

# INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the difference between an **interpreter** and a **translator**?

An **interpreter** is a person specially trained to convert *oral messages* from one language to another. A **translator** is a person specially trained to convert *written text* from one language to another. USCRI provides both interpretation and translation services.

### 2. What are the benefits of providing an interpreter?

Providing an interpreter is a respectful way to promote clear communication, reduce liability, and ensure that your agency is compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### 3. Do you have xxx language available?

Many languages are available, including: Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, French, Mandarin, Nepali, Somali, & Spanish. If we cannot provide an interpreter locally, we will reach out to our partner agencies to see if there is an interpreter in another state available to meet your need remotely.

### 4. How are interpreters trained?

USCRI's Interpreter training curriculum meets National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) Standards. Interpreters are professionally required to uphold **Interpreter Ethics**, including Confidentiality, Accuracy & Impartiality.

### 5. What options are available?

USCRI offers two options to better meet customers' needs:

1. **Face-to-Face** – an interpreter will travel to your office for an in-person meeting
2. **Telephonic** – an interpreter will be available over the phone

### 6. Are interpretation services free?

No. Interpretation is a fee-for-service, **social enterprise** operation that supports USCRI's mission of protecting the rights and addressing the needs of persons in forced or voluntary migration worldwide and supporting their transition to a dignified life.

### 7. How can I request an interpreter?

Please call or email to schedule a face-to-face or telephonic appointment. You'll need to provide your contact information (name, phone number, organization, and email address), details about the appointment (date, time, location and expected duration of the appointment), client's name, phone number, and preferred language.

### 8. I speak English and another language fluently. How can I work as an interpreter?

Join our team! Please apply on-line at [refugees.org](http://refugees.org) under the "careers" section.

Please reach out with any questions or feedback. We are here to help and can provide training or ideas about how to meet the linguistic needs of individuals served by your organization.

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## Best Practices for Working with Interpreters

- **Hire a professionally-trained interpreter.** Do not ask the client's friend or family (especially children!) to interpret unless it is a true emergency and you have no other choice. Working with a professionally-trained interpreter reduces liability, and ensures that confidentiality, accuracy, and boundaries are upheld.
- Schedule **enough time.** Interpreted appointments take longer than one-on-one visits. You will need to pause every few sentences.
- Indicate the **nature of the appointment** when requesting an interpreter.
- **Pre-session:** Meet with the interpreter at the beginning of the meeting to discuss the nature of the appointment, goals, and interpreting modes.
- Give the interpreter an opportunity to learn names of participants, introduce herself, and explain that everything that is said within the meeting will be kept confidential.
- **Speak directly to the client.** "When did this happen?" rather than "Ask her when this happened!" You don't have to be loud. Act 'normal'.
- **Be precise.** Avoid chaining questions together, e.g. "Do you smoke, drink, or take drugs?" should be three separate questions.
- **Avoid professional jargon** (such as acronyms, slang, or codes) that a lay person would not understand.
- Be prepared to have the interpreter interrupt when a word or phrase needs to be **clarified.**
- **Check-in** with the interpreter to see if you are speaking too fast or too slowly, too softly, or unclearly.
- **Learn** greetings and the appropriate pronunciation of names in the individual's primary language.

*Remember that the interpreter is there to allow you and the client/patient to talk with each other, not to act as an advocate, proxy or negotiator for either party. In other words, the interpreter is responsible for conveying the spoken message clearly, accurately, and fully. The interpreter is not responsible for whether or not people like or accept what they hear.*

## Requesting an Interpreter

When requesting an interpreter, please provide the following information:

- Client/patient's name, preferred language
- Client/patient's phone number for reminder call (optional)
- Date, time, expected duration, and location of appointment
- Preferred type of appointment (in-person or telephonic)
- Nature of appointment (lab work, surgery, counseling, job interview, etc.)

Please reach out with any questions or feedback. We are here to help and can provide training or ideas about how to meet the linguistic needs of individuals served by your organization.

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