

**State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Operations
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

RETURN TO:
Carrie DeFreece, PCO
DHHS
Office of Procurement and Grants
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509
402-471-0904

SOLICITATION NUMBER	RELEASE DATE
RFI Interpretation Services	April 6, 2023
OPENING DATE AND TIME	PROCUREMENT CONTACT
April 27, 2023, 2:00 p.m. Central Time	Carrie DeFreece

This form is part of the specification package and must be signed in ink and returned, along with information documents, by the opening date and time specified.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

SCOPE OF SERVICE

The State of Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services, Operations Division (hereafter known as DHHS), is issuing this Request for Information (RFI), **Interpretation Services**. The purpose of this RFI is to determine if one firm can serve as a single point of contact and provide program coordination services for all in-person interpreting needs identified by DHHS at locations across the entire state of Nebraska.

Written questions are due no later than April 6, 2023, and should be submitted via e-mail to: DHHS.RFPquestions@nebraska.gov.

RFI responses should be submitted by the RFI due date and time.

RFI responses should be received by DHHS by the date and time of RFI opening indicated above.

BIDDER MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING

By signing this Request For Information form, the bidder guarantees compliance with the provisions stated in this Request for Information.

FIRM: _____

COMPLETE ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ FAX NUMBER: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

TYPED NAME & TITLE OF SIGNER: _____

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I. SCOPE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

1. The State of Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services, Operations Division (hereafter known as DHHS), is issuing this Request for Information, Interpretation Services, for the purpose of determining if one firm can serve as a single point of contact and provide program coordination services for all **in-person interpreting** needs identified by DHHS at locations across the entire state of Nebraska.

ALL INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET AT: <https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html>

A. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The State expects to adhere to the tentative procurement schedule shown below. It should be noted, however, that some dates are approximate and subject to change.

	ACTIVITY	DATE/TIME
1	Release Request for Information	March 30, 2023
2	Last day to submit written questions ShareFile link for uploading questions: https://nebraska.sharefile.com/r-rd7e651acf3b74d1aa83a5a3e244dd538	April 6, 2023
3	State responds to written questions through Request for Information “Addendum” and/or “Amendment” to be posted to the internet at: https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html	April 13, 2023
4	RFI opening IT IS THE BIDDER’S RESPONSIBILITY TO UPLOAD ELECTRONIC FILES TO THE SHAREFILE LINK BELOW BY OPENING DATE AND TIME. EXCEPTIONS WILL NOT BE MADE FOR TECHNOLOGY ISSUES. ShareFile Electronic Proposal Submission Link: https://nebraska.sharefile.com/r-rd7e651acf3b74d1aa83a5a3e244dd538 Location: DHHS Office of Procurement and Grants 301 Centennial Mall South Lincoln, NE 68509 Also online, via Webex at: When it’s time, join your Webex meeting here.  More ways to join: Join from the meeting link https://sonvideo.webex.com/sonvideo/j.php?MTID=mbc73342bc57bb4cf9	April 27, 2023 2:00 PM Central Time
5	Conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations (if required)	To Be Determined

II. RFI RESPONSE PROCEDURES

A. OFFICE AND CONTACT PERSON

Responsibilities related to this Request for Information reside with the DHHS Office of Procurement and Grants. The point of contact for the RFI is as follows:

Name: Carrie DeFreece and/or Dana Smith, Procurement Contracts Officers
Agency: DHHS, Office of Procurement and Grants
Address: 301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509
Telephone: 402-471-0904
E-Mail: dhhs.rfpquestions@nebraska.gov

B. GENERAL INFORMATION

A subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP) may not be issued as a result of this RFI. There will not be a contract as a result of this RFI and the State is not liable for any cost incurred by vendors in replying to this RFI. If an RFP is issued, the information provided will assist the State of Nebraska in developing the Request for Proposal. This RFI does not obligate the State to reply to the RFI responses, to issue an RFP, or to include any RFI provisions or responses provided by vendors in any RFP.

C. COMMUNICATION WITH STATE STAFF

From the date the Request for Information is issued and until RFI opening (as shown in the Schedule of Events), contact regarding this RFI between potential vendors and individuals employed by the State should be restricted to written communication with the staff designated above as the point of contact for this Request for Information.

The following exceptions to these restrictions are permitted:

1. Written communication with the person(s) designated as the point(s) of contact for this Request for Information;
2. Contacts made pursuant to any pre-existing contracts or obligations; and
3. State-requested presentations, key personnel interviews, clarification sessions, or discussions.

Violations of these conditions may be considered sufficient cause to reject a vendor's response to the RFI. No individual member of the State, employee of the State, or member of the Interview Committee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFI. The State of Nebraska will issue any clarifications or opinions regarding this RFI in writing.

D. WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Any explanation desired by a vendor regarding the meaning or interpretation of any Request for Information provision should be submitted in writing to DHHS and clearly marked "In-Person Interpreting RFI Questions". It is preferred that questions be sent via e-mail to dhhs.rfpquestions@nebraska.gov

It is recommended that Bidders submit questions sequentially numbered, include the RFI reference and page number using the following format.

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>RFI Section Reference</u>	<u>RFI Page Number</u>	<u>Question</u>

Written answers will be provided through an addendum to be posted on the Internet at <https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html> on or before the date shown in the Schedule of Events.

E. ORAL INTERVIEWS/PRESENTATIONS AND/OR DEMONSTRATIONS

The State reserves the right to conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations if required at the sole invitation of the State.

Any cost incidental to the oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations shall be borne entirely by the vendor and will not be compensated by the State

F. SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE

The following describes the requirements related to the RFI submission, handling and review by the State.

The State of Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services, is accepting electronically submitted responses only for this RFP.

For submitting electronic responses:

1. Bidders submitting electronically can upload the response via ShareFile here:
<https://nebraska.sharefile.com/r-rd7e651acf3b74d1aa83a5a3e244dd538>

ShareFile works with Firefox, Internet Explorer and Chrome. It does not work with Microsoft Edge.

RFI responses should be submitted by the RFI due date and time.

A separate file must be provided that clearly states which sections have been submitted as proprietary or have copyrighted materials. RFI responses should reference the request for information name and be sent to the specified address. The Request for Information name must be included in all correspondence.

G. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Data contained in the response and all documentation provided therein, become the property of the State of Nebraska and the data become public information upon opening the response. If the vendor wishes to have any information withheld from the public, such information must fall within the definition of proprietary information contained within Nebraska's public record statutes. All proprietary information the vendor wishes the state to withhold must be submitted separate from the remainder of the response. The separate file must be clearly marked PROPRIETARY in the file name. Vendor may not mark their entire Request for Information as proprietary. Failure of the vendor to follow the instructions for submitting proprietary and copyrighted information may result in the information being viewed by other vendors and the public. Proprietary information is defined as trade secrets, academic and scientific research work which is in progress and unpublished, and other information which if released would give advantage to business competitors and serve no public purpose (see Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-712.05(3)). In accordance with Attorney General Opinions 92068 and 97033, vendors submitting information as proprietary may be required to prove specific, named competitor(s) who would be advantaged by release of the information and the specific advantage the competitor(s) would receive. Although every effort will be made to withhold information that is properly submitted as proprietary and meets the State's definition of proprietary information, the State is under no obligation to maintain the confidentiality of proprietary information and accepts no liability for the release of such information.

H. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OPENING

The sealed responses will be publicly opened via Webex and the responding entities announced on the date, time, and location shown in the Schedule of Events. Vendors may contact the state to schedule an appointment for viewing RFI responses.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF WORK

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

1. The purpose of this RFI is to determine if one firm can serve as a single point of contact and provide program coordination services for all in-person interpreting needs identified by DHHS at locations across the entire state of Nebraska.
2. DHHS released Request for Qualifications 103325 O3 to develop an interpreting pool of qualified interpreters and is currently contracting with twenty-nine (29) individual interpreters and interpreting firms to provide in-person interpretation statewide in as many as twenty-seven (27) languages and multiple dialects of some languages.
3. Currently, all DHHS in-person interpreting services are coordinated by the DHHS Office of Procurement and Grants

B. CURRENT BUSINESS PRACTICES

1. Services and rates are bid by the pool annually in four different Service Areas across the state, based on service areas developed by Child and Family Services (CFS). See Attachment 1.
2. Hourly rates currently include any travel expenses.
3. In-person interpretation services are only used once Telephonic and Video Interpreting Services from statewide mandatory-use contracts are deemed unavailable or inappropriate for the specific situation.
4. Some language interpretation is being provided through unvetted Open Market contracts.
5. When contracting for an in-person interpretation, telephonic interpretation is used only for scheduling appointments with clients.
6. DHHS staff representative must be on-site with the client for in-person interpretation to be billable to DHHS.
7. All in-person interpretations must be verified with signature of interpreter and DHHS representative at the time of the interpretation.

The bidder should provide a proposal that outlines how the bidder will meet the needs of the following information in response to this Request for Information.

C. DHHS INTERPRETATION NEEDS

1. Method(s) and a process for DHHS staff to request in-person interpretation services.
2. Menu of available interpretation services with prices for each language in each service area.
 - a. All prices should include travel expenses and be figured as a cost per hour.
 - b. Menu of services needs to be readily available to DHHS staff online.
 - c. Listing of price differentials for evening, weekend, or holiday interpreting needs.
3. DHHS is seeking a firm who can provide in-person interpretation and coordination services for the following languages:
 - a. Most commonly used:
 - i. American Sign Language (ASL)
 - ii. Spanish
 - iii. Arabic
 - iv. Vietnamese
 - b. Other languages used
 - i. See Attachment 2
4. Verification of interpreter proficiency for each interpreter providing services to DHHS.
 - a. See Attachment 3: Proficiency Levels
5. Use of the same interpreter in cases where client needs consistency.
6. Interpreters with training and/or experience working with specific populations including but not limited to:
 - a. Children
 - b. Developmentally disabled or vulnerable adults
 - c. Psychiatric settings
 - d. Court interpreting
7. Interpreters with the ability to respond to emergency needs
8. Interpreters with the ability to work evenings, weekends, and holidays

D. Invoicing Requirements

- 1.** Mutually (DHHS Representative and Interpreter) signed document from time of interpretation must be submitted with the invoice.
- 2.** Date of interpretation
- 3.** Line-item accounting codes as collected at time of interpretation initiation by DHHS staff must accompany the invoice.
- 4.** Amount of time (to the nearest quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) hour) spent for each interpretation by account code.
- 5.** Rate per hour for the interpretation as based on service area and language.
- 6.** Total cost of each interpretation by account code

Form A

Vendor Contact Sheet

Request for Information Interpretation Services

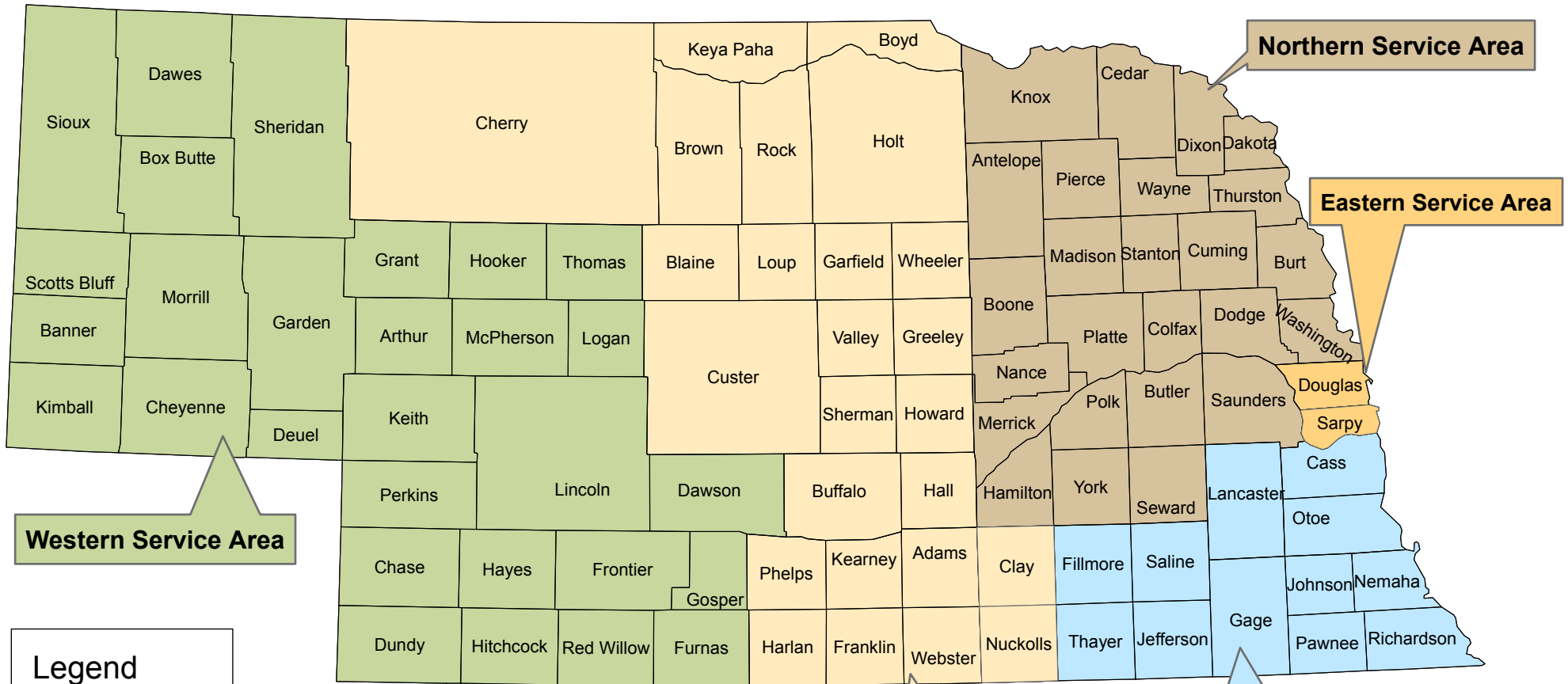
Form A should be completed and submitted with each response to this solicitation document. This is intended to provide the State with information on the vendor's name and address, and the specific persons who are responsible for preparation of the vendor's response.

Preparation of Response Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	
Vendor Address:	
Contact Person & Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone Number (Office):	
Telephone Number (Cellular):	
Fax Number:	

Each vendor shall also designate a specific contact person who will be responsible for responding to the State if any clarifications of the vendor's response should become necessary. This will also be the person who the State contacts to set up a presentation/demonstration, if required.

Communication with the State Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	
Vendor Address:	
Contact Person & Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone Number (Office):	
Telephone Number (Cellular):	
Fax Number:	

CFS Service Areas



Western Service Area

Northern Service Area

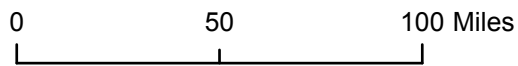
Eastern Service Area

Central Service Area

Southeast Service Area

Legend

- Western
- Central
- Southeast
- Eastern
- Northern



Attachment 2: Languages

Current In-person Interpreting Languages for DHHS

As of March 23, 2023

American Sign Language (ASL)	Kurdish
Arabic – All Dialects	Lingala
Armenian	Mandarin
Burmese	Nepali
Cantonese	Nuer
Castilian	Pashto
Dari	Persian
Dinka – South Sudan	Portuguese
French	Q'anjob'al
German	Russian
Hindi	Spanish – Castellano, Mexico
Japanese	Ukrainian
Karenni	Urdu

PROFICIENCY LEVELS

The following proficiency levels for interpretation and translation are determined by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). The ILR is a Federal organization established for the coordination and sharing of information about language-related activities at the Federal level. See <https://www.govtilr.org/>.

I. Interpretation

Level 5 (Master Professional Performance)

Able to excel consistently at interpreting in the mode (simultaneous, consecutive, and sight) required by the setting and provide accurate renditions of informal, formal, and highly formal discourse. Conveys the meaning of the speaker faithfully and accurately, including all details and nuances, reflecting the style, register, and cultural context of the source language, without omissions, additions or embellishments. Demonstrates superior command of the skills required for interpretation, including mastery of both working languages and their cultural context, and wide-ranging expertise in specialized fields. Outstanding delivery, with pleasant voice quality and without hesitations, unnecessary repetitions, and corrections. Exemplifies the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics.

Level 4+ (Advanced Professional Performance Plus)

Able to interpret in the mode (simultaneous, consecutive, and sight) required by the setting and provide accurate renditions of informal, formal, and most highly formal discourse. Conveys the meaning of the speaker faithfully and accurately, including most details and nuances, reflecting the style, register, and cultural context of the source language, without omissions, additions or embellishments. Demonstrates mastery of the skills required for interpretation, including command of both working languages and their cultural context, expertise in a number of specialized fields, and ability to prepare other specialized topics rapidly and routinely. Excellent delivery, with pleasant voice quality and rare hesitations, repetitions or corrections. Performance reflects the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics.

Level 4 (Advanced Professional Performance)

Able to interpret in the mode (simultaneous, consecutive, and sight) required by the setting and provide almost completely accurate renditions of complex, colloquial, and idiomatic speech as well as formal and some highly formal discourse. Conveys the meaning of the speaker faithfully, including many details and nuances, reflecting the style, register, and cultural context of the source language, without omissions, additions or embellishments. Demonstrates mastery of the skills required for interpretation, including command of both working languages and their cultural context, expertise in some specialized fields, and ability to prepare new specialized topics rapidly and routinely. Very good delivery, with pleasant voice quality and only occasional hesitations, repetitions or corrections. Performance reflects the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics.

Level 3+ (Professional Performance Plus)

Able to interpret accurately and consistently in the mode (simultaneous, consecutive, and sight) required by the setting and provide generally accurate renditions of complex, colloquial and formal speech, conveying most but not all details and nuances. Expression will generally reflect target language conventions. Demonstrates competence in the skills required for interpretation, including command of both working languages, their cultural context, and terminology in those specialized fields in which the interpreter has developed expertise. Good delivery, with pleasant voice quality, and few hesitations, repetitions, or corrections. Performance reflects high standards of professional conduct and ethics.

Level 3 (Professional Performance)

Able to interpret consistently in the mode (simultaneous, consecutive, and sight) required by the setting, provide renditions of informal as well as some colloquial and formal speech with adequate accuracy, and normally meet unpredictable complications successfully. Can convey many nuances, cultural allusions, and idioms, though expression may not always reflect target language

conventions. Adequate delivery, with pleasant voice quality. Hesitations, repetitions or corrections may be noticeable but do not hinder successful communication of the message. Can handle some specialized subject matter with preparation. Performance reflects high standards of professional conduct and ethics.

Level 2+ (Limited Working Performance Plus):

Able to transfer information, not always accurately and completely, during routine, everyday, repetitive exchanges in informal settings, but unable to perform adequately in the standard interpretation modes. May falter, stammer, or pause, and often resort to summarizing speech content. Idiomatic or cultural expressions may not be rendered appropriately in most instances. Language may be stilted or awkward.

Level 2 (Limited Working Performance)

Unable to transfer information reliably in most instances. May communicate some meaning when exchanges are short, involve subject matter that is routine or discourse that is repetitive or predictable, but may typically require repetition or clarification. Expression in the target language is frequently faulty.

Level 1+ (Minimal Performance)

Unable to transfer information reliably, even if familiar with the subject matter.

Level 1 (Minimal Performance Plus)

Unable to transfer more than isolated short phrases.

Level 0+ (Memorized Performance)

Unable to transfer more than isolated words.

Level 0 (No Performance)

No functional ability to transfer information from one language to another.

II. Translation

Level 5 (Professional Performance)

Can successfully translate virtually all texts, including those where lack of linguistic and cultural parallelism between the source language and the target language requires precise congruity judgments and the ability to apply a translation methodology. Expression is flawless. At this level, the translator consistently excels in a number of specialties, and is generally regarded as one of the arbiters of translating very high level language by persons competent in dealing with such material. Nonetheless, the resulting product may be subject to quality control.

Level 4+ (Professional Performance Plus)

Can successfully apply a translation methodology to translate texts that contain highly original and special purpose language (such as that contained in religious sermons, literary prose, and poetry). At this level, a successful performance requires not only conveying content and register but also capturing to the greatest extent all nuances intended in the source document. Expression is virtually flawless. Can produce fully accurate translations in a number of subject fields. When the need arises to perform in areas outside of specialization, a translator at this level is able to reach a successful level of performance given the time necessary for acquiring the relevant knowledge of the subject matter. The resulting product is a professional translation which may be subject to quality control.

Level 4 (Professional Performance)

Can successfully apply a translation methodology to translate a wide variety of complex texts that contain difficult, abstract, idiomatic, highly technical, and colloquial writing. Able to capture subtleties, nuances, and tone and register (such as official, formal, and informal writing). Such texts range from commentary reflecting a specific culture to analysis and argumentation. Linguistic knowledge and familiarity with source language norms enable an individual at this level to translate handwritten documents and other texts that represent spontaneous expression characteristic of the source language. Expression reflects correct usage and consistent control of target language conventions. Can translate materials outside the individual's specialties, but may not reach the absolute subject matter accuracy of the specialist in the given field. The resulting product is a professional translation which may be subject to quality control.

Level 3+ (Professional Performance)

Can generally translate a variety of texts, such as many scientific or financial reports, some legal documents and some colloquial writings. Can convey the meaning of many socio-cultural elements embedded in a text as well as most nuances and relatively infrequent lexical and syntactic items of the source language. Expression reflects target language norms and usage. May be able to operate in fields outside areas of specialty. The resulting product is a draft translation, subject to quality control.

Level 3 (Professional Performance)

Can translate texts that contain not only facts but also abstract language, showing an emerging ability to capture their intended implications and many nuances. Such texts usually contain situations and events which are subject to value judgments of a personal or institutional kind, as in some newspaper editorials, propaganda tracts, and evaluations of projects. Linguistic knowledge of both the terminology and the means of expression specific to a subject field is strong enough to allow the translator to operate successfully within that field. Word choice and expression generally adhere to target language norms and rarely obscure meaning. The resulting product is a draft translation, subject to quality control.

Level 2+ (Limited Performance)

Can render straightforward texts dealing with everyday matters that include statements of fact as well as some judgments, opinion, or other elements which entail more than direct exposition, but do not contain figurative language, complicated concepts, complex sentence structures, or instances of syntactic or semantic skewing. In these types of texts, the individual can read source language materials and render them accurately into the target language, conveying the key points and/or main ideas, supporting facts, most of the details, and some nuances. Can usually operate in more than one

narrowly defined subject field, using both linguistic knowledge of the languages involved and familiarity with the subject matter. A tendency to adhere to source language structures may result in target language expressions that may appear to be correct but are awkward or perhaps unidiomatic. Such expressions may sometimes obscure meaning. The resulting product is not a professional translation and must be subject to quality control.

Level 2 (Limited Performance)

Able to render into the target language some straightforward, factual texts in the standard variety of the source language. Can typically render accurately uncomplicated prose (such as that used in short identification documents, simple letters, instructions, and some narrative reports) that does not contain figurative language, complex sentence structures, embedding, or instances of syntactic or semantic skewing. Can normally rely on knowledge of the subject matter to operate within one given subject field, consisting of a narrow body of material that is routine, repetitive, and often predictable. Expression in the target language may be faulty, frequently reflecting the structure and word order of the source language. To the extent that faulty expression may obscure or distort meaning, accuracy will suffer. The resulting product is not a professional translation and must be submitted to quality control.

Level 1+ (Minimal Performance)

Able to scan source language texts for specific categories, topics, key points and/or main ideas, generally rendering an accurate report on these but often missing supporting facts and details. Can to some extent render factual materials, such as records or database entries, often relying on real-world knowledge or familiarity with the subject matter. Oversight and review of the product are necessary.

Level 1 (Minimal Performance)

Able to make word by word transfers, not always with accuracy. May be able to identify documents by their label or headings and scan graphic materials, such as charts and diagrams, for items of specific interest. Constant oversight and review of the product are necessary.

Level 0+ (Minimal Performance)

Able to transfer very little information from one language into another, usually representing isolated words and/or phrases. Accuracy is haphazard. Constant oversight is required.

Level 0 (Performance)

Has no practical ability to transfer information from one language into another.