

VOLUNTEER INTERPRETATION AT COMPASS

WHAT IS THIS ROLE ALL ABOUT?

COMPASS works with people from around 80 countries. Many of them do not speak or understand English, or at least not well enough to be able to work through the many different stages of their refugee claim.

Having an interpreter to make sense out of the unknown can be uplifting and can also help to reduce anxiety and confusion. Our Interpretation program seeks to:

- Provide language interpretation, both simultaneous and sight translations, to facilitate communication between caseworkers and clients.
- Maintain the integrity and confidence of communication by ensuring that only what has been said is interpreted.
- Reduce some of the stress that comes with trying to navigate a complex refugee claim process filled with technical and unique information requirements.



WHAT KIND OF TIME COMMITMENT IS NEEDED?

Interpreters must be available:

- for 2-3 (two-three) hours a day, one day a week, for 4 (four) months.
- to come to the office for both in-person and Zoom appointments.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO?

- Strong written and/or verbal communication skills in both languages.
- Quickly develop a broad vocabulary including unique phrases relevant to the claim process
 - Attentiveness to sound interpretation practices including:
 - Economy of words
 - Managing synonyms and idioms and their usage
 - Constructing proper sentences
 - Managing situations (body language, gestures, mimics, etc.)
 - Enunciation (pronunciation, syllable stress and intonation)
 - Voice control (volume, pitch, rhythm, and timbre/quality)
 - Accuracy, detail, and pace are essential
- Digital Literacy: A working knowledge Outlook, Zoom, Word, and the use of USBs for transferring information

OUTCOMES

- Both caseworkers and clients have confidence
 - they were heard correctly
 - that required forms are completed accurately
 - that what they said, and only what they said, was accurately communicated building trust and confidence
- Clients are relieved of some of the stress of their claim process as their understanding is improved, and the complexity is reduced for them

WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO THIS?

- Meet extraordinary and resilient people
- Gain valuable experience with the refugee claim process
- Grow your skills as an interpreter
- Learn about community resources
- Learn about opportunities for newcomers

VOLUNTEER TRANSLATION AT COMPASS

WHAT IS THIS ROLE ALL ABOUT?



Photo by Djordje Vezilic

There are many documents that need to be submitted to support a refugee claim. These can include identity documents, certificates related to education or employment, and records of evidence that support the person's claim to need protection.

These need to be submitted to the Immigration and Refugee Board in either English or French. Getting things translated can be very expensive.

Our volunteer translators are committed to ensuring quality translations of important documents, saving thousands of dollars every year in translation fees.

WHAT KIND OF TIME COMMITMENT IS NEEDED?

Translators must be available for in-person translation work for 2- 3 (two-three) hours a day, one day a week, for 4 (four) months.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO?

- **Linguistic Expertise:** have a level of fluency that enables you to communicate and understand the language you are translating. This includes not only basic vocabulary but also specialized terminology and differences in intonation that can completely alter a word or phrase's meaning.
- **Appreciation for Other Cultures:** Good translators appreciate and respect the cultures they represent through their translations. The best translators break down the misconceptions, stigmas, and other barriers that prevent various cultural groups from understanding and embracing one another.
- **Awareness of the Evolution of Language:** Vernacular is constantly changing. Translators need to make every effort to stay up-to-date with modern trends of vocabulary. Also, as technology evolves, translation methods and modes of delivery can shift as well. Artificial intelligence and machine learning, for example, are poised to make a huge difference. Successful translators do not avoid these changes but view them as opportunities to better serve clients.
- **Area of Specialization:** Legal documents often contain extensive jargon and complicated concepts that require the trained eye and knowledge of someone with experience in the field.
- **Attention to Detail:** No detail is too small. A single word, letter, or even accent can alter the entire meaning of a document. Compliance with established glossaries is essential to avoid discrepancies in translating specific technical terms. Check, double-check, and triple-check to ensure that every detail is correct.
- **Desire to Improve:** Successful translators accept and even encourage feedback in the interest of improving their skills.

HOW WILL COMPASS SUPPORT ME?

- A warm welcome every time you show up!
- Orientation to COMPASS and to your volunteer role
- Regular debriefing for continued improvement
- Opportunity for personal debriefing to process what has been heard and/or experienced with respect to content and personal values