



The Center for Health Care Services

SUBJECT: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Interpretation and Translation Services **RFP 2024-017**, Scheduled to Open: **May 23, 2024**; Date of Issue: **April 22, 2024**

FROM: Adam Velez
Sr. Director, Contracting and Procurement

DATE: May 10, 2024

THIS NOTICE SHALL SERVE AS ADDENDUM NO. I - TO THE ABOVE REFERENCED REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

EDIT: RFP 2024-017, Section 004 – Scope of Services, A. General Requirements, 1. Administrative Requirements, #vi., page 4 has been amended to read, “RESPONDENTS shall develop, implement, enforce and update, as necessary and/or required, a Confidentiality Policy that is compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, and the Code of Federal Regulations (42 C.F.R. Part 2), the Texas Administrative Code, including patient privacy requirements specific to the care of minors, and any other applicable federal and state laws including, but not limited to, the following components...”

EDIT: RFP 2024-017, Section 004 – Scope of Services, A. General Requirements, 2. Equipment Requirements, paragraph 1, sentence 4, page 4, is hereby amended to read, “If RESPONDENT is capable of recording calls/video calls, all calls/video calls are to be stored for a minimum of thirty (30) days.”

EDIT: RFP 2024-017, Section 004 – Scope of Services, B. Service Types and Requirements, 2. On-Site Interpretation and Translation Services (Scheduled and On-Demand), #i, sentence 3, page 8, is hereby amended to read, “If requested with less than twenty-four (24) hours advanced notice, RESPONDENT shall make an interpreter available within one (1) hour of requested service time in person, or make arrangements with the CENTER facility/department to immediately provide services through telephonic or audio visual device, as needed.”

EDIT: RFP 2024-017, Section 004 – Scope of Services, B. Service Types and Requirements, 2. On-Site Interpretation and Translation Services (Scheduled and On-Demand), #v, page 8, is hereby amended to read, “The CENTER will have the ability to request a specific interpreter for the specific language interpretation for onsite services, if the request is placed in advance of the actual time it is needed, in the manner detailed in the RESPONDENT’s proposal, and RESPONDENT will make every effort to accommodate the request, if possible.”

ADD: RFP 2024-017, Attachment A, Part Three – Proposed Plan, page 24, is hereby amended to add #14, “Describe the Respondent’s ability to record audio or video calls. Include specifications of platform, storage software/system, and any other applicable technical information. Also include Respondent’s recording retention policy including length of retention.”

DELETE AND REPLACE: RFP 2024-017, Attachment B – Price Schedule is hereby deleted in its entirety and replaced with Attachment B – Price Schedule, Revised 05/09/2024.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 010, RESTRICTIONS ON COMMUNICATION

Question 1: Who is the incumbent and what are their current fees?

Response: The Center currently utilizes Service by Vital Signs, Inc for on-site ASL Interpretation services charged at a rate of \$66.00 per hour for a minimum of two (2) hours.

For on-site interpretation services, the Center utilizes Worldwide Languages and is charged a rate of \$100.00 per hour for a minimum of two (2) hours. All telephonic interpretation services are charged at a rate of \$2.60 per minute, regardless of language utilized.

The Center does not currently have a contract for video interpretation or written translation services.

Question 2: Have you exercised all your renewal options with your existing providers?

Response: Not applicable.

Question 3: How many vendors will be selected and how will work be distributed?

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 009 – Submission of Proposal and RFP Section 011 – Evaluation of Criteria.

Question 4: What pain points are you looking to address that you did not have fulfilled by your current language service provider?

Response: The Center has elected to add video interpretation services and written translation services to this scope of services which are both services not received under a previous contract.

Question 5: Can you please share your anticipated annual budget or historic spend under this contract?

Response: The Center will use pricing submitted to this response for budgeting purposes. Historic spend is as follows:

Vendor	Service Type	FY 23 Spend	FY24 Spend (through April 2024)
Services by Vital Signs	On-Site American Sign Language Interpretation	\$27,357.69	\$27,740.73
Worldwide Languages	On-Site and Telephonic Interpretation	\$167,766.80	\$148,548.80

Question 6: Are you able to provide the historical or projected volumes for each of the service lines identified in the RFP? (Telephonic minutes/year; Video minutes/year; On-Site hours/year; and Translation words/year)

Response: Please refer to the following tables.

Telephonic Interpretation		
Language	Service Minutes Provided	
	09/01/22 - 08/31/23	09/01/23 - 04/30/24
Arabic	2,031	728
Burmese	732	401
Cantonese	0	290
Dari	289	107
Farsi	1,264	1,017
French	43	33
French Creole	0	15
Gujarati	22	0
Haitian Creole	0	211
Karenni	42	24
Kinyarwanda	324	455
Korean	3	0
Mam	0	2
Mandarin	771	229
Pashto	426	300
Rohingya	37	0
Romanian	12	87
Russian	0	25
Somali	0	101
Spanish*	32,095	13,175
Swahili	233	173
Tagalog	82	75
Turkish	0	65
Vietnamese	118	281
TOTAL	38,524	17,794

*Spanish services made up approximately 80.4% of services rendered in from 09/01/2022 – 04/30/2024.

On-Site Interpretation		
Language	Service Hours Provided	
	09/01/23 - 04/30/24	09/01/22 - 08/31/23
Arabic	41.75	44.75
ASL	203.75	159

Burmese	41.5	15
Chinese	0	8
Dari	2	0
Iranian Persian	37.75	8
Mandarin	12	14
Pashto	9.25	10
Romanian	24.25	4
Spanish	576.75	605.25
Swahili	11.5	18
Tagalog	4	4
Vietnamese	0	8
TOTAL	964.5	898

Spanish services made up approximately 63.6% of services rendered in from 09/01/2022 – 04/30/2024.

Video Remote Interpretation

The Center has utilized Video Remote Interpretation services on a limited basis, as this is not a service the Center has contracted for in the past. The information below is not reflective of future utilization of this service type.

Language	Service Hours Provided	
	09/01/23 - 04/30/24	09/01/22 - 08/31/23
ASL	15.25	9.5

Written Translation

The Center has not contracted for this service type in the past, and therefore does not have historical volume information.

Question 7: At a minimum, can you provide an approximate breakdown of your overall interpreting volume between audio/video vs. on-site?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 8: Are you able to provide a breakdown of languages by usage either as a percentage or by sharing actual volumes by language? At the very minimum, can you provide a breakdown between Spanish and all other languages?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 9: When will questions be answered? Can the Center ensure that vendors have sufficient time to review responses prior to the bid submission date (and if necessary, extend the deadline)?

Response: The Center will ensure that all potential respondents will have ample time to submit a response per the RFP Submission Instructions.

Question 10: When is the anticipated award date and how will vendors be notified?

Response: The Center anticipates performing its due diligence on all responses received in order to obtain the best services for its consumers and employees and as such is not able to provide an anticipated aware date. All vendors who submitted a proposal per the RFP Submission Instructions will be notified, after Board of Trustees approval, via email if their proposal was selected or is no longer being considered.

Question 11: Regarding Attachment B - typically audio and video interpreting are priced differently. May bidders submit different rates for audio vs. video? Can you also disclose if the incumbent vendor provides the same rate for audio and video?

Response: Please refer to RFP Attachment B – Price Schedule and the response to Question No. 1.

Question 12: Regarding Attachment A, Part Three, Item 11: Our HIPAA/Confidentiality Policy is strictly confidential. What assurances does the Center have in place to ensure this information is not publicly disclosed? If the Center cannot guarantee protection from public disclosure, would a description of the policy be an acceptable alternative?

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 009 – Submission of Proposal – Confidential or Proprietary Information.

Question 13: Regarding Attachment B - may bidders add additional language for any of the service lines?

Response: Please refer to RFP Attachment A, Part Three – Proposed Plan.

Question 14: Regarding Attachment B (Written Translations) - may bidders assume - for simplicity's sake - that the requested "Flat Fee" for requests under 150 words will be an editable document with minimal formatting required and no rush required?

Response: Yes.

Question 15: Can you please clarify the requirement for ink signature? Is this absolutely necessary? If yes, can you please clarify which documents require an ink signature?

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 008 – Proposal Requirements. Submit one (1) original, signed in ink and five (5) copies of the proposal and one (1) USB containing a copy of the entire proposal in either Microsoft Word or PDF format.

Question 16: Will the addenda need to be included in the bid response? Please note that it may not be feasible to include the addenda and ensure a timely delivery. This is especially true if you require the addenda to be signed in ink.

Response: No, the addenda do not need to be included in the response as they will not require ink signature(s). However, it is the vendors responsibility to ascertain that it is responding to the latest document posted to the Center's website.

Question 17: Regarding Equipment Requirements: Is the ability to record call/video a hard requirement for this RFP or are vendors welcome to submit bids if they cannot meet this requirement?

Response: Please refer to updated RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services.

Question 18: What is the anticipated and/or historical volume per month for phone interpretation and video interpretation?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 19: What is the anticipated volume for written translations (in number of words by language)? If unknown, what did your company spend on written translations in 2023?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 20: How much did your organization spend on remote interpretation (phone/video) in 2022/2023?

Response: Please refer to response to Question No. 5.

Question 21: What is the anticipated contract start date?

Response: Please refer to response to Question No. 10.

Question 22: Who is the incumbent? If multiple, how many incumbent vendors are there?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 1.

Question 23: What is the current rate?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 1.

Question 24: What is the language mix by percentage (e.g., Spanish 90%, Mandarin, 5%, etc.)?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 8

Question 25: Does your organization participate in a Group Purchasing Organization (GPO)? If so, which one?

Response: Yes. Omnia Partners, DIR, and Texas Buy Board.

Question 26: Will you allow any of this work to be performed offshore?

Response: No.

Question 27: Could you share the job titles and/or departments of the personnel who will be reviewing submissions for this RFP?

Response: No.

Question 28: Is the Center interested in receiving proposals for only certain services, but not all requested services?

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services.

Question 29: What is the anticipated budget for this RFP and all requested services?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 5.

Question 30: Does the Center have an estimated number of minutes or calls per month that are used for over the phone interpretation services?

Response: Anticipated volume not available. Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 31: Does the Center have any past usage reports to share for all services?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 32: Roughly what percent of all requests are for Spanish versus all other languages?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 8.

Question 33: Is there a facility requirement under this RFP? Is there a location requirement for this facility?

Response: No, there is no facility requirement. Please refer to the response to Question No. 26.

Question 34: Is offshore work permitted under this RFP?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 26.

Question 35: What is the total budget for the contract term (3-year base period)?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 5.

Question 36: Would the Center like to see any improvements in service under this contract? What pain points is the Center currently experiencing?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 4.

Question 37: Are services currently being provided by multiple vendors? If so, who are the vendors?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 1.

Question 38: What is the Center's current call center flow process to integrate language access?

Response: Currently the CHCS Call Center has Spanish-speaking individuals on staff that assist with calls where translation services are needed, but has the established workflow below when an interpreter is needed:

- a) If the caller is an established consumer, it is usually notated in their file an interpreter is needed. CHCS Call Center staff will email the CHCS clinic front desk staff letting them

know of the appointment day and time and that an interpreter is needed. Front desk staff will schedule with vendor.

- b) When the caller is new to services, CHCS Call Center staff will tell Enrollment Hotline Contractor that the caller will need an interpreter – Enrollment Hotline is not required to utilize CHCS-contracted vendor for interpretation and translation services.
- c) When CHCS is providing scheduling services, CHCS will request an interpreter to assist CHCS staff in providing interpretation/translation services if it is another language other than Spanish.

Question 39: What rates is the Center currently paying for Translation and Interpretation? Specifically for Spanish and all other languages?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 1.

Question 40: What is the total annual call volume (in minutes) that the Center is currently receiving?

Response: Please see the response to Question No. 6.

Question 41: What is the translation project management system the Center is currently using?

Response: Center does not utilize a translation project management system.

Question 42: Can Respondent bid on just one portion of the RFP? On-site ASL only, for example.

Response: Yes. Please refer to RFP Section 009 – Submission of Proposal and Attachment B – Price Schedule.

Question 43: When is the anticipated decision date for awarding contract(s)?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 10.

Question 44: When is the anticipated start date for any newly awarded contract(s)?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 10.

Question 45: **Paragraph A(1)(iii) and throughout the RFP:** Reference is made to “legal and financial systems” and “legal and financial processes.” Can CHCS provide more detail? What specific legal and financial areas are being referenced? Certain legal functions require a Court-Certified interpreter for ASL, so clarification on this point is critical in developing a response. For “financial systems” and “financial processes”, is CHCS referring to patients understanding their bill and payment responsibilities, or is the requirement deeper than that? “Financial systems” seems to imply being able to interpret how CHCS corporate financial works.

Response: The expectation of the Center is that interpreters will not make legal or financial advice during interpretation sessions.

Question 46: **Paragraph 2, Equipment Requirements:** Is this in reference to OPI/VRI only? Please clarify if these requirements apply to any aspect of on-site interpreting.

Response: Yes. These equipment requirements only apply to over the phone and video remote interpreting only.

Question 47: **Paragraph 4, Staffing:** reference to “interpreters and translators specialized in the specific industry(ies) as needed.” What industries beyond mental health are being referenced in this requirement?

Response: Depending on appointment type, program and consumer need, consumer appointments and services may also include information related to medical health, legal services, financial/payment, family services, documentation, etc.

Question 48: **Paragraph 4, Staffing:** Requirement for 12 to 15 languages. This is similar to question 1 above. Can a Respondent just bid on one language? If so, this requirement would not apply, correct?

Response: No, aside from ASL, if contractor is awarded for language interpretation, they must have the ability to accommodate languages identified in RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services.

Question 49: **Paragraph 4(i)(6):** Whose annual re-assessment test? Who certifies this test?

Response: Respondents will be required to re-assess their staff.

Question 50: **Paragraph 4(i)(10):** BEI no longer uses Levels I, II, III, etc. Interpreters are certified as Basic, Advanced, Master, etc. Generally, an Advanced interpreter is equivalent to the prior Level III. Should we assume that the requirement for a Level III or higher translates to Advanced or Higher? Also, if an interpreter has moved here from outside of Texas, their certification may be something other than BEI (e.g. RID). Is it safe to assume that the equivalent level of a non-BEI certification is acceptable for CHCS assignments? Does the requirement for Level III/Advanced apply to all CHCS assignments? We are aware of certain assignments (simple injection, Failure to Thrive, etc.) where a Basic certified ASL interpreter would be quite capable of interpreting the assignment, thus freeing up the limited number of Advanced interpreters for a more complicated assignment.

Response: The reference to Level III Interpreters is consistent with the Center’s contract with Health and Human Services,

Question 51: **Paragraph 4(ii), Coverage:** Can you clarify this statement/requirement? In reference to on-site ASL, there are a limited number of Advanced Certified ASL interpreters in the San Antonio area (actually, there is a shortage of interpreters, nationwide). It is not possible to guarantee an interpreter will always be available for every request. Usually this isn’t a problem, but if the request is less than 24 hours in advance, all interpreters may already be committed to other assignments.

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services.

Question 52: **Paragraph 4(ii), Coverage:** Can you clarify this statement/requirement? In reference to on-site ASL, there are a limited number of Advanced Certified ASL interpreters in the San Antonio area (actually, there is a shortage of interpreters, nationwide). It is not possible to guarantee an interpreter will always be available for every request. Usually this isn’t a problem, but if the request is less than 24 hours in advance, all interpreters may already be committed to other assignments.

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services, B. Service Types and Requirements, #2 – On-Site Interpretation and Translation Services (Scheduled and On-Demand).

Question 53: **Paragraph B(2)(i)**: “if requested with less than twenty-four (24) hours advanced notice, RESPONDENT shall make an interpreter available within one (1) hour in person, or make arrangements with the CENTER facility/department to immediately provide services through telephonic or audio visual device, as needed.”

- a) Please clarify this requirement. If the request is for the next day, but still less than 24 hours in advance (e.g. request made at 4pm Monday for a 9am Tuesday appointment), why do we need to make an interpreter available within one hour or provide immediate OPI/VRI service available?
- b) If the need is immediate, and an Advanced Certified interpreter (reference ASL) is not available within one hour (see comments in question 10 regarding limited number of interpreters), is the respondent considered to have failed in the contract?
- c) If the Respondent is only bidding on-site (no OPI/VRI), how would the respondent “immediately provide services through telephonic or audio-visual device?”

Response: For items “a” and “c,” please refer to RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services. For item “b,” yes. The expectation of the Center is to have the scope of services available.

Question 54: **Paragraph B(2)(iii)**: Why the requirement to utilize the interpreter closest to the assignment? And, if the assignment is scheduled weeks in advance, Respondent may have so many schedule changes prior to the assignment that they won’t know which interpreter is closest to the assignment until that day or the day before.

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services. It is the expectation of the Center that the selected vendor schedule appointments appropriately.

Question 55: **Paragraph B(2)(v)**: Requesting a specific interpreter is a great compliment to the interpreter and we always appreciate those requests. We do our best to accommodate those requests, but they can never be guaranteed. That is, the requested interpreter could be out sick, on vacation, or on another assignment. Please clarify that CHCS has the right to request, but it is understood that Respondent may not always be able to honor that request.

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services.

Question 56: **Attachment A, Part Three, Item 11**: Company policies are considered confidential information and not shared outside the company. Can we just certify that we comply with the HIPAA and 42 CFR Compliance requirements?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 12.

Question 57: **Attachment B, Price Schedule**: Can we attach an additional sheet with additional billing information, such as handling no-show and late cancellations, use of multiple interpreters for lengthy assignments, etc.?

Response: Please see RFP Attachment B – Price Schedule, Revised 05/09/2024.

Question 58: Has there been any update to this solicitation?

Response: Please see the revised solicitation posted 05/09/2024.

Question 59: What information must be listed on the outside of the response package?

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 009 – Submission of Proposal.

Question 60: Will there be any technology translation such as website, social media, etc.?

Response: No.

Question 61: Is this RFP similar to the one released in January? Was it cancelled?

Response: This RFP is similar to the previous solicitation, but services and scope have been more clearly defined. RFP 2024-003 was cancelled and is no longer active.

Question 62: Can telephonic/audio-visual interpretation services pricing be broken out by Modality? We offer different pricing based on phone or video.

Response: Please refer to RFP Attachment B – Price Schedule, Revised 05/09/2024.

Question 63: Does written translation pricing need to be both by the page and by word, or can we offer just one pricing?

Response: Please refer to RFP Attachment B – Price Schedule.

Question 64: Could pricing also be broken out by individual languages, vs grouped tiers?

Response: Please refer to RFP Attachment B – Price Schedule.

Question 65: Can you provide any historical volume information for each modality? (Minutes of Usage for OPI/VRI, requests for on-site interpreters, projects for Written Translation)

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 66: Who is the incumbent vendor?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 1.

Question 67: Can you please provide the telephonic/video interpretation services rendered in minutes per quarter in 2023 and quarter 1 of 2024?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 68: If possible, can you please provide the ratio between translation projects under 150 words and projects over 150 words from historical data?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 6.

Question 69: What are some of the pain points or issues that you have faced with the incumbent, if any?

Response: Not applicable.

Question 70: Are out of state vendors able to participate? Is there a local preference clause for business in the State of Texas?

Response: There is no local preference clause. Respondent must be physically located in a manner to effectively provide the services within Section 004 – Scope of Services. Please refer to RFP Section 011 – Evaluation of Criteria.

Question 71: Are there any certification requirements?

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 004 – Scope of Services.

Question 72: Are there any Small Business or Minority Business Enterprise preference clauses? If yes, does the SBE or MBE have to hold a certification from the State?

Response: Please refer to RFP Section 011 – Evaluation of Criteria. The Center verifies certification through the South Central Texas Regional Certification Agency (SCTRCA) and the State of Texas CMBL.

Question 73: Is there an incumbent for this contract? If there is, can you tell us who the incumbent is? Can you share the rates you are currently being charged?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 1.

Question 74: Can we participate in only one service (e.g. written translation only)? Is there a preference to contract with a vendor that provides all services? If the preference is for vendors that can provide all services, are there services that weigh higher in the vendor selection evaluation (e.g. primary service is on-site interpreting, second written translations, etc.)?

Response: Please refer to the response to Question No. 42.

Question 75: What is the solicitation's estimated volume in minutes, hours, words, and/or pages? Could you provide historical information of service utilization per language?

Response: Please see the response to Question No. 6.

Question 76: What percentage of the contract is for Spanish translation?

Response: As the Center cannot predict the number of services that will be needed by language, there will not be a designated percentage of contract services for Spanish translation. Please see the response to Question 6 for historical volume

Question 77: Can you provide the breakdown of spend per service (e.g. written translation, on-site interpreting, remote interpreting, etc.)?

Response: Please see the response to Question No. 5.

All other RFP conditions remain unchanged.

RFP documents may be downloaded from <http://www.chcsbc.org/contracting-opportunities/>