



American Translators Association

The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

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To: Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Department of Homeland Security

Re: Language Access Plans

On behalf of the American Translators Association (ATA), we appreciate your efforts to develop Language Access Plans for all your missions and functions. We welcome the implementation of the processes that aim to improve the quality of the communication and services provided to the Limited English Proficient (LEP) population. ATA has approximately 11000 members, 4000 of which are interpreters. ATA supports your efforts in implementing these services with the highest standards of interpreting practices.

After reading your twelve Language Access Plans (LAPs), we would like to offer our perspective on some of the most relevant issues.

1. Professional Standards of Practice: There are already professional interpreters and translators that follow specific standards and a code of ethics. Your different missions and functions may be able to find trained and certified professionals who just need to get immersed into your specific culture and linguistic requirements.
2. Process Transparency: Being fully bilingual does not even begin to define what it means to be an interpreter or a translator. Cultural awareness and in depth knowledge of the interpretation or translation process and stages are an absolute necessity when providing interpretation or translation services to LEP individuals. Process transparency helps overcome the barriers associated with culture and it is the only way to guarantee that the communication remains between the LEP and the English speaking person.
3. Professional Liaison: ATA has nearly 11000 members in 95 countries. ATA's translator certification is highly respected in the industry and is available in 27 language pairs. Many of ATA's members are certified interpreters and translators in a variety of fields, making ATA the only umbrella organization with all types of language professionals. ATA's online directory (www.atanet.org) with 7000 profiles is the most comprehensive directory for language professionals.

The mission of professional interpreters and translators is to overcome language barriers so that the LEP members of our society can have equal access to services. This falls under your vision of preserving the individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law to all members of society.

At ATA, look forward to collaborating with you in the future.

Caitilin Walsh
President
American Translators Association

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LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION SERVICES

The Business Case for Working with Trained Interpreters

The use of bilingual personnel as opposed to trained interpreters can cause potentially fatal errors as well as increase the cost of services due to miscommunication. There is conclusive medical research on this topic.

A study published by the American Association of Pediatricsⁱ listed certain types of errors that untrained interpreters make:

- Omission: not interpreting a word or phrase
- Addition: adding a word or phrase not uttered
- Substitution: substituting a word or phrase for a different word or phrase
- Editorialization: providing personal or idiosyncratic views as the interpretation of a word or phrase
- False fluency: using a word or phrase that does not exist in the language or is incorrect and substantially alters the meaning.

In this study, there was an average of 31 errors per interpreting encounter. 18% of the errors had potential clinical consequences overall.

Another study, published in the Annals of Emergency Medicineⁱⁱ, found that the interpreter's years of experience made no difference. Only training made a difference. The proportion of errors of potential consequence was as follows:

- Ad hoc interpreter (in this study, less than 40 hours of training): 22%
- No interpreter: 20%
- Professional interpreter with 40 to 99 hours of training: 12%
- **Professional interpreter with at least 100 hours of training: 2%.** For interpreters with over 100 hours of training, 0% of the false fluency, substitution or editorialization errors had potential clinical consequences.

Another study by the University of Massachusetts Medical Schoolⁱⁱⁱ has found that **professional interpreting services, at both admission and discharge, reduced a patient's length of stay by 0.75 to 1.45 days.** These patients were also less likely to be readmitted within 30 days.

The savings in misdiagnosis, length of stay and readmission rates are significant. According to Becker's Hospital review, in Oregon, for example, the average cost per inpatient day is approximately \$2500. Working with an interpreter, from this perspective, is very cost-effective.

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For a profile of interpreters rendering language interpretation services in the US across venues please consult the following:

Nataly Kelly, Robert Stewart, and Vijayalaxmi Hegde *“The Interpreting Marketplace. A Study of Interpreting in North America Commissioned by Interpret America.”* 2010, Common Sense Advisory, Inc. Free download at <http://interpretamerica.net/index.php/publications>

2014 Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) Sign Language Interpreters Survey. DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, APRIL 2014, REPORT NUMBER 11.208 <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1504/>

Thinking About Money – Pulling Back the Curtain. Theresa B. Smith. February, 2009 (Version 5)

Some Math For Liberal Arts Majors. Theresa B. Smith, PhD, SC:L. February 2014.

<http://interpreters4livingwage.blogspot.com/2014/05/some-math-for-liberal-arts-majors.html>

Understanding U.S. Spoken Language Interpreters' Credentials

Government agencies and other entities that receive public funding may find themselves bound by legislation and/or funding conditions to hire interpreters who have been appropriately credentialed. Private sector entities may also be bound by their own internal regulations to hire interpreters with certain specific type of credentials. An interpreter may possess a certification, a certificate and/or a degree.

The Federal Coordination and Compliance Section of the DOJ has prepared a very good document on what Interpreter Certification means:

<http://www.lep.gov/resources/TRUST%20ME%20I%27M%20CERTIFIED%20%203-19-14%20%20508.pdf>

A **certificate of completion**, often simply called **certificate**, is earned by a person who has completed some type of training, also called a certificate program, from a trade or vocational school, a junior college, and even a four-year college offering adult or extended education classes (e.g. Bellevue College Certificate in Interpretation). Completion certificates usually do not require a broad base of general education studies before specializing in a certain field.

An **academic degree**, often simply called **degree**, is a college or university diploma, awarded in recognition of a person having either satisfactorily completed a prescribed course of study or having conducted a scholarly endeavor deemed worthy. The most common degrees awarded today are associate, bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees (e.g. Middlebury College Master in Translation and Interpretation from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and the B.S. and M.A. in Translation and the Ph.D. in Translation Studies from Kent State University).

Professional certification, often simply called **certification**, is a designation earned by a person to assure qualification to perform a job or task. Certifications can be earned from a professional society, university, or from a private certifier. Some certifications may be valid for a specific period of time and must be renewed periodically. As a part of a complete renewal of an individual's certification, it is common for the individual to show evidence of continuing education.

Interpreter Accrediting Entity/Certifying Body/Board: private organization or governmental agency in charge of accrediting and regulating professional interpreters. Certifying bodies can be classified as follows:

- **Vendor Driven:** entities whose members are in the business of selling interpreter services (e.g. language services companies or professional associations).
- **Vendor-Neutral:** entities whose members are engaged in both buying and selling interpreter services.
- **Non-vendor:** entities whose members are buyers and end users of interpreter services (e.g. government agency).

Certified Interpreter: an interpreter whose interpreting skills have been objectively and reliably tested in at least one direction (e.g. English into Spanish or Spanish into English) in at least one of the three modes of interpretation: simultaneous, consecutive and sight translation.

Associate/Authorized/Qualified/Registered/Screened Interpreter: an interpreter whose interpreting skills have not been tested but has been otherwise deemed qualified to provide language interpretation services in a particular language pair. Some entities rely on language proficiency for one or both languages tested by a third party. Other entities test for oral memory skills in a particular language pair.

Accreditation: the multistep process interpreters need to take to obtain a specific certification. These steps may include some or all of the following:

- Interpreter coursework portfolio or degree
- Written exam
- Oral exam: testing in all three modes: simultaneous, consecutive and sight translation. Accrediting entities have different passing score requirements for interpreter certification.
 - While some require 80% in each mode, others require an equally weighed combined score in a couple of modes or directions.
 - For languages in which there are no interpreting skills tests available, language proficiency scores in both working languages are a reliable way to assess foundational language skills necessary for interpreting. However, these oral language proficiency tests DO NOT evaluate interpreting skills.
- Training: interpreting skills, terminology, ethics and protocol
- Background information: criminal records check, fingerprinting, security clearance
- ID badge
- Oath: interpreters swear to abide by a specific code of professional conduct
- References: peer review and portfolio
- Roster: accredited interpreters' name and contact information is placed on a list available to the public

Re-certification: mandatory requirements interpreters must comply with periodically in order to maintain their certification. These requirements may include all or some of the following:

- Continuing education
- Contact information update

- Oath renewal
- Proof of hours worked
- Criminal background check

De-certification: the certifying body may subject interpreters to disciplinary sanctions or actions for violation of the interpreters' code of professional conduct against which they have been accredited.

Spoken Language Proficiency Required for Interpreting

Language skills and competence in intercultural communication are very closely related. Competency in intercultural communication skill levels has recently been described by the ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable)^v, but no tests have been developed for it. On the other hand, there are tests available to evaluate the oral and written language proficiency skills. The ILR scale descriptions^{vi} provide guidance about the type of situation that someone with a specific proficiency level can negotiate in a given language. Interpreters should be tested in both working languages. After testing, interpreters should be assigned tasks that match the lowest score attained. For example, if they score an ILR Level 2 in one of the working languages and four in the other, the maximum complexity of the encounters in which they interpret should be ILR Level 2.

The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Level Scale

The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), a collaborative effort of US federal government agencies, academia and language specialists, has developed a 6-point skill level scale to evaluate language proficiency. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) adapted this scale for use in academic settings and the two organizations currently work together to ensure that the two systems are complementary. The ACTFL exams, along with the Defense Language Proficiency Tests (DLPT) developed by the US Department of Defense and the European Common Framework for Languages testing, are an effective way to determine proficiency in numerous languages.

DLPT Scale ^{vii}	ILR Scale	ACTFL Scale ^{viii}	Definition, from the ILR	Notes
	5 Functionally Native Proficiency		Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.	Hardly any native speakers reach this level
	4+ Advanced Professional Proficiency, Plus 4 Advanced Professional Proficiency	Distinguished	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful. Language ability only rarely hinders him/her in performing any task requiring language; yet, the individual would seldom be perceived as a native.	Very few native speakers reach this level

DLPT Scale^{ix}	ILR Scale	ACTFL Scale^x	Definition, from the ILR	Notes
3 and above	3+ General Professional Proficiency, Plus 3 General Professional Proficiency	Superior	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations in practical, social and professional topics. Nevertheless, the individual's limitations generally restrict the professional contexts of language use to matters of shared knowledge and/or international convention.	Level required for registered Oregonxi and Washingtonxii court interpreters. This is the equivalent of a college education obtained in the country where the language is spoken
2+	2+ Limited Working Proficiency, Plus	Advanced - High	Able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective. The individual shows considerable ability to communicate effectively on topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows a high degree of fluency and ease of speech, yet when under tension or pressure, the ability to use the language effectively may deteriorate.	Level required for registered court interpreters in California
2	2 Limited Working Proficiency	Advanced Advanced - Low	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle routine work-related interactions that are limited in scope. In more complex and sophisticated work-related tasks, language usage generally disturbs the native speaker.	Advanced Mid: Level required by National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters ^{xiii} Advanced – Low: Some BAs with a foreign language major achieve this level (based on observations made by Foreign Language department chairs and other stakeholders involved in testing)

DLPT Scale^{xiv}	ILR Scale	ACTFL Scale^{xv}	Definition, from the ILR	Notes
1+	1+ Elementary Proficiency, Plus	Intermediate - High	Can initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands. He/she may, however, have little understanding of the social conventions of conversation. The interlocutor is generally required to strain and employ real-world knowledge to understand even some simple speech.	Level required for Oregon Health Authority Health Care Interpreter Program
1	1 Elementary Proficiency	Intermediate - Mid Intermediate - Low	Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics. A native speaker must often use slowed speech, repetition, paraphrase, or a combination of these to be understood by this individual. Similarly, the native speaker must strain and employ real-world knowledge to understand even simple statements/questions from this individual.	
0+	0+ Memorized Proficiency	Novice - High	Able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances. Shows little real autonomy of expression, flexibility or spontaneity.	
0	0 No Proficiency	Novice - Mid Novice - Low	Unable to function in the spoken language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words.	

US Spoken Language Interpreting Skills Testing Comparison

The following chart summarizes the skills tested by different interpreter certifying bodies.

Bidirectional: English into language other than English (LOTE) and LOTE into English

Unidirectional: English into LOTE

Table 1: Comparison of skills tested for spoken language interpreting in the US

Interpreting Skills Testing (certified languages only)	Simultaneous Mode	Consecutive Mode	Sight Translation Mode
US DOS Liaison Interpreter	NO	unidirectional	NO
Health Care - National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (NBCMI) ^{xvi}	NO	bidirectional	unidirectional
Health Care – WA DSHS ^{xvii} (Washington State Department of Health and Social Services)	NO	bidirectional	bidirectional
Health Care - CCHI ^{xviii}	unidirectional	bidirectional	unidirectional
Social Services – WA DSHS ^{xix}	unidirectional	bidirectional	bidirectional
Courts – State ^{xx} ^{xxi} & Federal	unidirectional	bidirectional	bidirectional
US DOS Seminar Interpreter	unidirectional	unidirectional	NO
US DOS Conference Interpreter	bidirectional	unidirectional	NO

Interpreting Skills Scoring: In court certified interpreter exams, candidates must have a passing score in all three modes of interpreting. The NBCMI gives no details regarding the weight of the different modes of interpreting in the scoring of the oral exam. The CCHI weights the Consecutive Interpreting section significantly more heavily than the sight translation and simultaneous interpreting sections.

Federal Courts Interpreter Certification Program^{xxii}

The Court Interpreters Act, 28 U.S.C. §1827 provides that the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts shall prescribe, determine, and certify the qualifications of persons who may serve as certified interpreters. The United States Courts Administrative Office certifies in only three languages: Spanish, Navajo and Haitian Creole. The administrative offices of the courts, professionally qualifies all other languages.

State Courts Interpreter Certification Programs

In 1995, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) established the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts (CLAC a.k.a. the Consortium) to share expertise and the expense associated with developing and administering testing and certification programs for interpreters. Its founding states were Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington. A growing number of state court systems have instituted certification and continuing education programs and have prescribed codes of professional responsibility for court interpreters. The Consortium has developed interpreting skills tests in 20 languages: Arabic, Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian, Cantonese, Chuukese, French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Ilocano, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Marshallese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish and Vietnamese. Examinations are available only to Consortium member states. To use any of these exams, the state must contact the appropriate Consortium staff person at the National Center for State Courts.^{xxiii}

For a detailed list of currently available court interpreter certification, oral exams [please visit](#):

[http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/Services%20and%20Experts/Areas%20of%20expertise/Language%20Access/Written%20and%20Oral/Oral Exam Ready for Administration%20October%202014.ashx](http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/Services%20and%20Experts/Areas%20of%20expertise/Language%20Access/Written%20and%20Oral/Oral%20Exam%20Ready%20for%20Administration%20October%202014.ashx)

Currently 43 states participate in this Consortium though not all of them run a court interpreter program. For details on each state's court language access program [please visit](#):

<http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Resources-for-Program-Managers/LAP-Map/Map.aspx>

U.S. Department of State Interpreter Program

The Office of Language Services tests interpreters for freelance contract work according to the language needs of the Department of State, with languages of most critical need taking top priority. The table below lists some of the languages for which the Office of Language Services tests interpreters:

Table 2: Languages in which the US Department of State tests interpreters^{xxiv}

Albanian	Dutch	Kazakh	Portuguese
Amharic	Estonian	Kurdish	Romanian
Arabic	Finnish	Korean	Russian
Armenian	French	Kyrgyz	Serbian
Azerbaijani	Georgian	Lao	Sinhalese
Bengali	German	Latvian	Slovak
Bosnian	Greek	Lithuanian	Slovenian
Bulgarian	Haitian	Macedonian	Somali
Burmese	Hebrew	Mandarin	Spanish
Cambodian	Hindi	Mongolian	Taiwanese
Cantonese	Hungarian	Nepali	Thai
Croatian	Indonesian	Pashto	Turkish
Czech	Italian	Persian	Ukrainian
Dari	Japanese	Polish	Urdu

National Health Care Interpreter Certification Programs

The Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI)^{xxv}, created in 2009, is an independent certification agency member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (formerly NOCA). CCHI's main mission is to develop and administer a national, valid, credible, vendor-neutral certification program for healthcare spoken language interpreters. CCHI Healthcare certification is currently available in 3 languages: Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin. The CCHI associate credential is available for all other languages.

The National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (NBCMI)^{xxvi} was jointly founded in 2009 by two vendors: Language Line Services (LLS), a for-profit language services company, and International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA), a professional organization based in Massachusetts. NBCMI pays exam royalties to both LLS and IMIA. NBCMI medical certification is currently available in 5 languages: Spanish, Russian, Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean. NBCMI qualification and screening is available for all other languages.

State Health Care Interpreter Certification Programs

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Service created its Language Testing and Certification program (DSHS/LTC) in 1991 to develop systems, methods, procedures, and policies in carrying out the department's legal commitment (pursuant to RCW 41.56.030, 41.56.113, 41.04.810, 43.01.047, and 74.04.025) requiring the department to provide language services to its LEP clients. This program was the culmination of lawsuits and civil rights complaints brought against DSHS for not providing equal access to services for Limited English Proficient - LEP clients. As part of a consent decree (Reyes Consent Decree), DSHS agreed not only to provide (and pay for) interpreters for clients, but also to ensure the quality of interpreter services provided through the development and administration of standardized tests.^{xxvii}

The tests developed by LTC aim to measure both language proficiency in English and a second language and interpreting/translation skills. DSHS language certification is currently available for Medical Services in eight languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Cambodian, Laotian, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, and Korean. Authorization screening tests are also available in all other languages.

Oregon has a registry of Health Care Interpreters. The Oregon requirements for certification are:

- Pass an interpreting certification exam offered by CCHI or NBCMI
- 60 hours of formal medical interpreter training
- 80 hours of work experience in the medical interpreting field

The requirements for qualification, in Oregon^{xxviii}, are:

- Language Proficiency Testing

- 60 hours of formal medical interpreter training
- 40 hours of work experience in the medical interpreting field.

State Social Services Interpreter Certification Program

Washington State, under the Reyes Consent Decree, is the only certifying body in the U.S. for spoken language interpreters rendering services in community settings. DSHS language certification is currently available for Social Services in eight languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Cambodian, Laotian, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, and Korean. Authorization screening tests are also available in all other languages.

Procurement Models

Government agencies should choose procurement model(s) tailored to their varying needs and language demands. Please note that the different models listed below can be used in combination. According to CLAS Standard 7^{xxix}, there should be a way to ensure that all individuals providing language assistance (bilingual staff, staff interpreters, and contract interpreters) have the appropriate training, language proficiency, and certification regardless of the procurement model or delivery modality. (National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice, April 2013, Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

1. In-house

- **Bilingual staff:** an employee who performs a job in English and in a language other than English (LOTE). Example: English <> Japanese Senior Software Engineer, Nintendo of America.
- **Staff interpreter:** an employee whose job description is to provide language interpretation services thus acting as a liaison between staff and their clients, patients, peers, or employees. Example: Medical Interpreter – Spanish, University of Washington Medical Center.

2. Outsourced

- **Direct contracting:** the payer schedules, invoices and pays contracted interpreters. Direct contracting can be done either by working directly with the interpreter, or online through web portals. The following are two ways web portals are currently being used.
 - Proprietary software systems: the payer develops and maintains its own software tailored to its unique needs for scheduling, invoicing, and paying contracted interpreters. Example: WA King County District Court Web Application (scheduling only).^{xxx}
 - Software as a Service (SaaS): the payer leases an interpreter management software system from a company that develops, maintains and provides tech support for a flat fee. Example: 1Lingua at WA Tukwila Municipal Court (scheduling and invoicing only).^{xxxi}
- **Subcontracting:** the payer uses an intermediary to schedule, invoice and pay contracted interpreters.
 - Language agency/company: an intermediary is paid a percentage of each work order to schedule, invoice, and pay interpreters. Example: Western States Cooperative Alliance – National Association of State Procurement Officials (WSCA-NASPO) DES Contract #10306^{xxxii}
 - Coordinating entity: an intermediary is paid a preset flat administrative fee, independently negotiated from the interpreters' pay, to schedule, invoice, and pay interpreters. Interpreters' pay simply passes through. Example: Washington Health Care Authority (HCA) Contract with CTS LanguageLink^{xxxiii}

When drafting contracts, there should be ample flexibility for negotiating different rates according to language demands. Languages of limited diffusion (LLDs) generally command higher rates.

Supply Chain

Payer	The person(s) or entity that pays for the interpreting services.
Requester	The person(s) or entity that places the order for interpreting services.
End User(s)	The person(s) in need of interpreting services some of which are LEP.
Language Services Provider	The person(s), interpreter(s), organization, or language services company (LSC) making arrangements for the provision of interpreting services including, but not limited to, selecting, contracting, scheduling, invoicing, and paying the interpreter.
Individual Service Provider/Interpreter	The person who performs the interpreting service.

Delivery Modalities

Interpreters are most effective when they have as much information as the speakers and the audience, such as facial expressions, gestures, and other visual cues. Therefore In-person interpreting is always the preferred delivery modality for interpreters and should be the default. Whenever possible, the delivery modality should mirror the one used if the event were monolingual. For example: if the doctor communicates with his English speaking patients regarding their test results over the telephone, then the delivery modality can very well be either tele-interpreting or remote interpreting. However, in emergency situations or when no in-person interpreter is available, remote interpreting should be used. In some situations, working with an untrained interpreter yields worse results than not having an interpreter.

1. In-person interpreting

- **On-site interpreting:** provided by interpreters present in the same physical location as both the speaker AND the audience.
- **Tele-interpreting:** Sometimes not all the parties in an interaction are in the same location. In that case, the interpreter can be in the location where one of the participants is present.
 - Videoconference: provided by interpreters having a video-mediated view of the speakers or the audience.
 - Audio conference: provided by interpreters having an audio feed (e.g. telephone) of the speakers or the audience.

2. Remote interpreting: provided by interpreters not present in the same physical location as the speakers and the audience.

- **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):** provided by interpreters having a video-mediated view of both the speakers and the audience.
 - Scheduled VRI: provided by interpreters at a previously arranged date and time.
 - On-demand VRI: provided by interpreters on call.
- **Telephonic or Over-the-Phone Interpreting (OPI):** provided by interpreters having an audio feed (e.g. telephone) of the speakers and the audience.
 - Scheduled OPI: provided by interpreters at a previously arranged date and time.
 - On-demand OPI: provided by interpreters on call.

A recently updated study on remote interpreting found significant differences when comparing the effects of fatigue on performance for the same interpreters working either live or remotely. The same interpreter will be less tired, hence work at a higher level of quality, in on-site conditions as opposed to remote conditions. The onset of decline in performance is reached between 15 and 18 minutes for VRI and around 30 minutes for on-site interpreting.^{xxxiv}

Interpreter Management Systems

Interpreter management software programs have been used by both government agencies and language companies since the early 2000s. Some programs can only schedule, some can schedule and invoice while others can schedule, invoice, pay interpreters and track expenditures using specialized language access measurements. Consolidated/Centralized Interpreter Management Systems (CIMS) can schedule and track both in-house and outsourced interpreters. Example: King County District Court Interpreter Web Application.^{xxxv}

Centralized interpreter scheduling, invoicing, and payment by electronic funds transfers can decrease administrative costs considerably. Case in point: Washington State’s federal matching funds Interpreter Services Program for Medicaid enrollees. With legislated procurement reform (2011 SESH 1087 Sec 213(31)), the biannual total program expenditure currently managed by HCA went from \$23M in 2009-2011 to \$17.7M in 2011-2013 while the demand for interpreter services increased slightly.^{xxxvi}

Online Interpreter Scheduling Systems

All online scheduling systems require that both interpreters and requesters register as authorized users on scheduling portals.^{xxxvii}

- **Competitive Scheduling:** interpreters self-schedule on a first come first served basis by logging into a web portal and select available assignments. The system assumes that all interpreters are equally qualified for all assignments. Example: <http://www.gofluently.com/>
- **Availability Based Scheduling:** interpreters accept or reject assignments sent to them via email or text messaging. The system sends the assignments only to in-house and/or outsourced interpreters automatically sorted by the requester’s preset search criteria

such as language, gender, certification, proximity to location, etc. Example: <https://www.1lingua.com/index.html>

Proper Accounting of Administrative Costs

In any cost analysis of a services program, administrative cost (admin staff) must be reported separately from the direct services cost (staff and independent contractor interpreters). Administrative employees' salaries (program managers, coordinators, and schedulers) should never be lumped together with those of its staff or subcontracted interpreters. Consolidation of administrative staff performing similar duties for different departments within the same government agency by sharing single scheduling/invoicing software should bring down those administrative costs thus devoting more of the budget to actually providing the service as opposed to managing it.

Specialized Language Access Measurements

In any language interpretation services program, it is paramount to keep track of how many interpreted encounters were served, in which languages, and how many billing hours and units (1 unit = 15 minutes) were paid. There should be a detailed accounting of the Interpreter/LEP ratio for languages of greater demand (e.g. Spanish). A ratio of 1:1, meaning one interpreter serving one single LEP individual, is expensive by definition. Accordingly, many interpreter coordinators strive to lump LEP individuals of the same language for the same morning or afternoon. These efforts are sometimes called "interpreter calendars" or more colloquially, as an example, "Vietnamese Tuesdays." Staggering of appointments is also very helpful. Instead of requesting 5 Spanish interpreters for 5 appointments at 10 am, coordinators can have 1 Spanish interpreter servicing appointments staggered every 45 minutes. For large Spanish calendars, for example, many locations have teams of 2 or 3 interpreters working several rooms in the same morning. This assembly line approach is ideal for busy courts, hospitals, etc.

There has to be a proper accounting of the percentage of No Shows and Late Cancellations (NS/LC). There are three types of No Shows each needing to be tracked separately: Interpreter (NS-I), LEP client/patient (NS-LEP) and Provider (NS-P).

Interpretation work order, based on ASTM F2089 – Standard Guide for Language Interpretation^{xxxviii}

Text in right columns clarifies briefly what is mentioned in the left columns.

Work order number		
Payer		<i>invoicing details</i>
LEP Client(s) / Patient(s)		
Requester		<i>Name, job title, contact information including cell phone</i>
Contact person for further details		
Date of original request		
Date of acceptance of estimate		
Event	Date	
	Prep time	<i>Not always applicable, but very important for conference interpreting.</i>
	Start time	
	End time	
	Location	
Delivery modality		<i>On-site or remote (video conference or audio conference). Remote interpretation should be used only when participants are meeting remotely.</i>
Area of interpreting		<i>e.g. diplomatic, liaison, conference, media, business, labor relations, community, social services, healthcare, educational, legal (judicial or quasi-judicial), security-related, military and conflict zone, disaster relief and humanitarian</i>
Languages and dialects		
Language combinations and directions		<i>for example, English <> Spanish or English > Spanish</i>
Event setting		<i>one-on-one meeting, group hearing, presentation, conference, trial, media, deposition</i>
Venue		<i>conference center, meeting room, courtroom, correctional facility, police station, detention center, educational facility, office, theater, TV/radio studio, healthcare facility, business/industrial complex, agricultural/outdoors.</i>
Number of interpreters needed		<i>Consecutive interpreting: To ensure interpreting quality and accuracy, it is recommended that two interpreters be hired for meetings longer than 2 h or dealing with complex, technical, and/or specialized subjects. Simultaneous interpreting: Two interpreters shall be assigned per language for any event lasting over 1 hour. An additional interpreter may be assigned when the team is required to interpret bidirectionally. Factors that increase information complexity and density:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rate of speech</i> • <i>Oral recitation of written documents</i> • <i>Visual aids and prerecorded videos</i> • <i>Technical subject matter</i>
Interpreter qualifications	Certification	<i>Certified court interpreters should be required for legal interpreting, and Certified Medical Interpreters should be required for interpreting in medical settings.</i>
	Security Clearance	

		HIPAA Certification	
		Immunizations	
Background or supporting documents		<i>To ensure interpreting quality and accuracy, interpreters shall have access to or be briefed on pertinent materials that will be discussed or referenced at the event, such as program/agenda, translated handouts, written text of speeches, handouts, PowerPoint slides, materials from previous meetings, jury instructions, etc.</i>	
Working conditions		Acoustics	<i>When the speakers use microphones, the interpreter is able to hear them more clearly. The interpreter should also have a hands-free microphone and a podium for consecutive interpreting.</i>
		Visibility	<i>The interpreter should have as much visual input as possible including an unencumbered view of the speaker or, in the case of videoconferencing, large screens showing the speaker. Sign language interpreting is particularly dependent upon a clear line of sight between the interpreter and the deaf consumer.</i>
Equipment	Sound	Headphones	<i>The interpreter should only hear the speaker, not the interpreter, through the headphones. Interpreter-operated volume control</i>
		Microphone	<i>Interpreter-controlled on/off switch and cough button</i>
	Booths	Silent ventilation	
		Soundproof	
		Writing table, with adequate reading light	
		Silent chair	
	Tech support	Technical personnel for booth and audio equipment setup, dismantling and monitoring	<i>Contact information</i>
	Wireless Equipment	Transmitters	<i>One per language</i>
		Receivers	<i>One per person</i>
		Microphones	<i>One per interpreter</i>
		Headphones	<i>One per person</i>
		Backup equipment	<i>Sufficient, at least one of each type of equipment</i>
	On stage	Microphones	<i>Separate hands-free microphone for interpreter</i>
Podium		<i>Extra podium for interpreter</i>	
Document preparation		Determination if written translation is necessary for attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pre-event translation</i> • <i>Post-event translation</i> • <i>Set up separate translation work order</i>

LANGUAGE TRANSLATION SERVICES

Translation Quality

Translation is the process of creating a written target text in one language based on a source text in another language in such a way that the message in the source text is transferred completely into the target text with all its nuances and proper language rules, to produce a culturally appropriate text that reads as if originally written by a native speaker of the target language. It is necessary to distinguish between “translation” *per se* and other forms of language transfer, which may be seen as “translation plus”, such as:

- gisting (translation plus condensation, or condensation plus translation)
- adaptation of marketing messages (translation plus modification of the original message in creative ways)

Fundamentally, translations should not contain either:

- transfer errors (where the meaning of the source text is inadequately transferred)
- language errors (where the rules of target language writing are not followed).

End users *will* recognize a flawed translation where the target language writing exhibits defects that are not typical of native writing, but *cannot* recognize a flawed translation that reads well (e.g., a translation that reads “the apartment will not be rented at that price ” where the source text said “the apartment will only be rented at that price”). Only a translator working in a specific language pair (and its related cultures) can adequately evaluate the work of another translator in that language/culture pair.

However, in order to create an effective and error-free translation, translators need the source text and the following:

- the specific country or region for which the source text was produced
- the audience for which it was produced
- the published or unpublished contexts in which it appears
- contextual information to know whether the source document is:
 - a single document that does not refer to other documents (e.g., a news report)
 - one of a set of documents (e.g., one of a set of interrelated help files, which must have consistent terminology)
 - part of an exchange (e.g., a legal brief from one party in an ongoing lawsuit, where other briefs from the other side have already been translated)
- the intended use of the original document in the source culture

- the intended use and the audience of the target (translated) text
- the medium through which the translated text will be presented to the user.

Translators must also know whether the target text will be used for the same purpose as the source text, or for a different purpose.

For instance, translations of user instructions for a transit system will be used in the same physical environment and must refer accurately to physical objects, and will be used for the same purpose. Translations of user manuals for products to be sold in different countries will refer to the “same” product, but adjustments may be necessary to account for differences in culture or the real world (e.g., differences in how devices are used in different cultures, or differences in electrical plugs or technical specifications—which may imply a slightly different physical object).

Translations for use in other contexts may have a different purpose than the source. A legal brief, for instance, has as its original audience the judges and attorneys of a particular court system, where it is filed and has a specific legal effect, while the translation of the brief does not have legal standing and is usually considered “for information” for corporate attorneys at a multilingual company’s headquarters, for instance. In intelligence, a written document may have been originally intended as a recruiting document for a terrorist organization. The translation of the document, however, will not be used for this purpose, but rather for information about the organization and its recruiting methods. In this example, it may be necessary for the translator to add translator notes (TN) with additional cultural information for the reader to understand the effect and effectiveness of the source document.

The foregoing makes it clear that the translation specifications (often called the “translation brief”) are a critical input necessary to produce high-quality translations.

A number of different approaches have been developed to measure translation quality in various circumstances. ATA operates a translator Certification Program, which has developed an error point system that deducts points for errors in the target text based on their effect on the usefulness of the target text for its intended purpose. ATA graders are trained to use a tool called the Flowchart for Error Point decisions as a guide for assessing the seriousness of any given error. For testing purposes, two 250-word text samples are translated, and each sample must have fewer than 17 points of errors in order for the candidate to be awarded certification. This is a holistic assessment, which does not break scores down into various competencies. Requesters and payers who would like to verify the quality of the purchased translations could very well ask for an outside review by ATA test graders.

Revision – an Essential Step

Monolingual materials for publication in the original language are usually reviewed by others before publication. Translation is a more complex task that requires even more attention. Before dissemination can happen, the translation must be revised by another qualified translator in order to ensure that the meaning has been accurately transferred. When working with an independent translator, requesters should require that the quote include revision by an equally qualified professional. When ordering translations from a language services company, it is necessary to clarify whether the quote includes revision and proofreading by a second translator.

For further information on obtaining high-quality translations, please see the following references on the American Translators Association website:

How to Choose a Translator Vendor: 9 Tips to a Successful Experience

<http://theatacompass.org/2013/05/22/how-to-choose-a-translation-vendor-9-tips-to-a-successful-experience/>

Translation: Getting it Right^{xxxix}

The Business Case for Working with Qualified Translators

As reported in the newsletter of an ATA Chapter^{xi}, during a single week in July 2013, translation topics made headlines in the Pacific Northwest's newspapers for some embarrassing and avoidable mistakes.

The *Seattle Globalist* informed the public about a problem in the translation into Spanish of bus timetables. As part of a comprehensive Language Access Plan (LAP), Metro King County had identified a need to offer multilingual user materials. Accordingly, the bus schedules released in June contained, for the first time ever, segments written in Spanish. However, for routes that operate seven days a week, the schedules stated in English that service on public holidays would follow the Sunday schedule, while the message in Spanish stated that there would be no service at all on holidays or weekends. After riders and a bus driver called attention to these mistakes, Metro posted an alert notice on buses apologizing for any mix-ups. According to Spanish-language TV news outlets, the error occurred due to lack of sufficient proofreading after pre-translated Spanish sentences were inserted into the original English document.

The very same week, the Washington Health Benefit Exchange (WAHBE), offering health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, proudly announced on its Facebook page that multilingual consumer fact sheets in the eight threshold languages were available on its website. Among the errors found were cases of:

- wrong language used (e.g., the title read Simplified Chinese but text was written in Traditional Chinese)
- usability levels of translated texts ranging from inappropriate street language in the Khmer (Cambodian language) version to overly erudite syntax in the Vietnamese version
- translation of proper names, which were then incorrectly translated

Generally, all of the translations tended to be literal, or word-for-word renditions, making them difficult to understand. In addition, the English originals were written in too high a register to be useful as consumer materials, despite Washington State's Plain Talk mandate. After the Northwest News Network of National Public Radio reported on translation problems in both the Washington and Oregon Health Benefits Marketplaces, all of the translations were taken down from the websites.

In the translation industry, a vast majority of translations are done by independent contractors, whether they work directly for the requester/payer or as part of a team put together by a language services provider (LSP) (also called a translation agency). In many cases, LSPs are able to coordinate the work of a translation of a single source text into multiple languages and can deal with other technical issues such as desktop publishing, etc. If you are considering hiring an LSP for your translations, ask how they screen their translators and revisers. The most critical factor for the quality of your translation is the quality of the translator/reviser team. For example, if an unqualified translator translates "Boston rocks!" as "Rocks from Boston", the meaning has been totally changed, making the translation unusable for the

intended purpose. Requesters should consider the experience and credentials detailed below and verify them.

Understanding Translators' Credentials

ATA Translator Certification: Of the world's roughly 6,900 languages, relatively few have a written form. A small number of these languages represent the highest volume of translation, particularly commercial translation. ATA certifies in several of these high-volume languages, providing certification in one direction for 7 languages (Arabic and Danish into English, and English into Chinese, Finnish, Hungarian, Polish, and Ukrainian) and in both directions for 10 languages (Croatian, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Swedish). Exams are constantly in development for additional language pairs.

WA DSHS Translator Certification: As a result of Title VI class action lawsuits, the Washington State Department of Health and Social Services (WA DSHS) has been offering translation skills exams in some languages that ATA does not. WA DSHS certifies translators in only one direction (English into LOTE) and only in 7 languages (Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese). A detailed explanation of the test and a list of DSHS certified translators can be found at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc/>. Washington State is the only state that has implemented this kind of certification program.

The National Judiciary Interpreter and Translator Certification (NJITCE) better known as the NAJIT Exam, was developed at the behest and under the sponsorship of a professional organization. NAJIT worked in close collaboration with a test development company that provided psychometric expertise. The NAJIT Exam differed from the Federal and former Consortium examinations in that its Written test included a demanding translation component to qualify successful candidates to translate from English into Spanish and from Spanish into English as well as to interpret. The NAJIT Exam was piloted in 2001 and was available only in Spanish. It has now been discontinued.^{xli}

Note that each language direction is a separate proficiency and is certified separately. This means that a translator certified in Spanish>English is not necessarily competent to translate English>Spanish, etc. Normally, it can be expected that translators will produce higher-quality translations when translating *into* their native or primary language. There are many more language combinations for which no *translator* certification is available. Where this is the case, requesters should require at a minimum that the translator demonstrate *language* proficiency at ILR Level 3 or above.

A translator certifying body/board is a private organization or government agency in charge of certifying and/or regulating professional translators. Certifying bodies can be classified as follows:

- Vendor Driven: entities whose members are in the business of selling translation services (e.g. language services companies or professional associations).
- Vendor-Neutral: entities whose members are engaged in both buying and selling translation services.

- Non-vendor: entities whose members are buyers and end users of translation services (e.g. government agency).

Translator Competencies

Language proficiency (reading and writing)

First and foremost, translators must have high-level reading proficiency in the source language and high-level writing proficiency in the target language. Individuals lacking these proficiency levels are unable to produce a high-quality translation.

The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), a collaborative effort of US federal government agencies, academia and language specialists, has developed a skill level scales to evaluate various aspects of language proficiency (reading, listening, speaking, writing, translation performance, interpretation performance, audio translation performance, and competence in intercultural communication). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) adapted this scale for use in academic settings and the two organizations currently work together to ensure that the two systems are complementary. The ACTFL exams, along with the Defense Language Proficiency Tests (DLPT) developed by the US Department of Defense and the European Common Framework for Languages testing, are an effective way to determine proficiency in numerous languages. In order to perform translation, proficiency is necessary in reading in the source language and writing in the target language, along with translation proficiency and intercultural proficiency.

ILR Scale	Definition from the ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Reading Performance ^{xlii}	Definition from the ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Writing Performance ^{xliii}
5 (Functionally Native Proficiency)	Reading proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of the well-educated native reader. Can read extremely difficult and abstract prose; for example, general legal and technical as well as highly colloquial writings. Able to read literary texts, typically including contemporary avant-garde prose, poetry and theatrical writing. Can read classical/archaic forms of literature with the same degree of facility as the well-educated, but non-specialist native. Reads and understands a wide variety of vocabulary and idioms, colloquialisms, slang, and pertinent cultural references. With varying degrees of difficulty, can read all kinds of handwritten documents. Accuracy of comprehension is equivalent to that of a well-educated native reader.	Has writing proficiency equal to that of a well-educated native. Without non-native errors of structure, spelling, style or vocabulary can write and edit both formal and informal correspondence, official reports and documents, and professional/educational articles including writing for special purposes which might include legal, technical, educational, literary and colloquial writing. In addition to being clear, explicit and informative, the writing and the ideas are also imaginative. The writer employs a very wide range of stylistic devices.

4 (Advanced Professional Proficiency)	<p>Able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs. The individual's experience with the written language is extensive enough that he/she is able to relate inferences in the text to real-world knowledge and understand almost all sociolinguistic and cultural references. Able to "read beyond the lines" (that is, to understand the full ramifications of texts as they are situated in the wider cultural, political, or social environment). Able to read and understand the intent of writers' use of nuance and subtlety. [...] Recognizes all professionally relevant vocabulary known to the educated non-professional native, although may have some difficulty with slang. Can read reasonably legible handwriting without difficulty. Accuracy is often nearly that of a well-educated native reader.</p>	<p>Able to write the language precisely and accurately in a variety of prose styles pertinent to professional/educational needs. Errors of grammar are rare including those in low frequency complex structures. Consistently able to tailor language to suit audience and able to express subtleties and nuances. Expository prose is clearly, consistently and explicitly organized. The writer employs a variety of organizational patterns, uses a wide variety of cohesive devices such as ellipses and parallelisms, and subordinates in a variety of ways. Able to write on all topics normally pertinent to professional and educational needs and on social issues of a general nature. Writing adequate to express all his/her experiences.</p>
3 (General Professional Proficiency)	<p>Able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of authentic prose material on unfamiliar subjects. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although it is not expected that the individual can comprehend thoroughly subject matter which is highly dependent on cultural knowledge or which is outside his/her general experience and not accompanied by explanation. [...] Almost always able to interpret material correctly, relate ideas and "read between the lines," (that is, understand the writers' implicit intents in text of the above types). [...] Rarely has to pause over or reread general vocabulary. However, may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structure and low frequency idioms.</p>	<p>Able to use the language effectively in most formal and informal written exchanges on practical, social and professional topics. Can write reports, summaries, short library research papers on current events, on particular areas of interest or on special fields with reasonable ease. Control of structure, spelling and general vocabulary is adequate to convey his/her message accurately but style may be obviously foreign. Errors virtually never interfere with comprehension and rarely disturb the native reader. Punctuation generally controlled. [...] Relationship of ideas is consistently clear.</p>
2 (Limited Working Proficiency)	<p>Sufficient comprehension to read simple, authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context. Able to read with some</p>	<p>Able to write routine social correspondence and prepare documentary materials required for most limited work requirements. [...] Can write simply about a very limited number of</p>

	<p>misunderstandings straightforward, familiar, factual material, but in general insufficiently experienced with the language to draw inferences directly from the linguistic aspects of the text. [...]The individual does not have a broad active vocabulary (that is, which he/she recognizes immediately on sight), but is able to use contextual and real-world cues to understand the text. Characteristically, however, the individual is quite slow in performing such a process. ...</p>	<p>current events or daily situations. Still makes common errors in spelling and punctuation, but shows some control of the most common formats and punctuation conventions. [...] Elementary constructions are usually handled quite accurately and writing is understandable to a native reader not used to reading the writing of foreigners. ...</p>
<p>1 (Elementary Proficiency)</p>	<p>Sufficient comprehension to read very simple connected written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript. [...] Some misunderstandings possible on simple texts. Can get some main ideas and locate prominent items of professional significance in more complex texts. Can identify general subject matter in some authentic texts.</p>	<p>Has sufficient control of the writing system to meet limited practical needs. Can create by writing statements and questions on topics very familiar to him/her within the scope of his/her very limited language experience. Writing vocabulary is inadequate to express anything but elementary needs; writes in simple sentences making continual errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation...</p>

Translation skills proficiency

If we can't speak in Spanish, we clearly can't interpret into Spanish. And if we can't write in Spanish, we can't translate into Spanish. Even though language proficiency is a foundational skill for interpreters and translators alike, language proficiency tests do NOT cover the skills involved in transferring a message accurately from one language to another so the message has the same meaning in the target language.

The FBI has tested linguists for language proficiency and for translation proficiency. Their results showed that only 40% of those achieving a specified proficiency level in reading and listening (ILR 2+ and above), were able to produce a high-quality translation. Conversely, essentially all individuals with proficiency levels below the threshold were unable to translate effectively. As they point out, "According to the ILR SLDs [skill level descriptions] for Translation Performance, 'translation' does not occur until the Level 3."^{xliv}

Translators may also hold certifications from organizations in other countries, such as Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC) and provincial translator associations in Canada, ITI in the UK, NAATI in Australia, etc. These are also indicative of acceptable levels of proficiency.

ILR Scale	Definition from the ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Translation Performance ^{xiv}
5 (Professional Performance)	Can successfully translate virtually all texts, including those where lack of linguistic and cultural parallelism between the source language and the target language requires precise congruity judgments and the ability to apply a translation methodology. Expression is flawless. At this level, the translator consistently excels in a number of specialties, and is generally regarded as one of the arbiters of translating very high-level language by persons competent in dealing with such material. Nonetheless, the resulting product may be subject to quality control.
4+ (Professional Performance)	Can successfully apply a translation methodology to translate texts that contain highly original and special purpose language (such as that contained in religious sermons, literary prose, and poetry). At this level, a successful performance requires not only conveying content and register but also capturing to the greatest extent all nuances intended in the source document. Expression is virtually flawless. Can produce fully accurate translations in a number of subject fields. When the need arises to perform in areas outside of specialization, a translator at this level is able to reach a successful level of performance given the time necessary for acquiring the relevant knowledge of the subject matter. The resulting product is a professional translation which may be subject to quality control.
4 (Professional Performance)	Can successfully apply a translation methodology to translate a wide variety of complex texts that contain difficult, abstract, idiomatic, highly technical, and colloquial writing. Able to capture subtleties, nuances, and tone and register (such as official, formal, and informal writing). Such texts range from commentary reflecting a specific culture to analysis and argumentation. Linguistic knowledge and familiarity with source language norms enable an individual at this level to translate handwritten documents and other texts that represent spontaneous expression characteristic of native speakers. Expression reflects native usage and consistent control of target language conventions. Can translate materials outside the individual's specialties, but may not reach the absolute subject matter accuracy of the specialist in the given field. The resulting product is a professional translation which may be subject to quality control.
3+ (Professional Performance)	Can generally translate a variety of texts, such as many scientific or financial reports, some legal documents and some colloquial writings. Can convey the meaning of many socio-cultural elements embedded in a text as well as most nuances and relatively infrequent lexical and syntactic items of the source language. Expression reflects target language norms and usage. May be able to operate in fields outside areas of specialty. The resulting product is a draft translation, subject to quality control.
3 (Professional Performance)	Can translate texts that contain not only facts but also abstract language, showing an emerging ability to capture their intended implications and many nuances. Such texts usually contain situations and events which are subject to value judgments of a personal or institutional kind, as in some newspaper editorials, propaganda tracts, and evaluations of projects. Linguistic knowledge of both the terminology and the means

	of expression specific to a subject field is strong enough to allow the translator to operate successfully within that field. Word choice and expression generally adhere to target language norms and rarely obscure meaning. The resulting product is a draft translation, subject to quality control.
2+ (Limited Performance)	Able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective. The individual shows considerable ability to communicate effectively on topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows a high degree of fluency and ease of speech, yet when under tension or pressure, the ability to use the language effectively may deteriorate.
2 (Limited Performance)	Able to render into the target language some straightforward, factual texts in the standard variety of the source language. Can typically render accurately uncomplicated prose (such as that used in short identification documents, simple letters, instructions, and some narrative reports) that does not contain figurative language, complex sentence structures, embedding, or instances of syntactic or semantic skewing. Can normally rely on knowledge of the subject matter to operate within one given subject field, consisting of a narrow body of material that is routine, repetitive, and often predictable. Expression in the target language may be faulty, frequently reflecting the structure and word order of the source language. To the extent that faulty expression may obscure or distort meaning, accuracy will suffer. The resulting product is not a professional translation and must be submitted to quality control.
1+ (Minimal Performance)	Able to scan source language texts for specific categories, topics, key points and/or main ideas, generally rendering an accurate report on these but often missing supporting facts and details. Can to some extent render factual materials, such as records or database entries, often relying on real-world knowledge or familiarity with the subject matter. Oversight and review of the product are necessary.
1 (Minimal Performance)	Able to make word by word transfers, not always with accuracy. May be able to identify documents by their label or headings and scan graphic materials, such as charts and diagrams, for items of specific interest. Constant oversight and review of the product are necessary.
0+ (Minimal Performance)	Able to transfer very little information from one language into another, usually representing isolated words and/or phrases. Accuracy is haphazard. Constant oversight is required.
0 (No Performance)	Has no practical ability to transfer information from one language into another.

Cultural proficiency

The ILR has developed a cultural proficiency scale to evaluate readiness for particular language mediation tasks and found that competence in intercultural communication is closely linked to language proficiency, since when we communicate a message in a particular language, it is almost always heard or read by a person who lives in a culture where that language is dominant. This is the reason foreign language instruction includes literature, history, and geography of the countries and peoples of a certain language. In May of 2012, the ILR published the [skill level descriptions for competence in intercultural communication](#).^{xlvi}

“Competence in intercultural communication is the ability to take part effectively in a given social context by understanding what is being communicated and by employing appropriate language and behavior to convey an intended message.

Knowledge and understanding of some extra linguistic elements may be acquired through independent research, regional studies, or educational programs that include coursework in such disciplines as anthropology, history, religion, politics, psychology, sociology, sociolinguistics, economics, communication, literature, and the arts. However, control of a full range of nonverbal responses to social cues is typically unattainable without extended immersion in the culture.”

Cultures develop in a geographic area, where they have to respond to the needs of their physical environment, cultures they are in contact with, and other issues. Each culture has different resources and different problems to solve, and therefore will develop different customs to some degree.

Technical proficiency

In addition to the language, translation skills, and cultural proficiency necessary to produce a high-quality translation, translators can often benefit from the ability to use various technological solutions to produce professional translations. Translation Environment Tools (TenTs), often also called Computer-Aided Translation Tools (CAT tools), provide translators with terminology management utilities, translation memory, a variety of quality assurance tools, and sometimes access to machine translation. Academically trained translators frequently receive instruction on how to manage the specialized terminology in a particular domain using these tools, which enhances the consistency and accuracy of translations. During the translation process, the translation memory stores the translated segments (e.g., sentences) in a database. In subsequent translations, new segments are compared to stored segments. Identical or similar segments are retrieved from the database and inserted into the translation for the translator to edit and verify.

Requesters may find that translators with such technical proficiency will be more successful in producing high-quality translations, particularly when a variety of texts are translated over a longer period of time. The translation memory and terminology management tools make it possible to maintain consistency over time and various text types, which can enhance the quality of a requester’s publications. In addition, professional translators can be expected to have proficiency in handling a variety of electronic

document types such as word processing, spreadsheets, or presentations, as well as PDF conversions and more complex types such as software help files.

Domain expertise

In order to translate effectively, translators need expertise in the subject matter (domain) of the source text in addition to proficiency in source reading, target writing, culture, and transfer of meaning. Certified translators can be expected to produce high-quality translations in a variety of general topics without specialized knowledge, but requesters must consider the subject matter of the source text in order to decide whether such knowledge will be necessary in order to translate effectively. A relatively simple example is that the word “policy” has different translations into Spanish depending on whether the topic is government policy or an insurance policy.

Professional translators often will have specializations in business, law, finance, science, technology, medicine, patents, humanities, or literature. Individual translators will often be highly specialized in a particular subdomain, for instance, contracts or technical specifications. As noted earlier, requesters should carefully describe the subject matter of the source text in the specifications for the translation and require the translation service provider or independent translator to indicate their background knowledge in a specific domain.

The Process of Procuring Translation Services

Unlike language interpretation, translation is a multistep process (commonly referred to as translation project) that results in a tangible good: a written document. Translating is a highly complex and skilled human activity that can potentially involve any area of knowledge. Translators must activate a wide range of specialized technical, linguistic, and cultural knowledge in order to produce a translation. At the most basic level, obviously, a French>English translator cannot produce a Spanish>English translation. But the issues that translators must grapple with are more complex: a translation into Arabic as used in Morocco, for instance, may have cultural references that are obscure or offensive for Arabic speakers from another of the 22 Arabic-speaking countries. Requesters should be careful to provide all available information and context to the translator to ensure that the translation, as a product of a complex multistep process, achieves maximum quality.

In accordance with the previously referenced CLAS Standard 7, requesters/payers should carefully vet each individual service provider involved in each one of these steps. Outsourcing translation services should never be synonymous with surrendering one's better judgment with an out-of-sight out-of-mind attitude. We recommend that requesters/payers develop their own work order templates based on ASTM standards. The following process is based on the ASTM F2575-14 Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation

Translation Process:

1. Specifications agreement
2. Terminology
 - a. develop glossary using client's resources and ongoing translation process
3. Translation
4. Revision
 - a. Compare source text to target text for:
 - i. completeness
 - ii. accuracy
 - iii. free from misinterpretations
 - b. Referring only to target text:
 - i. coherence
 - ii. readability
5. Formatting and compilation
6. Proofreading and verification
 - a. typographical errors
 - b. spelling
 - c. formatting
7. Comparison with specifications
8. Delivery
9. Client review

Procurement Models

When it comes to choosing a procurement model for translation services, government agencies should embrace business models tailored to their varying needs and language demands. Please note that the different models listed below are not mutually exclusive and can be used in combination. No matter what procurement model or vendor is selected, the requester should verify that the translators have the necessary qualifications and that the vendor follows a proper translation process, including revision, before negotiating the price.

In-house

- **Bilingual staff:** an employee who performs a job in English and in a language other than English (LOTE). Example: English <> Spanish Legal Assistant at a public defense office.
- **Staff translator:** an employee whose job description is to provide translation services. Example: Medical Translator English > Spanish, Seattle Children's Hospital.

Outsourced

- **Direct contracting:** the payer orders, invoices and pays contracted translators. Direct contracting can be done either by working directly with the translator, or online through web portals.
 - **Proprietary software systems:** the payer develops and maintains its own software tailored to its unique needs for scheduling, invoicing, and paying contracted translators. Example: The WA DSHS Centralized Translation Coordination is a Web-based application used for requesting, processing, and tracking translation services.
- **Subcontracting:** the payer uses an intermediary to order, invoice and pay contracted translators.
 - **Language services company:** an intermediary is paid a percentage of each translation to order, manage the project, compile glossaries, invoice, and pay translators. Example: Western States Cooperative Alliance – National Association of State Procurement Officials (WSCA-NASPO) DES Contract #10306
 - **Service as a Product (SaaP):** a translation is sold by the translator to the requester/buyer through an online standalone website.

Supply Chain

Payer	The person(s) or entity that pays for the translation.
Requester	The person(s) or entity that places the order for the translation.
End User(s)	The LEP person(s) in need of the translated documenting.
Language Services Provider	The person(s), translator(s), organization, or language services company (LSC) making arrangements for the provision of language translation services including, but not limited to selecting, contracting, scheduling, invoicing, and paying the translator, the proof reader and the project manager.
Individual Service Provider/Translator*	The person who conveys meaning from and into the English language. (Note that according to ATA, 80% of its members are freelance professionals.)
Individual Service Provider/Reviser*	Bilingual member of the translation team who compares a completed translation to the source text for the purpose of validating the accuracy of the final target text, and gives detailed feedback.
Individual Service Provider/Proofreader*	Target language reader of printed or electronic translation whose task is to find typographical and formatting errors and verify whether the text is understandable and reads well in the target language without reference to the source text.
Translation Project Manager*	The person who coordinates the various steps and individual service providers of the translation project and ensures its proper execution.

*Please note that though one person can fulfill more than one of these roles, there should be two translators involved in any given project. The translator should always work with a reviser who is a fully qualified translator.

Work Order^{xlvii} Based on ASTM Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation F2575-14^{xlviii}

Text in italics clarifies the options briefly stated in the boxes in the left column.

Payer	<i>full invoicing details</i>
Work order number	
Date of original request	
Date of acceptance of estimate	
Deadline	<i>Depending on the text and the type of editing required, a reasonable time frame would be 2000 words per day, with at least two work days to complete each project in order to have time for input from a reviewer. This can be adjusted depending on the type of document and the needs of the client</i>
Requester	<i>name and contact info</i>
Project manager	<i>name and contact info</i>
Translator	<i>name and contact info</i>
Reviewer	<i>name and contact info</i>
Other team members	<i>name and contact info</i>
Delivery method	<i>Electronic, physical, etc.</i>

Source text	Locale and audience it was written for	
	Subject matter	<i>Medical, legal, science, etc.</i>
	Type of document	<i>brochure, inter office memo, etc.</i>
	Format, including graphics	<i>PDF, inDesign file, etc. Word files are easier for translators to work within the editing process.</i>
Target text	Target audience locale and nationality	
	Purpose of translation	<i>Publication, gisting, information for medical staff, etc.</i>
	Cultural adjustment	<i>To communicate the message accurately, some cultural adjustment is always necessary. Changes of this type will be submitted to the requester for approval before being implemented.</i>
	Format for delivered text	<i>Straight text? Formatted text?</i>
	Style guide to be used	
	Layout expectations	
Responsibilities	How to handle text in graphics	<i>Sometimes the translator doesn't have the ability to modify graphics that include text elements.</i>
	Desktop publishing	<i>Sometimes the same desktop publisher the</i>

	responsibilities	<i>business used for the original document, with input from the translator before publication.</i>
	Terminology research	
	Software testing	
Qualifications	Language competence (reading insource language, writing in target language)	<i>Can be demonstrated using test scores, certifications, or degrees obtained. However only 40% of translators with language competence have translation competence.</i>
	Translation competence	<i>ATA certification, a degree in translation, experience, references may be indicators of competence.</i>
	Task type competence	<i>Polished translation, gisting, extraction of information, identification of topics</i>
	Subject field competence	
	Text-type competence	
	Translation technology competence	
	Clearances	<i>For some work, security clearances are required</i>
Process, project environment	Location where work will be performed	<i>Usually the translator's office, but when confidentiality is at a premium the translator may work at a location of the client's choice</i>
	Third party review	<i>If the requester will have another party review the document after delivery, the translator should have an opportunity for input after the review.</i>
	Use of specialized tools	
Reference materials provided by requester	Source and translated versions of similar texts	<i>Previous translations or materials published in both the source and target languages on the topic will help the translator be consistent with previous work done by others. In some cases, the translator may suggest alternate terms.</i>
Financial issues	Fee	
	Terms of payment	
	Method of payment	
	Identification of translator in target document	
	Fee for ancillary services (desktop publishing, software testing, extensive terminology research, etc.)	

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- Interpreters Division Leadership Council of the American Translators Association
- Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee of the American Translators Association
- Certification Committee of the American Translators Association

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Definitions

Bidirectional Interpreting: language interpretation performed back and forth between two languages (e.g. Spanish <> English)

Consecutive interpreting: the rendering of a speaker's or signer's message into another language when the speaker or signer pauses to allow interpretation.

Interpretation: the process of first fully understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken or signed language. Interpreters work using three modes of interpreting: simultaneous interpreting, consecutive interpreting, and sight translation.

Sight translation: the rendering of a written document directly into a spoken or signed language, not for purposes of producing a written document.

Simultaneous interpreting: the rendering of a speaker's or signer's message into another language while the speaker or signer continues to speak or sign.

Transcription/Translation (T/T): the two step process of creating a written text based on an audio file in another language. First, speech is transcribed in the source language and then translated into the target language.

Transcription: the process of converting speech into a written text within the same language.

Translation: the process of creating a written target text in one language based on a source text in another language in such a way that the content and, in many cases, the form of the two texts can be considered to be equivalent.

Unidirectional Interpreting: language interpretation performed only from one language into another language (e.g. Spanish > English)

Online Professional Resources

Most, if not all, certifying bodies maintain free public online lists of interpreters certified and otherwise. In addition, most interpreter and translator professional associations maintain a list of their members including detailed profiles.

This listing of online professional resources, is taken from the ATA web page (www.atanet.org)

ATA Chapters

Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida, Inc. (ATIF)

www.atifonline.org

Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT)

www.aait.org

Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI)

www.catiweb.org

Colorado Translators Association (CTA)

www.cta-web.org

Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA)

www.dvta.org

Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network (MiTiN)

www.mitinweb.org

Mid-America Chapter of ATA (MICATA)

www.micata.org

Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (MATI)

www.matiata.org

National Capital Area Translators Association (NCATA)

www.ncata.org

New York Circle of Translators (NYCT)

www.nyctranslators.org

Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA)

www.notatranslators.org

Northern California Translators Association (NCTA)

www.ncta.org

Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS)

www.notisnet.org

Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA)

www.umtia.org

ATA Affiliates

Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA)

www.aatia.org

El Paso Interpreters and Translators Association (EPITA)

www.metroplexepita.org

Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA)

www.hitagroup.org

Iowa Interpreters and Translators Association (IITA)

www.iitanet.org

Nebraska Association for Translators and Interpreters (NATI)

www.natihq.org

Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association (NITA)

www.nitaonline.org

New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association (NMTIA)

www.nmtia.net

Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators (TAPIT)

www.tapit.org

Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA)

www.utianet.org

Other Groups

American Literary Translators Association (ALTA)

www.literarytranslators.org

Arizona Court Interpreters Association (ACIA)

www.aciaonline.org

Arizona Translators & Interpreters, Inc. (ATI)

<http://atiinc.org/>

Association of Translators and Interpreters in the San Diego Area (ATISDA)
www.atisda.org

California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)
www.ccia.org

Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI)
<http://www.cchicertification.org>

Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)
www.chicata.org

Colorado Association of Professional Interpreters (CAPI)
www.coloradointerpreters.org

Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs/International Federation of Translators (FIT)
(ATA is affiliated with FIT)
www.fit-ift.org

International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA)
www.imiaweb.org

Medical Interpreter Network of Georgia (MING)
www.mingweb.org

Metroplex Interpreters and Translators Association (MITA)
www.dfw-mita.com

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)
www.najit.org

National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC)
www.ncihc.org

New England Translators Association (NETA)
www.netaweb.org

Oregon Society of Translators and Interpreters (OSTI)
www.ostiweb.org

Society for Technical Communication (STC)
www.stc.org

Texas Association of Healthcare Interpreters and Translators (TAHIT)

<http://www.tahit.us>

Vermont Association of Translators and Interpreters (VATI)

www.vermontati.org

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^{iv} <http://www.beckershospitalreview.com/lists/average-cost-per-inpatient-day-across-50-states-in-2010.html>

^v (<http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/Competence.htm>).

^{vi} (<http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale2.htm>)

^{vii} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defense_Language_Proficiency_Tests

^{viii} <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

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^{xi} <http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/docs/osca/cpsd/interpreterservices/chartofappropriatescoresfororegoninterpretercredentials.pdf>

^{xii} http://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/pos_interpret/index.cfm?fa=pos_interpret.display&fileName=registeredInterpreters

^{xiii} http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/195_2.pdf

<http://www.oregon.gov/oha/oei/hci/Documents/Health%20Care%20Interpreter%20Language%20Requirements.pdf>

^{xiv} http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defense_Language_Proficiency_Tests

^{xv} <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

^{xvi} *National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters, NBCMI:*

<http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org//sites/default/files/national-board-candidate-handbook.pdf>

^{xvii} WA DSHS Medical: scoring information available on candidates' results letters only. Oral total score: 50% of sight translation and 50% of consecutive interpretation. Oral total must be 74.5 or higher to pass.

^{xviii} *Certification Commission in Health Care Interpreting, CCHI*
<http://www.cchicertification.org/images/pdfs/candidatehandbook.pdf>

^{xix} WA DSHS Social: scoring information available on candidates' results letters only. A total score of 69.5 or higher is required to pass the simultaneous portions of the Level 2 test. Level 1 does not require passing the simultaneous portion.

^{xx} *Oregon Court Certified:*
<http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OSCA/cpsd/InterpreterServices/pages/faq.aspx#FAQ13>

^{xxi} *Washington Court Certified:*
http://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/pos_interpret/index.cfm?fa=pos_interpret.display&fileName=certifiedInterpreters

^{xxii} <http://www.uscourts.gov/FederalCourts/UnderstandingtheFederalCourts/DistrictCourts/CourtInterpreters.aspx>

^{xxiii} <http://www.ncsc.org/Education-and-Careers/State-Interpreter-Certification.aspx>

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^{xxxii} <https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/apps/ContractSearch/ContractSummary.aspx?c=10306>

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- xlvi <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/AdoptedILRTranslationGuidelines.htm>
- xlvii <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/Competence.htm>
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<http://www.training.gauchatranslations.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/GT-Translations-process-filled-in-oct-2014.pdf>
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<http://www.astm.org/Standards/F2575.htm>