

CERTIFIED TRANSLATIONS

FOR IMMIGRATION FILINGS



A quick guide for community members and volunteers

When is a certified translation needed?

When a document submitted to USCIS is in a language other than English. **Must include:**

ORIGINAL-LANGUAGE
DOCUMENT

+

FULL ENGLISH
TRANSLATION

+

TRANSLATOR'S
CERTIFICATION

The translation should cover the entire document, not just the portions that seem important.

Sample Certificate of Translation

I, [printed name of translator], certify that I am fluent in English and [document language], and that the attached/above document is a true, accurate, and complete translation of the document entitled [title of foreign document].

Translator's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone/Email: _____

Date: _____

Best Practices

Translate everything. Include headings, stamps, seals, handwritten notes, signatures, and any visible text.

Don't "clean up." Translate what the document says, even if something seems incorrect, odd, or repetitive.

Don't guess. If something cannot be read, use a notation such as [illegible] rather than inventing text.

Identify non-text elements. For example: [seal], [signature], [photograph], or [stamp: Civil Registry].

Keep formatting reasonably similar. It should be easy to tell which translated text corresponds to which part of the original.

Proofread carefully. Double-check names, dates, and numbers.

Translate, don't interpret. Accurately convey exactly what the document says; don't explain its meaning.

No professional credential required.

The translator must be sufficiently competent in both languages to provide and certify an accurate translation.

Notarization is generally not required.

For USCIS, the key requirement is the translator's signed certification and contact information for any needed follow-up.

CERTIFICATION ≠ AUTHENTICATION

A certified translation is not the same thing as a certified copy.

You are certifying the accuracy and completeness of your translation, not authenticating the underlying document.