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# Asylum Interview Interpreter Requirement Modification Due to COVID

On March 16, 2022, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of Homeland Security announced in the Federal Register an extension of the [temporary final rule](#). The temporary final rule is a modification that applies to [affirmative asylum interviews](#) in which the applicant is not able to complete the interview in English. In the past, asylum applicants were allowed to have an interpreter accompany them to the interview for translation purposes; they are now required to use [USCIS telephonic contract interpreters](#).

The initial temporary final rule ([85 FR 59655](#)) was created in September of 2020, in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during asylum application interviews. It established that “asylum applicants who cannot proceed with the interview in English are no longer required to provide interpreters at the asylum interview but rather must ordinarily proceed with DHS-provided telephonic interpreters.”

USCIS contract interpreters are available for [47 languages](#). If an asylum applicant is not fluent in any of the 47 listed languages, they are permitted to provide an interpreter for their affirmative asylum interview, though the interpreter must meet a list of [requirements](#). An asylum applicant who is fluent in one of the 47 languages but refuses a USCIS contract interpreter will have their application dismissed or referred to immigration court.

This is the third extension of the temporary final rule, and will be effective from March 16, 2022, to March 16, 2023.

*By Colby Feigenbaum, Legal Intern*