Interpreters and translators enable the cross-cultural communication by converting one language into another. These language specialists do more than simply translate words—they relay concepts and ideas between languages.

**Trends**

Employment of interpreters and translators is projected to increase much faster than the average through 2022. Higher demand for interpreters and translators in recent years has resulted directly from the broadening of international ties and the increase in the number of foreign language speakers in the United States. Both of these trends are expected to continue, contributing to relatively rapid growth in the number of jobs for interpreters and translators.

**Education & Training**

The educational backgrounds of interpreters and translators vary. Knowing a language in addition to a native language is essential. Although it is not necessary to have been raised bilingual to succeed, many interpreters and translators have grown up speaking two languages. A bachelor’s degree and specialized training in how to do the work is required. A number of formal programs in interpreting and translation are available at colleges nationwide. Many people who work as conference interpreters or in more technical areas—such as localization, engineering, or finance—have master’s degrees, while those working in the community as court or medical interpreters or translators are more likely to complete job-specific training programs.

**Tips for Breaking In**

Persons seeking to enter interpreting and/or translating should begin by getting experience whatever way they can—even if it means doing informal or unpaid work. All translation can be used as examples for potential clients, even translation done as practice. Mentoring relationships and internships are other ways to build skills and confidence. Other helpful pursuits include spending time abroad, engaging in comparable forms of direct contact with foreign cultures, and reading extensively on a variety of subjects in English and at least one other language.

**Licenses & Certifications**

There is no universal certification required; however, there are tests and certifications used by some companies to measure proficiency. The American Translators Association and The Translators and Interpreters Guild both offer certifications/accreditations. Federal courts have certification for Spanish, Navajo, and Haitian Creole interpreters; many State and municipal courts offer their own forms of certification. The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators also offers certification for court interpreting.

**Earnings**

Earnings depend on language, subject matter, employer, and other factors. The average salary (2014) for interpreters and translators was $43,590.