



**State of Rhode Island
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**Solicitation Information
4/21/2020**

ADDENDUM #7

RFP #7602776

TITLE: Interpreting and Translation Services (MPA-54/CR-34)

Bid Closing Date & Time: Monday, May 4, 2020 @ 11:30 AM Eastern Time (ET)

Notice to Vendors

Attached are vendor questions with State responses. No further questions will be answered.

**Anthony Venditelli
Buyer I**

Interested parties should monitor this website, on a regular basis, for any additional information that may be posted.

Vendor Questions with State Responses for RFP #7602776 – Interpreting and Translation Services (MPA-54/CR-34)

Question 1: 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?

Answer to question 1: The waiting time for a new betting process has been a challenge

Question 2: What is the expected volume of this contract?

Answer to question 2: State courts expect to outsource at least 35% of their annual requests.

Please see the Fiscal Year spend in the past :

FY16	\$787,147.14
FY17	\$1,077,318.64
FY18	\$1,558,737.15
FY19	\$1,464,591.72

Question 3: Is there any historical data for Interpreting and Translating Services?

**Answer to question 3: Yes, DHS collect monthly data of all interpreter services.
State courts keep their own data.**

Question 4: Is this RFP open to out of state vendors?

Answer to question 4: Yes, it is

Question 5: Is this a multiple source award contract?

Answer to question 5: Yes, it is

Question 6: Have you experienced any difficulties with the current incumbent?

Answer to question 6: No

Question 7: What is the anticipated volume of translations, onsite interpretation per month and in which languages?

Answer to question 7: For DHS the volume of translations and onsite interpretation is between 700 to 800 per month being Spanish 60% and Portuguese 20% and 20% other languages. State courts require 95% of onsite interpretation, with Spanish, Cape Verdean, and Portuguese being the most requested languages, followed by Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese), Arabic, and Kiche.

Question 8: How does the State currently organize their requests – do they all go through one team or is it decentralized?

Answer to question 8: Decentralized

Question 9: Is the State open to using technology for an onsite interpretation scheduling and for document translation?

Answer to question 9: State courts are currently considering setting up platforms for telephone and video interpreting as an addition to onsite (in-person) interpretation

Question 10: Industry standards for interpreters are per hour rates with a minimum of 2 hours, and 4 hours for American Sign Language, and they will not accept anything less. This includes interpretation for over the phone appointments. Is it possible to add minimum charges?

**Answer to question 10: Yes
State courts have a one hour minimum and a 24 cancellation notice for in-person interpreters. If video and/or phone, then, it is a per minute rate based on industry standards.**

Question 11: What type of certification does the State need from interpreters and translators? Do they have to be certified by Rhode Island? Is there a specific third part certification needed or will our own internal certification suffice?

Answer to question 11: Each contract vendor has their own certification process and for DHS is enough.

For state courts, interpreters are required to be “qualified” at the very least, which means passing the National Center for State Court written certification exam. Because that is a national exam, RI state courts have reciprocity with other states. If an individual has not taken the NCSC written exam, they will be required to do so the next time the exam is available. For agencies, they will need to provide proof of their interpreters’ credentials and training.

Question 12: Some translation files if in InDesign or PDF format will need formatting and Desktop publishing charges. Would it be possible to add that to the cost work sheet?

Answer to question 12: Yes

Question 13: Standard for translation work is to be priced per hour not per word. Is it possible to change that on the price sheet?

Answer to question 13: Yes, it is possible

Question 14: Does all work have to be US based or can we use linguists outside of the US for translation and over-the-phone interpretation?

Answer to question 14: Yes, we can use linguists outside of the US but, prefer US based

Question 15: Are we able to bid on a single service (i.e. document translation), or does the state prefer a proposal that includes all requested services?

Answer to question 15: All requested services preferred.

Question 16: Is there an incumbent or is this a new contract?

Answer to question 16: An incumbent

Question 17: What is the historical per word volume for document translation in the past?

Answer to question 17: State courts does not have data on that. Court forms are selected depending of the frequency they are used in each court.

Question 18: What is the anticipated annual contract amount for document translation?

Answer to question 18: See answer to Question 2 regarding past Fiscal Year spend

Question 19: What has been the historical annual spend for document translation?

Answer to question 19: See answer to Question 2 regarding past Fiscal Year spend

Question 20: Does Contractor's MBE, WBE, and/or Disability Business Enterprise membership have to be in the State of Rhode Island, or can it be in their home state?

Answer to question 20: Has to be Rhode Island

Question 21: Does the contractor have to have a physical office in Rhode Island (re: pg. 13 Maintenance of Records)?

Answer to question 21: No

Question 22: Are you only accepting submissions from Rhode Island based Contractors?

Answer to question 22: No, contractors based in other States are accepted.

Question 23: The RFP states, "...if possible, all interpreters and/or translators providing services hereunder shall be certified by the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters..." Is this a requirement of all translators/interpreters or guidance and preference?

Answer to question 23: No is not, a requirement is by guidance and preference.

For state courts, interpreters can be either qualified (have passed a written national certification exam) or certified by the NCSC or NAJIT.

Question 24: The RFP requests a Rhode Island W-9. Is a Federal IRS W-9 acceptable?

Answer to question 24: Rhode Island W-9

Question 25: Are out of state contractors permitted?

Answer to question 25: Yes

Question 26: Why is the State of Rhode Island issuing this RFP?

Answer to question 26: For DHS is a federal requirement from the office for Civil Rights. We must provide free interpreter services to the DHS Limited English population (LEP).

State courts are also required to provide such services free of charge.

Question 27: What challenges has the State faced in the past with interpretation services?

Answer to question 27: DHS had had some challenges at time of requesting some specific languages, and with some technical issues. State courts also face challenges to provide services in rare languages.

Question 28: Will the court system continue to utilize MPA-54 for the procurement of Interpretation services?

Answer to question 28: Yes

Question 29: Who has provided services under MPA-54 from 2011-2020?

Answer to question 29: A number of local and out State vendors. Please see User Guide.

Question 30: Does the State of Rhode Island currently utilize any technology or interpreter management system for order submittal, tracking, reporting?

Answer to question 30: State courts do have an interpreting managing system

Question 31: What is the estimated contract value on an annual basis?

Answer to question 31: State courts expenses for non-staff language services for FY19 was close to \$267K

Question 32: Who is the senior responsible person for language services at the Rhode Island Department of Health?

Answer to question 32: Margarita Jaramillo

Question 33: What KPIs and reporting metrics are important to the State of Rhode Island for Interpretation and Translation services? What metrics and KPIs were assessed under MPA-54 in the past?

Answer to question 33: State Courts and Agencies would differ

Question 34: How many bookings does the State or Rhode Island do annually under MPA-54?

Answer to question 34: See answer to Question 2 regarding past Fiscal Year spend

Question 35: Does the State of Rhode Island pay travel for interpreters? If so, how much annually is spent on travel?

**Answer to question 35: Not for RI DHS
State courts do pay for travel if included on bid.**

Question 36: Which languages are do you foresee the largest need for?

**Answer to question 36: Spanish, Portuguesa, creole, Haitian,
Southeast Asian, French and African languages**

Question 37: Is over-the-phone interpretation included in this or in a separate RFP?

Answer to question 37: Yes

Question 38: Is lack of work with two (2) current state agency clients a disqualification? Would references for work with other large government agencies be a satisfactory alternative?

Answer to question 38: For state courts, if not current agencies, then references from other large government agencies should suffice.

Question 39: What type of certification of 45 CFR 155.110 compliance is required?

Answer to question 39: N/A

Question 40: Which specific vaccinations are required of onsite interpreters?

Answer to question 40: None

Question 41: Since this RFP requests rates as opposed to a cost proposal, what dollar amount would fulfill the requirement of a bid surety bond?

Answer to question 41: Bid Surety Bond not required

Question 42: Would the state confirm if telephonic interpretation services are on demand/as needed or scheduled? Or both?

Answer to question 42: Both

Question 43: Would the state confirm if a per-minute rate for unscheduled telephonic interpretation and an hourly rate for scheduled telephonic interpretation is acceptable? This is industry standard and will save state agencies significantly on cost.

Answer to question 43: State courts would only accept a per-minute for both scheduled and unscheduled telephonic interpretation.

Question 44: Would the state confirm if telephonic interpretation services are able to be on-demand and as-needed, and not scheduled in advance?

Answer to question 44: No, it can be both

Question 45: Would the state allow for per word translation pricing and not per hour? Per hour for translation services is not industry standard.

Answer to question 45: Yes, they would

Question 46: What is the estimated number of minutes required for telephonic interpretation services per month/per year?

Answer to question 46: It would be very difficult to estimate

Question 47: What is the estimated language mix for telephonic interpretation? I.E. 70% Spanish, 10% Mandarin, etc.

**Answer to question 47: For DHS Spanish 60%, Portuguese 20% and 20% for other languages.
For state courts, it would be mostly for rare languages (African and Asian)**

Question 48: Does the state have any past telephonic interpretation usage reports or spend data for the previous contract that can be shared with interested bidders?

Answer to question 48: State courts don't have any significant data.

Question 49: Can vendors propose for select services, but not for all? I.E. Can vendors bid only on telephonic interpretation and not document translation?

Answer to question 49: Yes

Question 50: Is this a multi-vendor award? If so, how is work anticipated to be split up amongst vendors?

Answer to question 50: DHS usually go for the lowest bidder.

Question 51: What is the estimated number of translation projects required per year?
What is the estimated number of words per project?

Answer to question 51: See answer to Question 2 regarding past Fiscal Year spend – data not available regarding number of projects

Question 52: What is the estimated language mix for document translation services? I.E. 70% Spanish, 10% Mandarin, etc.

Answer to question 52: Spanish 60%, Portuguese 20% and 20% for other languages,

Question 53: Is the state amenable to receiving interpretation services from interpreters who have undergone an internal qualification and certification process? Would we be able to list an internally certified interpreter as a “certified” interpreter under our cost proposal?

Answer to question 53: State courts only recognize as certified an interpreter who has passed a certification exam from either the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) or from the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters (NAJIT). However, agencies can submit the process by which they assess/qualify their interpreters, and interpreters can submit their qualifications and trainings to support their experience as legal interpreters. All court interpreters may be required to take, at the very least, NCSC’s written examination.

Question 54: When would the contract begin for the State of Rhode Island?

Answer to question 54: Due to the current Covid-19 situation, this contract start date can be roughly between 3-6 months.

Question 55: Can the state confirm that small business participation is encouraged, but not required, under this agreement?

Answer to question 55: Correct

Question 56: As a language service supplier providing professional interpreting and translation services under the RFP, are we to certify that we are a “qualified entity” having “demonstrated experience on a State or regional basis in the individual and small group health insurance markets and in benefits coverage”?

Answer to question 56: Yes

Question 57: Does this requirement (mentioned in question #56) mean that if we are a “qualified entity,” we have provided language services related to health care, or is the requirement that we actually have core experience in the Exchange health care markets and benefits coverage?

Answer to question 57: Experience in the Exchange health care markets and benefits coverage

Question 58: Section I. Introduction - Paragraph 13

Vendors with extensive background providing interpreting/translation services in a variety of medical facilities can qualify as “business associate” under HIPAA?

Answer to question 58: Yes

Question 59: Section I. Introduction - Paragraph 14.

- (a) Who is considered an eligible Entity?
- (b) How can vendors become an Eligible Entity?
- (c) Can a small business be an Eligible Entity?
- (d) If a vendor does most of the work with other State agencies other than the RI Department of Health, can the vendor be disqualified if it does not meet the criteria of Eligible Entity?
- (e) Can vendors choose which state agencies to work with when solicited?

Answer to question 59: Yes

Question 60: Section I. Introduction - Paragraph 15.

- (a) If a vendor does not submit a Bid Surety Bond and opts to pay five (5%) of the vendor’s cost proposal, will the vendor be reimbursed for any monies if the projected cost proposal is not totally expended?
- (b) Is the five (5%) of the vendor’s cost proposal paid only for the first year of contract? If the state chooses to renew the contract for (4) additional 12-months periods based on vendor performance and availability of funds, what are vendors required to do?
- (c) How can vendors best calculate five (5%) of the cost proposal if

interpreting services are paid hourly and varies from month to month?

Answer to question 60: Bid Surety Bond not required

Question 61: Section I. Introduction - Paragraph 17.

- (a) When do vendors pay the one percent (1%) MPA contract administrative fee?
- (b) Must this fee also be furnished with vendor's bid proposal?

Answer to question 61: The contract administrative fee shall be applicable to all purchase orders issued relative to State MPA contracts

Question 62: Section 3. Scope of Work and Requirements - Insurance Requirements

Vendors must attach copies of all 3 insurances (Professional Liability, Automobile Liability, Workers' Compensation) with their proposals?

Answer to question 62: Yes

Question 63: Section 4. Proposal - Staff Qualifications

Do vendors need to submit resumes and certificates for all current employed interpreter/translators?

Answer to question 63: Yes

Question 64: Section 4. Proposal - Capability, Capacity, and Qualification of the Offeror

Can vendors submit more than two (2) current state agency clients and two (2) non-state clients' reference?

Answer to question 64: Yes

Question 65: Standard practice for interpreter services is a min of 2 hours. Is the state have a min requirement for hours for onsite interpreters?

Answer to question 65: For state courts, the minimum is an hour.

Question 66: Section 8 of the bid, page 4 of 23: Can anyone from the public have access and request to view the information submitted for the MPA bid by any company? Is anyone allowed to make copies, take pictures or notes of the information contained on any vendors bid after it's been awarded?

Answer to question 66: Access to Public Records request can be submitted, but will not be given confidential information.

Question 67: Last paragraph on page 4 of 23:

Can you clarify what do you mean by "...prior to issuance of a purchase order." Does this refer to a PO# each time an interpreting or translation request is submitted? Or once the MPA is awarded it will be a blanket PO#?

Answer to question 67: A blanket PO is issued once the volume of services to be provided is determined.

Question 68: Page 6 of 23, Bid Surety Bond: How do we know the amount of the Bid Bond without knowing the amount awarded? Please further explain in what situations does a bidder for this MPA have to submit a Surety Bond? Does a bidder providing only Interpreting, translation and graphic design services need to have a Surety Bond?

Answer to question 68: Bid Surety Bond not required

Question 69: Page 17 of 23 Under the Cost Proposal Evaluation: "*Cost Proposal Evaluation: The vendor with the lowest cost proposal shall receive one hundred percent (100%) of the available points for cost. All other vendors shall be awarded cost points based upon the following formula:
(lowest cost proposal / vendor's cost proposal) x available points

For example: If the vendor with the lowest cost proposal (Vendor A) bids \$65,000 and Vendor B bids \$100,000 for monthly costs and service fees and the total points available are thirty (30), Vendor B's cost points are calculated as follows: $\$65,000 / \$100,000 \times 30 = 19.5$ "

How does a vendor calculate what the projected bid for monthly cost and fees would on average be? Does the State have an average amount of hours that are projected to be used monthly for all interpreting and translations services that are of a non-legal or non-OCI?

Answer to question 69: Please provide hourly rates in the Cost Proposal using the formatting provided on the provided template.

Question 70: Page 4 of 23 it states: "Vendors with 50 or more employees and \$50,000 or more in government contracts must prepare a written "Affirmative Action Plan" prior to issuance of a purchase order."

If a vendor has less than 50 employees, but has \$50,000 in government contracts does the vendor still have to prepare an “Affirmative Action Plan” if the vendor already has in place an “Affirmative Action Policy Statement”?

Answer to question 70: Affirmative Action Policy Statement should be sufficient

Question 71: The sentence “Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the vendor’s proposal and the subcontractor(s) to be used is identified in the proposal.” indicates that all interpreters and translators must be identified in the proposal.

What alternatives exist for agencies so that the names of interpreters and translators can be described without listing actual names in order to keep that information as proprietary?

Answer to question 71: For state courts, agencies usually have a clause where interpreters are not be contacted/hired directly, unless the state can verify their services have terminated with the contractor. Resumes and credentials can be submitted with a first name only

Question 72: What guarantees are in place to protect proprietary information for the agency if a public records request is made and the information marked confidential is deemed by another entity as not confidential? Is there any written notification on the part of the State if the information is to be released in spite of the “confidential” marking?

Answer to question 72: Confidential information will not be given out

Question 73: Is this bid considered to be a “Public Works Contract”? The answer would determine whether the vendor must submit a monthly report regarding compliance with EEO laws

Answer to question 73: No

Question 74: Does an agency from out-of-state have to register in Rhode Island for MBE and WBE, or would the designation from another state qualify the agency in these circumstances?

Answer to question 74: Not required

Question 75: There are additional credible exams, such as the ATA for translators that provide evidence of qualifications. Are these exams acceptable?

Answer to question 75: For state courts, ATA certification for translators is acceptable.

Questions 76: Page 5, #13, HIPAA Business Associate Agreement: It is my understanding that any and all contracted/freelance translators, proofreaders and interpreters would have to sign this for all types of interpreting, not just medical. Is that correct? Would you, the State of RI, provide this agreement or would we use our own, internally generated version for this?

Answer to question 76: That is correct. This agreement would be providing by the State.

Question 77: Page 7, Qualification/Certification: For CCHI, the Core Certification for Healthcare Interpreters is only available in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin) and Spanish. A search on the CCHI site shows a total of 9 interpreters with certification in Rhode Island, all listed as Spanish speakers, and no other languages listed. For the NBCMI, Certification (CMI) is available in six languages: Spanish, Russian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese. There are 14 NBCMI Certified interpreters in Rhode Island listed on their website – 1 is Mandarin speaking the others are Spanish. At least 1 of the Spanish interpreters is a duplicate from the CCHI list. My question is, for languages other than Spanish, or for interpreters that do not have Certification but have a proven track record of successful and competent interpretation, how do we provide documentation to show this? And for Legal Interpreters, on the NAJIT site there are no interpreters (individuals) listed for Rhode Island, there are several for Massachusetts, including a few agencies as well. I am interested in having a better understanding of how the Office of Court Interpreters (OCI) provide testing for the written and oral portions and how often/where these testing opportunities take place.

Answer to question 77: On Page 15, Staff Qualifications – Provide staff resumes/CV and describe qualifications and experience of key staff who will be involved in this project, including their experience in the field of interpretation and translation services. Also include:
a. Minimum employment requirements including education, training and previous work experience, language proficiency (include how this is assessed), and interpreter/translator skill (include how this is assessed)
b. Documentation of any and all certifications and/or license for translation and/or interpretation

Question 78: Page 11, Documentation of Services Performed: Is there a form that each state agency/requestor will provide for interpreters to sign in and out on? Or, is that something we will need to provide to the individual interpreters?

Answer to 78: Each agency/Court will have different sign in/out methods

Question 79: Page 11, Professional Development: Does that State of RI offer any training to update interpreters, in particular legal/court interpreters, about changes in statutes, rules of courts and policies of the judicial systems/agencies as they may relate to interpretation?

Answer to question 79: Companies Offering Translation and Interpretation Training can be found on the RI DOH website.

Question 80: Page 11, Emergency and Non-Scheduled Requests: Do you have any data or other information regarding the frequency of requests made by agencies for interpreter services (in person) during non-business hours, which we typically consider to be 8 am to 5 pm. The language under this section is quite clear that the expectation is to provide an interpreter within 2 hours of the request, regardless of the time of day or night. I am not so concerned about the 8 am to 5 pm timeframe but I am wondering what the flow of requests for say, 11 pm or 2 am are.

Answer to question 80: Data unavailable

Question 81: For these meetings, are these supposed to take place with all state agencies or only the ones with which our company has direct contact with and has provided services for under the RFP? If I understand correctly, these meetings can be done in person or over the phone, correct?

Answer to question 81: Meetings must be with various State courts and/or user departments (agencies will decide). Meetings can be both in person or over the phone.

Question 82: Page 14, Insurance Requirements: I just want to confirm that our coverage for Professional Liability has to be at the \$1 million minimum, correct? Do we also need to have Workers Compensation coverage at \$1 million or does that only apply to construction and related vendors? Also, I was not able to access the “Notice of Designation as Independent Contractor” form via the link provided. Can you send me the link and/or the form itself via email?

Answer to question 82: Correct, both Professional Liability and Workers Compensation insurance (\$1 million minimum) required.
Link: <http://www.purchasing.ri.gov/rivip/publicdocuments/DWC-11-IC.pdf>

Question 83: Page 15, Section 4 Proposal: 1. Staff Qualifications – Do you want a resume/CV for just the two of us or all of our translators, proofreaders and interpreters?; 2. Capability, Capacity and Qualifications of the Offeror – a. Reference from two (2) current state agency clients – Do you just need a description in narrative form, or do you need something more formal? Again, do you just need a narrative about how we track this or do you need something formal or copies of their continuing education coursework?; 3. Work Plan – c. Business Associate Relationship Agreement as required by HIPAA – do you have a template you would like us to use or do you want us to provide one?

Answer to question 83: Technical Proposal - describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with and for similar projects, and all information described earlier in this solicitation. The technical proposal is limited to six (6) pages (this excludes any appendices and as appropriate, resumes of key staff that will provide services covered by this request).

- a. One (1) Electronic copy on a CD-R, marked “Technical Proposal - Original”.**
- b. One (1) printed paper copy, marked “Technical Proposal -Original” and signed.**
- c. Four (4) printed paper copies**

Refer to question 76 regarding BAA

Question 84: Page 16, Section 4 Proposal – C. ISBE Proposal: I understand that there is a separate form and that it needs to be included, does it need to be in a separate sealed envelope or simply included in the sealed envelope that contains all of the required documentation?

Answer to question 84: Please complete separate forms for each MBE, WBE and/or Disability Business Enterprise subcontractor/supplier to be utilized on the solicitation. Which should be sealed separately.