

New York State Department of Civil Service
DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION

Classification Standard

Occ. Code 8107100

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 1, Grade 18 8107100
Cultural Interpretation Specialist 2, Grade 23 8107200
Cultural Interpretation Specialist 3, Grade 27 8107300

Brief Description of Class Series

Positions in this series provide and coordinate language services, primarily interpretation and translation, to allow Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals statewide meaningful access to agency services, programs, and activities. These positions are classified only in the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA).

Distinguishing Characteristics

All positions are in the non-competitive jurisdictional class.

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 1: full performance level; under the supervision of a Cultural Interpretation Specialist 2, performs activities to provide a centralized resource for interpretation and translation resources; ensures that the language needs of the refugees, immigrants, and those seeking political asylum that utilize statewide services are met; directly addresses customer needs of local social services districts in their role as direct interpreters for clients.

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 2: advanced performance/first supervisory level; independently performs a wide range of activities to provide a centralized resource for interpretation and translation resources; supervises and coordinates outreach activities to refugee and immigrant communities; evaluates prospective and current contractors; may supervise lower level staff engaged in language services.

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 3: single position class; under the general direction of a higher-level Temporary Assistance Specialist (Refugee and Immigrant Services), manages the Language Services Unit that provides a centralized statewide resource for language services.

Related Classes

Immigrant Community Specialists provide information to eligible immigrants in applying for citizenship and accessing social services.

Immigrant Workers Specialists conduct outreach to identify and address the needs and concerns of immigrant workers; evaluate the services provided by the Department of Labor (DOL) to determine their effectiveness, and develop and oversee the implementation of plans to improve agency services to immigrant workers; and ensure that immigrant workers and related advocacy groups have access to agency programs, services and facilities. They educate agricultural employers about New York State labor laws and regulations and provide information to employers on DOL services.

Translators translate verbal and written communication from one language to another (i.e., English to Spanish, Spanish to English). Incumbents must be able to communicate ideas using proper syntax and grammar; accurately and precisely edit materials; analyze and research abstract pertinent material; and may coordinate the translation of other languages with other State and local agencies.

Illustrative Duties

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 1

Determines the level and extent of need for written translation and oral interpretation services to meet the requirements of relevant legislation and provide service to identified customers.

Provides oral interpretation services as needed.

Adheres to developed standards of communication deemed culturally sensitive and brings any breaches in sensitivity to the attention of the supervisor.

Translates documents, forms, informational materials, and other written material into a targeted language; employs and monitors quality control of translation and integrity of intent from original documents.

Maintains a statewide database containing individuals, organizations, and educational institutions to provide translation and interpretation services.

Participates in the request for proposal process and in development of contract and memorandum of understanding requirements to meet client needs and to comply with court orders and/or any other types of legislation or agreements that apply to interpretation or translation.

Trains State and local district staff on translation guidelines, translation ethics, and the role of the interpreter.

Participates in and supports statewide outreach services (such as symposiums and conferences) involving sensitive cultural issues and language barriers.

Performs research and assists in the creation of a lexicon (dictionary) database containing acceptable individual word translations of Temporary Assistance terms in order to provide consistent terminology for translators.

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 2

May perform all of the same duties as a Cultural Interpretation Specialist 1.

Performs a continuing statewide assessment to determine the level and extent of need for written translation and oral interpretation services in order to meet the requirements of any pertinent legislation and to provide service to identified customers.

Develops and updates the priority list of State and federal documents requiring translation and determines which languages will need to be represented in the document translations.

Tracks translation related requests through completion and delivery; establishes files for incoming assignments with instructions for translators; and clarifies requirements with requester.

Conducts quality reviews of documents translated by a contractor or other Language Services Unit staff to ensure accuracy, integrity and completeness of the work product.

Develops a standard of communication that is culturally sensitive and informative while not being offensive and communicates these standards to subordinate and contract staff and ensures compliance.

Develops quality controls for written translation and interpretation services, continuously monitors the results, and makes recommendations for adjustments.

Participates in the development of a statewide database containing resources able to provide translation and interpretation services.

Directs and participates in the development of methods to evaluate translator and interpreter level of ability such as interview process, and training and experience.

Responds to public information inquiries on translation and interpretation services.

Supervises and participates in the research, creation and maintenance of a lexicon (dictionary) database containing acceptable individual word translations of Temporary Assistance terms in order to provide consistent terminology for translators.

May supervise Cultural Interpretation Specialists 1, clerical or paraprofessional staff.

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 3

May perform all of the same duties as lower-level Cultural Interpretation Specialists.

Manages workflow and administratively supervises all Cultural Interpretation Specialist 1 and 2 staff. Assists in hiring of new staff; provides ongoing direction and assistance to unit staff and contractors; assigns work and oversees completion including translation of official documents for the agency and Executive Chamber.

Coordinates activities to meet agency goals, guidelines, and requirements established under memorandum of understandings and all potential agreements reached between the State, courts, federal government, and within the agency concerning language services for the population served by OTDA.

Manages the development of new policies and sustains or modifies existing programs and policies, based on changing State law and regulations.

Oversees development of request for proposals for language services and coordination of vendor contracts; monitors quality control of the work of the current contractor(s) and ensures contract compliance.

Assesses the language needs of the agency, local districts, and executive staff, and collaborates in the development of a plan to address the identified needs, considering statewide resettlement and immigration trends and available resources in the assessment of need.

Produces and directs the production of various written correspondence and reports.

Liaises with other State agencies, local districts, and the Governor's Office to provide technical assistance and support on language access.

Minimum Qualifications

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 1

Non-competitive: bachelor's degree and two years of experience* performing written translation and/or interpretation services. Candidates must demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural issues and nuances. Fluency in speaking, reading, writing and oral comprehension of at least one language spoken by the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population in New York State and command of the English language, both written and spoken, is required.

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 2

Non-competitive: one year of permanent service as a Cultural Interpretation Specialist 1; or a bachelor's degree and three years of experience* performing written translation and/or interpretation services. Candidates must demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural issues and nuances. Fluency in speaking, reading, writing and oral comprehension of at least one language spoken by the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population in New York State and command of the English language, both written and spoken, is required.

Cultural Interpretation Specialist 3

Non-competitive: one year of permanent service as a Cultural Interpretation Specialist 2; or a bachelor's degree and five years of experience* managing programs to improve access to services, directions, assistance and/or benefits to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), of which at least two years must have included supervision of professional staff. The experience must also include systematic management of information and workflow, analysis of data to determine trends, preparation of budgets, negotiation of payment rates for contracts and other agreements, and analysis of cash flow needs. Candidates must demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural issues and nuances. Fluency in speaking, reading, writing and oral comprehension of at least one language spoken by the LEP population in New York State and command of the English language, both written and spoken, is required.

*Substitution: A master's degree may substitute for one year of general experience.

Note: Classification Standards illustrate the nature, extent and scope of the duties and responsibilities of the classes they describe. Standards cannot and do not include all the work that might be appropriately performed by a class. The minimum qualifications are those which were required for appointment at the time the Classification Standard was written. Please contact the Division of Staffing Services for current information on minimum requirements for appointment or examination.

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