Volunteer Interpreter and Translator Training Guide
# Table of Contents

- About Refugees and Resettlement……………………………………………………………………………...…………….page 3
- About HIAS and Resettlement…………………………………………………………………………………………………….page 6
- About HIAS and the Asylum Process…………………………………………………………………………………………..page 8
- Roles and Responsibilities of Volunteer Interpreters…………………………………………………………………page 11
- Tips for Using an Interpreter………………………………………………………………………………………………….…page 13
- Volunteer Translation Guidelines……………………………………………………………………………………………..page 15
- Sample Text to Study and Review…………………………………………………………………………………………….page 18
- Welcome to HIAS New York Language………………………………………………………………………………………page 19
- Volunteer Interpreter Practice- Sample Conversation……………………………………………….………….….page 21
- Volunteer Interpreter Practice - Sample Text……………………………………………………………………………page 23
- Glossary of Common Resettlement Terms for Interpreters……………………………………………………….page 25
- Glossary of Common Asylum/Legal Terms for Interpreters………………………………………………………..page 27
About Refugees and Resettlement

Definition: A refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (1951 Refugee Convention). The persecution a refugee experiences may include harassment, threats, abduction or torture. A refugee is afforded legal protection either by their host country’s government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or both. For further information on the distinction between refugee, asylee, and other immigrant classifications, see the Roads to Refuge informational video.

Worldwide, the number of refugees is the highest in recorded history, at a staggering 21.3 million people, and about half of the world’s refugees are children. Around one in every 122 people today is either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum (UNHCR). After fleeing their home country, refugees seek safety in a different country, and may live in an established refugee camp or in a pre-existing city or community. Although the Syrian refugee crisis is receiving particular attention, there are also large refugee populations from Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burma, the Central African Republic (CAR), Iraq, and Eritrea, among others. You can read more about refugee statistics here: UNHCR and see an interactive map of refugee populations over the years here: The Refugee Project.

The Three Durable Solutions

The diagram above lists them: 1. Voluntary repatriation, 2. Integration in the country of first asylum, and 3. Resettlement in a third country. (1) If the situation in a refugee’s home country changes and the source of persecution no longer exists, many refugees ultimately want to return to their communities, families, homes and schools, but in many cases, voluntary repatriation is impossible due to protracted crises. (2) The second option for the refugee is to integrate into the country to which he fled, or country of first asylum. For example, if a refugee fled Syria and traveled to Lebanon, Lebanon would be his country of first asylum. This is possible if he is able and permitted to integrate into Lebanon. There may be similarities in culture, language, social structure, and custom. However, given that Lebanon is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Optional Protocol, and about 25% of Lebanon’s population is now comprised of Syrian refugees, this option is not possible for most refugees due to legal obstacles and
Lebanon’s lack of economic, social, and political capacity to integrate a large influx of refugees. (3) The last option is resettlement, which unlike the first two options, includes relocating to a new country with oftentimes very different norms, culture, and language.

The number of refugees who are considered for resettlement to a new country is incredibly small compared to the scale of the crisis, as depicted in the chart below. The international community, including the United States, has committed to resettle less than 1% of the refugees of concern to the UNHCR. The UNHCR, country governments and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners therefore identify vulnerable refugees most in need of resettlement. Each year the President, in consultation with Congress, determines the numerical ceiling for refugee admissions. For Fiscal Year 2017, the United States is expected to resettle 110,000 refugees. In FY 2016, the largest numbers of refugees admitted to the U.S. were from Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, Burma, Iraq and Somalia.

*Source: UNHCR

![Scale of Refugee Populations Worldwide](chart)

While the United States has welcomed refugees throughout its history, the current U.S. Refugee Admissions Program was established by Congress in 1980 as a public-private partnership between the government and national and local organizations. Refugees may only apply for resettlement if referred by the UNHCR, a qualified NGO, a U.S. Embassy, or if they fit within a family reunification or humanitarian category established by the U.S. Department of State. Criteria for resettlement in the U.S. include:

- **Priority 1**: Refugees referred from UNHCR, US Embassy, or a qualified NGO, by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement.
- **Priority 2**: Groups of refugees designated of special humanitarian concern to the US.
- **Priority 3**: Family reunification cases (spouses, unmarried children under 21, and parents of persons lawfully admitted to the United States as refugees or asylees or permanent residents or US citizens who previously had refugee or asylum status).

The path to resettlement is tedious, lengthy, and stringent. Although highly simplified, a diagram on the next page provides an overview of the resettlement process. The family or individual goes through an intensive process of applications, interviews, biometric screenings, background checks, and health examinations by multiple agencies, including UNHCR, U.S. Resettlement Support Centers, U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the Department of Homeland Security before they are considered for refugee resettlement. You can read more about the process here: WhiteHouse.gov.

If a refugee family clears these extensive processes, they are matched to one of the national resettlement agencies, such as HIAS. There are nine resettlement agencies (formerly known as Voluntary Agencies, or VOLAGs) authorized by the U.S. government to resettle refugees. They are:

- Church World Service (CWS)
- Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)
- Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM)
- HIAS, Inc.
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- World Relief (WR)

Every week the nine resettlement agencies (RAs) meet to distribute refugee cases. RAs are responsible for pre-arrival processing, reception, and integration services for the refugee cases allocated to them. Refugee cases are placed based on several considerations including case size and availability of affordable housing, expertise resettling populations with special needs, local ethnic and religious communities, and language capacity of the local resettlement agency. Individuals who arrive in the United States as a refugee benefit from this unique immigration status and arrive on a path to citizenship. Once the case is assured, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) arranges their travel. Upon their arrival, representatives from a local HIAS affiliate, such as HIAS NY, greet refugees at the airport and provide for their basic needs during the initial resettlement period (30-90 days) with funding from the State Department.
About HIAS and Resettlement

Guided by our Jewish values and history, HIAS protects those whose lives are in danger for being who they are. During our 135-year history, we have given aid to more than 4.5 million refugees. Today, violence and persecution have forced more than 65 million people around the world to flee their homes, the highest number of displaced persons since WWII. HIAS, formerly known as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, works globally to provide legal protection, psychosocial services, and livelihoods assistance, and locally in the United States as one of nine refugee resettlement agencies (RAs). In the U.S., HIAS resettle refugees through its local affiliates, including HIAS NY, which receive and provide direct services to refugees upon arrival.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>HIAS stands for a world in which refugees find welcome, safety, and freedom.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>HIAS rescues people whose lives are in danger for being who they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We protect the most vulnerable refugees, helping them build new lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and reunite them with their families in safety and freedom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We advocate for the protection of refugees and assure that displaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>people are treated with the dignity they deserve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a volunteer interpreter, you will be assisting HIAS in the resettlement of refugee, asylees, and/or SIV (Special Immigrant Visa) clients as they work to build new lives in the United States. In the process of resettlement, HIAS has several core services that must be provided to clients, such as home visits, cultural orientation, assistance in applying for benefits, and more. It will likely be in the providing of such services that HIAS will ask for your assistance as a volunteer interpreter. While some refugees do arrive in the United States with a high proficiency in English, language support is crucial for many and even required for some services of resettlement programs.

In addition to volunteer interpreters, HIAS New York also works with volunteers interested in providing other kinds of support for the resettlement of refugees. These volunteers assist HIAS clients through a range of activities such as building job readiness, identifying employment opportunities, and school enrollment. Due to the role of volunteers in HIAS’ resettlement programs, you may also be asked to interpret for other volunteers working with refugee clients.
Resettlement Core Services:

As an affiliate of a refugee resettlement agency, HIAS NY must provide core services to all refugees within 90 days of their arrival. In providing these services, HIAS works to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency, which means that they can cover basic household expenses, navigate systems, and manage daily tasks.

Reception and Placement Services include:

- At least two home visits within 30 days of arrival, to assess the living conditions and needs of the refugee(s), and to assist with any basic needs.
- An intake interview, which will be conducted to verify refugee documentation, and to discuss the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in resettlement. The intake will take place within five working days of the refugee(s)’s arrival.
- Assistance applying for social security card(s), food stamps, and cash and medical assistance if necessary within seven working days of arrival.
- Assistance enrolling in other appropriate services, such as English language programs and employment services, within ten working days of arrival.
- Assistance registering children for school within 30 days of arrival.
- Assistance filing change of address forms with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Post Office.
- Providing cultural orientation on topics such as U.S. laws, housing, education, transportation, health, budgeting and personal finance, safety, and more.
- Conducting an exit interview at the end of the R&P period to determine that all core services were provided to the refugee(s) and to assess whether the refugee(s) has achieved self-sufficiency.
About HIAS and the Asylum Process

U.S. Legal Protection Program at a Glance
In 2016 - 2017, HIAS’ U.S. Legal Protection department:

- Served over 300 clients, a majority of whom were asylum seekers.
- Represented clients for U-visas, T visas, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, and adjustment of status cases.
- Served clients from over 50 countries.
- The U.S. is the second-largest recipient of new asylum applications worldwide. Over 262,000 applicants were from Mexico and Central America. In 2015, 40% of those granted asylum came from China, El Salvador, and Guatemala.
- The majority of HIAS New York’s legal clients speak Spanish, Russian, French, and Arabic.

What is Asylum?
Asylum is a protection granted to foreign nationals already in the United States or at the border who meet the international definition of a “refugee.”

Who Are Asylum Seekers?
An asylum seeker is someone who has fled persecution in their home country and has applied for protection, but has not yet received any legal recognition or status. An asylum seeker, like a refugee, faces well-founded fears of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, and membership in a particular social group. Asylum seekers begin the asylum process once they arrive in the United States, whereas refugees are resettled by the U.S. government and arrive in the U.S. with already established refugee status.

As of 2016, the United States is the second-largest recipient of new asylum applications worldwide. A 52% increase over the previous year, over half of the 262,000 applicants were people from Mexico and Central America. In 2015, 40 percent of those who were granted asylum hailed from, China, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

In fiscal year 2015, the United States granted asylum to 26,124 individuals, a 12 percent increase from fiscal year 2014. There were a total of 65,218 asylum cases in immigration courts in fiscal year 2016, representing a 35 percentage increase from fiscal year 2012.

What is the Process for Seeking Asylum in the United States?
Some asylum seekers arrive to the U.S. on a variety of visas and then claim asylum. Others present themselves to authorities at ports of entry, like an airport or the southern border, in order to claim asylum. The process can take anywhere from 2-8 years, and in 2017, the U.S. immigration court and asylum systems were backlogged with more than 630,000 cases pending.

Asylum applicants are also ineligible to work at least for the first five months in the United States, and all asylum seekers receive no government support. Once an asylum seeker’s case has been pending for 150 days, they can apply for work authorization, and the application process takes at least another three
months. Once an asylum seeker receives work authorization, they are eligible to apply for a social security number.

An asylum seeker has two routes to request asylum in the United States. Affirmative asylum is when an applicant submits a request with a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officer after arriving to the United States, but only if the person has never been apprehended by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for violations of immigration law. An affirmative application will be adjudicated during an interview with an asylum officer at USCIS.

If an affirmative application is not granted by the asylum office, the case is referred to the immigration court for removal proceedings. There, the applicant will have another opportunity to present their case to an immigration judge in adversarial proceedings. The government does not provide an attorney, so most applicants represent themselves with very little knowledge of the complexity of immigration laws.

In recent years, noncitizens apprehended near the border or presenting themselves at airports with valid temporary visas are put into expedited removal, an accelerated process that allows the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to perform rapid deportations without the opportunity to see a judge. It is at this moment that DHS officials are required to ask if the noncitizen is afraid to return to their country. If the noncitizen says ‘yes,’ they are supposed to be scheduled for a credible fear interview with an asylum officer. If the officer finds that there is a ‘significant possibility’ that the noncitizen could qualify for asylum, the noncitizen is placed in removal proceedings before the immigration court where, in 3-5 years, the noncitizen will have a trial on the merits of their case. This is called a defensive asylum application.

During the adjudication of both affirmative and defensive asylum applications, asylum seekers undergo an extensive series of background checks, by U.S. security agencies: the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of State, among others. These include fingerprinting, travel history, and a review of biographical information. If an individual is found to have: persecuted others, been convicted of a serious crime in the U.S. or abroad, engaged in terrorist activities or supported any terrorist group in any way, or pose any security threats to the United States, they are not eligible for asylum. In addition, even if an asylum seeker qualifies under the law for asylum, they can still be denied under the discretion of the immigration judge.

If an asylum seeker is eventually granted asylee status, they are eligible for assistance from the Office of Refugee Resettlement and may petition for immediate family members abroad or in the United States. Asylees may also be eligible for federal benefits.

After one year, asylees may apply for a green card (lawful permanent resident status). Once that is granted, they must wait four years to apply for citizenship. Neither residency nor citizenship is guaranteed; at either point in the process, the asylee can still face deportation. In other words, the only safe immigration status is U.S. citizenship.

Asylum grants in the United States vary drastically by jurisdiction and judge, ranging from a 97% grant rate to a 0% grant rate from 2012-2016.
How Long Does the Asylum Process Take?
The Asylum process can take years to conclude. In some cases, a person may file their application and receive a hearing or interview date years in the future. In 2016, the U.S. immigration court and asylum systems were backlogged with more than 620,000 pending cases.

What Happens to Asylum-Seekers While their Application is Processed?
Some individuals live in the U.S. while their application is processed, while others (including children and families) are detained for some of this time. Detention exacerbates the challenges asylum-seekers already face and can negatively impact a person’s asylum application. Children and families who are detained suffer mental and physical health problems including depression, PTSD, and frequent infections. The duration of an asylum seeker’s detention varies since “there are no statutory limits to the amount of time a non-citizen may be held in immigration detention.” Some asylum applicants may be kept in detention for several months or even years.

In general, why are HIAS’ legal clients forced to flee their homes?
- Civil war or unrest
- Arrest or torture due to political beliefs
- Lack of acknowledgement of human rights due to sexual orientation or gender identity
- Targeted violence perpetrated by criminal gangs
- Etc.
  - All determinations for asylum are contingent on one of the 5 enumerated grounds.

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**Example of one Asylum Seeker’s legal journey in the United States**

1. Gabriella* arrives at the border fleeing persecution. Her husband was murdered by MS-13 and she now fears for her life.
2. She requests asylum from a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer at her point of entry.
3. CBP transfers her to ICE custody for security screenings and safety checks before bringing her to an immigration detention center.
4. Traumatized and afraid, she has a credible fear interview with a trained officer from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
5. After the interview, USCIS establishes that she has a credible fear of persecution in her home country and refers her for a court date.
6. Her request for asylum is granted, and she can now live in safety in the United States.
7. She is released from detainee on parole, and returns to court for her case to be heard by an immigration judge.

#NotALoophole
Roles and Responsibilities of Volunteer Interpreters

**Introductions:** When providing interpretation, it is important to first make clear to all parties involved what your role is in the conversation. Start by introducing yourself as the volunteer interpreter who will facilitate the dialogue and interpret all that is said. During introductions, it may be helpful to take note of the speakers’ accents, dialects, or mannerisms, for they may inform the decisions you make when interpreting.

**Position Yourself:** It is best to avoid a triangular configuration, in which the provider and client primarily speak to the interpreter rather than to each other. Instead, you should try to position yourself in a way that physically minimizes your presence in the conversation, as a means of creating more direct communication between the provider and client. In other words, your positioning should prevent side conversations from developing between you and the client or provider.

**Voice and Accuracy:** As the interpreter you are representing the speaker. For this reason, it is important to stay consistent with the voice used by the speaker. For example, if the speaker uses the first person, your interpretation must remain in the first person. While it is essential that you interpret all that is said, accurate interpreting does not always mean giving a literal, word for word, translation. Interpreting the meaning of what was said should be the interpreter’s focus. For example, you may want to avoid literal translations of idioms that do not exist from one language to the other, and instead attempt to find equivalent phrases in the target language.

**Ensure Comprehension:** You should always be mindful of ensuring the listener’s comprehension. If you realize that the client or provider has misunderstood something you have interpreted; you should repeat it or rephrase it until it has been clearly understood. Additionally, cultural context should be given to the provider and/or client when appropriate. Some literal interpretations may not properly convey the intended meaning of the speaker unless accompanied by an explanation of the cultural basis of what was said.

**Note-Taking:** Relying on memory may be risky, especially when you are tired. By taking notes, you can stay focused on the meaning of what is being said rather than just translating the words. It will also allow each speaker to talk more freely without constantly stopping to be interpreted. Frequent interruption and switching between languages upsets the flow of thought and often hampers the logic and clarity of the speaker’s ideas. Choppy statements reflect poorly on both the speaker and the interpreter. Note taking can also help you to report accurately all the information provided and in the same order as the original statement. This ensures continuity and precision.
**Remember Your Role:** It is imperative for you as the interpreter to be sensitive to the boundaries of the role, and to interact professionally with all parties. Personal biases, expectations, and opinions should not shape the interpretation you give. The best service you can give is to interpret what is said with fidelity, and not to interject with thoughts, assumptions, or more information you have about the conversation at hand. Inserting yourself can confuse the client and provider, who may become unclear about who you are speaking for. Not keeping professional distance can also complicate the task of interpreting when you have personal ties to the client or provider that might prompt you to alter your interpretation.

**Building Trust:** Clients may not immediately trust you to interpret for them. Particularly for those who have experienced trauma and/or have lived in countries with corrupt governments, suspicion of an interpreter and their intentions can be common. If a client does not immediately trust you to accurately interpreting information, it is important to remain respectful of the client and not to take personal offense. Often times, such clients will simply need time working with you in order to overcome initial hesitations. In general, you should be courteous to the clients and attempt to make yourself approachable.

**Be Ready to Adapt to Different Circumstances:** Every client has a unique personality, therefore his or her interaction with the provider will always differ from somebody else’s. Be ready to adapt to different circumstances (interpretation in the office, during visits, via phone), different clients’ attitudes (mood, tone of voice, accent), and different language use. There is no standard conversation, and it is normal to translate conversations that do not strictly refer to the resettlement process (e.g. personal conversations, clients’ emotions, etc.).

**Understand Your Strengths and Limitations:** In order to give your most accurate interpretation of what is being said, you must be comfortable telling a speaker when to stop, slow down, repeat, or simplify what they are saying. While you personally should know the limits of your knowledge, it is also important that the provider and client are aware of the extent of your capabilities and experience. It is likely that you will interpret in situations where uncommon terms are used, even for fluent speakers. Do not hesitate to ask the client or provider for clarification about unfamiliar words or phrases.

Finally, you should always inform HIAS if there are any contexts or settings in which you do not feel comfortable interpreting for any reason. Depending on the situation and the client, you may be asked to interpret conversations that are emotionally strenuous. Be mindful of how such conversations may affect you, and whether you wish to interpret in such situations.
Tips for a Using an Interpreter

Introduce the Interpreter: Briefly introduce the interpreter as someone that will facilitate conversation. Tell the provider (and remind the interpreter) that the interpreter will say exactly what you, the provider, and the refugee is saying. Defining the interpreter’s role sets the stage for the interpreter to act professionally and strictly within his/her role.

Speak in First Person: Volunteers and interpreters should both speak in the first person, e.g. if the volunteer says: “Today we will write your resume...” then the interpreter should NOT say: “She said that today you’ll write your resume...” Professional interpreters repeat EXACTLY as the provider says and as the client says, as if they were the provider/client.

Interpreters Should Never ‘Explain:’ Interpreters are there for communication purposes only: not to act as providers. The provider (or the volunteer) should be the giver of information. If the interpreter begins to give information, you risk not knowing what information the client is receiving. Be safe and only use the interpreter to say exactly what you say in the client’s language, not to explain. If the refugee has questions, they should be interpreted to you - not the interpreter.

No Side Conversations: No matter the circumstance, never have a side conversation. If one party (e.g. the refugee or alternatively, you and the provider) is left out of the conversation, then transparency (and trust/respect) is not maintained. Again, the interpreter should interpret everything that is being said. If a side conversation needs to take place, leave the room to demonstrate the conversation is private, do not exclude one party due to language ability.

How to Interject or Make a Comment: If you missed a point or are confused, it’s ok to interject. You may say: “Interpreter, could you repeat that?” If the refugee is speaking in long, complex sentences without a pause for the interpreter to interpret, it’s ok to say: “Excuse me, can you pause and let her interpret so I don’t miss anything?” This ensures smooth communication and comprehension.

Positioning: suggestions for where to physically place interpreters/telephone: If possible when using an in-person interpreter or when using a telephone to communicate with a refugee who is with you in the room, you should position the telephone or the interpreter to promote direct communication between you and the refugee (just like you would with a native English speaker).

- Triangle is NOT ideal for direction communication - client and provider start to look at interpreter, not at each other.
- The positioning on the left is best (to encourage provider and client to have direct communication with each other). The one on the right can be used if necessary.
- This is a good idea when using a phone (e.g. placing the phone on a chair between you, or on a table corner with you sitting across from refugee):
Information for Clients and Providers

Please communicate the following information to all those for whom you will be interpreting before the session begins, to ensure that all those involved are prepared.

Basic Introductions:

- Everything will be interpreted
- Everything will be kept confidential
- Speak directly to each other (and not to the interpreter)
- Speak slowly and pause (to allow interpretation)

More detailed instructions:

- Talking will be in first-person
- Keep the language simple
- Technical terms will need to be explained
- Hand signal must be used to pause
- Don’t say anything you don’t want to be interpreted
- It is ok to ask for clarification

Position yourself:

1. **Pros:** promotes direct communication; provider can see both learner and interpreter; learner may feel more secure.
   **Cons:** CO provider may look at the interpreter; learner may see interpreter as a friend and try to speak directly to them.

2. **Pros:** interpreter is more likely to be seen as unbiased.
   **Cons:** does not promote direct communication; easy for the interpreter to take control of the physical space; CO provider and learner both tend to focus on the interpreter. If it is absolutely
necessary for the interpreter to take this position, he or she can minimize the negative effects by avoiding eye contacts.

3. **Pros:** encourages direct communication; allows the interpreter a clear view of the learner. **Cons:** position may be difficult to achieve due to space limitations (recommended).

**Volunteer Translation Guidelines**

**Description:** The instructions below is intended for volunteers who will be providing volunteer written translation assistance. See the template below, accompanied by written translation instructions to use as a best practice when translating any/all documents for HIAS unless otherwise instructed.

**Written Translation Instructions**

- Draft your written translation of the original document into the attached Translation Template. This will be sent to you as a Word document.

- Type each individual document into its own Translation Template. If a document takes up more than one page, it will remain within one Translation Template.

- Once you complete the translation, send document to Volunteer Coordinator. Do not sign the document.

- HIAS attorneys and/or Language Assessment Volunteers will review the documents and we will send back any needed edits or adjustments to you.

- Once you receive the final word, complete the Certification of Translation and psychically sign the document.
Formatting Your Translation Document

Formatting

1. The *formatting* from the original document (charts, lines, italicized words, words in bold, words in large print, etc.) should be followed as closely as possible in your written translation.

2. Abbreviations should be translated and not transliterated, if possible.

3. **All parts** of the document should be translated; the translator should not make judgment calls or take short cuts on her/his own as to what is relevant or what needs to be translated.
   a. Immigration judges and trial attorneys are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and will notice.
   b. A trial attorney in Immigration Court can move to exclude from evidence a document, for which the translation appears to be improperly translated (summarized, paraphrased, etc)

**We always welcome you to consult with our attorneys with any ambiguities or questions.**

[Brackets] + Translator’s Notes

1. Descriptions of text which do *not* represent what is in the actual text should be in [brackets] followed by “Tr. Note” or “Translator’s Note.”
   a. E.g., [illegible—Tr. Note] or [Print obscured—Tr. Note]

2. If a foreign character or word cannot be translated into English and has to remain in the original.
   a. E.g., ПA should not be converted into Roman characters as this character only occurs in the Cyrillic alphabet and not the Roman.
      i. A translator’s note should be included that clarifies this reasoning to the immigration judge or asylum officer.

3. In some cases, dates have to be converted from a foreign calendar to the Gregorian calendar

**See next page for examples of proper formatting**
1. Each document’s final version should include a signed **Certification of Translation** [see below]. The Certificate of Translation can be found at the bottom of all Translation Templates. Only sign the certificate after being instructed to by HIAS staff.

![Certificate of Translation](image)
Sample Text to Study and Review for Interpretation and Translation
Welcome to HIAS New York!

We look forward to assisting you and your family as you are beginning a new life in New York City.

As a volunteer interpreter, you may be asked to help communicate HIAS’ services to our non-English speaking refugee clients. Please familiarize yourself with the overview of HIAS’ services to refugees below.

How HIAS serves refugees:

- HIAS New York is a local resettlement agency. Our goal is to ensure your basic needs are met upon arrival and that you receive services and assistance that will help you start a new life in the United States.

- HIAS New York staff will visit you in your new home several times to ensure that you have been provided appropriate housing, furniture, household items, food, clothing, and other essentials. Staff also wants to verify that you are comfortable.

- You will work with a HIAS case manager to develop a resettlement plan for your family. The case manager will assist you in achieving the goals outlined in this plan.

- HIAS New York will assist you and your family members with accessing a health screening at a clinic designated by the State of New York and appropriate follow-up medical services. If you have concerns about your health, let your case manager know, and we will help you get the care you need.

- HIAS New York staff will meet with you regularly throughout the first 30 to 90 days after you arrive to:
  - provide $1,125 to - or on behalf of - you and each of your family members on your case, including pocket money;
  - assist you and each of your family members on your case with enrollment into all services for which you are eligible, including food, cash and medical assistance;
  - assist you with enrollment into an English language program, as appropriate;
  - assist you with enrollment into employment services, as appropriate;
  - assist school age children with meeting school enrollment requirements and registering children for school.
  - provide information on the requirement to notify the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through the AR-11 form, and to notify the U.S. Post Office of each change of address and new address within 10 days of moving;
  - provide information on how to reunite with your close family members who are
overseas, and the milestones on achieving U.S. citizenship, including permanent resident alien status; and
  o provide language-appropriate orientation on the following topics: refugee status, English, public assistance, U.S. laws, community, employment, health, budgeting and personal finance, housing, hygiene, safety, cultural adjustment, education, and transportation.

- HIAS New York staff will answer any questions you have about life in New York City and the United States. Please share any concerns you have with your case manager, so we can better assist you.

- As the initial resettlement period nears its end, you will meet with your case manager to evaluate the progress of your resettlement in New York, the ability of your family to meet your monthly expenses, and the effectiveness of services HIAS New York has provided. HIAS New York will also ensure that you have access to support services beyond 90 days. We appreciate your feedback and will use it to improve our services.

As a refugee, you will also have the following responsibilities:

- Actively participate in the R&P program by coming prepared for meetings and orientations.

- Provide agency with copy of each case member’s social security card, employment authorization document (EAD) card, I-94, public benefits statements, and any notifications from state and local authorities regarding health, employment, and welfare for case file and reporting purposes.

- Repay your travel loan under the terms of the promissory note.

- Inform DHS through form AR-11, and inform USPO of each change of address and new address within 10 days of moving.

- Register for the Selective Service (for males between the ages of 18 and 26).

*On behalf of HIAS, we wish you best of luck in your new home!*
Volunteer Interpreter Practice – Sample Conversation

Scenario: You are interpreting for a client in a meeting with their HIAS case manager. The case manager has called the meeting to schedule an appointment with the Department of Social Services so that the client can apply for benefits.

Roles: Case manager (CM, will speak only English), Client (CL, will only speak a language other than English), Interpreter (IN, will speak both languages and is not provided with a script)

Script:

CM: Good morning [client name], this is [interpreter name] and they are a volunteer interpreter who will help facilitate our conversation today. Their role is to interpret all that is said by both of us with as much accuracy as possible.

IN: [interprets to CL]

CL: [client introduces themselves to the interpreter and tells the case manager they understand]

IN: [interprets to CM]

CM: Great, so today I wanted to speak with you about applying for benefits through the Department of Social Services.

IN: [interprets to CL]

CM: It is best that we begin this process as soon as possible, so I would like to know if you are available Thursday morning at 9 am to go to the Department of Social Services?

IN: [interprets to CL]

CL: [client asks if they can go a week later]

IN: [interprets to the CM]

CM: Unfortunately, we cannot wait that long to apply. Our Reception and Placement Program requires us to complete applications for these benefits within seven days of your arrival. Would later in the day on Thursday work better for you? Perhaps at noon?

IN: [interprets to the CL]

CL: [client agrees to go on Thursday at noon]

IN: [interprets to the CM]

CM: Excellent, once at their office, I will be helping you apply for three government programs: Food Stamps, Cash Assistance, and Medical Assistance.
IN: [interprets to the CL]

CM: When we go to the Department of Social Services you will have to bring your passport, I 94 Form, Social Security Number, and birth certificate, proof of address, and income.

IN: [interprets to the CL]

CM: Do you have any questions?

IN: [interpreters to the CL]

CL: [client asks where they would meet the case manager, at the apartment or office?]

IN: [interprets to the CM]

CM: Would you be comfortable meeting me at the DSS office? The address is 65 Court St.

IN: [interprets to the CL]

CL: [client affirms that they are comfortable getting to DSS on their own]

IN: [interprets to the CM]

CM: Great, I will see you there. Also, so that you are aware, we will soon have to make an appointment for a mandatory Refugee Health Screening, but that will be done next time.

IN: [interprets to the CL]

CL: [client says they understand and will see the case manager on Thursday at noon]

IN: [interprets to the CM]

CM: See you soon and thank you for taking the time to meet today. Let me know if you need anything.

IN: [interprets to the CL]

CL: [client thanks the case manager for their time and says goodbye]

IN: [interprets to the CM]
Volunteer Interpreter Practice – Sample Text

Description: This text is an example of the kind of language you, the volunteer interpreter, may encounter in providing translation and interpretation for HIAS clients as they go through the resettlement process. As practice, try translating this excerpt from a New York State informational booklet on applying for benefits.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

For Temporary Assistance

As a Temporary Assistance recipient, you may be expected to look for work and to participate in activities that will help you get and keep a job. If you do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, such as a GED diploma, you may be eligible and may be required to participate in an education activity to improve your basic skills and/or obtain a high school equivalency diploma. You will likely also be expected to participate in employment, work experience or other activities along with the education activity. Let your worker know if you are interested in participating in an education activity.

If you believe you will not be able to comply with some or all the employment requirements because of domestic violence, you may be eligible for a temporary waiver of these requirements. To request a waiver, you must complete the Domestic Violence Screening Form or notify your worker that you want to see a domestic violence liaison for an assessment.

If you have a physical or mental health impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a record of such impairment or are regarded as having such impairment, you may have rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Physical or mental health impairments include, for example, learning disabilities, mental retardation, depression, mobility impairments, and hearing or vision impairments. Having a disability will not disqualify you from receiving Temporary Assistance.

(Taken from, New York State Book 1: What You Should Know About Your Rights and Responsibilities, When Applying for or Receiving Benefits. Your Rights – Section 6, Pages 10-11)
Sample Script: Interpretation Practice Exercises

Case Manager requests interpreter to communicate the following messages over the phone to two different clients.

Text 1:
I spoke with an HRA representative. I was told that HRA (Human Resources Department) cannot say exactly what they will receive. The Cash Assistance application must be filed to determine what they will qualify for.

The $675 that was listed on the chart that was shown to you is the maximum cash assistance. There is no guarantee they will receive that amount. However, in addition to the $675 or whatever the amount is, they may also receive a separate amount to go toward their rent, but again there is no way of knowing until they apply.

Text 2:
I spoke to Zarema at ALL HEALTH and she sent me a document that I hoped would clear you from having to go to the Department of Health (DOH) but when I sent the documents to Nicole Health at the DOH, it was not sufficient enough for her to release them from this very important appointment.

As of now, Nicole will send me a new appointment date – no longer will it be on August 31st. When I receive the new date of the appointment, I will let you know. I am sorry that you have to go through with this appointment, but unfortunately it cannot be avoided.
Glossary of Common Resettlement Terms for Interpreters

The following are terms that you are likely to encounter when providing interpretation in the context of refugee resettlement and when assisting HIAS in providing services to refugees.

**Case Manager:** The employee of the Affiliate who is responsible for the resettlement of the refugee case, including enrollment in benefits, initial welcome, and home visits. The roles of the case manager differ between agencies, but services usually last for at least 90 days.

**Department of Social Services (DSS):** The local governmental agency that manages Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Protective Services, Medicaid, Temporary Disability, and other public benefits.

**Green Card:** A document that proves an individual’s right to live and work in the United States.

**Employment Authorization Document (EAD):** A work permit card that refugees receive within a few weeks of arrival (although they are authorized to work immediately). EAD cards are another government form of ID.

**I 94 Arrival/Departure Form:** A form used by U.S. Customs and Border Protection to record the arrival and departure to/from the United States by non-U.S. citizens. Refugees will carry this form.

**Principal Applicant (PA):** The PA is considered to be the head of the refugee case, and is usually a father or mother within the family unit. All other family members are listed as relatives of the PA, and the case will usually be referred to as the last name of the PA.

**Resettlement Agency (RA):** Any of the nine national agencies contracted through the State Department that are authorized to provide resettlement and placement services to newly arrived refugees. RAs may work locally through field offices or through Affiliate partners.

**Reception and Placement (R&P):** The Reception and Placement (R&P) program is funded by the U.S. Department of State for all refugees resettled in the U.S. This program is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the RAs and their local affiliates. R&P supplies resettlement agencies a one-time sum per refugee to prepare of a refugee’s arrival and to assist with meeting basic needs during a refugee’s first 90 days in the United States.

**Self-Sufficiency:** Gross income exceeds 125% of the Federal Poverty Level for the state.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** SNAP offers assistance to low-income families and individuals to purchase and access nutritious food. Formerly known as Food Stamps.

**Social Security Administration (SSA):** The United States Social Security Administration (SSA) is
an independent agency of the United States federal government that administers Social Security, a social insurance program consisting of retirement, disability, and survivors' benefits.

**Special Immigrant Visa (SIV):** A special, expedited immigration process category for Iraqi or Afghani nationals who worked with the U.S. Armed Forces or under Chief of Mission authority as a translator or interpreter and Iraqi nationals who worked for or on behalf of the U.S. Government in Iraq. SIVs are eligible for all refugee resettlement services and public benefits.

**Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG):** TAG is a workforce development program run through the state government (in the case of New York, it is run through the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and provided to resettlement agency affiliates such as HIAS New York). The purpose of the program is “to provide, through a process of local planning and implementation, direct services intended to result in the economic self-sufficiency and reduce welfare dependency of refugees through job placements.”

**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):** Provides cash assistance to American families with dependent children; operates through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Formerly known as welfare.

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):** The UN agency dedicated to serving and protecting refugees around the world and facilitating repatriation, integration, or resettlement efforts.

**Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** A federal assistance program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for healthcare and nutrition of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and infants and children under the age of five.
Glossary of Common Asylum Terms for Legal Interpreters

The following are terms that you are likely to encounter when providing interpretation in the context of asylum and when assisting HIAS in providing legal representation to asylum seekers.

**Asylum Seeker:** Individual that left home country due to a fear of persecution or mistreatment. You may often hear an asylum seeker referred to as a ‘client’ at HIAS.

**Asylee:** An individual seeking asylum who has been granted asylee status by the U.S. government. Asylees have the same rights as U.S. citizens, except for the right to vote until they become citizens.

**Lawyer:** HIAS in New York has two lawyers: Hector and Aleks. They provide legal protection and representation to our clients at no cost. HIAS also has a Pro-Bono attorney program in which outside lawyers’ partner with HIAS to provide pro-bono legal representation. Because of this, you may hear your client refer to their lawyer by a name other than their first or last name.

**Asylum/Withholding:** Those who fear returning to home country due to past persecution or fear of future persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

**U-Visa:** Victims of violent crime in the U.S. who are helpful to law enforcement in the investigation/prosecution.

**T-Visa:** Victims of sex or labor trafficking who are in the U.S. on account of trafficking.

**Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS):** Unmarried children under 21 who were abandoned, neglected, or abused by one or both parents and who’s best interest is to not return to their home country.

**USCIS:** United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. This is the government office that handles immigration and affirmative asylum applications. Their website is [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

**EOIR:** Executive Office of Immigration Review. This is the Immigration Court and Board of Immigration Appeals, where an Immigration Judge will rule on asylum applications if the client is in deportation proceedings.

**Asylum Officer:** In affirmative asylum cases, an asylum officer will interview the client. The asylum officer may approve the asylum application is the client can show that they qualify as a refugee under U.S. immigration law and a background check has already been completed. Otherwise, the Asylum Officer may issue a “recommended approval” of the application pending the successful completion of the background check.

**Immigration Court and Immigration Judge:** An Immigration Judge will determine the asylum case if the client is already in deportation proceedings. If an Asylum Officer has denied the clients application and referred client for deportation proceedings, the client may renew the application to the Immigration Judge.
ICE: Immigration and Customs Enforcement. ICE officers can detain persons and start deportation. If ICE detains a client, that client should insist to speak to their lawyer. They should not sign anything that ICE asks them to sign without consulting their lawyer first.

BIA: The Board of Immigration Appeals is the highest administrative body for interpreting and applying immigration laws. The BIA has been given nationwide jurisdiction to hear appeals from certain decisions rendered by immigration judges and by district directors of the Department of Homeland Security.

Ins form 1-589: Federal Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal administered by the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Form EOIR-28: Form that authorizes presence of a lawyer.

Affidavit: An affidavit is a written statement confirmed by oath or affirmation, for use as evidence in court. Asylum seeking clients will need to explain what happened to them, why they left their country, and why they want to remain in the United States. This content creates their affidavit. They are encouraged to write down everything they can remember from their home country as well as conversations they had with officials in the U.S. from the time they entered the country.

Identification Documents: Often people leave their country quickly and with very limited resources. Birth certificate, passports, or other official documentation are very helpful in providing proof if identification. Clients are encouraged to have these documents sent if left in home country.

Personal, Medical, or Psychological Exams/Reports: Obtaining medical and/or psychological evaluations by health professionals is helpful so the court has an objective assessment of physical or mental marks of torture and persecution. Especially in incidents of torture, a medical evaluation is often important to show the facts about what happened to the client. (scars, burns, FGM, etc.)