

IRM PROCEDURAL UPDATE

DATE: 05/26/2017

NUMBER: wi-21-0517-0925

SUBJECT: Multilingual Assistance

AFFECTED IRM(S)/SUBSECTION(S): 21.3.4.3.7

CHANGE(S):

IRM 21.3.4.3.7 Multilingual Assistance added Note for interpreter service and clarified language for OPI service

1. Multilingual services will be offered to taxpayers with a language barrier. The primary vehicle for providing this service is through bilingual employees and an Over-the-Phone Interpreter (OPI). However, the OPI line will NOT be used for Out of Scope issues.
2. If the taxpayer needs multilingual assistance and the issues cannot be determined, a Qmatic ticket will be given by an IAR, if available. TACs are required to offer interpreter services (OPI or bilingual employee) even if the taxpayer brought an interpreter with them or is insistent on having a family member/friend interpret on their behalf. Minors may **not** act as interpreters, even if they are family members.
3. The IAR will refer the taxpayer to a bilingual employee to determine if issues are In Scope and provide the needed assistance.
4. If a bilingual employee is not available to assist a taxpayer, the OPI service will be used. If OPI is unable to provide the requested language, the TAC should take the following action with the taxpayer:
 - o Advise the taxpayer that the requested language is not currently available.
 - o Apologize for any inconvenience caused.
 - o The TAC employee should advise the taxpayer that the appointment can be re-scheduled for a time when the service is available (the service provider will advise when the requested service is available).

NOTE: If the taxpayer does not want to wait for agency-provided interpreter services and wants to use their own interpreter, it can be allowed, as long as the employee has first offered to provide a qualified interpreter to the taxpayer at no cost.

5. If it is determined that an issue is Out of Scope for FA, see IRM 21.3.4.3.5.5, *Out of Scope Procedures*.
6. If a bilingual employee is available to assist a taxpayer with In Scope issues, the bilingual employee may be used prior to seeking the OPI

service. If a bilingual employee is unavailable to assist the taxpayer, the OPI service will be used for In Scope issues only.

7. The OPI User Guide (page 4) provides a Language Identification Sheet that lists commonly requested languages and has specific instructions for the use of the service. Interpreters can be reached by dialing the access telephone number **1-888-563-1155**.
8. Each TAC employee must use their own unique personal identification number, also known as the "PIN". This nine digit number (4 digit site ID + a 5 digit user PIN) identifies the TAC employee making the call. Your PIN must not be shared with other business units or TACs. Questions regarding your PIN should be addressed to the FA area OPI analyst.

NOTE: If you call for interpreter services without a PIN, you will be told to call back with the appropriate number.

9. The IRS/OPI contract allows the disclosure of tax information to the OPI interpreter. TAC employees should only disclose taxpayer information that is necessary to resolve the issue. The interpreters are not employees of IRS so communicate to them exactly as you would advise the taxpayer.
10. Use the Language Identification Card to help the taxpayer identify their language. Language Identification Cards are supplied by the vendor. The Headquarters OPI analyst will request a yearly supply of the cards from the vendor for distribution to each TAC.
11. Input employee SEID when prompted.
12. Care should be taken to use the service efficiently, including, termination of the call while performing case research, and calling back when research is completed.
13. When dialing the OPI line and a busy signal is received, make a second attempt in dialing. If there is a hold time, wait a reasonable amount of time (at least 5 minutes) prior to ending the call. If the problem persists contact your area OPI analyst to report, along with other concerns i.e., long wait times or any issue with the LionBridge Service. The area OPI analyst will forward the following information to the Headquarters OPI analyst:
 - o PIN
 - o Interpreter ID (This is provided by the Interpreter during the beginning of the call)
 - o Problem/Issue
 - o Date and Time of Problem/Issue
 - o Language
14. All IRS employees who use the OPI service can provide feedback about the service by completing Form 14162, *OPI Service Feedback*.
15. The OPI contract provides interpretive services via phone for agency face-to-face and telephonic contacts with taxpayers. Do not send inquiries to the vendor for written translations.