Job Aid

August 2026

IRS Over-the-Phone Interpreter (OPI) Service

for SPEC Partners, Site Coordinators, and Volunteers

Mission

The IRS provides interpretation services at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) sites to help taxpayers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) meet their federal tax obligations.

Background

The IRS is committed to servicing our multilingual taxpayers by offering SPEC Over-the-Phone Interpreter (OPI) services to LEP communities. OPI is a federally funded program.

OPI provides real-time interpretation services in seven languages through virtual call centers, enabling around-the-clock service year-round. The OPI service is free and available to all VITA/TCE partners/sites.

OPI Services

OPI services are used in all aspects of the SPEC business model, including:

- Income tax return preparation
- Return and Quality Site Reviews
- Field site visits
- Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) services
- Outreach and Education on topics such as the Child Tax Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit, Education Credits, Identity Theft, etc.

If a partner wants to use OPI services for any purpose other than tax return preparation, the partner must submit a request to their relationship manager and obtain written authorization from SPEC.

The IRS OPI services provide seven languages:

- Cantonese
- Haitian Creole
- Korean
- Mandarin
- Russian
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

What is Needed?

- Site coordinator/volunteer must certify yearly through Link and Learn Taxes (LLT).
- Site Identification Number (SIDN) is required before taking the SPEC OPI training.
- If taxpayer is not present it is recommended that sites have conference call abilities (3-way-calling).
- Weekly SPEC OPI Log

How to Use the Over-the-Phone Interpreter Service

- **Step 1:** A certified VITA/TCE volunteer will call the taxpayer.
- **Step 2:** From a secure location, the volunteer will call the interpreter's toll-free line at 1-877-384-4474. (If the taxpayer is not present: Use three-way-conference calling.)
- **Step 3:** Once connected, you will hear: "Welcome. For interpretation services, please say or enter your (sites assigned) personal identification number (PIN) followed by the #".
- **Step 4:** Press number for appropriate language:
  - Press 1 for Spanish
  - Press 2 for Haitian Creole
  - Press 3 for Mandarin
  - Press 4 for Russian
  - Press 5 for Korean
  - Press 6 for Vietnamese
  - Press 7 for Cantonese
  - Press 8 to speak with an operator
- **Step 5:** Secure the interpreter's name and identification number.

- **Step 6:** After all questions are answered, the volunteer ends the call and completes the OPI log.
- **Step 7:** All volunteers will give their OPI log to the site coordinator.
- **Step 8:** The site coordinator will merge all data into one form and send their completed OPI log to their relationship manager weekly.

Partner/Site Coordinator Responsibility

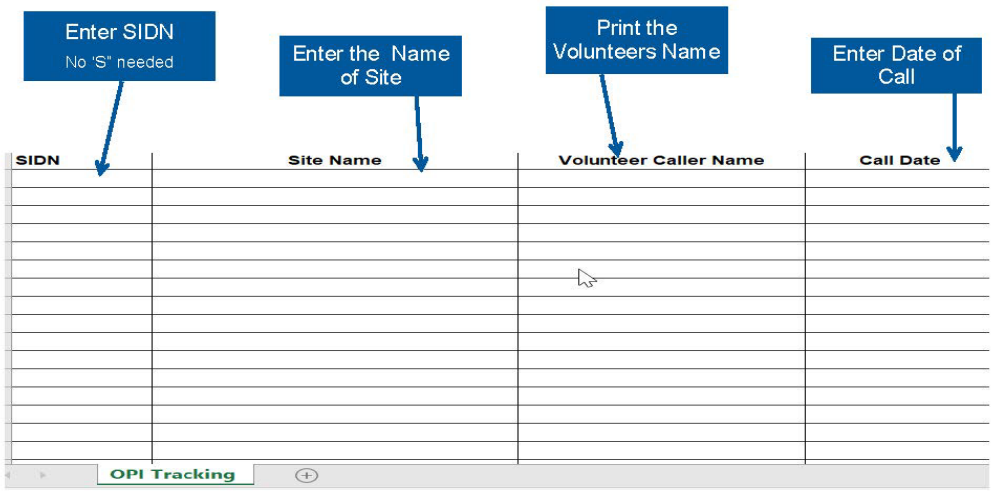
Volunteers, partners, and site coordinators are required to:

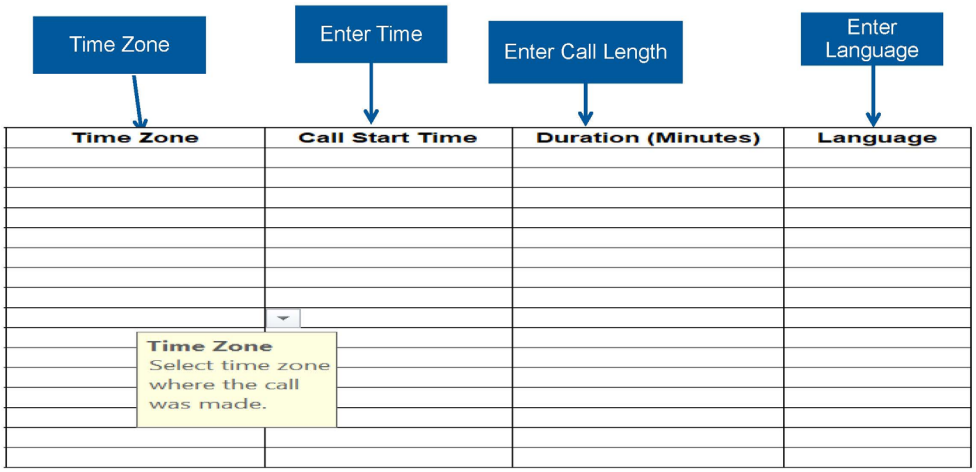
- Complete the annual SPEC Over-the-Phone Interpretation (OPI) certification through Link and Learn Taxes (LLT).
- After completing the OPI certification, the site coordinator must contact their relationship manger to request activation of the OPI PIN.
- Complete Form 13715, Volunteer Site Information Sheet, by entering "Virtual Interpreter Service" in Question 7, Languages Offered.
- Record each OPI call on the Weekly SPEC OPI Log.
- Submit the completed Weekly SPEC OPI Log to your relationship manager weekly on Mondays by noon your local time. If no OPI services were used during the reporting week, the partner/site coordinator must email the relationship manager to confirm that there was no OPI usage.
- Assist the relationship manager with the monthly reconciliation of the Weekly SPEC OPI Logs.

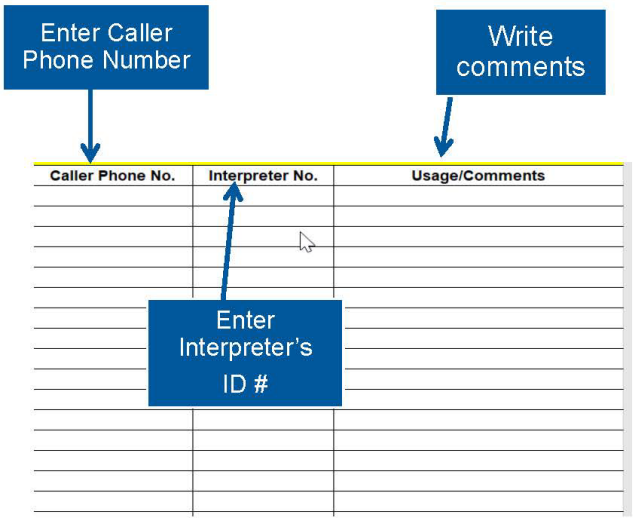
Point of Contact

Contact your relationship manager if you are interested in participating in the OPI services.

Attachment 1 (Breakdown):







Comment Examples:

- No interpreter for language requested.
- Call dropped, had to call back.
- Time to connect with interpreter was too long.