

**Interpreter Services**



**Q1.** The company I represent offers foreign language services but we do not offer sign language interpretation services. Does this make us ineligible to compete on this bid?

**R1. No, however vendors who are able to provide all of the services will receive preference.**

**Q2.** Article 10 states that "Interpreters must be employees of the contracting agency and the Vendor must attest that all interpreters have completed criminal history check, and CAN Central Registry clearance." Like many language Service Providers, LSA uses interpreters that are independent contractors, and I was wondering if this fact would be grounds to reject our proposal?

**R2. They may be contracted, but the provider must provide a list of all the sub-contracts.**

**Q3.** Did the Department have a previous vendor?

**R3. Yes.**

**Q4.** What price were you paying for this Vendor?

**R4. The contractual allocation over a fifty-one month period has been \$307,123.50 to date for interpreter services.**

**Q5.** What are your past usage statistics by language, length, words, volume, geography, etc?

**R5. Utilization information is not available for these services.**

**Q6.** Is there a copy of the contract available?

**R6. Yes, upon written request to Starr Stewart, Director at [www.starr.stewart@dhr.alabama.gov](mailto:www.starr.stewart@dhr.alabama.gov).**

**Q7.** Are services under this RFP exclusive to this Department?

**a) If not, what other agencies can buy off the contract?**

**R7. Yes.**

**Q8.** P. 7, Sec. 1, 1.0 (also p.18, Sec.3, 3.23, #7)  
What is meant by Universal Sign Language?

**R8. The sign language that is universally accepted, such as American Sign Language.**

**Q9.** P.7, Sec.1, 1.3  
If the State exercises the two options, does that mean that the contract will be in place until 2012?

**R9. Yes.**

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- Q10.** P. 10, Sec. 1, 1.9.3  
“Vendors must respond...by utilizing RFP Price Sheets found in Section 5”. As there were no Price Sheets included in Section 5, does that mean they are not required?
- R10. Yes. Please see Amendment #1, which is posted on the Department’s web site at [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov).**
- Q11.** P. 13, Sec. 2, 2.11.5  
If the Department uses part or all of a proposal submitted by a vendor not selected as awardee, will that vendor be compensated for his original ideas, work plan, etc.? Will designating certain sections as “Proprietary” be sufficient to protect the vendor’s original ideas or must the Trade Secret affidavit be executed?
- R11. No. No.**
- Q12.** P.15, Sec. 3, 3.0  
**a)** Must all interpreters be employees as mentioned here and on P. 18, Sec. 3, 3.23, #10 and P. 22, Sec. 4, 4.2.5.1.5, or may some be considered subcontractors, or independent contractors, as mentioned on P. 16, sec.3, 3.5?  
**b)** Please clarify the type of background check required and the level – for example, State, 3-State or National.  
**c)** Is there a fee for a CAN clearance request?
- R12. a) See R2.  
b) National.  
c) Yes.**
- Q13.** P. 15, Sec. 3, 3.3  
Please clarify “within 24 hours”. Does this mean that the State can cancel anytime up to the appointment (within 24 hours prior to the appointment) without cost being billed, which seems unreasonable, or does it mean that if the State cancels before the 24 hour period just prior to the appointment, there is no cost?
- R13. The State can cancel within 24 hours of any scheduled appointment at no cost to the State.**
- Q14.** P. 15, Sec. 3, 3.4  
Must the statement saying that the employee is “free from infectious disease”, which the vendor keeps on file, come from a medical source (which incurs a cost) or as an attestation from the interpreter him/herself?
- R14. A statement from a medical source is required.**
- Q15.** p. 17, Sec. 3, 3.17  
“Interpreters are prohibited...phoning clients directly.” Does this mean that DHR social workers cannot request an interpreter to call a client directly to set up an appointment, cancel an appointment, etc.?
- R15. No.**

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- Q16.** P. 18, Sec.3.23, #3
- a)** Please clarify: “Interpreters may serve no more than ten families at any one time”. Does this mean that an interpreter, who is assigned to interpret for several one-time assignments, i.e. food stamp interviews, which could easily exceed the 10 family limit within a few days, is prohibited from taking further assignments? What is the timeframe to be considered?
  - b)** “face-to- face will be utilized when other means are not available”. Should this be “telephone interpreting will be utilized when other means are not available”?

- R16.** **a) Refer to R35.**  
**b) Yes, the statement should read, telephone interpreting will be utilized when face-to-face is unavailable.**

- Q17.** P. 18, Sec. 3, 3.23, #4  
This statement appears too general and restrictive, because in some areas of the State face-to-face interpreters may not be readily available around-the-clock in all languages. This statement also conflicts with P. 18, Sec. 3, 3.23, #3 (if our correction is appropriate, see previous question), and 3.24, which allows for telephone interpreting when face-to-face interpreters are not available.

- R17. Telephone services may be utilized with face-to-face interpreters are not available.**

- Q18.** P. 18, Sec. 3, 3.24  
Is the vendor required to submit reports for the face-to-face assignments, or only for telephone interpreting?

- R18. Reports are required for both services.**

- Q19.** P. 22, Sec. 4, 4.2.5.1.7  
Please clarify.
- a)** Is the State requiring background check documentation to be sent with the proposal? If so, this places a financial burden on the contractor for the proposal phase and is unreasonable.
  - b)** Upon award of the contract, must the vendor submit the actual background report for each interpreter to the State or is just a statement attesting that this requirement has been executed for all interpreters be sufficient as stated in paragraph Sec. 3, 3.23, # 10 on Page 18?
  - c)** Should the required documentation be sent periodically or each time a new interpreter is acquired?

- R19. a) Vendors must indicate whether a background check has been completed on all proposed interpreters. If so, documentation must be submitted. If not, Vendors must attest the background checks will be completed prior to contact with clients.**
- b) Actual background reports must be submitted.**
- c) Each time a new interpreter is acquired.**

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**Q20.** P. 22, Sec. 4, 4.2.5.2

As a small business doing business with various government agencies, we have never been asked to submit audited financial statements. Because this requirement places a financial burden on small business, would the State accept financial statements prepared by a qualified CPA firm and a statement from our bank to confirm financial stability? If so, which financial documents would be required, i.e. quarterly P&L, tax returns, etc.?

**R20. Yes. Quarterly financial statements from the previous two (2) quarters will meet this requirement.**

**Q21.** P. 25, Sec. 5, 5.0

We have determined that there are more than 3 types of translation/interpreting services cited in the solicitation; may we address each as separate line items in our cost proposal?

**R21. Yes.**

**Q22.** Section 3 page15, Item 3.0 (Paragraph 1) What is the percentage of expected volume for each language per county?

**R22. Unknown.**

**Q23.** Section 3 page15, Item 3.1 Is the client willing to incur an after hour fee for cases between the hours of 6pm thru 6am, as well as weekends and Holidays?

**R23. Your cost proposal should include after hour service fees.**

**Q24.** Section 3 page18, Item 3.23 #10 In order to cover the whole State of Alabama with so many dialects, the nature of the business dictates that our language professionals are sub-contracted. Is this acceptable?

**R24. Yes.**

**Q25.** What is the estimated contract value?

**R25. There is no stated estimated contract value. Vendors should submit their best offer to the state.**

**Q26. a)** Is there a current provider or providers? If so, what is the volume of usage and what has been the state's experience to date with services?

**b)** What are typical problems/concerns in service levels, quality, etc with current provider/s?

**R26. a) There are currently two providers. The state has not tracked utilization for these services.**

**b) The main area of concern has been statewide access.**

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**Q27.** Is Alabama going to select multiple vendors for different services, or multiple vendors for the Face to Face interpreting portion of this contract, or one vendor for the entire contract?

**R27. One provider is preferred.**

**Q.28.** 1.1 ELIGIBLE ENTITIES 9 (page 7)  
Can you elaborate on the scope of eligible agencies (specifically what types of organizations are envisioned or potentially might be included outside of the government)?

**R28. Please refer to the list of entities identified in the RFP document for this procurement.**

**Q29.** 1.3. CONTRACT TERM  
Can you verify the term, based on months and stated start and end dates?

**R29. Please refer to the RFP document for this procurement.**

**Q30.** 3.0 PROGRAMMATIC INFORMATION  
Does one vendor need to supply all services listed, or is it possible the State may select more than one vendor to provide the services requested?

**R30. If one vendor can provide all the services, one vendor is preferred.**

**Q31.** 3.5. LISTING Is this a requirement for telephone interpreters? The majority of interpreters reside outside of the State of Alabama and number over 2,000.

**R31. A listing of all interpreters and the languages they interpret should be maintained by the provider. It is not expected that these interpreters will be assigned to individual counties.**

**Q32.** 3.7 NO DENIAL OF SERVICES ALLOWED  
Can you clarify the scenario the State is trying to avoid?

**R32. See R33.**

**Q33.** 3.7 NO DENIAL OF SERVICES ALLOWED  
Does this mean that contractor will not prejudicially deny services to client, or that client must never have an incident where services are not available to Alabama, or something else?

**R33. A Vendor must not prejudicially deny services to client. In addition, services must be available as needed to all areas of Alabama.**

**Q34.** 3.23 FACE-TO-FACE INTERPRETER SERVICES  
What percentage of usage under this contract is expected to be face to face, versus telephone interpretation?

**R34. There is no expectation of percentages...it is based on the individual needs of**

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**cases being served by the Department.**

**Q35.** 3.23 # 3 What is the meaning of the statement in that an interpreter may work with only 10 families? Does this mean that an interpreter may only be utilized on appointments for 10 individuals across the time of the contract?

**R35. An interpreter may be working on only 10 cases at one point in time.**

**Q36.** 3.24 TELEPHONE INTERPRETER SERVICES  
Reporting for telephone interpretation is typically delivered in detail on a monthly basis. Will that meet the State's requirements?

**R36. Monthly reports will suffice to the State. Counties may request reports on each case as needed.**

**Q37.** 4.2.5.1.2 REFERENCES Is the request for Alabama-based references only?

**R37. References may be based anywhere in the United States.**

**Q38.** 4.2.5.1.6. STAFF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AND TRAINING  
Our interpreter workforce numbers over 2,000. Can we propose an alternative way to present their qualifications?

**R38. Vendors should include their minimum qualifications not each interpreter's personal experience.**