



Educational mission spurs Foreign Language Institute team

10-25 EMPLOYEES



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Think about the popular belief that working for a governmental agency requires a love of bureaucracy and inefficiency, and the picture isn't one of high self worth and personal growth potential.

But Janice Rodriquez and her crew at the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute have turned that paradigm upside down.

Rodriquez is the executive director of the organization, which was formed by the state in 1986 to facilitate intercultural communication through

language instruction, translation and interpretive services.

A portion of its operating budget comes from the state and the rest is generated through services it provides to other organizations, businesses and individuals. It now provides language classes in more than 100 languages, professional development for language teachers, on-site classes for businesses and provides a court interpreter program for the state's

judicial branch.

More than a place of work, TFLI has become a place of vision, says Rodriquez and it's a belief in that mission that provides the motivation and drive of the people who make it work.

"I think we're one of the Best Places to Work because of the environment and the culture we have here," she says. "Although we're a state agency, we try to give people the room to grow."

That room to grow, she says, is built around the idea that the professionals who work there believe they're making a difference on a personal level and can individually and collectively contribute to the organization's mission.

"We appreciate innovation and new ideas and I think that has allowed people to express their creativity and bring things to the work place that they might not be able to do at other jobs," she says.

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