



**American
Red Cross**

American Red Cross Language Bank

A Resource Guide for Nonprofit Partners



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▪ Your Local American Red Cross Chapter ▪

We PREPARE. We RESPOND. We CARE.

What We Do

Your local American Red Cross chapter brings together local volunteers to care for their neighbors, trains 70,000 people each year in life-saving skills, and responds to a local disaster once every 48 hours. With offices in Seattle and Bremerton, we serve the people, businesses and communities of King, Kitsap and North Mason counties.

How We Do It

Through the efforts of nearly 60 employees and 1,500 volunteers, we provide:

- Immediate, short-term disaster assistance for victims of fires, floods, earthquakes and other natural or man-made disasters
- Community disaster education
- Safety classes for adults and youth
- Workplace preparedness and training
- Emergency kits and supplies
- International and national communication to locate family members separated by disaster or warfare.
- Emergency communication for military families
- Patient and staff support at Naval Hospital Bremerton
- Language translation and interpretation for individuals and nonprofits

The chapter also mobilizes local volunteers and resources to help respond to disasters across the nation and around the world.

History and Leadership

The local chapter dates back more than a century. The Seattle-King County Chapter, founded in 1898 and the Kitsap Chapter, founded in 1925, merged together in 2002 to provide more effective services for our local communities. Today, a 36-member Board of Directors consisting of local community and business leaders sets the direction and policies for the American Red Cross Serving King & Kitsap Counties. Dawn Angelo is the chapter's chief executive officer.

We Are One Red Cross

The Red Cross is an international humanitarian network dedicated to saving lives. The local chapter is one of more than 700 chapters across the United States that form the American Red Cross with national headquarters located in Washington D.C. The American Red Cross is a member of the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which is made up of 189 national societies around the world. The International Committee of the Red Cross coordinates international relief efforts and helps protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and violence.

Our Congressional Charter

The American Red Cross is not a government agency. We are a nonprofit organization mandated by Congress to provide short-term emergency relief for natural or manmade disasters. During a disaster, the organization works closely with government agencies and other nonprofit organizations to coordinate services, but remains politically neutral and impartial. More than 95% of local Red Cross funding comes from the generosity of individuals, businesses and community foundations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Language Bank: (tel) 206.709.7339 (fax) 206.720.5390

[Email: languagebank@redcross.org](mailto:languagebank@redcross.org)

Other International Services: (tel)206.726.3554

▪ International Services Programs ▪

The Red Cross Mission is to provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. Through our International Services programs we further the international efforts of the Red Cross by educating the community about these efforts and by facilitating communication among refugees and immigrants, the organizations that serve them, and families facing communication barriers caused by language, armed conflict, disasters, and emergencies. The ability to serve those with limited English proficiency, especially newly arrived residents to our counties enables the Chapter not only to help these families meet their basic needs, but also to fulfill the organization's broader mission by preparing new immigrants and refugees to respond appropriately in the case of a disaster or other emergency. Because many of the families served are also low income, they tend to be at highest risk of home or apartment fires. The ability to assist such families at the time of crisis is key to the Chapter's ability to fulfill its mission.

THE LANGUAGE BANK: Translation and Interpretation Services

Whether you are meeting in person with your client or conducting a meeting, being able to communicate effectively is critical to providing social services to populations in need. The Red Cross Language Bank provides interpretation and translation services to individuals and non-profit organizations who serve the limited-English population. We have over 400 volunteers who collectively speak more than 75 different languages and dialects and are available seven days a week. The Language Bank provides in-person and over-the-phone interpretation as well as written translations.

The Language Bank was founded by the Seattle Altrusa Club in 1962, with the idea of providing volunteer interpreters to limited and non-English speaking persons in emergency and crisis situations. It remained sponsored by the Seattle Altrusa Club for more than twenty years, and on July 1, 1983, control of the Language Bank was transferred to the local Red Cross chapter. Over the years our services have evolved to meet changing community needs. Currently, our services are targeted to individuals in certain emergency situations or for whom access to other interpretation services is limited or cost-prohibitive. Services to these individuals are provided free of charge. Additionally, we provide assistance both within the Chapter (to other Red Cross departments and programs such as Disaster and Health Services) and to other non-profit social service agencies (such as grassroots community organizations, food banks, homeless and domestic violence shelters, among others).

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS: Family Tracing and Reunification

When the confusion and chaos surrounding a disaster separates families and loved ones, the Red Cross helps find family members and re-open the lines of communication. Whether it's been weeks or years, we can help re-connect families around the world after natural disasters, war, civil unrest or other international catastrophes.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW: Community Education

From war to disease, our local communities are impacted by the events that happen around the world. As part of an International Movement dedicated to saving lives, the Red Cross is in the unique position to engage our community around global humanitarian and health issues including International Humanitarian Law and the eradication of measles and landmines. We offer a variety of education programs and facilitate community presentations to help foster awareness and understanding.

INFORMATION & REFERRAL

Information and referrals are provided during office hours to individuals needing an array of community services such as shelter, food, medical assistance, job training, immigration advice, and more.

▪ Interpretation Services ▪

Interpretation is the intellectual activity of facilitating oral communication between two or more speakers who do not speak the same language. American Red Cross Language Bank volunteer interpreters are trained in consecutive interpretation. Consecutive interpretation is a method in which the parties involved speak in short segments, not simultaneously, and pause for the interpreter to interpret before continuing.

Volunteer Interpreters

Our Language Bank volunteers are screened and cleared through a Washington State Patrol check, and sign American Red Cross Codes of Ethics and Conduct. In addition, our volunteers attend a 4-hour course which provides skills training in the practice and ethics of interpretation.

Interpretation Process

Please consider the following steps when requesting an interpreter from the Language Bank. Be sure to make your request at least 7-10 days in advance.

1. Visit the following URL: <http://www.redcross.org/wa/seattle/programs-services/translation-interpretation>. If you don't have access to a computer, please contact the Language Bank at (206)709-7339 or languagebank@redcross.org.
2. Click the "Request an Interpretation" link and fill out an Interpretation Request Form, which will ask for the following information:
 - Your agency/program name
 - Your full name
 - Your phone number and email
 - The language you are requesting
 - When you need an interpreter (date and time) Length of interpretation
 - Location (neighborhood) of the interpretation or note if it is over the phone
 - Gender preference, if any
 - A description of your appointment. Please provide as many details as possible so our interpreters can be appropriately prepared.
3. The Language Bank will make every effort to locate an appropriate volunteer. When we have found a volunteer interpreter for your case, we will give the volunteer your name and contact information, and have the volunteer contact you to confirm. If you do not hear from a volunteer 48-hours before your scheduled appointment, contact the Language Bank for further assistance.
4. The volunteer interpreter will call you directly to confirm the case, receive address directions and any special instructions. This is your confirmation that you have an interpreter. If you do not receive a call from a volunteer interpreter, contact the Language Bank.
5. Once the interpretation has taken place, you may submit feedback to the Language Bank if you wish.

Telephone Interpretations

For cases where in person interpretations are not possible or not necessary, we can provide interpretations over the phone. This can occur with an interpreter on the phone while you and your client(s) are in the same room, or we can set up a conference call where all parties are in different locations.

Urgent Case Requests

We understand that last minute case requests might be necessary when you have an unexpected walk-in or phone call or an urgent matter arises. We are sometimes able to accommodate these requests via phone for some in-house languages. However, this availability is highly variable, and we recommend that you know of alternate businesses that are available to provide immediate language assistance.

After-Hours Services

After business hours, during evenings, weekends, or holidays, the chapter's answering service forwards emergency or urgent requests to a designated on-call volunteer. You will be called back within 15-30 minutes.

www.redcross.org ▪ 206.709.7339 ▪ languagebank@redcross.org

▪ How to Work Effectively with an Interpreter ▪

- Greet the client first. Even if the client doesn't understand your words, your body language will indicate your meaning.
- Introduce yourself to the interpreter; establish the interpreter's level of English and professional training, and remind the interpreter that you expect everything to be interpreted accurately and completely.
- During the case, speak directly to the client not to the interpreter (i.e., "How long have you been there"? As opposed to "Please ask him how long has the client been there.")
- A professional interpreter will use the first person in interpreting, reflecting exactly what the client said: e.g. "Sign this form" instead of "He wants you to sign this form." This allows you to have a direct conversation with the client.
- Avoid: slang and very specific cultural references, technical terminology, complicated sentence structures, sentence fragments, changing your mind in the middle of a sentence, and asking multiple questions at one time.
- Do not hold the interpreter responsible for what the client says or doesn't say; the interpreter is the medium, not the source, of the message.
- Be aware that many concepts you express have no linguistic, or often even conceptual, equivalent in other languages. The interpreter may have to paint word pictures of many terms you use; this may take longer than your original speech.
- Speak at an even pace in relatively short segments; pause after completing a thought to allow the interpreter to interpret. Be aware of "interpreter fatigue" Give them a break!
- Assume that everything you and the client say is interpreted. If you are concerned that the interpreter has not interpreted everything, ask the interpreter to do so.
- If you must address the interpreter about an issue of communication or culture, let the client know first what you are going to be discussing with the interpreter.
- Ask the interpreter to point out potential cultural misunderstandings that may come up. Respect an interpreter's judgment that a particular question is culturally inappropriate and either rephrase the question, or ask the interpreter's help in eliciting the information in a more appropriate way.
- Don't make assumptions about the client's educational level. An inability to speak English does not necessarily indicate a lack of education.
- When possible, give materials and glossaries to interpreters. This is a key to obtain high-quality interpreting, hence, a successful experience.
- An interpreter who is prepared with a dictionary is acting professionally.

▪ Tips on Working with Interpreters by Phone ▪

Please remember that telephonic interpretation is different than face-to-face interpreting. Background noise can be a significant barrier to quality interpretation and presents difficulties for both caseworkers and interpreters. Telephonic interpretation requires greater concentration as visual cues are missing. The following tips are intended to help facilitate quality interpreted visits in any setting.

- Positioning is important – make sure you and client are sitting close to the phone; if you need to move away from phone, let interpreter know.
- After introducing yourself, give a brief statement summarizing the situation to the interpreter. Set the scene.
- Check that the interpreter can hear what you and the client are saying. If the client is soft-spoken, try to encourage them to speak a little louder.
- Try to control the noise level in the room: if possible, limit number of people in room, ask client to switch off cell phone, avoid giving children noisy toys such as blocks and provide coloring books when available, ask parent to keep children quiet during telephonic interpretation so that everyone can hear what is being said.
- Use a splitter and additional handset if available to help block out background noise.
- Remember to always include the interpreter, avoid side conversations with English-speaking family members.
- Speak directly to the client, not the interpreter. Do say “How are you feeling today?” do not say “Ask him how he feels today.”
- Speak in short sentences at an even pace, allow interpreter time to interpret.
- Avoid: using jargon, changing ideas in mid-sentence, asking more than one question at a time, using slang or very technical terms.
- Pay attention to body language which the interpreter cannot see and let interpreter know when client is nodding, making gestures, etc., so that interpreter can follow the conversation.
- Leave time at the end of the phone call for questions or to have the patient repeat important instructions back to you. Check for full understanding.

▪ Translation Services ▪

The Language Bank provides translation services in over 60 languages. A translation is the rendering of written text from one language into another. Please note that translating documents into languages that use regional alphabets, such as Khmer, Lao, etc. may not be possible, depending on the access to appropriate software.

You must request translation at least one month in advance. We do not accept documents longer than 1,000 words. All documents must be submitted electronically in MS Word format.

Translation Process

Please consider the following steps when requesting a translation from the Language Bank.

1. Visit the following URL: <http://www.redcross.org/wa/seattle/programs-services/translation-interpretation>. If you don't have access to a computer, please contact the Language Bank at (206)709-7339 or languagebank@redcross.org.
2. Click the "Request a Translation" link and fill out a Translation Request Form, which will ask for the following information:
 - Your full name
 - Your phone number and email
 - The languages you are requesting
 - Length of document in words
 - A copy of the document in MS Word Format
 - A brief description of the document.
3. The Language Bank will inform you within 7-10 business days whether we can fill your translation request.
4. Language Bank caseworkers will contact a pair of volunteer translators to translate your document. This is a two-step process: the first volunteer translates the document, and the second volunteer edits the original document for accuracy. Our volunteer editors are always native speakers of the target language. This process can take 2 - 8 weeks.
5. Once the translation is complete, we will send you the final document.
6. Once this process is complete, you may submit feedback to the Language Bank if you wish.

Translation Guarantees

- All Language Bank translators and editors have passed a competency translation test
- The Language Bank is not a certified translation service and does not guarantee translations but we are committed to providing accurate, high quality translations.
- We can address any issues or concerns regarding a translation and perform an additional edit if requested.

Translation Capabilities

The Language Bank's main goal is to facilitate access for limited and non-English speakers to all American Red Cross and its community partners' services. Thus, the majority of the translations we perform are social-service oriented. The Language Bank can translate documents such as information for non-profit clients, event flyers, brochures, agreement/permission forms, and birth, marriage and death certificates. The Language Bank does not translate the following types of documents:

- Legal documents for which a high level of legal expertise or certification is required.
- Medical documents for which a high level of medical expertise or certification is required.
- Documents that require special formatting.
- Documents with very technical jargon, colloquialisms, or unexplained acronyms.

The Language Bank reserves the right to refuse any translation request.

▪ Community Partner Benefits ▪

The Language Bank supports the efforts of local non-profit organizations to serve the diverse communities of our region by offering interpretation and translation services. This allows limited and non-English speakers to access community agency - services. To help ensure that our non-profit partners and their clients receive the language resources they need, we offer Language Bank services for community-based organizations at no cost.

The American Red Cross is recognized as a premier humanitarian disaster relief organization. As a community partner, non-profit organizations play an important role in building the most educated and prepared communities in America to respond to disasters and other emergencies. Partner organizations have the opportunity to be involved with the Red Cross through use of our Language Bank, Preparedness and International Services Programs. The services offered to Language Bank partners are:

- In-person or over-the-phone interpretations
- Free translations of up to 1000 words (Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Tagalog, Farsi, and Arabic. All other languages accommodated on case-by-case basis)
- Access to bilingual social service glossaries in several languages (Spanish, Russian, Korean, Cambodian, Laotian, Chinese, and Vietnamese)
- American Red Cross e-newsletter and announcements about Red Cross events
- Community disaster education for your clients (also offered in multiple languages)
- Workplace disaster preparedness training for your organization

Available Languages for Interpretation and Translation

These languages are those for which we most frequently provide interpretation and translation. Please note that this list is not complete and changes often based on the availability of our volunteers and the needs of the community. If you would like to request a language that is not on this list, we encourage your inquiry as we can accommodate special requests on a case-by-case basis.

Amharic	Kirundi	Russian
Arabic	Kiswahili	Somali
Cantonese	Khmer	Spanish
Chinese	Korean	Tagalog
Farsi/Dari/Persian	Laotian	Thai
French	Mandarin	Tigrigna
German	Oromo	Toishanese
Hindi	Polish	Ukrainian
Japanese	Portuguese	Vietnamese
	Punjabi	
	Pushtu	

▪ Red Cross Language Bank- Frequently Asked Q's ▪

What is the difference between interpretation and translation?

Interpretation is rendering one language into another orally, while translation is written.

Are Red Cross Language Bank volunteers certified? What kind of training have they received?

Our nearly 400 volunteer interpreters and translators are bilingual individuals with a desire to help others in the community. Our Red Cross Language Bank volunteer services are neither guaranteed nor certified. However, all Red Cross Language Bank volunteers go through a volunteer application process that includes an interview, a background check through Washington State Patrol and they have attended a 4-hour training covering the basic skills and ethics of interpreting.

Who is eligible for Red Cross Language Bank services?

The most appropriate use of Red Cross Language Bank volunteers is by community-based social service organizations and individual immigrants and refugees living in King, Kitsap and North Mason counties. Our main goal is to collaborate with agencies that are aligned with our humanitarian mission.

Who is not eligible for Red Cross Language Bank services?

The Red Cross Language Bank reserves the right to decline service in situations for which its volunteers are not the most appropriate resource. Private, for-profit business, legal and medical agencies are not eligible for services. The Language Bank will decline cases that compromise its volunteer management or conflict with its mission and principals.

How much does it cost to access the Red Cross Language Bank?

Individuals, non-profit social service organizations and other Red Cross chapters receive interpretation services at no cost. Written translations are free as well.

What if I have an urgent case after business hours?

For urgent calls placed outside of normal business hours, the Red Cross answering service forwards requests to an on-call volunteer; response time by after-hours volunteer staff is usually 15-30 minutes. Call 206.323.2345.

Are there certain documents that the Red Cross won't translate?

Yes, we are unable to provide translation assistance for medical, legal, business or published documents or documents requiring signatures; documents that require special formatting; documents with technical jargon, colloquialisms or acronyms; or documents longer than 1000 words.

Can the Red Cross provide me with volunteer contact information so that I can call them directly?

No. All requests for interpreters/translators must be made through the Red Cross Language Bank; please do not make additional requests directly to our volunteers. In order to protect Language Bank volunteers' privacy, we do not give out their personal contact information. We do encourage community organizations to request specific volunteers if they are particularly satisfied with that individual's interpretation skills.

Does completion of the partner agreement guarantee Red Cross Language Bank services every time?

No. The partner agreement is not a contract for service. All of our interpreters and translators are volunteers, and we cannot guarantee their availability; volunteers have the prerogative to accept or decline individual requests. Providing services depends on the language requested, timeframe, location, and other factors.

I'm bilingual and interested in volunteering with the Red Cross Language Bank. Who should I contact?

If you or anyone you know is bi- or multilingual and interested in joining the Red Cross Language Bank, please visit www.redcross.org, call 206.709.7339, or email languagebank@redcross.org.

I am interested in other International Services opportunities. Who should I contact?

If you are interested in joining the Red Cross International Services, please contact Cody Austin at 206.726.3554, or cody.austin@redcross.org. We are always looking for volunteers who can help our program grow and evolve to meet the needs in our community.

Confidentiality

Interpreters must treat all information revealed to them during and interpretation session as confidential.

Accuracy: Conveying the Content and Spirit of What Is Said

Interpreters must transmit information in exactly the way it was intended, even if the interpreter disagrees with what is being said or feels uncomfortable with the subject matter. It is important to convey the spirit as well as the content of what is said. A word-for-word interpretation may not convey the intended idea. The interpreter must determine the relevant concept and say it in language that is readily understandable, and culturally appropriate to the person being helped.

Non-Judgmental Attitude

An interpreter's function is to facilitate communication. Just as interpreters should not omit anything said, they also should not add their own personal opinions, advice or judgment. The only appropriate information to add in an interpretation is information about the culture, practice and belief system of each person.

Client Self-Determination

The interpreter may be asked by the provider or client for his/her opinion. When this happens, the interpreter needs to provide or restate information that will assist the provider or client in making his or her own decision. The interpreter should not influence the opinion of providers or clients by telling them what action to take.

Attitude Towards Clients

Each individual has the right to be treated equally with dignity and respect regardless of race, color, sex, religion, nationality, political persuasion or life-style choice.

Acceptance of Assignments

If level of experience or personal sentiment makes it difficult to abide by any of the above conditions, the interpreter should decline or withdraw from the assignment. Interpreters should refrain from providing services to family members or close personal friends except in emergencies.

In emergency situations, interpreters may be asked to do interpretations for which they are not qualified. The interpreter may consent as long as all parties understand the limitations and no other interpreter is available.

Professionalism

Interpreters shall be punctual, prepared and dressed in an appropriate manner, as well as respectful and courteous. Interpreters shall seek to further their knowledge and skills, both in preparation for specific assignments and through continuing studies and training.

