

# International Language Interpreters, Inc.

## November Newsletter 2008

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### Interpreters and Translators – How do we define their skills?

Many businesses and corporations that require interpreting and translating services are not aware of specific qualification requirements or contracting laws; there are many interpreting agencies that do not follow strict guidelines in providing professional and proficient services. A report done by the **U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics for 2008-2009** found that **22 percent of interpreters and translators are self-employed**. If that is true, are agencies requiring them to verify a business license, qualifications and certifications?

We would like to explain a few things about this particular industry in order to help potential clients make the right choice in choosing an interpreting services company.

### What is the difference between certified and qualified?

In our business contract, we have established a characterization for these terms that correlate directly with a definition given by the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics. **“Certified interpreter”** is a person who has passed the California Court Interpreter certification Examination and who has fulfilled the corresponding Judicial Council requirements are referred to as **certified interpreters**. The state personnel board also provides a certification test for **medical** and **administrative hearing interpreters** for California. **“Qualified interpreter”** is a person who is not a certified interpreter and who speaks the language to be translated into English fluently and who speaks English fluently and that poses a minimum of 2 years of interpreting experience.

Different rates are established by the court system and interpreters themselves based on their experience and the amount of years they have been in the industry. ***Unfortunately, many interpreters will increase their rates based on a fellow interpreters increase.*** Businesses must recognize rates should be based on certification, qualifications and also whether or not the client requires a certified interpreter vs. a qualified interpreter. In most cases a **certified interpreter** is **not required**; therefore businesses should **NOT** have to pay a **certified rate**.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics wrote ***“There is currently no universal form of certification required of interpreters and translators in the United States.”*** Although different states have implemented oral and written tests to verify capabilities, there are still many interpreters that base their experience and qualifications from translating for family members and having grown up in a bilingual household.

We must also point out that the term “certified” can be misused by the interpreters and many will claim they are certified to gain a higher rate of pay. When our company then searches for their information in databases to verify certification, we are unable to locate their name. There is a list available to the public with the names of persons who are **deceased, retired, or de-certified – no longer certified to interpret in the court systems**. Often times interpreters will continue to claim they are certified, maintain a high pay rate, and agencies are unaware that they are using an interpreter that is not capable of providing excellent service.

As the industry continues to grow with the diversity of our nation, our company has implemented a strict screening process for interpreters and translators that will push this industry into a level professionalism it deserves. A teacher within their first year of teaching does not have the same rate of pay as a tenured instructor; the same should be established for interpreters and translators. If there are counties that require a business license for independent contractors then it should be implemented and not overlooked by agencies, businesses, doctors, lawyers, etc.

We are not an agency who will overlook requirements just to attain an interpreter for an assignment. We go the extra mile to ensure that our clients receive what they deserve.

**We are International Language Interpreters, Inc. and We Speak Your Language.**