



FIELD GUIDANCE: INTERPRETER'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Thank you for working as an Interpreter with USCIS. Your role as an Interpreter is extremely important to our mission of resettling refugees and your hard work is much appreciated. You are required to follow the rules set forth in this document throughout your work with us. If you have any questions about these responsibilities, please contact the USCIS Team Leader.

You will either be interpreting between English and the applicant's native language or another language in which the applicant is proficient. If there is a choice, you should always interpret using the applicant's native language.

You will be working under the direction of a USCIS Adjudicating Officer during each Refugee Interview. You will rotate among Adjudicating Officers throughout the detail. The rotation may be on a daily or weekly basis, as determined by the Team Leader and RSC. You will report to the assigned Adjudicating Officer and be available for Refugee Interviews during the work day. Necessary breaks such as lunch or prayer time should be coordinated with the Adjudicating Officer. The Adjudicating Officer will begin each Refugee Interview, direct the proceedings, and ultimately conclude the Refugee Interview.

You are required to interpret the meaning of the Adjudicating Officer's questions and the applicant's responses verbatim (word-for-word) to the extent possible. During the Refugee Interview, you should not:

- Condense the Adjudicating Officer's questions or the applicant's answers
- Expand on the Adjudicating Officer's questions or the applicant's answers
- Answer questions for the applicant or alter the applicant's responses
- Explain the meaning of what the applicant is saying
- Engage in conversations with the applicant or comment on their testimony

Please interpret the applicant's responses even when the responses do not appear to make sense or do not answer the Adjudicating Officer's questions. Let the Adjudicating Officer know if the length of his or her questions is making interpretation difficult. Similarly, advise the Adjudicating Officer when the applicant's responses are too long or complex for accurate interpretation. You should also advise the Adjudicating Officer if you are having difficulty understanding either the applicant or the Adjudicating Officer. Adjudicating Officers will use the

second person (you) when addressing the applicant; Interpreters should use the first person (I or me) when interpreting the applicant's testimony into English.

You must remain neutral during USCIS Refugee Interviews. If you have previously met an applicant, even if it was a minimal social interaction, you should disclose this information to the Adjudicating Officer prior to the start of the Refugee Interview. It is strictly forbidden to have personal connections with applicants, have business affairs with applicants, or behave in such a way as to give the appearance to the applicants that you have influence on any case decision. If at any time an applicant or other person offers you a bribe, threatens you, or otherwise tries to coerce you to interpret incorrectly, you should inform the Adjudicating Officer or team leader immediately. They will communicate this information to other parties as appropriate. Your report will be treated in confidence.

During Refugee Interviews, you should always sit in a way that demonstrates neutrality. Adjudicating Officers may make adjustments to where you are seated in certain locations or certain situations, due to the set-up of the interviewing room, or an applicant's handicap or disability.

Information shared between an Adjudicating Officer and applicant is strictly confidential. Please give all notes taken during a case to the Adjudicating Officer at the end of the Refugee Interview. Revealing anything about an applicant's claim, even to other Interpreters, can be potentially harmful to the applicant. Any notes you take during the Refugee Interview that may include personal information concerning the applicant or their claim should be shredded by the Adjudicating Officer after the Refugee Interview has concluded.

You will be asked to take the following oath before you begin your work with this USCIS team:

“I solemnly swear or affirm that I will interpret all statements made during an interview completely and truthfully and that I will keep all information confidential.”

Adjudicating Officers are prohibited from socializing with Interpreters outside of work hours to prevent any perception that Interpreters can influence Adjudicating Officers' decisions. Adjudicating Officers and Interpreters may meet at group gatherings where all Interpreters and USCIS staff are invited. Other interactions, including individual outings, evening or weekend trips, or social media contact with USCIS staff are not appropriate at any point during your employment with the RSC.