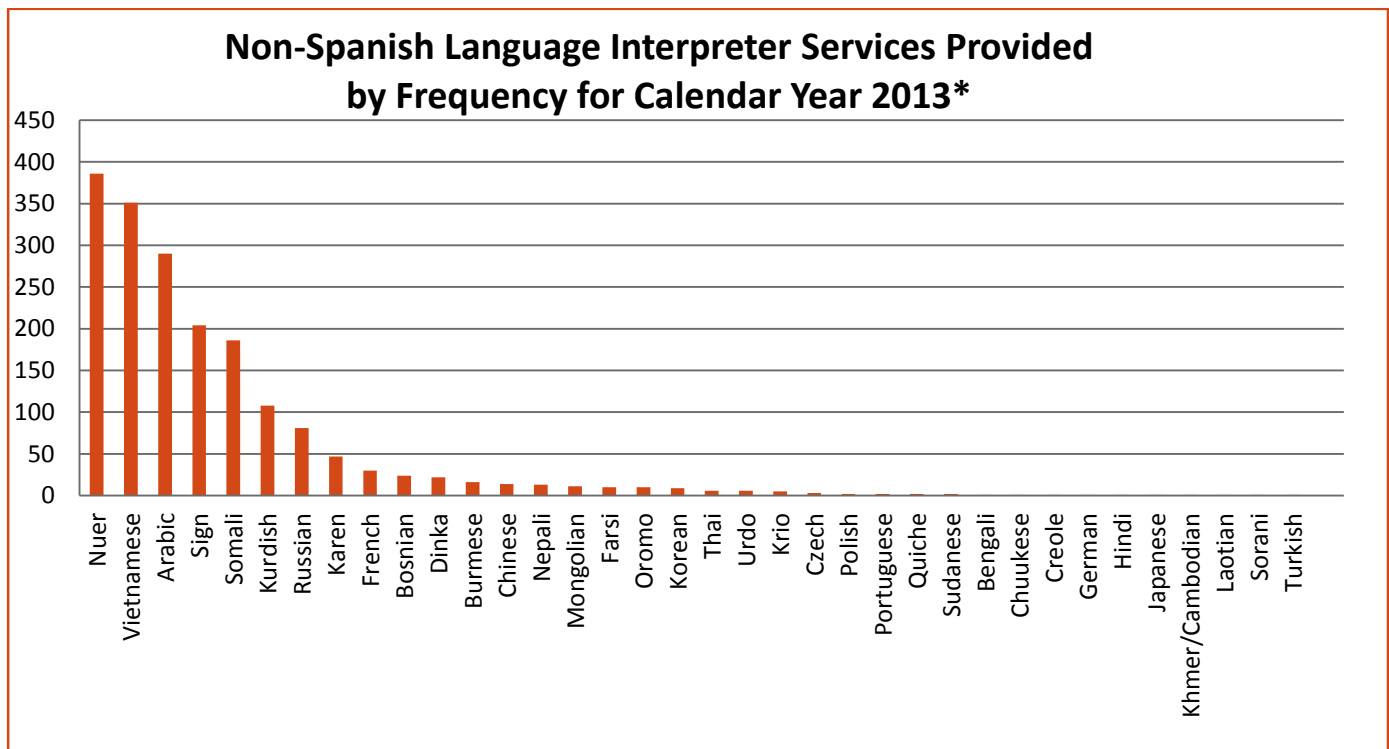
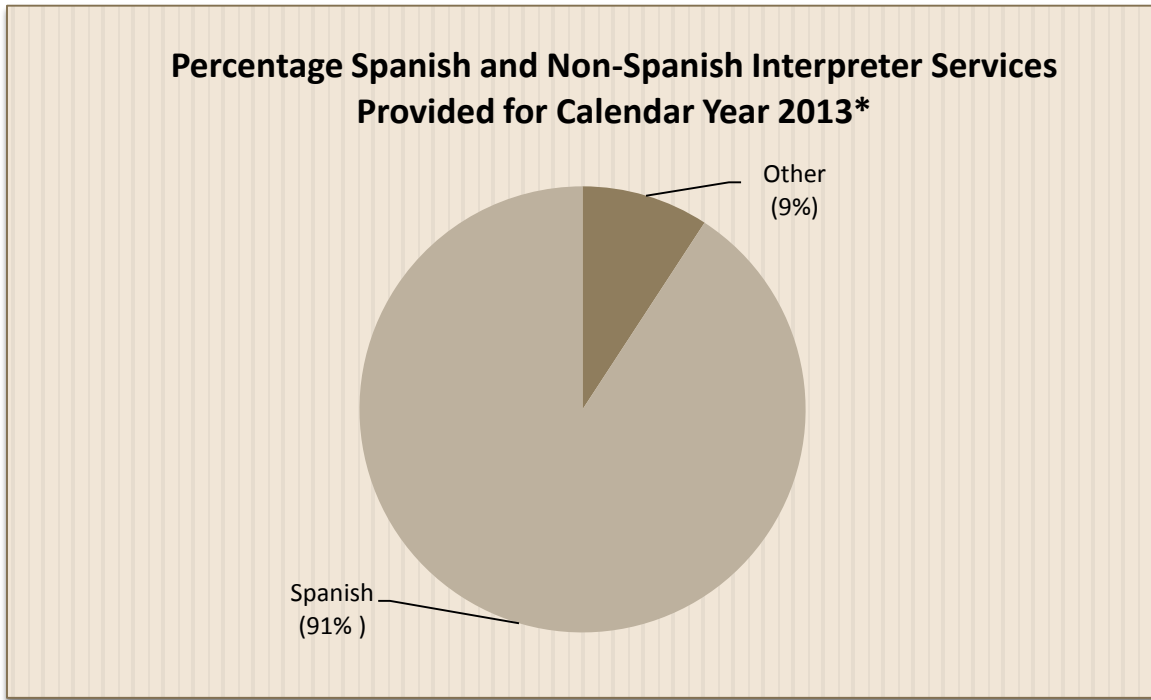
1. Identify, recruit, educate, mentor, and test interpreters in needed languages to ensure language access to all court users regardless of language need or location.
2. Provide recorded information on court processes for interpreters and court users.
3. Establish a rule for providing translations and identify qualifications for translators.
4. Complete an Interpreter Ethics Manual



Appendix

Statewide provision of interpreter services, by language, for individuals served by Nebraska courts and probation system in 2013.





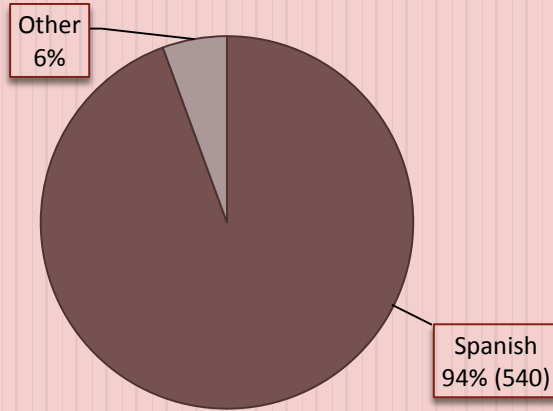
Updated 01/28/2015 *

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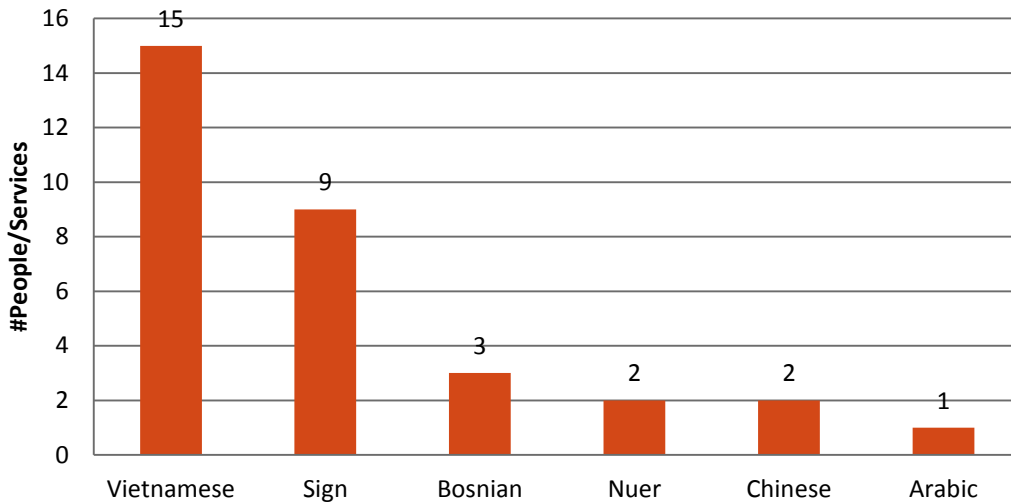
Chart (1) Interpreter Services: 1st Judicial District



Spanish and Non-Spanish Languages Served In Judicial District 1 for 2013



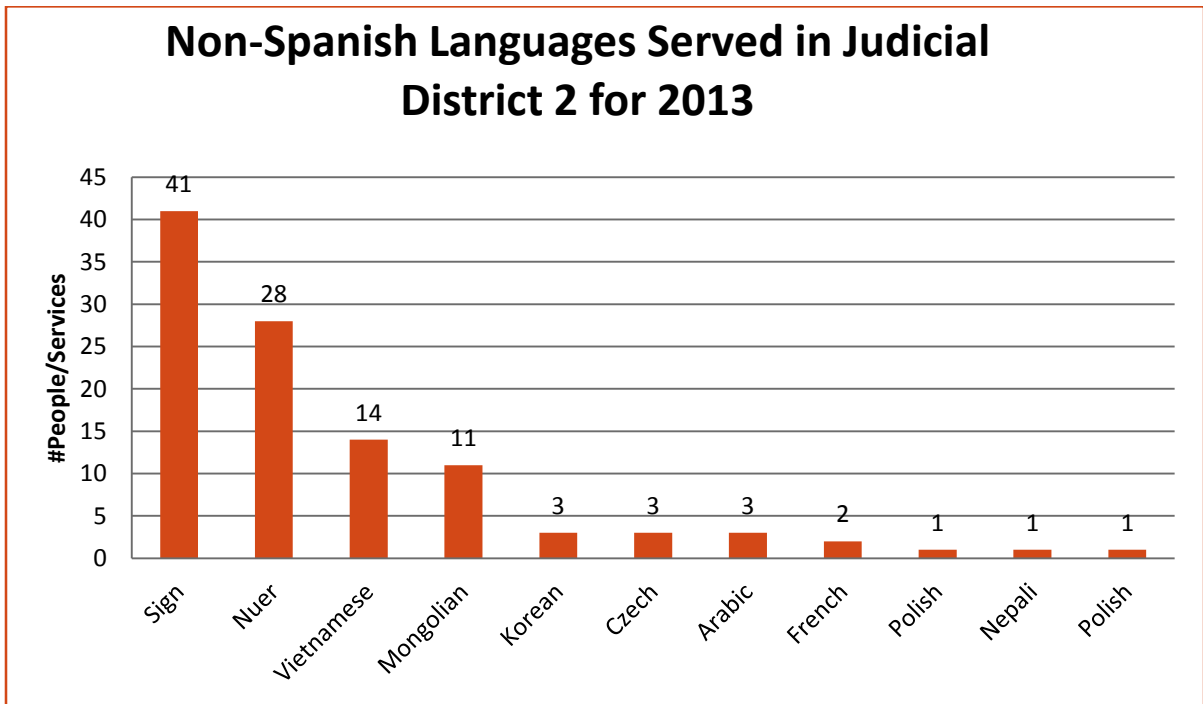
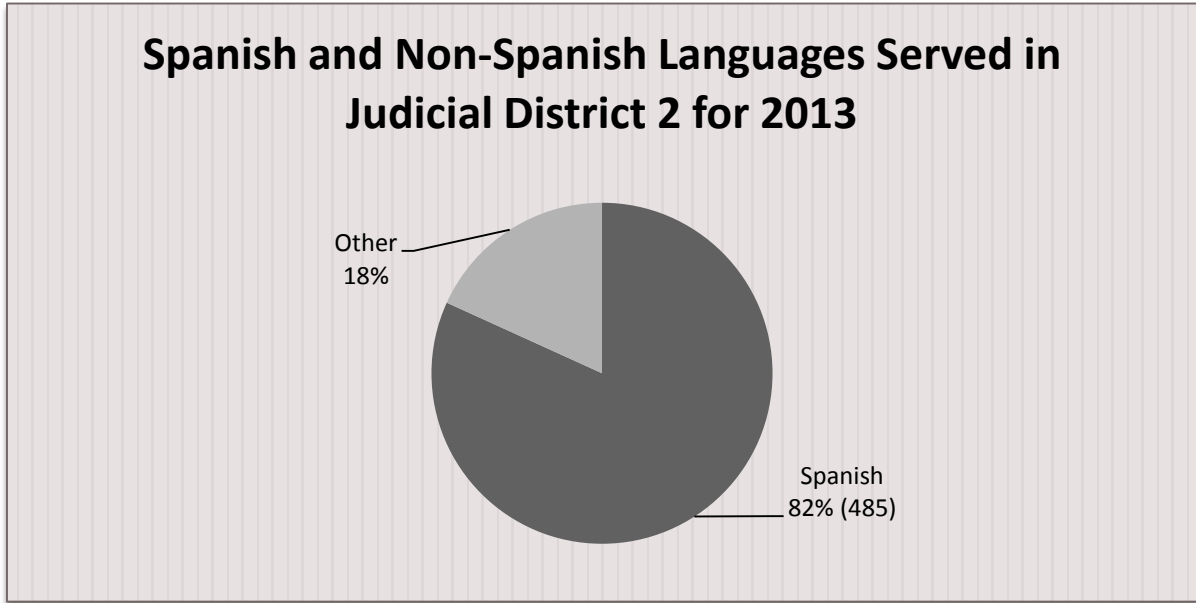
Non-Spanish Languages Served in Judicial District 1 for 2013



Appendix



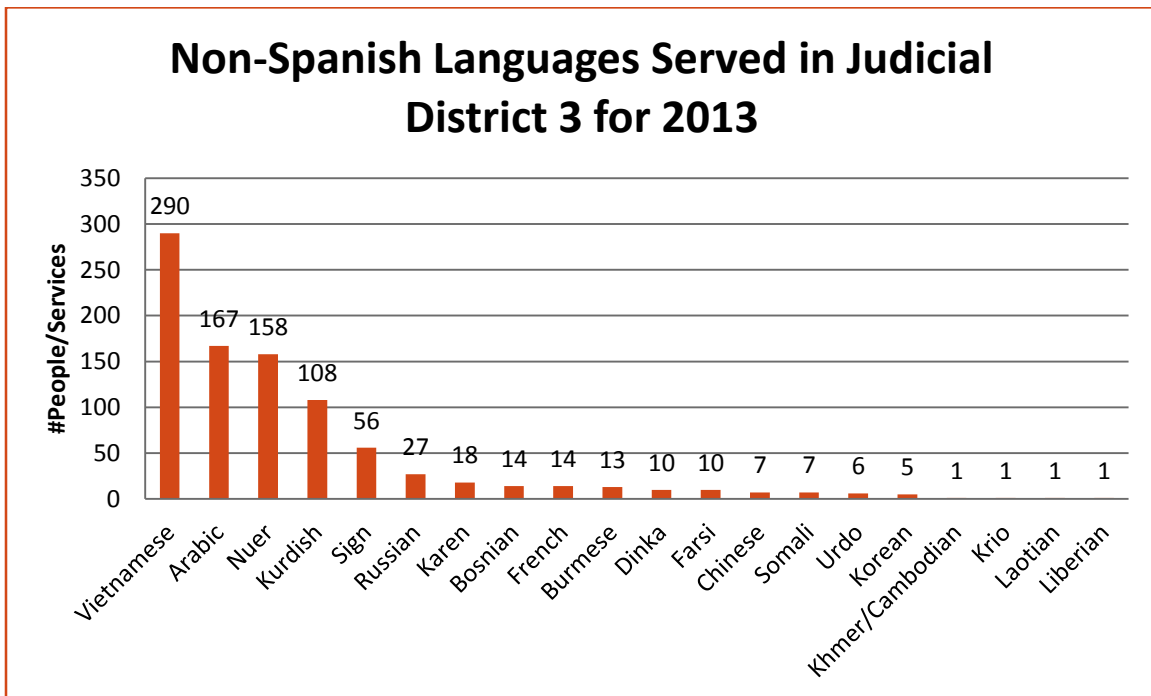
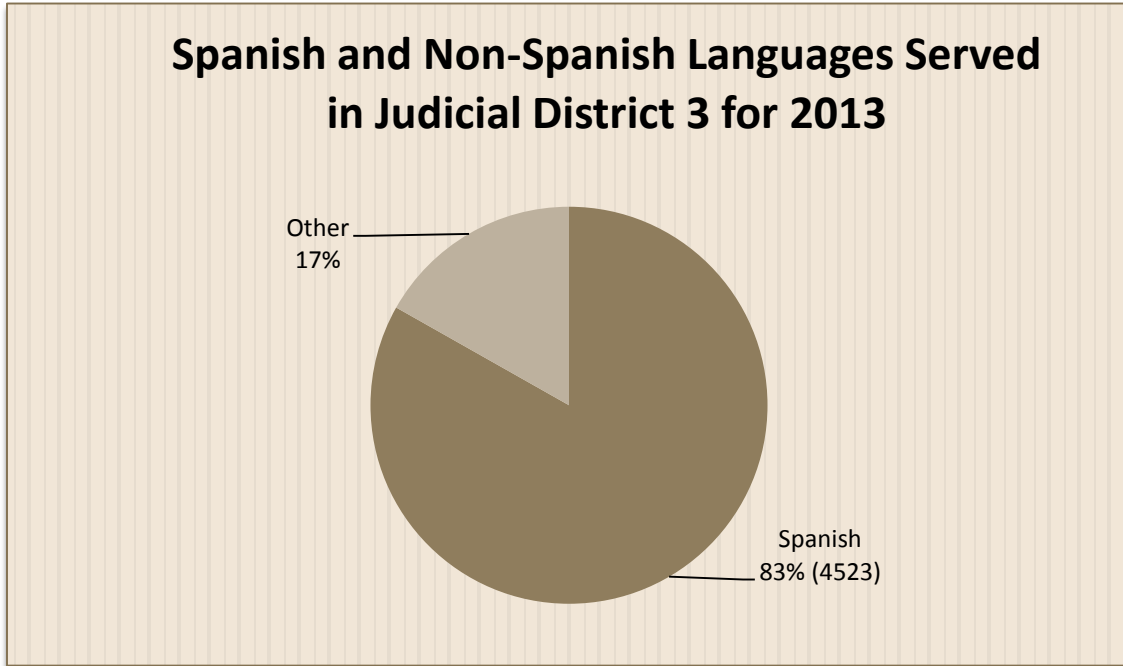
Chart (2) Interpreter Services: 2nd Judicial District



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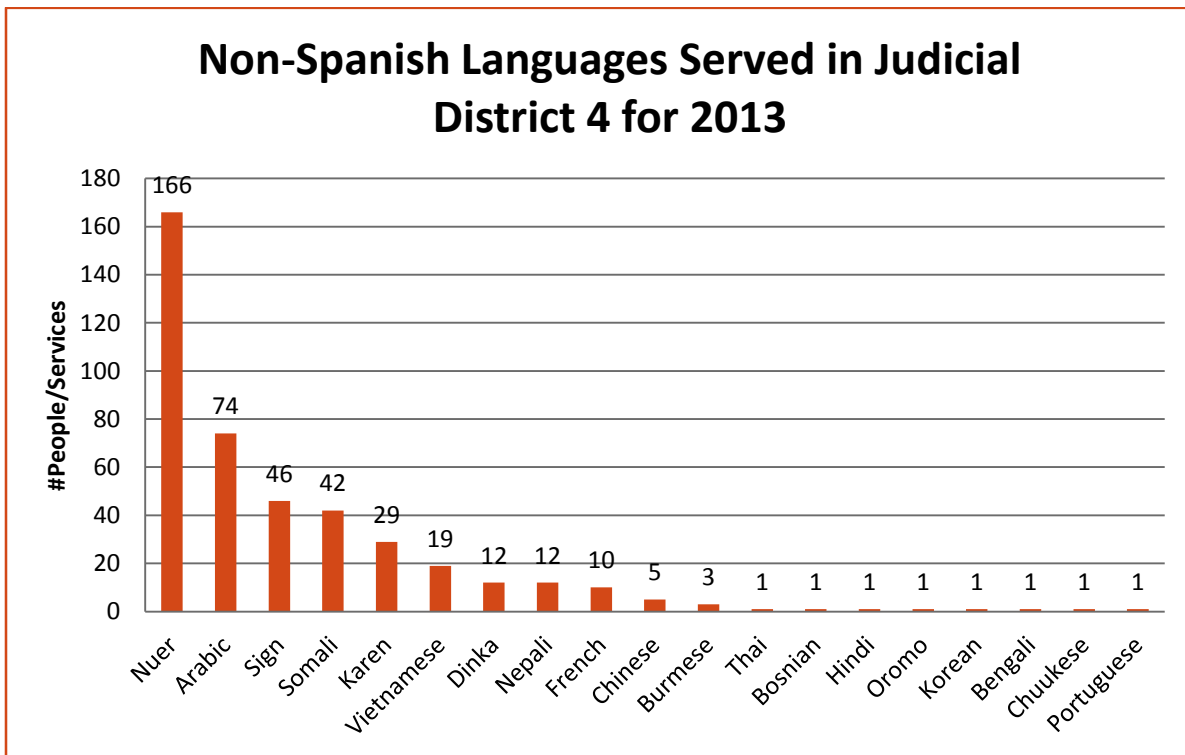
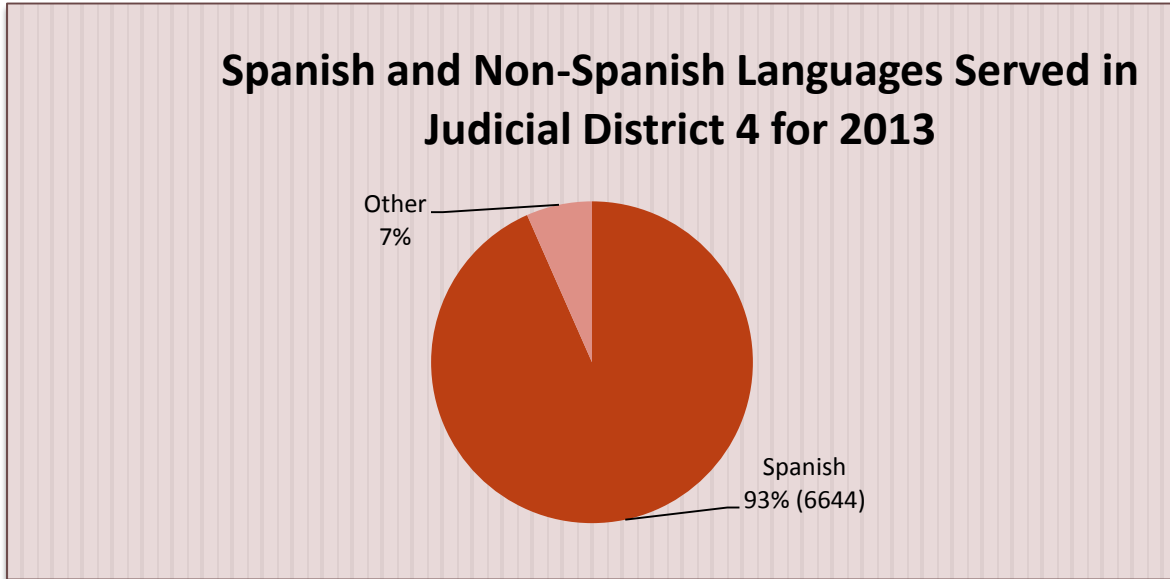


Chart (3) Interpreter Services: 3rd Judicial District



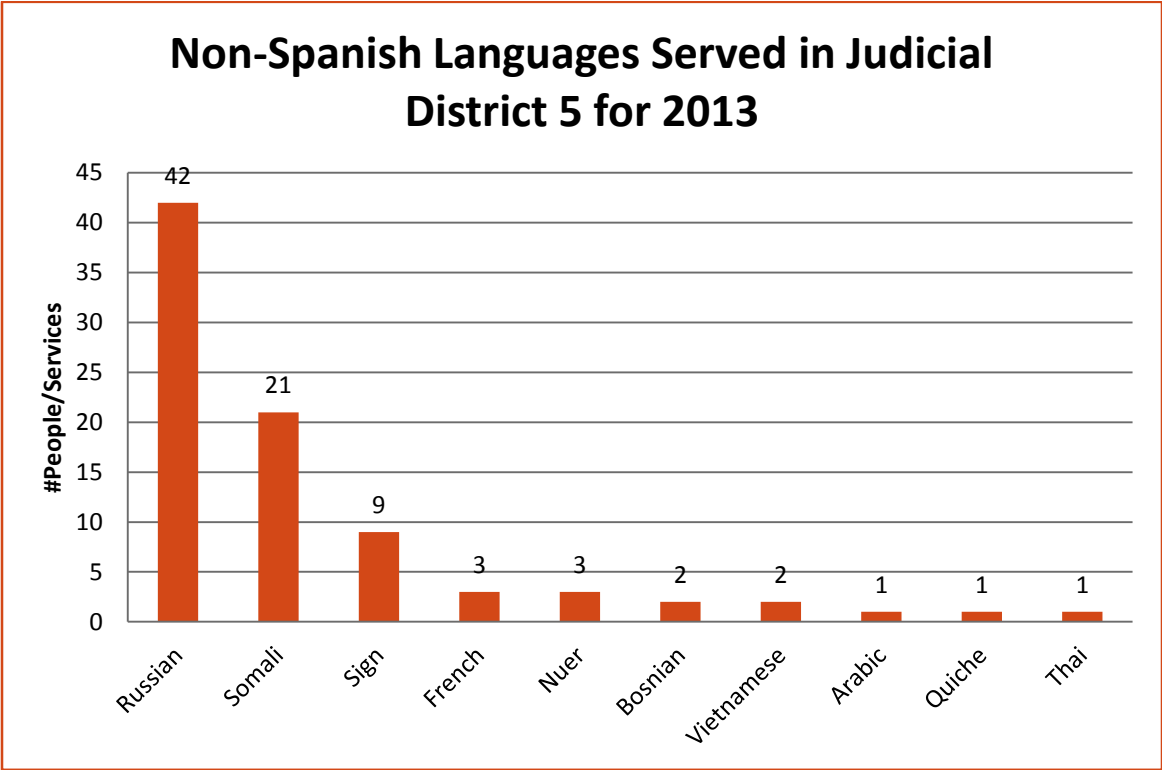
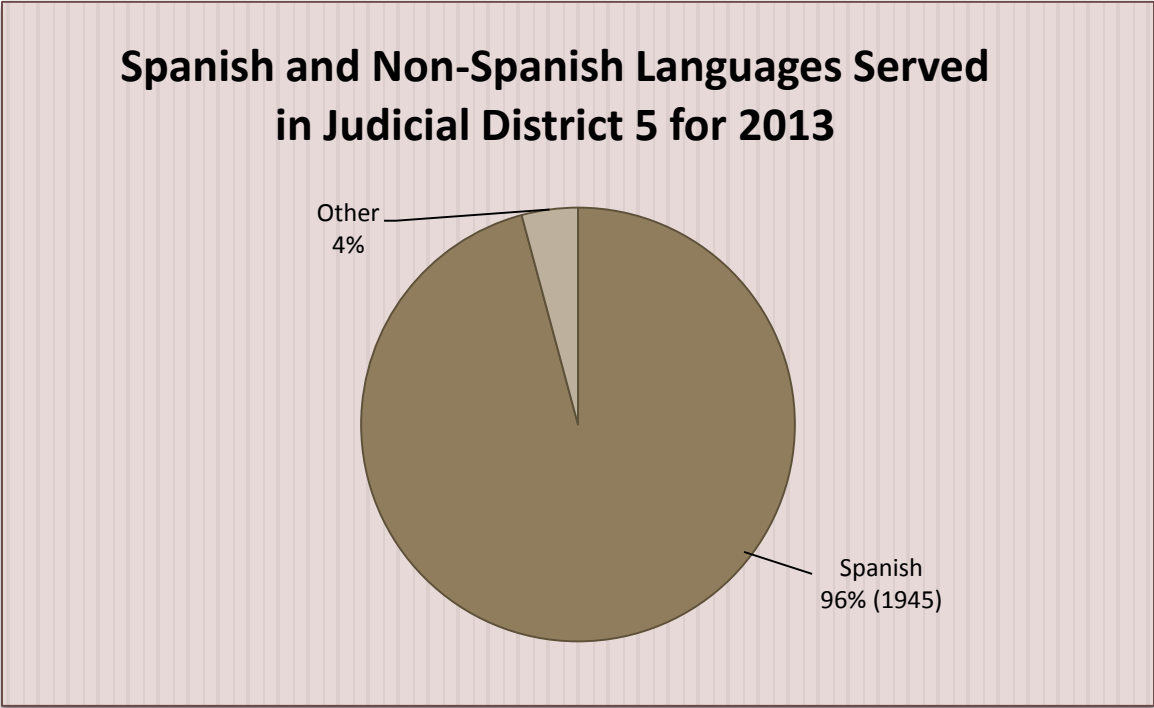
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Chart (4) Interpreter Services: 4th Judicial District



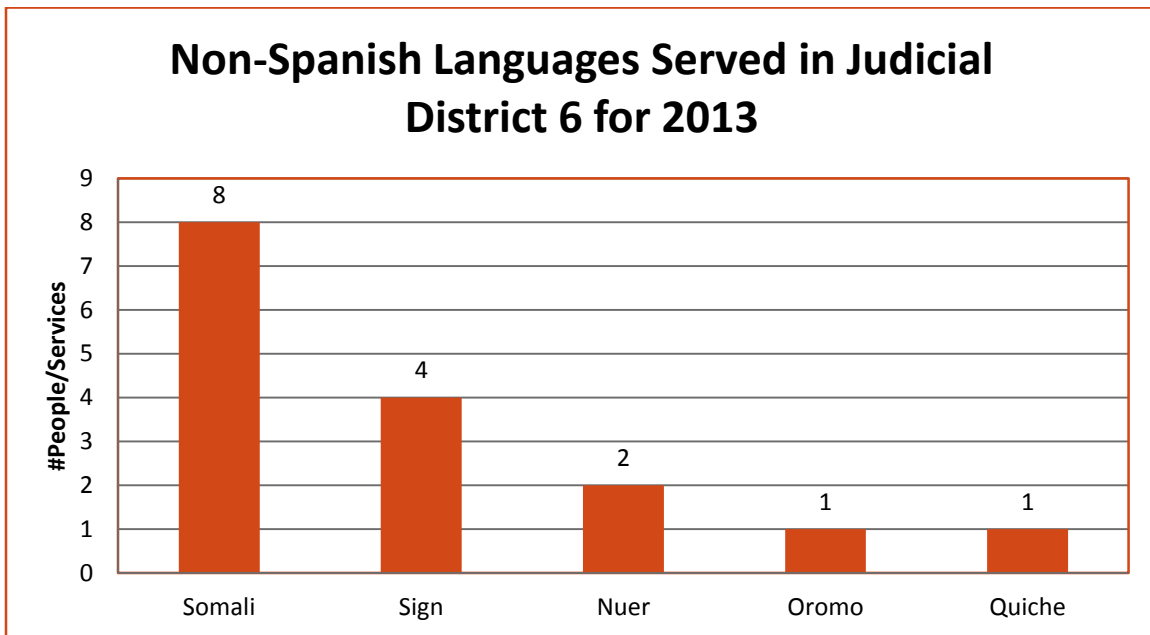
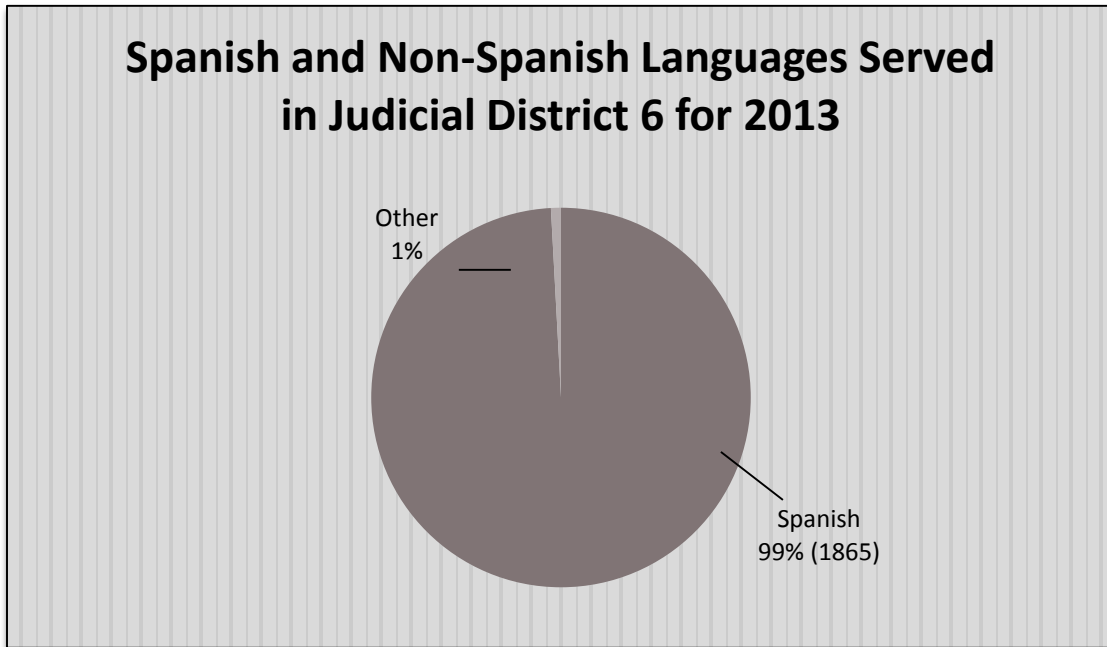
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Chart (5) Interpreter Services: 5th Judicial District



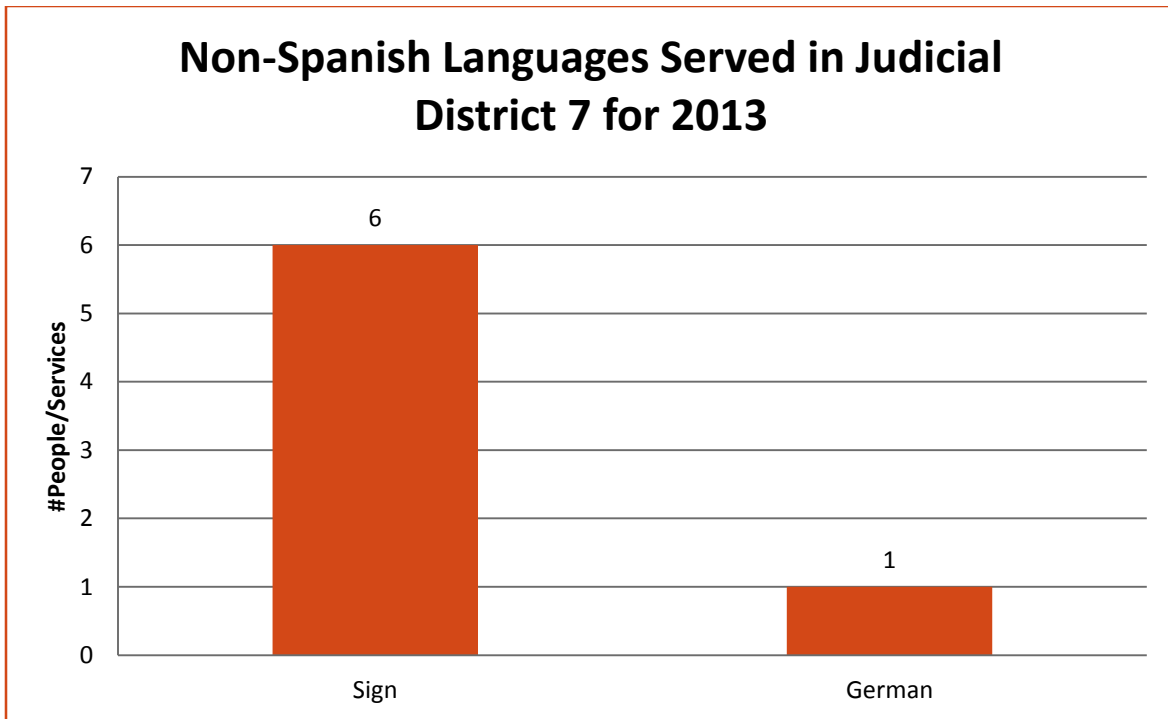
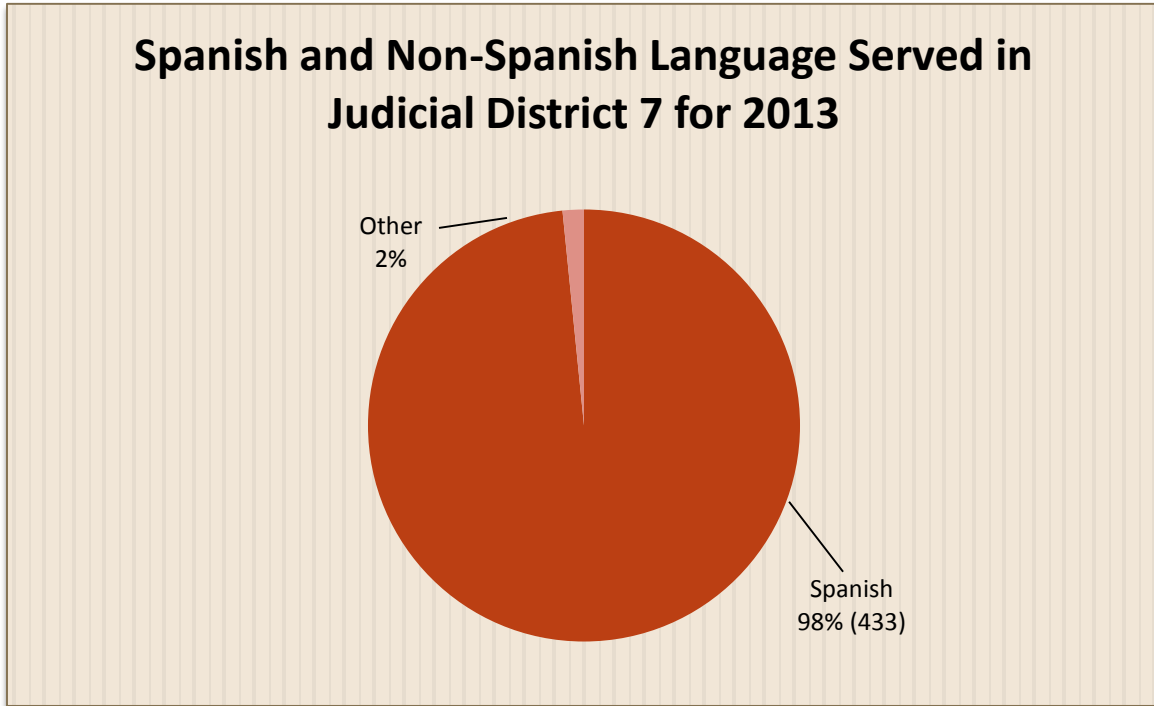
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Chart (6) **Interpreter Services: 6th Judicial District**



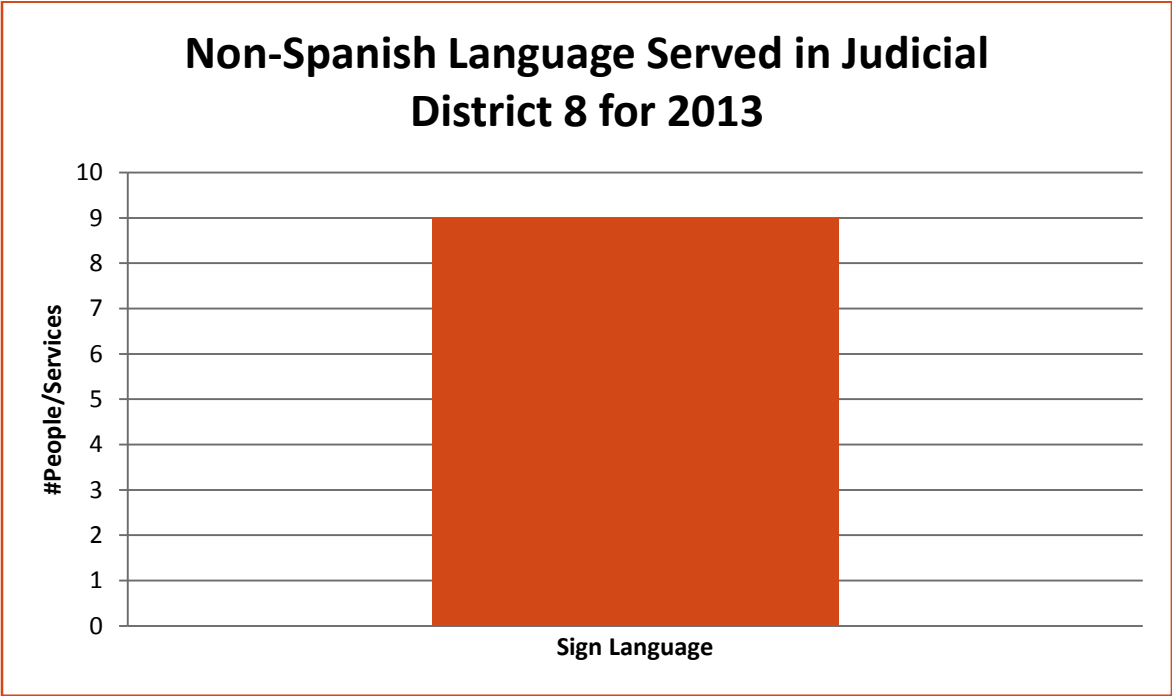
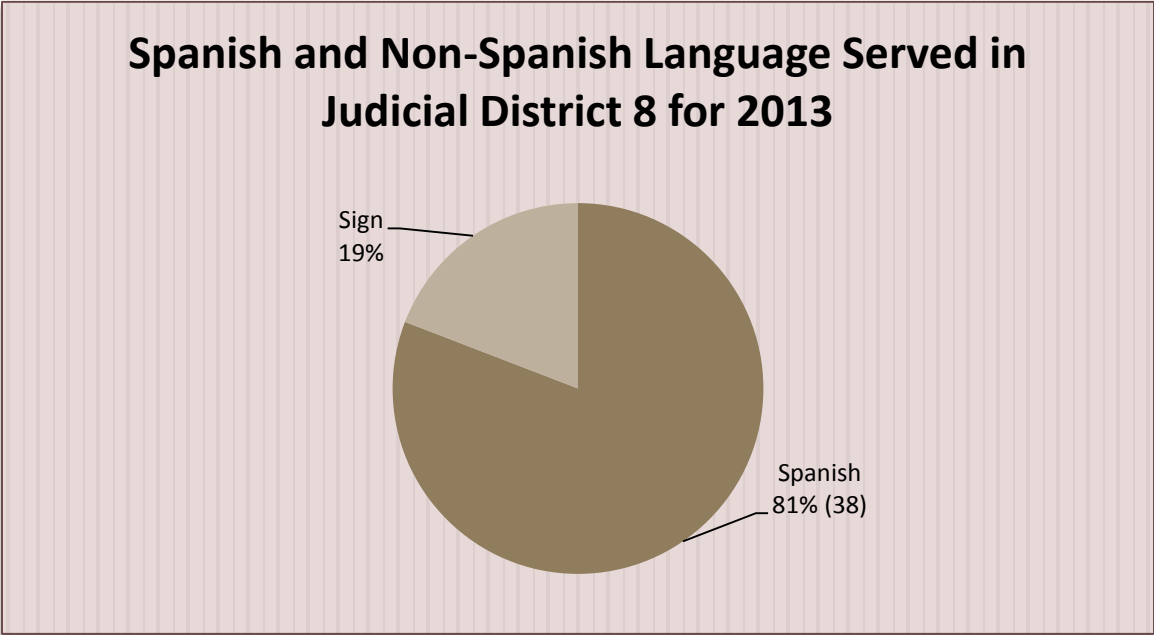
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Chart (7) Interpreter Services: 7th Judicial District



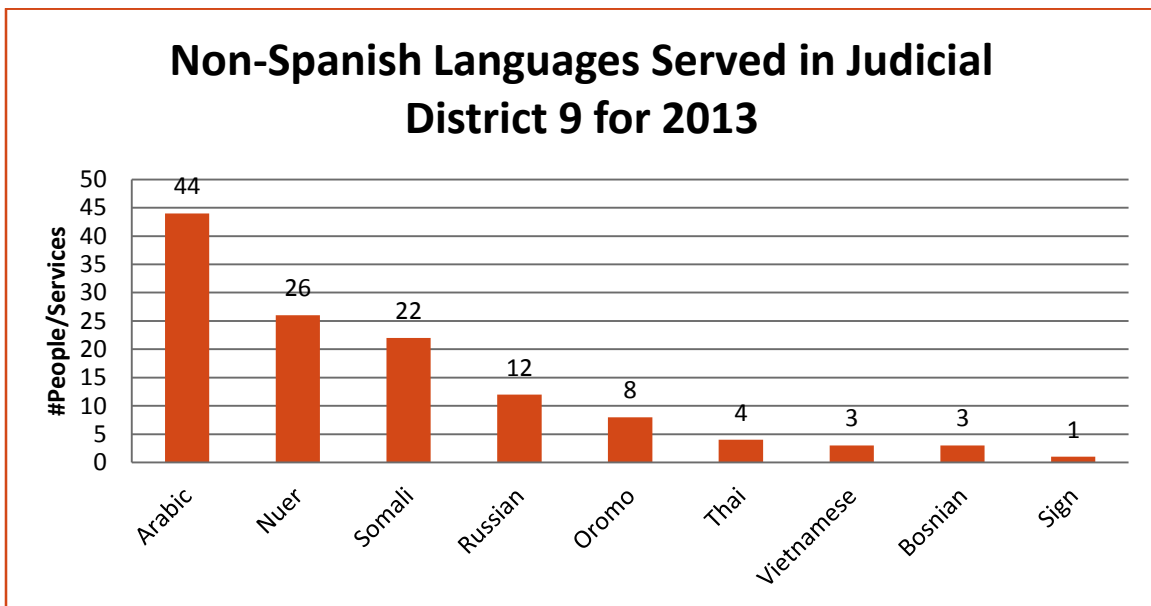
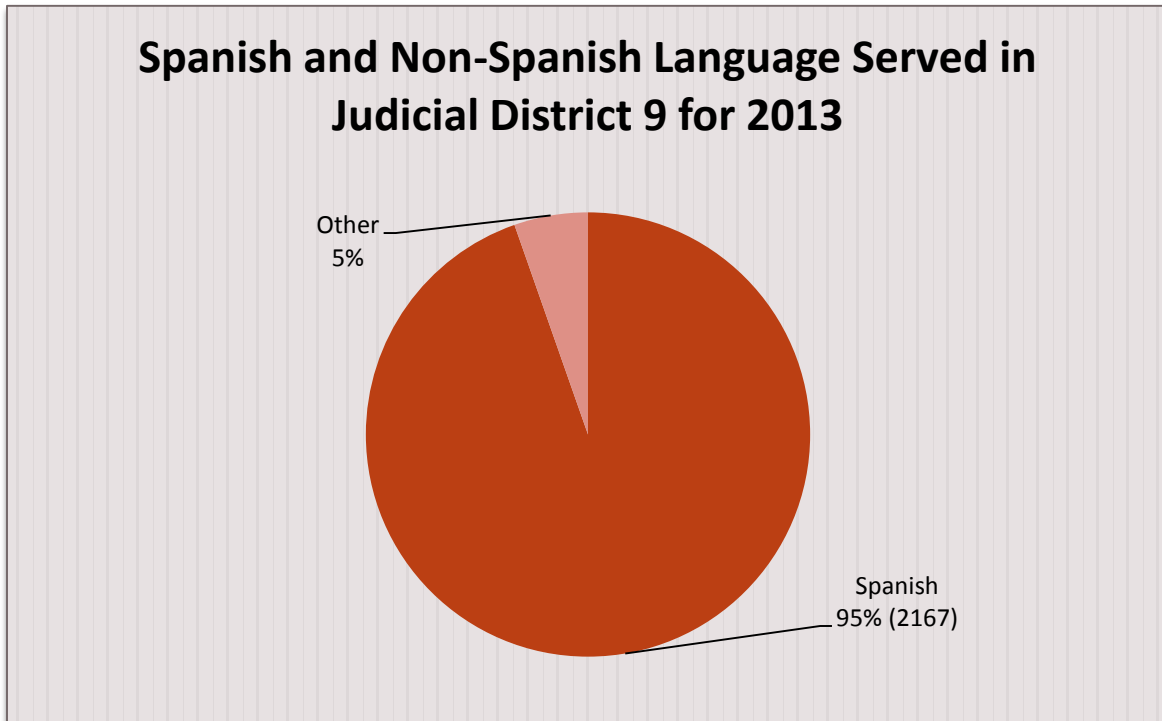
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Chart (8) **Interpreter Services: 8th Judicial District**



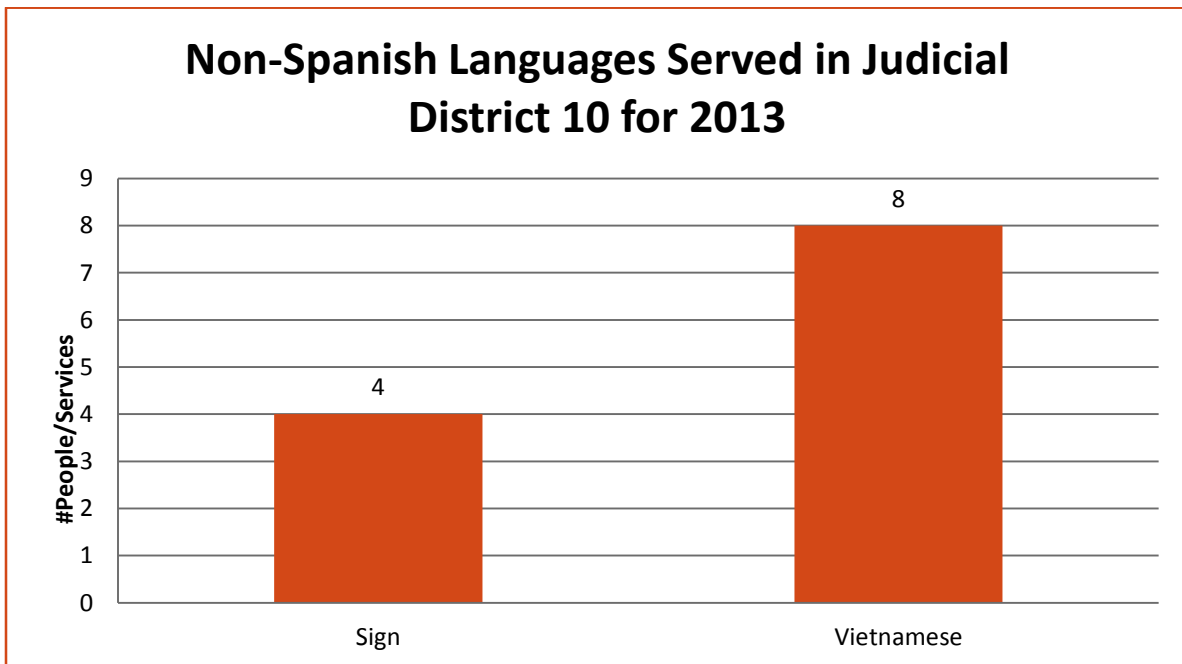
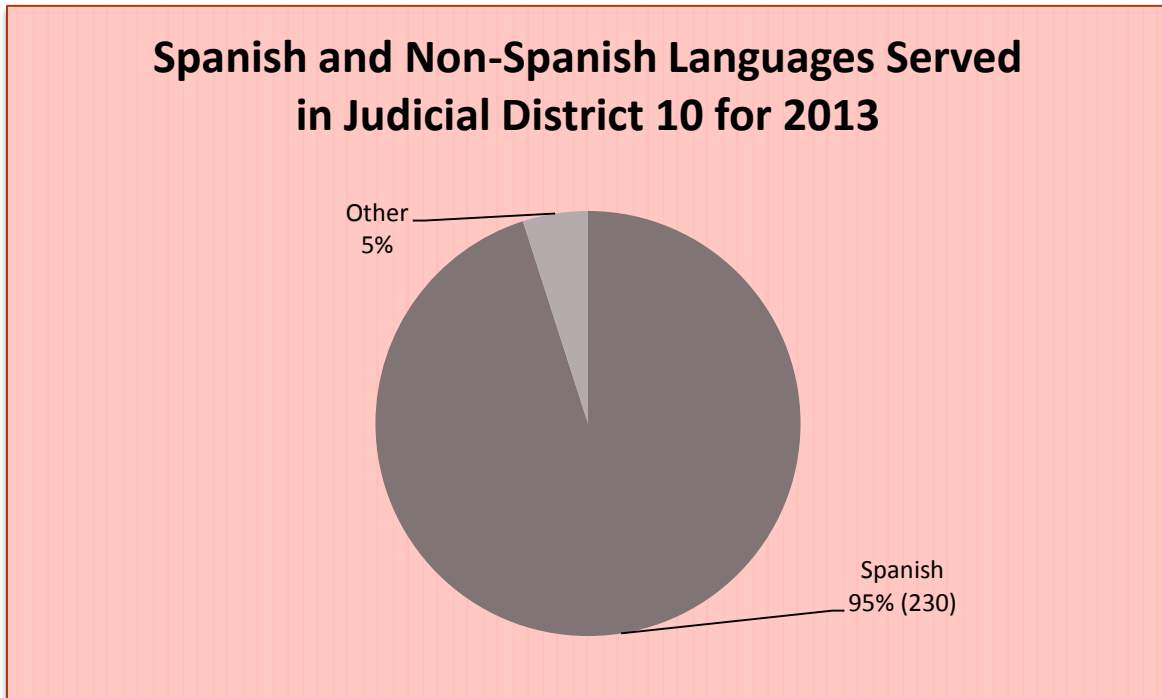
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Chart (9) **Interpreter Services: 9th Judicial District**



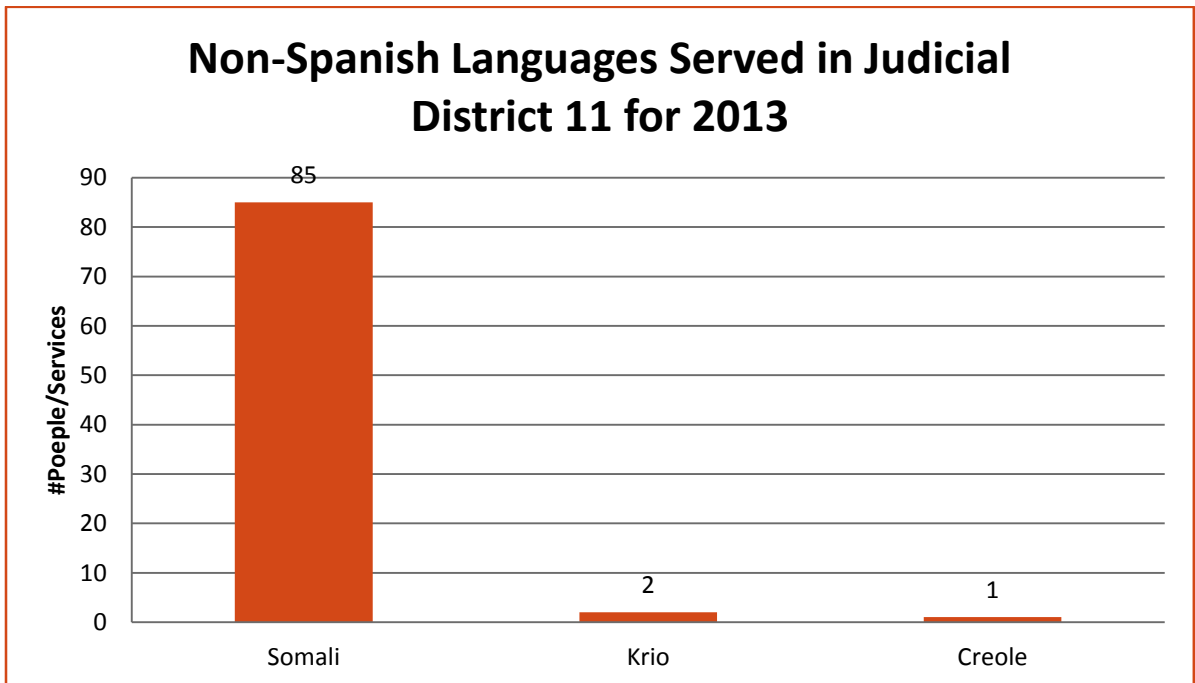
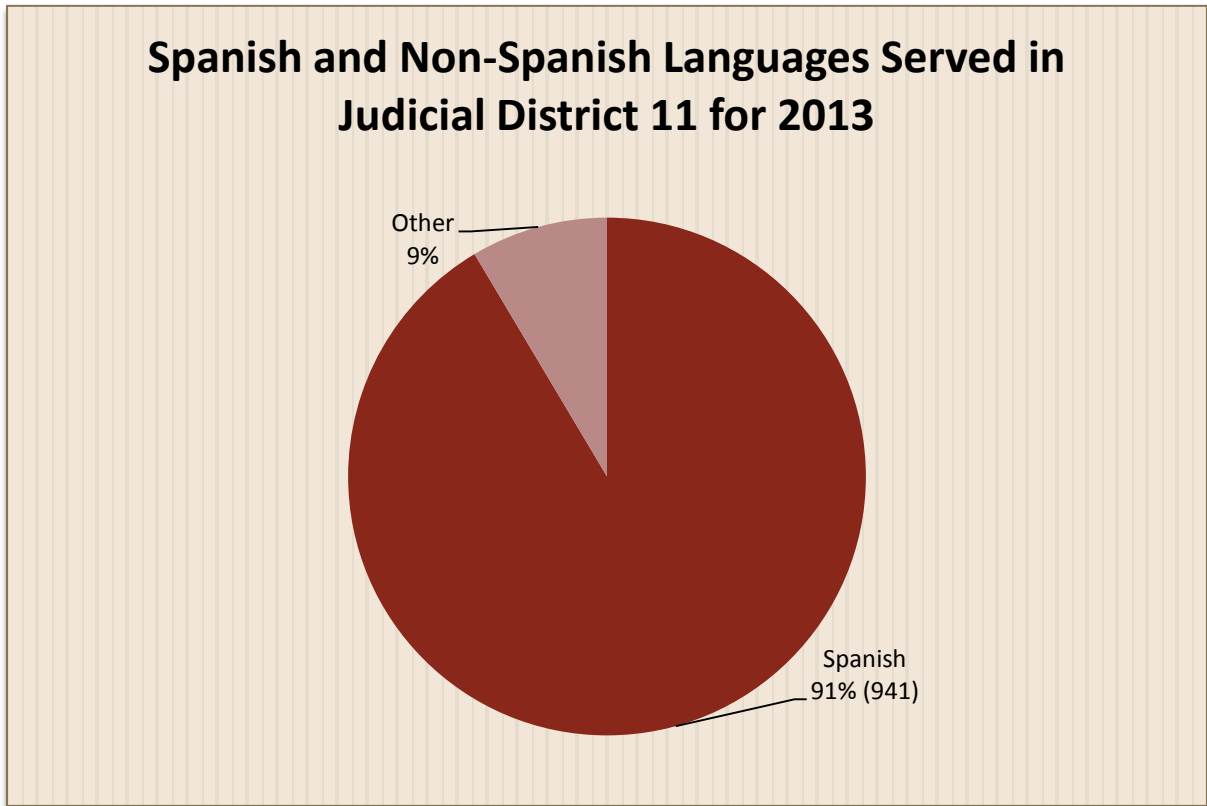
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Chart (10) Interpreter Services: **10th Judicial District**



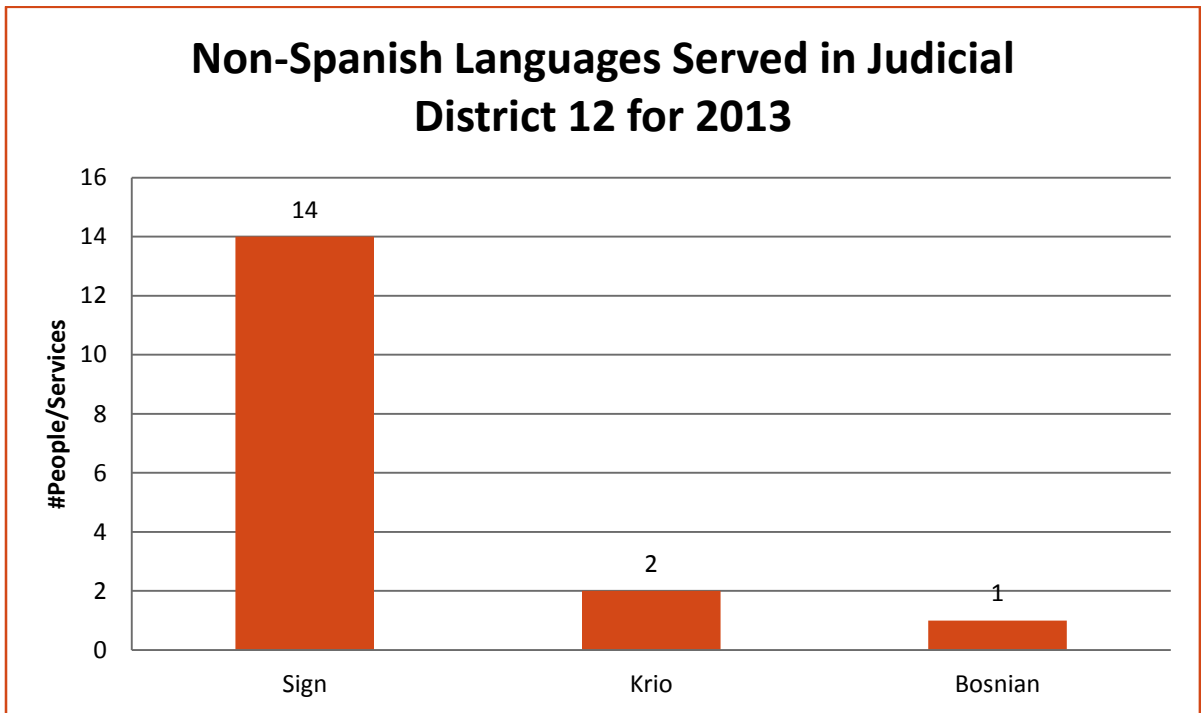
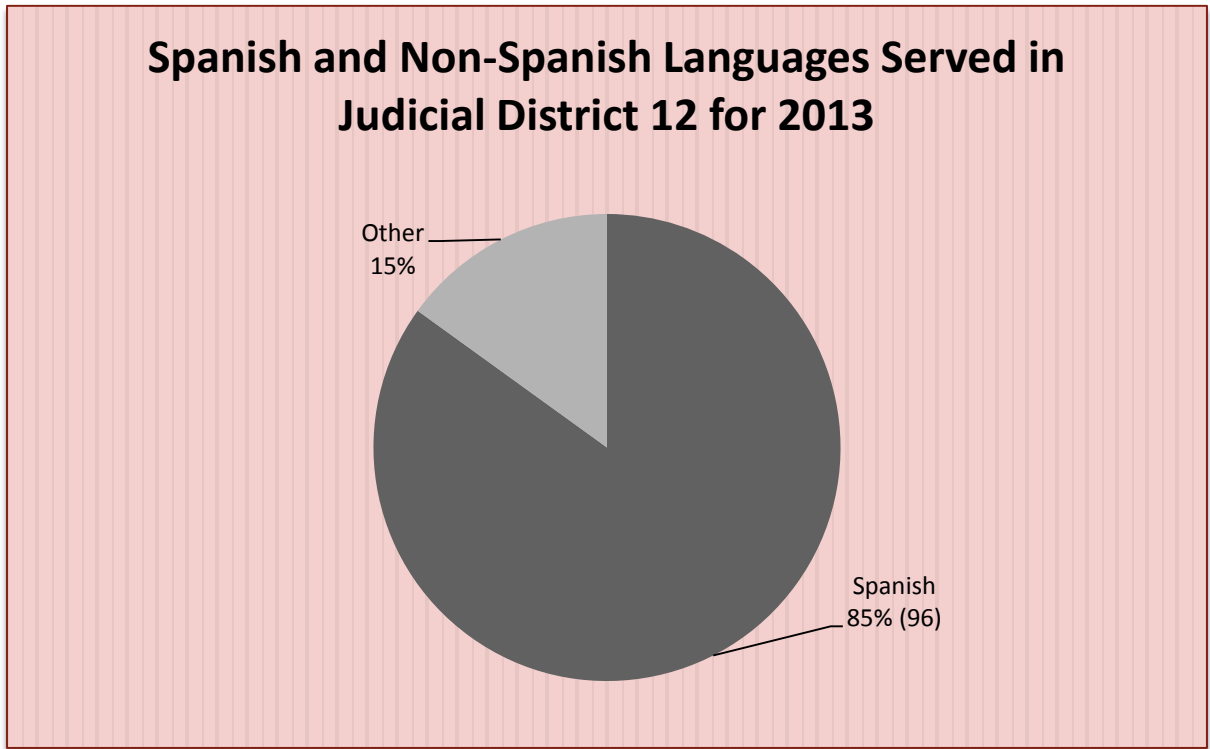
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Chart (11) **Interpreter Services: 11th Judicial District**



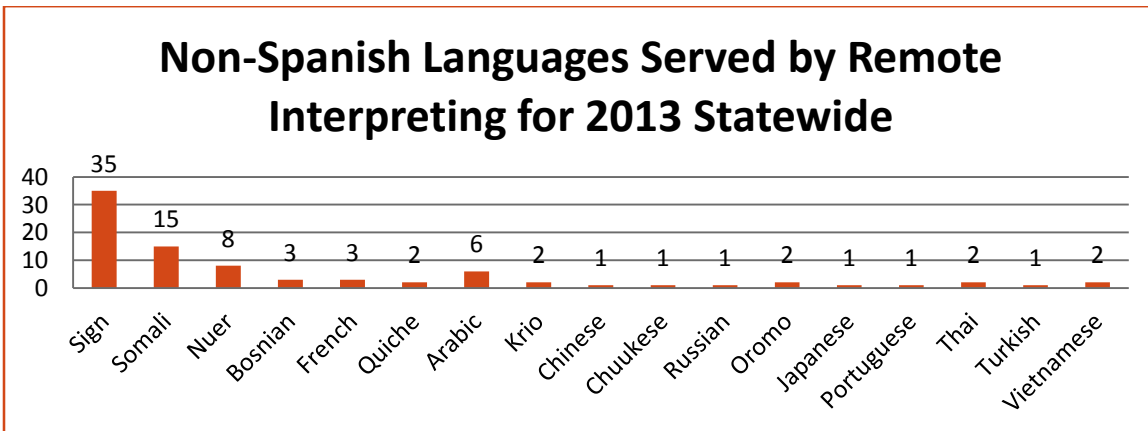
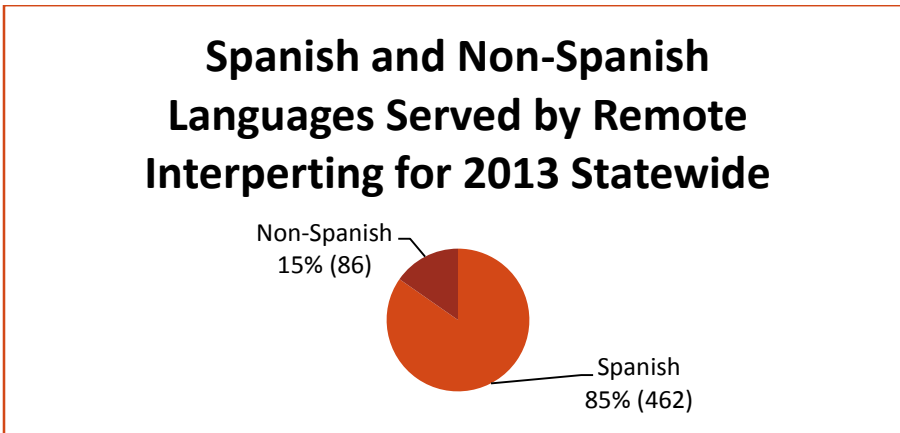
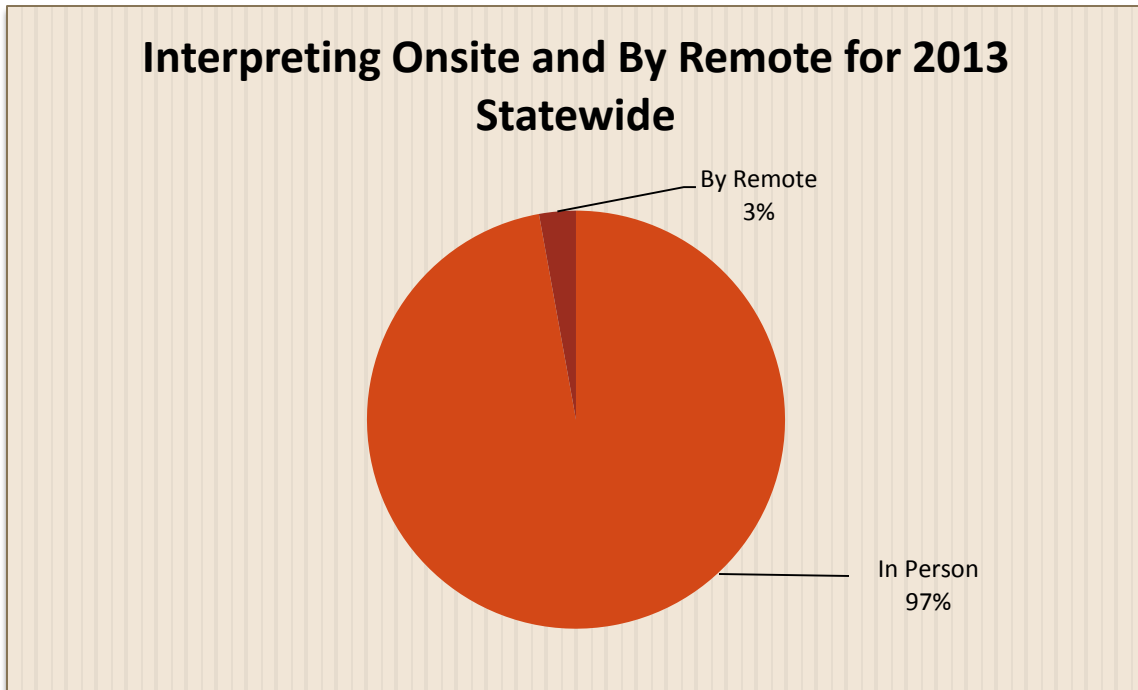
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Chart (12) **Interpreter Services: 12th Judicial District**



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Chart (13) Remote Interpreter Usage



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sChart (14) Interpreter Services: Probation

