



Australian Government

Department of Health
and Aged Care



An Australian Government Initiative

Interpreting Services for PHN- Commissioned mental health services

Information for providers

As a provider of mental health services funded by a Primary Health Network, your organisation is now able to access interpreting Services funded by the Australian Government through the National Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National).

The Australian Government is investing \$7.8 million over two years (2022-23 to 2023-24) to ensure interpreting Services delivered by TIS National are available through PHN-commissioned mental health services. Language services are designed to ensure that people with limited or no English language proficiency can access the services and programs they need, removing a significant barrier faced by Australians from multicultural backgrounds when accessing mental health support.

Registering for TIS National

To access TIS services, you will need to register for a client code via the TIS National Website.

[TIS online](https://tisonline.tisnational.gov.au/RegisterAgency) (<https://tisonline.tisnational.gov.au/RegisterAgency>).

You'll be asked to complete an online registration form. For the first four questions of the registration form, answer as follows:

- Category — choose 'Commonwealth Government Agency'
- Sub-category — choose 'Other Commonwealth Government agency'
- Name of organisation or agency — enter the name of your organisation/service
- Section Name — enter 'PHN-Funded Mental Health Program'

TIS National will email you the unique client code once your application is complete. You will also receive a welcome email containing your account details and information on how to use the services.

Note that if you provide mental health services through different government programs, you need a register a separate client code for each one.

Accessing TIS National

TIS National provides access to the following interpreting services:

[Immediate phone interpreting](#)

[ATIS automated voice-prompted immediate phone interpreting](#)

[Pre-booked phone interpreting](#)

[On-site interpreting](#)

[Video remote interpreting](#)

Once you have a client code, you can book an immediate phone interpreter by calling TIS National on 131 450 or make a booking through your [TIS Online account](#) (onsite, pre-book phone interpreting and video interpreting can only be booked via TIS Online). You should use phone interpreting services unless there's a genuine need for an on-site interpreter. Providers will need to quote their unique client code when booking an interpreter.

TIS National have published [A guide to TIS National services ebrochure](#) which details the different service types available to help you decide what format best suits your client. Interpreters are available in more than 160 languages.

All billing will come to the Department of Health and will be monitored.

Helpful tips:

- Pre-booked telephone interpreting is recommended where the availability of interpreters for a particular language is limited or where your consultation may be complex. The minimum booking time is 30 minutes for a pre-booked telephone interpreter.
- Providers can request gender specific interpreters where culturally appropriate or requested by the client.
- The minimum booking time for onsite interpreting is 90 minutes. Where phone interpreting is not suitable, providers may book an onsite interpreter even if the consultation will be less than 90 minutes.
- As an alternative to on-site interpreting, TIS National offers video remote interpreting. This may be useful on occasions where an onsite interpreter is not available in your area. Video remote interpreting services must be booked for a minimum of **30 minutes and supports a wide range of video conferencing platforms**.
- When requesting a phone interpreter by calling 131 450, providers must advise TIS how long an interpreter will be needed to ensure they are available for the whole consultation.
- The provider must ensure they record the 10-digit TIS job number as this will allow the provider to be reconnected with the same interpreter should the phone connection be lost during the consultation.
- Any specific job details can be added in the interpreter booking form "required information" field and will be taken into account when allocating an interpreter to your booking request.

Cancellation and client attendance

- A 24-hour cancellation policy applies to pre-booked phone, onsite and video remote interpreting services.
- Strategies to improve client attendance:
 - phone call reminders (you engage an interpreter for this)
 - SMS reminders
 - Appointment reminder translation tool (<https://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/publications/appointment-reminder-translation-tool/create-an-appointment>)

Other useful documents:

- [Bridge the communication gap e-brochure](#) provides general information about working with interpreters
- [A guide to TIS National Services](#)
- [Hints and tips for working with interpreters video](#)
- [Cultural Sensitivity resources](#)

- [Translated resources for clients](#)
- [Language Identification Card](#)

For more information or any questions regarding funding, please contact TISMentalHealth@health.gov.au

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for funding through this program?

All mental health services commissioned by a PHN are eligible for a TIS client code through this program. All services/providers that apply for the client code will be validated by the Department of Home Affairs.

Can services use this code for other PHN commissioned services?

No. The funding for this program is only for PHN-commissioned mental health services. Client codes acquired as part of this program should only be used for mental health services.

Will PHNs manage the funding for TIS services?

No. Department of Health and Aged Care will manage the funding. All client codes will be linked to an overarching code managed by the Department.

Is there a limit on the number of calls a service can make?

No. Eligible services are able to access TIS for every client that needs interpreting services.

How do I make a booking for an interpreter?

To pre-book an interpreter, you must be registered as an agent in the TIS Online booking system and know your unique username and password in order to proceed.

To obtain a username and password, contact TIS National's Client Liaison Team at tispromo@homeaffairs.gov.au with your request, providing the following information:

- Client code
- Agent full name
- Agent role and section name
- Agent contact – Telephone number and email address.

I need an interpreter right now, how do I request one?

TIS National provides access to [immediate phone interpreters](#) 24 hours, every day of the year. Call the TIS National contact centre on 131 450 at any time of day or night to access an immediate phone interpreter.

Can I request a specific interpreter?

TIS National encourages clients to avoid requesting specific interpreters where possible as this:

- may limit TIS National's ability to supply an interpreter, particularly for urgent requests (the specified interpreter may not be available when requested); and
- may not result in allocation of the most highly credentialed interpreter available for your appointment.

If you would still like to make a request for a specific interpreter, contact TIS National's Client Liaison Team at tispromo@homeaffairs.gov.au. Requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis and are more likely to be considered favourably if a client can demonstrate that allocation of the nominated interpreter is:

- essential to maintaining the quality and continuity of care or service; and
- of clear benefit to the non-English speaking client.

For more FAQs, see the [TIS National FAQ page](#).

My service isn't PHN funded - are there other programs I can access to help with the cost of interpreting services?

TIS National delivers the Free Interpreting Service (FIS) on behalf of the Australian Government. Selected groups and industries are eligible for FIS, including pharmacies, medical practitioners and some non-government organisations. More information is available on the TIS website - [About the Free Interpreting Service | Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#).

The FIS was recently expanded on 24 October 2022 to include allied health professionals delivering services in selected LGAs. The list of eligible allied health professional includes a range of mental health professional roles. You may be eligible if you are delivering non-PHN funded private mental health services. See <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/en/Agencies/Charges-and-free-services/About-the-Free-Interpreting-Service/Free-Interpreting-Service-for-allied-health-professionals>