

RESOLUTION NO. 03-14  
RESOLUTION DECLARING ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL  
LANGUAGE OF POLK COUNTY

TO THE HONORABLE CHAIRPERSON AND SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY BOARD OF  
THE COUNTY OF POLK:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

1 WHEREAS, the English language is the common language of Polk County, of the State  
2 of Wisconsin, and of the United States; and

3 WHEREAS, most all of our ancestors came to this country without any prior working knowledge of  
4 the English language; and

5 WHEREAS, the use of a common language removes barriers of misunderstanding and helps to unify  
6 the people of Polk County, this State and the United States, and helps to enable the full economic and  
7 civic participation of all of its citizens, regardless of national origin, creed, race or other  
8 characteristics, and thus a compelling governmental interest exists in promoting, preserving, and  
9 strengthening the use of the English language; and

10 WHEREAS, proficiency in the English language, as well as in languages other than the English  
11 language, benefits Polk County both economically and culturally and should be encouraged; and

12 WHEREAS, in addition to any other ways to promote proficiency in the English language, Polk  
13 County can promote proficiency in English by using the English language in its official actions and  
14 through activities such as supporting and enhancing English language usage, grammar, and literature  
15 programs and studies; and

16 WHEREAS, in today's society, Polk County may also need to protect and preserve the rights of  
17 those who speak only the English language to use or obtain governmental programs and benefits; and

18 WHEREAS, Polk County can reduce costs and promote efficiency, in its roles as employer and as a  
19 government accountable to the people, by using the English language in its official actions and  
20 activities.

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors does hereby declare  
22 English as the official language of Polk County, with English only to be used for all audio, video,  
23 printed materials, signage, or other materials or documents used in any and all official capacities.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that henceforth printed materials, signage, or other materials or  
25 documents of Polk County printed in languages other than English at the time of the adoption of this  
26 resolution shall not be discarded or reprinted in English only at the additional cost and expense of the  
27 taxpayers of the county until the materials have been exhausted or until they have become otherwise  
28 obsolete.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the declaration and use of English as the official language of  
30 Polk County should not be construed as infringing upon the rights of any person to use a language

31 other than English in private communications or actions, including the right of government  
32 employees and officials (including elected officials) to communicate with others.

33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if any provision of this resolution, or the applicability of any  
34 provision to any person or circumstance, shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent  
35 jurisdiction, the remainder of this resolution shall not be affected and shall be given effect to the  
36 fullest extent practicable.

Funding Amount and Source: Not Applicable  
Finance Committee Advised: Not Applicable  
Finance Committee Recommendation: Not Applicable  
Date Submitted to County Board: Jan. 21, 2014  
County Board Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effective Date: Upon Passage  
Sponsored and Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Review By County Administrator:  
 Recommended  
 Not Recommended  
 Reviewed Only  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dana Frey, County Administrator

Review By Corporation Counsel:  
 Approved as to Form  
 Recommended  
 Not Recommended  
 Reviewed Only  
\_\_\_\_\_

Jeffrey B. Sage, Corporation Counsel

County Board Action

At its regular business meeting on Jan. 21, 2014, the Polk County Board of Supervisors enacted the above-entitled resolution, Resolution No. 03-14 Resolution Declaring English as the Official Language of Polk County, by a majority vote of 13 in favor and 9 against.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dated: 02.03.2014  
William Johnson, IV, County Board Chair

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: 2-03-14  
Carole Wondra, Polk County Clerk

