



CITY OF HOUSTON

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Mayor

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June 20, 2014

SUBJECT: Letter of Clarification No. 2
Interpretation and Translation Assistance for the Mayor's Office

REFERENCE: RFP No.: S33-T25033

TO: All Prospective Respondents

This Letter of Clarification is issued for the following reasons:

1. **To extend the solicitation closing date from Thursday, June 26, 2014 at 2:00 pm., to Thursday, July 3, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.**
2. **Replace page 20 of the RFP in its entirety with the attached page 20, marked "Revised June 19, 2014"**
3. **To provide a response to vendors questions as follows:**

Question In the event that subcontractors do not carry Workers Compensation are we required to cover them under our Workers Compensation policy

Response See section 3.5, page 9 of the RFP document.

Question If the subcontractor has 100 persons on payroll or freelance contracted (these person may also already have personal insurance), must we include all 100 persons in the Pay/Play program although only 10 persons my work on this project?

Response If they are employees of the prime on a construction contract then they would be listed on the prime's payroll if he is paying taxes on them. If they are Independent and their contract value is under \$200K they are exempt from POP. The prime's contract must be \$100K for POP to kick in and the sub must be \$200K.

Question If the subcontractor has company provided health insurance must we include them in the Pay/Play program?

Response Yes

Question If my business partner and I have individual health insurance policies must we now purchase a group policy to cover ourselves?

Response Provide proof of coverage and as long as it meets the POP's minimum threshold you will be OK. If the plan does not meet then you can pay the \$1.00 per hour for time worked on the City contract or get a policy that meets the minimums.

Question In RFP No. S33-T25033 - Interpretation and Translation Assistance Services, page 26 – EXHIBIT - I REFERENCES, there are line items asking for the “contract name/title”. Shouldn’t these line items ask for “contact name/title” instead? Please clarify whether or not this is correct.

Response No, this refers to contracts that a contractor has or may have had with other customers.

Question Please confirm that this RFP is for Phone Interpretation and Document Translation services

Response This is for interpretation and translation services. Depending on the need, interpretation services will be rendered by telephone or in person. Translation services will be rendered in a format that is acceptable to both parties, for example, email, or the use of a web-based portal.

Question Does the City also require Face-to-Face (On-Site) interpretation services

Response Yes. Some departments may require an interpreter for on-sight translation if they do not have bilingual staff available. Qualifying firms should have the capacity to provide on-sight interpretation assistance within a reasonable time frame.

Question What firm is the incumbent provider for these services?

Response The City of Houston does not currently have a contract for these services.

Question What is the current pricing for Phone Interpretation services?

Response Please contact Language Line for that information. Their information can be found at <http://www.languageline.com/>

Question What are the historical number of calls and the minutes of usage for the past year or longer?

Response The information is not available at this time because we are in the processing of developing a methodology for collecting this information. However, the majority of all our phone calls are from Spanish speakers. A very small amount have been from callers speaking languages other than English/Spanish.

Question We are interested in knowing the mix of languages that the City of Houston requires and the volume of minutes for each language.

Response The COH will be relying on its current Language Line contract through 311 for the bulk of telephonic interpretations, rather than the qualifying firm. That is not a part of this project.

Question What is the current pricing for Document Translation services?

Response There is not set amount. Each department has different pricing with different translation firms. This is the first time we are using a translation firm for this project. We assume prices will vary. We will be looking for qualified professionals that can offer the requested service at a reasonable price.

Question What is the historical number of documents, average page length, and word count for the documents to be translated for the past year or longer?

Response This is a new project, so we do not have this information. Please view the essential documents in www.ispeakhouston.org and estimate how much you would charge to translate those documents in the five official languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu.

Question What is the breakdown of requested languages and their corresponding document word count?

Response Please view the essential documents in www.ispeakhouston.org and estimate how much you would charge to translate those documents in the five official languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu.

Question Can a vendor bid on a single service to offer to the City? For example, only submitting a bid for Phone Interpretation?

Response No, we are seeking a single vendor/company solution.

Question Is there an incumbent vendor for these services?
Response If yes, who is the vendor(s) and what rates do they provide for the services
The City of Houston does not currently have a contract for these services.

Question What has been the biggest challenge for fulfilling services under this contract, or if this is a new contract, are there any challenges that you anticipate?
Response This is a new contract. We anticipate that challenges will arise, but this will allow us to make adjustments as needed within the contract year, and succeeding years

Question What is the expected volume of this contract?
Response Please view the essential documents in the language access plans for each department. You can find this at www.ispeakhouston.org. Estimate the cost to translate those documents in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu. Your estimates can be based per word or by document, or, if you want, you can provide pricing for both. In addition, look at the webpage for each department that submitted a plan, and estimate how much you would charge to translate the department's home page in the five languages. Keep in mind that we are just looking for estimates.

Question Is there any historical data for Interpretation and Translation Services? (that is, various rates of language usage, etc).
Response Historical data is not available because this is a unique project.

Question Is this RFP open to out of state vendors?
Response Yes

Question Is this a multiple source award contract?
Response No, we are seeking a single vendor/company solution.

Question Is it possible to submit a Good Faith Effort should we fail to find a suitable subcontractor?
Response Yes, However you should seek assistance from The City's Office of Business at 832.393.0600 prior to submitting a good faith effort report.

Question Is there any specific set of documents that you would like submitted as translation samples?
Response Again, supply us with no more than five samples of your work. It can be anything you want, but we just want to get an idea of the work you have performed for other companies or organizations.

Question May we submit reviewed financials in lieu of audited ones?
Response No. Please submit what was requested.

Question Section 1.3 of the Specifications/Scope of Work states that "Translation assistance includes the translation of essential documents into the five most commonly spoken languages other than English". By contrast, Section 2.1.1 contains a list of more than five languages in which qualified professional firms will need to provide translation services. Can the City clarify or confirm the Scope of Work for translation services?
Response The essential documents will be translated into these languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu. The translation of essential documents will be in those languages. However, because some departments will be using this contract for on-sight interpretation when needed, and they may need to communicate with people that speak a language that is not one of the five languages, a qualifying firm will have the capacity to offer translation/interpretation assistance in the languages listed in the larger list.

Question Section 1.3: Please clarify what are "the five most commonly spoken languages other than English"?
Response Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu. You can find data related to these languages at www.speakhouston.org

Question Section 4.5 of the Statement of Work specifies that “Payment will be made on a quarterly basis, or based on criteria established by the City of Houston.” Section 8.1 of the Special Terms and Conditions states “The City of Houston’s standard payment term is to pay 30 days after receipt of invoice or receipt of goods or services, whichever is later...” Can the City confirm that Section 8.1 represents the payment terms applicable for this solicitation?

Response Yes, 8.1 represent the City’s standard payment terms.

Question Please provide the names of the companies that participated in the bidders’ conference held on June 10.

Response Attendance log can be found on the website at: <http://purchasing.houstontx.gov/bids.html> keyword, T25033

Question Will the city provide information on issues discussed in the bidders’ conference, for those who were unable to attend in person?

Response No, the deadline for submitting questions was June 13, 2014.

Question In item 1.2 on p. 16, the city advises that assistance with “spoken” interpretation is needed. Can the city specify whether it is procuring onsite, telephonic, or video remote interpretation services, or all of the above.

Response We are looking for qualified firms that have the ability to provide translation, and interpretation services. While the majority of the work will likely be done in the qualifying firms office, there may be situations in which an interpreter is required in person to assist a constituent that does not speak English. Every effort will be made to use in-house bilingual staff, and/or the City’s Language Line. However, in the event that the City does not have in-house resources to provide interpretation assistance in a particular situation, a qualifying firm will have the capacity to provide that service within a reasonable amount of time.

Question Can the city provide monthly volume and language split information for all of the services that it is looking to procure.

Response Unfortunately, the request information is not available at this time.

Question Can the city advise as to the yearly spend, by service type, on the services that it is looking to procure.

Response Unfortunately, the request information is not available at this time.

Question Does the city anticipate making an award to a single vendor or multiple vendors? If multiple vendors, how does the city intend to divide the award?

Response A single vendor/contractor.

Question Can the city advise as to who are the incumbents and the current price points.

Response The City of Houston does not currently have a contract for these services.

Question Can the city provide any details as to pain points that it is experiencing under the current contract.

Response We do not have a current contract in place. This is the first time we have done this.

Question Point 8.2 on p. 14 states that the city will pay within NET 30, and item 4.5 on p. 17 states that the city will make payment on a quarterly basis. Please provide clarification regarding payment terms.

Response 8.2, page 14 represents the City’s standard payment terms. The City is willing to pay as defined in section 8.2, page 14.

Question Can the city advise as to the average lead time for onsite interpretation requests?

Response 24-48 hours. However, the City is willing to negotiate the time based on industry standards and/or allow for more time for languages that are not as common in the Houston area.

Question Can the city provide an approximate usage for each branch of the city?
Response Unknown at this time

Question Please provide the average duration of onsite interpretation requests.
Response Unknown at this time.

Question Please confirm that Section 1.1 means that offerors should submit only one hard copy of the proposal and six electronic copies on flash drive.
Response Please submit documents are stated in 1.1

Question Do the M/WBE need to be certified by an authorized institution or can they be self-certified?
How would you classify an “authorized institution”?
Response All M/WBE’s must be certified by the City of Houston Office of Business Opportunity.

Question Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this ?? (From India or Canada)
Response Yes, however please read section 6.0, page 14.

Question Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA ?? (From India or Canada)
Response We prefer that the services be performed in the USA.

Question Can we submit our proposals via email ?
Response No. Please see section 1.0, page 2.

Question I do not have employees; I have labor contractors, where can I have the waivers forms for the Pay and play, and Workers comp forms? Do I need workers compensation coverage for subcontractors?
Response See section 3.5, page 9 of the RFP document

Question What insurance forms do you want me to use, ISO, What year?
Response Samples of the required insurance document can be found in the RFP. See pages 40-58.

Question Who is the certificate holder for the liability insurance? City of Houston or Department of Neighborhoods office of International Communities?
Response The City of Houston

Question On page 20 entry 4.1.2.4.2 is requesting to indicate the percentage of work performed by subcontractors, but on page 16 it does not mention what percentage of each one of the listed languages is going to be used for translation or interpretation services.
Response Section 4.1.2.4.2 has been removed. See attached page marked revised June 19, 2014.

Question If we are bidding only on document translation services, would we still be required to supply the insurance coverage.? Our translators are independent contractors who will not be working on site.
Response Yes, as a prime vendor/contractor you are required to meet the insurance requirements as defined in the RFP.

When issued, Letter(s) of Clarification shall automatically become a part of the solicitation documents and shall supersede any previous specification(s) and/or provision(s) in conflict with the Letter(s) of Clarification. All revisions, responses, and answers incorporated into the Letter(s) of Clarification are collaboratively from both the Strategic Purchasing Division and the applicable City Department(s). It is the responsibility of the respondent to ensure that it has obtained all such letter(s). By submitting a proposal on this project, respondents shall be deemed to have received all Letter(s) of Clarification and to have incorporated them into their proposals.

If you have any questions or if further clarification is needed regarding this solicitation, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Conley Jackson" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Conley Jackson
Senior Procurement Specialist
Strategic Purchasing Division
832-393-8733

END OF LETTER OF CLARIFICATION 2