



Office of Language Services

U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE



Translating Talent into Opportunity

A Young Professional's Guide
to

Translating & Interpreting Careers

Translating & Interpreting Essential Skills

Language Proficiency:

- Native or Near-Native Proficiency Required

Cultural Competency:

- Nuanced understanding of cultural references, phrases, and view points

Specialized Knowledge:

- Stay up-to-date on current events and headlines from any country where your target language is spoken
- Solid knowledge of the language's grammar style & vocabulary

Tools:

- Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) Tools
- Familiarity with Generative AI Tools
- Research Data Bases

What is Translating & Interpreting (T&I)?

- **Translating:** The process of translating words or text from one language into another. It is a written form of communication
 - Small teams of translators and editors
- **Interpreting:** The act of converting thought or expression that is spoken from one language to another language
 - Work in front of large and small audience
 - On the spot knowledge of terms
- **Both Translation and Interpretation are rapidly growing fields**, where language enthusiasts from all different backgrounds are necessary to help make a difference in the world!

Ideal Candidates:

- Strong Language Skills
- Attention to Detail
- Adaptability and Quick Thinking
- Passion
- Working Well Under Pressure

How to Get Started

- **Internships & Volunteer work**
 - Shadow professionals in the field
 - Volunteer to translate/interpret in your local community
 - Use social media to make connections
 - Network with language professionals
- **Building a portfolio**
 - Take T+I technology classes at a local college
- **Attend conferences such as:**
 - AIIC
 - ATA
 - NAJIT
 - TAALS
- **Focus on language learning in high school and college**
 - Take AP/IB language courses
 - Join language clubs
 - Study Abroad

Working with Office of Language Services

What is OLS?

The Office of Language Services, part of the Department of State, continues a longstanding tradition of providing language support for foreign policy that originated in 1789, when it was established by Thomas Jefferson.

Working for OLS:

Interpreting:

- White House & State Department
 - Diplomatic & Conference interpreters on OLS staff
 - Conference interpreters on contractor rosters

Translating:

- Provide translation services to the State Department, White House, & other U.S. Government Agencies
- Translation projects include correspondence, treaties, reports, speeches, briefing slides, website, etc.



Career Paths & Opportunities

- **Freelance vs. Full-Time**
 - *Freelance/Contract*
 - On contractor rosters
 - Can be placed on individual assignments
 - *Full-Time*
 - State Department Federal Employees
- **Career paths:**
 - Translation Agencies
 - Corporate Translation
 - Government (with OLS!)
 - Legal Translation
 - Media & Publishing
 - Healthcare & Medical Translation
- **Industries that need T&I:**
 - Conferences & International Events
 - Hospitals & Healthcare services
 - Courts & Legal Systems
 - Business & Tech