Federal Coordination and Compliance Section

BEFORE YOU HIRE – *ASK YOURSELF*: "WHAT ARE MY PROJECT'S LANGUAGE NEEDS?"

Translation and Interpretation Procurement Series TIPS

INTERPRETATION (ORAL)

THE PROJECT WILL REQUIRE SOMEONE WHO CAN:

- Listen to a communication in one language and orally convert it to another language (either *simultaneously* or *consecutively*) while retaining the meaning
- Orally communicate in the target language and can convey the meaning of that conversation in English (direct "in-language" communication)
- Listen to English language media and convert audio into spoken target language
- Listen to target language media and convert audio into spoken English

KEY INTERPRETATION ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION BODIES:

- Federal Language Assessments Using the ILR Scale (such as the Defense Language Proficiency Test, Foreign Service Institute Test, or the FBI Language Proficiency Test)
- The Federal Court Interpreter Program (FCIP) Certification
- The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) have certification programs
- Select state court programs (The Language Access Services Section (LASS) of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has drafted the testing materials used by many states) provide certifications
- Select university/college programs certify and/or assess language skills

TRANSLATION (WRITTEN)

THE PROJECT WILL REQUIRE SOMEONE WHO CAN:

- Convert written English language text into written target language
- Convert written target language text into written English
- Listen to the target language media and convert audio into written English text (transcription)
- Listen to the English language media and convert audio into written target language (transcription)
- Review target language text and orally translate meaning into spoken English (sight translation)

KEY TRANSLATION ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION BODIES:

- Federal Language Assessments Using the ILR Scale (such as the Defense Language Proficiency Test, Foreign Service Institute Test, or the FBI Language Proficiency Test)
- The American Translation Association (ATA), the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) all have certification programs
- Select state court programs (The Language Access Services Section (LASS) of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has drafted the testing materials used by many states) provide certifications
- Select university/college programs certify and/or assess language skills

BEWARE – LANGUAGE SERVICE DECISIONS TO AVOID:

- Hiring linguists without verifying their language qualifications
- Hiring linguists who have not had their skills independently assessed by a qualified assessment or certification body (e.g., the linguist is certified in court interpretation by the Federal Court Interpreter Program, or achieved equivalent recognition from a qualified assessment or certification body)
- Hiring a vendor or linguist without establishing a quality control plan and remedies for low quality language service
- Hiring a vendor without inquiring about the formal qualifications or certifications of its linguists
- Hiring linguists without verifying that they can meet your specific language and/or vocabulary needs (e.g., hiring a certified medical interpreter to interpret legal arguments in court)
- Hiring <u>translators</u> to <u>interpret</u>, unless they are qualified to do both
- Hiring <u>interpreters</u> to <u>translate</u>, unless they are qualified to do both
- Using self-identified multilingual staff, who are not otherwise certified or assessed in the target language, to assess the linguistic skill of a professional translator or interpreter