

# **Certification and Ethical Standards for Language Interpreters and Translators**

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Question: What are the certification standards and ethical guidelines for language interpreters and translators?

[According to the Oregon Society of Translators and Interpreters](#), the United States does not have formalized licensing requirements for translators.

- ✓ Court interpreters are certified by state or federal authorities.
- ✓ Medical interpreters have been evaluated by a national board.

Guidance on professional standards can be found through the [Oregon Society of Translators and Interpreters \(OSTI\)](#). OSTI is a professional society dedicated to support the needs of professional interpreters and translators in Oregon and Washington.

Principles of the translation and interpretation professions:

- Translating and interpreting require a respect for the consumer.
- Translating and interpreting are complex cognitive tasks.
- Translating and interpreting require bilingual and bicultural competence.
- Translating and interpreting require a broad base of general knowledge, for what is not understood cannot be translated.
- The mere transfer of the form instead of the meaning of the original message does not constitute an accurate translation.
- Translators need to function in an ethical and professional manner.

Expected standards for the profession:

- The document text is written at the appropriate grade level for the audience intended (i.e. parents-8<sup>th</sup> grade level, educators- 12<sup>th</sup> grade, etc.).
- The content is appropriate regarding English content equivalents and style issues (punctuation, grammar, abbreviations, etc.).
- English equivalent concepts, ideas, and meaning are communicated clearly and precisely.

## **Resources:**

[To get services as a client in Multnomah County](#)- interpretation services provided free-of-charge to any client who expresses the need.

ODE staff that need live interpretation services should check the J Drive for instructions on accessing the language line that the agency uses for this purpose. (J:\GENERAL OFFICE\Translations)