

DHS S&T Funds Startup to Customize Language Translator for USCG

WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) has awarded myLanguage of San Jose, California, \$199,592 in Phase 1 funding to adapt and customize its language translation platform to support the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG).

“We look forward to working with myLanguage as they develop language translation solutions to enhance safe and efficient USCG missions,” said Wendy Chaves, chief of Coast Guard Research, Development, Test & Evaluation and Innovation.

Coast Guard operators must be able to communicate with vessel occupants, many who may be non-English speakers, while performing a variety of rescue and investigation missions. Accurate and swift translation of information is critical to the safety and security of USCG boarding teams and vessel occupants. S&T’s Silicon Valley Innovation Program (SVIP) Language Translator solicitation sought new capabilities to support the Coast Guard in facilitating real-time communication with non-English speakers and those who are unable to communicate verbally. The solicitation also included requirements for the language translation technology to be capable of operating both online and offline because many USCG interactions take place in extreme environmental conditions in locations without cell service or internet connection.

The current myLanguage platform is an online and offline voice-to-text speech recognition and text-to-text translation system that employs deep learning and artificial intelligence. In Phase 1, myLanguage will adapt its voice translation technologies for use in a rugged, hand-held mobile device that

can withstand extreme temperatures and is able to customize model designs and training language models to fit USCG use cases.

“The focus of the myLanguage technologies is to enable fluent conversations across language barriers,” said Melissa Oh, SVIP managing director. “This Phase 1 funding enables myLanguage to expand their product capabilities for commercialization and provide USCG with an innovative technology that strengthens operator safety and mission outcomes.”