Table of Contents

1. Introduction & Overview
2. Membership Requirements
3. Member Benefits
4. Membership Credentials
5. Membership Tier Descriptions
6. Member Responsibilities
7. Frequently Asked Questions
Introduction & Overview

The Society of Professional Interpreters (SPI) is a membership program within Americans Against Language Barriers (AALB), a nonprofit organization dedicated to breaking down communication barriers and promoting linguistic inclusivity. Our mission is to improve communication and understanding, enhance the quality of interpretation services, and promote professional development among interpreters, with a focus on benefiting Deaf and limited English proficiency individuals. Through the Society of Professional Interpreters, we aim to ensure that all individuals have access to high-quality interpretation services, regardless of their language proficiency, and that our members are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to excel in their profession.

SPI serves as a platform for interpreters to connect, learn, and grow in their careers. Upon being accepted into the society, all members will be assigned to a tier of membership based on their skills and qualifications. All members will receive a physical membership identification card for the duration of their membership, among other credentials, as pictured below:

Members can take advantage of valuable benefits designed to support their professional development and enhance their skills in the field, including:

1. Simulated Roleplay Practice Sessions: Hone interpretation skills and discuss ethical scenarios with fellow interpreters in a supportive environment.
2. Free Accredited Continuing Education: Stay current with industry trends by attending live webinars that offer accredited continuing education units (CEUs).
3. Exclusive Event Invitations: Gain access to exclusive events and networking meetings, connecting with experienced interpreters and expanding your professional network.
4. Networking Opportunities: Join a vibrant community of professional interpreters, fostering connections and collaboration within the field.
5. Inclusion in the Member Directory: Enhance your visibility by opting into our member directory, showcasing your expertise to potential clients, employers, and colleagues.

Click here to view the full list of benefits.
Membership Requirements

The requirements to become a member of the AALB Society for Professional Interpreters are designed to ensure inclusivity of the diverse profession of interpretation. Given the requirements to be a professional interpreter not only vary by specialty but also by geography, the following criteria provide applicants with a great degree of flexibility in order to qualify for membership.

To be a member, an individual must meet the following criteria:

1. **Be 18 years of age or older**
2. **Be fluent in at least two languages**
   a. A complimentary informal self-paced interview is provided in two languages for applicants who don’t have evidence of language proficiency.
3. **Meet at least one of the following requirements:**
   a. Completed or currently enrolled in 40 hours or more of training as a professional interpreter through a certificate program or equivalent in college-level classes on interpretation
   b. Hold a valid certification or licensure as a professional interpreter
   c. If members do not have training or certification, they are required to have at least 2 years of proven consistent professional experience as an interpreter.

Please note: Deaf interpreters have a unique set of requirements, as they are not required to be fluent in two languages. Please see the FAQ section for further details.

Meeting these criteria demonstrates that an individual has the necessary language skills and professional training or experience to work as an interpreter. Once an individual has been accepted into the society, they will be placed into a membership tier based on a combination of their training, experience, and professional accomplishments.

Not sure if you qualify to be a member? Click HERE to take our quiz and find out!

How to apply for membership in the AALB Society for Professional Interpreters:

1. Complete the online membership application form, providing all necessary information about your language skills, training, and experience.
2. Submit any required documentation, such as proof of language proficiency, interpreter training, or certification.
3. Pay the applicable membership fee.
4. Once your application is received and reviewed, you will be notified of your membership status and tier placement.
Member Benefits

1. **Attend Simulated Roleplay Practice Sessions (48 hours annually):** Join live practice sessions twice a month to enhance your interpretation skills, engage in team-building activities, discuss ethical scenarios, and more. All qualified interpreters of any language are welcome to participate. Practice sessions are held at various times and days to ensure maximum participation. Please click [here](http://example.com) to view the most up to date schedule on our website. The speciality of interpretation for each practice session is listed on the schedule.

2. **Attend Free Accredited Continuing Education (24 hours annually):** Stay current in your field by taking advantage of our complimentary continuing education opportunities. We offer live webinars that are recorded and sent to all members for their convenience. These workshops provide continuing education units (CEUs) that are accredited and accepted for renewing your certification. The organizations and certifying bodies that accredit each class will be listed, ensuring the quality of your professional development. Even if you can't attend live, recordings of the workshops will be sent to all members. Click [here](http://example.com) to see the 2023 schedule. The speciality of interpretation for each continuing education workshop is listed on the schedule.

3. **Exclusive Member Event & Networking Meeting Invitations:** As an AALB member, you'll gain access to member exclusive events and networking meetings, allowing you to expand your professional network and connect with experienced interpreters. These monthly meetings offer opportunities to engage in team-building activities, discuss ethical scenarios, and more. Seize this unique chance to connect with other professionals in the field. Click [here](http://example.com) to view the 2023 schedule.

4. **Join the Society of Professional Interpreters Member Directory:** As a member, you have the option of joining our member directory, making it easier for potential clients, employers, and colleagues to find and connect with you. Your tier and area of specialization will be featured in the directory, further showcasing your expertise. This optional member directory serves as a valuable networking tool for members, allowing you to establish connections with other professionals in the interpretation field and enhancing your visibility within the community. The member directory will be launched in May of 2023.

5. **Enhance Your Professional Profile with SPI Membership Credentials:** Showcase your commitment to the industry by including your SPI membership credentials on your resume and social media profiles. This demonstrates to employers that you are part of a professional network of interpreters who prioritize their work and maintain high standards of professional competence. All members will receive a digital membership ID upon acceptance. Click [here](http://example.com) for more details regarding the credentials offered.
6. **Discounted Rates for Conferences, Events, and Workshops:** SPI members enjoy discounted registration rates for various conferences and workshops hosted by the AALB and other organizations in the interpretation field. These events provide opportunities for professional development, networking, and exposure to the latest trends and research in interpretation. Stay informed of upcoming conferences and workshops through our regular member communications.

7. **Mentorship Opportunities:** Members can choose to participate in an interpreter mentorship program, where experienced interpreters provide guidance, support, and advice to those new to the profession. This program fosters professional growth and development, and helps build lasting relationships within the interpreter community. Bronze through Gold members are eligible to be mentees, and Platinum and Diamond members are eligible to be mentors.

8. **Physical Membership ID Card:** As an AALB SPI member, you will receive a physical membership ID card that displays your tier, indicating your level of commitment and expertise within the interpretation profession. This card can be used as a form of identification at conferences, workshops, and other events where proof of membership is required. It serves as a tangible representation of your dedication to the interpreting profession and your affiliation with the AALB SPI. Click [here](#) for more information on membership tiers.

9. **Influence Training Opportunities for Your Specialty:** As an AALB SPI member, you have the ability to request CEU sessions, simulated practice sessions, and other training opportunities for your specific interpretation specialty. If there are at least 30 members qualified in that specialty, we will work to provide the relevant educational opportunities. AALB is currently offering continuing education and practice sessions for professional medical interpreters. The speciality of each practice session and workshop offered is listed on the schedule.
Member Credentials

1. **Membership ID Card:** Members will receive a personalized Membership ID card, featuring their name, photo, membership tier, qualified interpretation specialty, languages, membership ID number, QR code (backed by the blockchain for verification), expiration date, and issue date. This ID card serves as a physical proof of membership and can be presented to clients, employers, or colleagues as evidence of the member's affiliation with the AALB Society and their professional standing in the interpreting field.

2. **Membership Certificates:** Members can receive a Membership Certificate, showcasing their name, membership tier, date of issue, and expiration date. These certificates can be provided for various milestones, such as 1-year, 2-year, 5-year, or 10-year memberships. Members must meet a minimum participation requirement of attending at least 20% of offered continuing education workshops or training sessions, either live or self-paced, to be eligible for a certificate.

3. **Digital Badges:** Digital badges are available for members to display on their online profiles, such as LinkedIn, personal websites, or email signatures. These badges represent various accomplishments, including membership tier, specific certifications, language proficiency, and participation in AALB Society events or volunteer work. The digital badges offer a visual representation of a member's professional achievements and commitment to the interpreting field.

4. **Letters of Recommendation:** Members who have held Gold or Platinum membership for at least 18 months and have met certain eligibility criteria can receive a personalized Letter of Recommendation from the AALB Society. Eligible members must have attended at least one networking event or community event, such as partnered free clinics and charity events, and have no ethical complaints filed against them. They should have also participated in at least 20% of offered continuing education workshops or training sessions, live or self-paced. The Letter of Recommendation highlights the member's professional accomplishments, dedication to the field, and their involvement in the AALB Society.

5. **Verification of Membership Letter:** The AALB Society offers a Verification of Membership Letter as an additional credential. This official letter serves as a formal confirmation of an individual's active membership status within the organization, including their membership tier, language proficiency, and areas of expertise in interpreting. The Verification of Membership Letter can be used by members to provide evidence of their professional affiliation with the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters for potential employers, clients, or other professional organizations.
Membership Tier Descriptions

All members will be assigned to one of the following tiers:

1. Bronze (Apprentice Member)
2. Silver (Verified Member)
3. Gold (Specialist Member)
4. Platinum (Fellow)
5. Diamond (Distinguished Fellow)
6. Sapphire (Honorary Fellow)

The tier that a member is assigned to is reflected on their membership ID and is updated every year, if necessary. The following page elaborates on the requirements and descriptions for each tier of membership that is offered.

Bronze (Apprentice Member)

An Apprentice Member of the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters is an individual who is pursuing or has recently completed formal training in interpretation, or has professional experience in interpretation without formal training, and is seeking opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills in the field.

Apprentice Member Requirements:

All accepted members of the AALB Society of Professional Interpreter qualify for bronze-level membership. The requirements to be a bronze-level member are the same as the requirements to be a member of the society:

1. Be 18 years of age or older
2. Be fluent in at least two languages
3. Meet at least one of the following requirements:
   a. Completed or currently enrolled in 40 hours or more of training as a professional interpreter through a certificate program or graduate-level college program.
   b. Hold a valid certification or licensure as a professional interpreter.
   c. If members do not have training or certification, they are required to have at least 2 years of proven consistent professional experience as an interpreter.
Membership Tier Descriptions (Continued)

Silver (Verified Member)
A Verified Member of the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters is a multilingual individual who has successfully completed an interpreter training program and gained a minimum of six (6) months of work experience in the professional interpretation industry.

Verified Member Requirements:
1. Have a certificate of completion from a recognized interpreter training program or equivalent or certification from a recognized certifying body.
2. Have at least six (6) months of consistent work experience as a professional interpreter.
3. Have completed at least 60 hours of training in a single field of interpretation, such as medical, legal, or educational.
   a. The training can be a combination of introductory and continuing education courses, and continuing education courses provided by the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters can count towards the required training hours.

Gold (Specialist Member)
A Specialist Member of the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters is a multilingual individual who has acquired extensive knowledge and experience in a particular area of interpretation. This level of membership is reserved for interpreters who have demonstrated a high level of expertise and commitment to their chosen area of specialization, and who are dedicated to advancing the profession through ongoing learning and professional development.

Specialist Member Requirements:
1. Have a certificate of completion from a recognized interpreter training program or equivalent or certification from a recognized certifying body.
2. Have a minimum of 3 years of consistent work experience in a single field as a professional interpreter.
3. Have completed at least 100 hours of training in a single field of interpretation, such as medical, legal, or educational.
   a. The training can be a combination of introductory and continuing education courses, and continuing education courses provided by the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters can count towards the required training hours.
Membership Tier Descriptions (Continued)

Platinum (Fellow)

A Fellow of the Society of Professional Interpreters (SPI) is a multilingual individual who has achieved a high level of knowledge and experience in the interpretation industry. This level of membership is reserved for interpreters who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to their profession, and who have made significant contributions to the field of interpretation through their work and ongoing learning.

Fellow Requirements:

1. Have a certificate of completion from a recognized interpreter training program or equivalent or certification from a recognized certifying body.
2. Have a minimum of 5 years of consistent work experience, with at least 3 years in a single specialty, as a professional interpreter.
3. Holds one or more advanced certifications in at least one area of interpretation, if such certifications are applicable and available in the member's language combination and area of expertise.
4. Have completed at least 150 hours of training in interpretation, with at least 100 hours in a single field of interpretation (such as medical, legal, educational, and community).
   a. The training can be a combination of introductory and continuing education courses, and continuing education courses provided by the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters can count towards the required training hours.
5. Have demonstrated a strong dedication and commitment to the profession of interpretation through notable leadership, volunteer work, or advocacy experience in the field. This can include active participation in the interpreting community, contributions to the improvement of interpretation services, or engagement in professional development through research, publication, or education.
Membership Tier Descriptions (Continued)

Diamond (Distinguished Fellow)
A Distinguished Fellow of SPI is a multilingual individual who has achieved the highest level of knowledge and experience in the interpretation industry. This level of membership is reserved for interpreters who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to their profession, and who have made significant contributions to the field of interpretation through their work, ongoing learning, leadership, volunteer work, or advocacy.

Distinguished Fellow Requirements:
1) Have completed an interpreter training program or obtained certification from a recognized certifying body.
2) Have at least 5 years of consistent work experience as a professional interpreter, with at least 3 years of work experience in a single field of interpretation.
3) Holds one or more advanced certifications in at least one area of interpretation, if such certifications are applicable and available in the member's language combination and area of expertise.
4) Have completed at least 200 hours of training in interpretation, with at least 150 hours of training in a single field of interpretation (such as medical, legal, educational, or community).
   a) The training can be a combination of introductory and continuing education courses, and continuing education courses provided by the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters can count towards the required training hours.
5) Have demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to the profession of interpretation through significant leadership, volunteer work, or advocacy experience in the field. This can include work on behalf of the profession or marginalized communities, efforts to improve access to interpretation services, or contributions to the development of the profession through research, publication, or education.

Sapphire (Honorary Fellow)
The Honorary Fellow designation is reserved for individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of interpretation through their leadership, volunteer work, or advocacy. To be eligible for this distinction, the candidate must be nominated by other members of the organization. Up to three Honorary Fellows may be selected per year based on their outstanding achievements and contributions to the field of interpretation.

Honorary Fellow Requirements:
While Honorary Fellows do not have to meet the standard requirements for other membership tiers, they must still meet the overall requirements to be a member of the society and pay membership dues to have access to certain benefits and privileges.
Member Responsibilities

Membership Responsibility: Active Participation in Practice Sessions

As a member of the Society of Professional Interpreters, it is your responsibility to actively engage and contribute when attending practice sessions and workshops, whether online or in-person. Your participation should be focused on improving your skills, knowledge, and expertise while respecting the learning environment for others. When attending practice sessions, members are expected to:

1. Actively participate in exercises, discussions, and activities, ensuring that their involvement is constructive and conducive to their own growth as well as that of their fellow members.
2. Refrain from disruptive behavior that may hinder the progress or learning experience of other participants.
3. Respect the session facilitator's guidance and follow their instructions to maintain an orderly, productive, and collaborative learning atmosphere.
4. Be open to feedback from peers and facilitators, and provide constructive feedback to others when appropriate.
5. Utilize the practice sessions as an opportunity to develop professional relationships, share experiences, and learn from fellow members in the pursuit of continuous improvement in the field of interpreting and translation.

Membership Responsibility: Technical Requirements for Online Participation

As a member of the Society of Professional Interpreters engaging in online activities, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the necessary equipment and technical capabilities to actively participate in these sessions. To effectively contribute to and benefit from online practice sessions, live remote events, or other virtual activities, members are expected to have:

1. A computer or device with a stable internet connection, ensuring uninterrupted access to the online platform or tools being used for the session.
2. A high-quality microphone to facilitate clear and effective communication with fellow participants and facilitators.
3. A webcam, which allows for better engagement, interaction, and rapport during live remote activities. Participants should keep their webcam enabled, unless indicated otherwise, to be counted as present and actively participating.
4. Adequate lighting and a quiet environment, free from background noise or distractions, to maintain a professional and focused atmosphere during online sessions.
5. By adhering to these technical requirements, members can actively engage in the Society's online activities and contribute to a productive and inclusive learning experience for all participants.
Member Responsibilities (Continued)

Oath of Linguistic Ahimsa (Non-Harm)

All AALB Society of Professional Interpreters Members will be asked to take the oath to do no harm during the onboarding ceremony. The oath will read as follows:

“I solemnly pledge to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct as a medical interpreter. I pledge to:

1. Interpret accurately and impartially,
2. Respect confidentiality and privacy,
3. Honor diversity and dignity,
4. Pursue continuous learning,
5. Act with integrity,
6. Do no harm in my service to patients, healthcare providers, and the community.

By taking this oath, I commit to these principles and dedicate myself to providing exceptional care, support, and understanding in the healthcare process.”

Professional Representation

As representatives of the Society of Professional Interpreters, members carry the responsibility of upholding and enhancing the organization’s reputation and the profession as a whole. In this regard, they should:

1. Be mindful of their conduct in professional settings, ensuring that their behavior reflects the Society's values and high standards.
2. Treat clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders with respect, courtesy, and professionalism at all times.
3. Promote the importance of the interpreting profession and advocate for its recognition, understanding, and respect in various settings and contexts.
4. Demonstrate commitment to the code of ethics and principles of interpretation, and act as role models for fellow members and aspiring interpreters.
5. Encourage collaboration and positive relationships among members, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose within the Society.
6. Utilize their professional ID and credentials responsibly, using them only for their intended purpose and in accordance with the Society's guidelines.

By upholding these principles of professional representation, members of the Society of Professional Interpreters can contribute to the growth, recognition, and success of the organization, as well as the interpreting profession as a whole.
Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Am I eligible for membership?

If you are unsure of your eligibility for membership, click here to take our eligibility quiz and to find out.

Question: How do I know if I am fluent enough to be a member?

Fluency in at least two languages is required. We provide all of our members with a self-paced onboarding interview, which we use to determine fluency to prove their fluency in at least two languages. The fluency requirement is especially important in order to participate in practice sessions, as you do not want to hinder anyone else’s ability to practice due to issues with fluency. If we find that you are not fluent, we will send you a refund minus a $35 application fee.

Question: Which tier of membership will I be given?

Your tier of membership will be determined once your application is reviewed and accepted. All individuals assigned a tier will have 14 days to appeal that assignment if they believe it is not accurate. After this time period has passed, a physical member identification card will be sent out to the address given.

Question: How do I renew membership?

Once you are accepted as a member of the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters, you will need to renew your membership annually to remain an active member. You do not need to apply for membership again unless there has been a lapse in membership of greater than 3 months. To renew your membership, you need to meet the following criteria:

1. If not completed during the first year, members must participate in an onboarding ceremony where they take an oath to do no harm and commit to upholding the organization's values and professional standards.
2. Maintenance of a good standing within the organization by adhering to the code of ethics and professional conduct and having no unresolved complaints or disciplinary actions.
3. Payment of the annual membership fee.

By meeting these criteria, you will ensure your continued membership and access to the resources and benefits provided by the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters. A reminder with instructions on how to renew membership will be sent to all members 3 months in advance.
Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)

Question: Am I required to attend classes or networking meetings in order to renew my membership?

No, these are ultimately for your benefit and we do not place attendance requirements for renewal. Continuing education workshops will be made available in a self-paced manner for those who are unable to attend live, but you are not required to complete these to renew your membership.

Question: Are all of the events held online?

No, not all events are held online, but the majority are. While the primary focus is on online education to ensure accessibility and global reach, there are in-person events and meetings available for AALB SPI members. As the membership grows, the organization intends to hold regular in-person meetings alongside online offerings. Online learning will still be the main method of delivering education and training. In-person events will be clearly marked on the schedule, and members will receive additional information about the location.

Question: Why is training or certification required to advance beyond the Bronze, or Apprentice, level of membership?

The requirement of training or certification to advance beyond the Bronze, or Apprentice, level of membership is to ensure that our members possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to provide high-quality interpretation services. As a professional organization, the AALB Society of Professional Interpreters is committed to promoting and maintaining the highest standards of practice in the field of interpretation. By requiring advanced training or certification for higher membership tiers, we encourage our members to continually develop their skills and stay current with industry best practices. This, in turn, contributes to better outcomes for both the interpreters and the clients they serve.

Question: How do I cancel my membership?

If you wish to cancel your membership, please contact our representative by emailing contact@aalb.org and expressing your desire to do so.

Question: What are the membership requirements for Deaf interpreters?

To be eligible for membership, Deaf interpreters must:
1. Be 18 years of age or older
2. Demonstrate fluency in sign language and knowledge of Deaf culture
3. Meet at least one of the following requirements:
   a. Completed or currently enrolled in a recognized interpreter training program specifically designed for Deaf interpreters
   b. Hold a valid certification or licensure as a Deaf interpreter
   c. If members do not have training or certification, they are required to have at least 2 years of consistent professional experience as a Deaf interpreter.