

Bilingual Attorneys: Finding a Lawyer Who Speaks Your Language

By Jamie L. Friye, JD

In an increasingly global society, lawyers are finding that it pays to speak your clients' native languages, whether your clients reside overseas or locally. Chicago is home to many Eastern European, Western European, Latino or Hispanic, and Asian people, including those who are Polish, Russian, Bulgarian, Greek, German, Italian, Puerto Rican, Mexican, South American, Lithuanian, Serbian, Czech, Romanian and Assyrian, and bilingual attorneys and multilingual law firms are in demand.

All of these communities are composed of people who sometimes find themselves in need of legal services. Many of these clients can speak English perfectly well, but written documents, particularly legal documents that often are difficult for even native English speakers to understand, create a particular challenge. For these people, finding the services of a bilingual attorney is invaluable.

Immigrants, and even first-generation Americans who learned English through the American education system but spoke another language at home, often take great comfort in the ability to converse with an attorney in their cultural language.

As Chicago's population grows more diverse in terms of race, national origin and native language, the demand for lawyers who speak a language other than English is increasing. Not only is it easier for clients when an attorney speaks their native language, they can more quickly establish trust and rapport with their attorney. Those lawyers familiar with a client's language often are well-versed in the client's cultural practices as well.

In some instances, clients whose first language is not English have a hard time understanding the role of lawyers and the ins and outs of the judicial system in this country. A bilingual attorney can explain details related to a case as well as help to bridge any cultural gaps.

Our firm services clients locally and around the world who have interests and issues related to Illinois law. As such, most of our attorneys are bilingual or multilingual, and we offer translation services in Spanish, Polish, French, Russian, German, Greek and Bulgarian.

Chicagoland's Cultural Diversity

Census data show that Chicago has one of the nation's most ethnically diverse populations. In fact, Chicago has the second-largest Polish population in the world after Poland's capital city of Warsaw.*



Chicago also has the second-largest Puerto Rican population in the continental United States, after New York City, and the second largest Mexican population in the United States after Los Angeles. Further, the Hispanic population in Aurora, the headquarters city of our firm, has reached 41 percent.

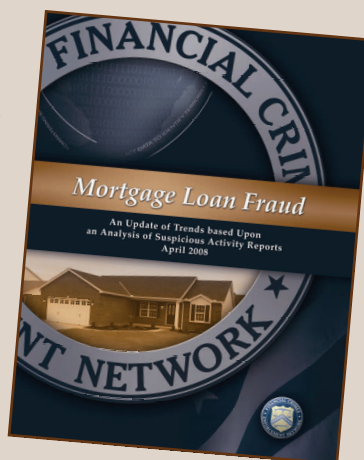
The city of Chicago has the largest population of Lithuanians in the United States, and the second largest Serbian, and the third largest Greek population of any city in the world. Chicago has a large Bulgarian population, an estimated 150,000, as well as a Romanian-American community of more than 100,000, and an Assyrian population of roughly 80,000.

The greater Chicagoland area has one of the largest concentrations of Italian-Americans in the US, with more than a half-million living in the metropolitan area. Chicago also has the third-largest South Asian population in the United States, and there are about 185,000 Arabs in Cook County as well.

*Obtained through wikipedia.com or other secondary Internet resources.

More on the Mortgage Fraud Crisis

While we just published our *Special Issue on Mortgage Fraud* in March, the recent release of a report from the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) of the US Dept. of the Treasury prompted us to touch on the topic again. The most relevant finding in the FinCEN report is that Illinois led the country in increased filings of suspected mortgage fraud. The reported increase in Illinois filings was nearly 76 percent. Read more about the [FinCEN report and what to do if you're among the increasing number of Illinoisans affected by mortgage fraud.](#)



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