

Roster Search FAQ within Disclaimer Section

1. What is the difference between a translator or interpreter?
 - Often people use the words, “translators” and “interpreters” interchangeably, however there is a difference between a translator versus an interpreter.

Interpreters is a person who converts a spoken message or written text from one language to another in oral form.

Translators is a person who converts a written text from one language to another in written language.

(Source: Hawaii Administrative Rules 11-220-3)

2. Does the Office of Language Access (OLA) provide interpreter or translator services?
 - No, OLA does not provide interpreter nor translation services.
3. What are the requirements to be listed on the OLA Roster of Interpreters and Translator?
 - The requirements for an interpreter:
 - (a) is at least 18 years of age;
 - (b) is eligible to work in the United States;
 - (c) has a high school or higher education diploma or general education development certificate;
 - (d) has completed at least sixteen hours of basic interpreter training provided by the office or attended and successfully completed interpreter training programs approved by the office; and
 - (e) demonstrates English language proficiency through:
 - (1) Completing at least 48 semester college credit hours or equivalent with classes conducted in English;
 - (2) Holding bachelor’s, master’s, PhD, or any other degree from an institution of higher education with classes conducted in English;
 - (3) Possessing a credential from an established interpreter certification program that includes a language-specific performance test as determined by the office; or
 - (4) Possessing a valid English language proficiency scale as determined by the executive director, and
 - (f) demonstrates non-English language proficiency through:
 - (1) Completing at least 48 semester college credit hours or equivalent with classes conducted in the non-English language;
 - (2) Holding bachelor’s, master’s, PhD, or any other degree from an institution of higher education with classes conducted in the non- English language;
 - (3) Possessing a score of advanced high on American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) assessment;
 - (4) Possessing a score of 2+ on Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) equivalent;
 - (5) Possessing a credential from an established interpreter certification program that includes a language-specific performance test as determined by the office; or

(6) Possessing a valid language proficiency scale as determined by the executive director.

(Source: Hawaii Administrative Rules 11-220-32)

- The requirements for a translator:
 - (a) is at least 18 years of age;
 - (b) is eligible to work in the United States;
 - (c) has a high school or higher education diploma or general education development certificate; and possess a current translation certification from the American Translators Association (ATA), or Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DHS), or other programs approved by the office.
- (Source: Hawaii Administrative Rules 11-220-33)

4. What is a certified interpreter?

- A certified interpreter has passed a formal credentialing process administered by a professional organization or governmental entity may be certified. Certification is a credential awarded by a recognized certification body to interpreters who pass a rigorous, externally validated skills test with oral and written components that is based on national or international requirements for professional certification.

(Source: Bancroft, Marjory A. The Community Interpreter, A Comprehensive Training Manual, 5th Edition, Cross Cultural Communication, 2011)

5. What is a certified translator?

- In contrast to many other countries, in the United States there is no federal or state licensing or certification for translators. There are some credentials available to translators working in some language pairs in this country, but they do not carry the same weight—in the marketplace or in the translation community—as federal licensing or certification in other countries. The American Translators Association offers [translator certification](#) in various language pairs. ATA-certified translators are required to specify the language pairs and directions in which they are certified. For example, a translator certified in German to English is not necessarily certified in English to German. Please note that there are many languages for which there is no type of certification or screening available in this country. There are many excellent, experienced translators and interpreters who are not certified. In the United States it is not necessary to be certified or licensed in order to provide a certified translation for official use, unless the entity receiving the translation specifies that the translation must be done by an ATA-certified translator.

[\(Source: Caitilin Walsh, CT; French/German to English translator and ATA President-Elect\)](#)

6. Are all interpreters and translators on the OLA Roster of Interpreters and Translator certified?

- No. Not all languages can be certified.

7. Does OLA certify interpreters and translators?

- No. OLA does not certify interpreters nor translators.

8. How do I contact the interpreters or translators

- You can contact interpreters or translators directly with the information provided on the roster.

9. What is the cost to use the OLA Roster of Interpreters and Translator?

- It is free to use the OLA Roster of Interpreters and Translator.

10. If I have any question(s) on the FAQ, who do I contact?

- Contact the Office of Language Access at 808-586-8730 (phone) or doh.ola@doh.hawaii.gov (email).