

***First Judicial District of Pennsylvania's ("FJD")
Request for Proposal ("RFP")***

For

Interpreter Agency and Services

Dated August 1, 2018

VENDOR'S QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ("Q&A")

<http://courts.phila.gov>

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE DEADLINE FOR THE ABOVE REFERENCED RFP HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO SEPTEMBER 19, 2018, BY 3:00 P.M.

EXCEPT THOSE MODIFICATIONS STATED HEREIN, ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE RFP REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT.

- Q1. Is this RFP for in person interpreting or will you accept proposals for Over the Phone or Video Relay Interpreting?***
Proposals will be accepted for Telephonic as well as Video Remote Interpreting.
- Q2. There is no timeframe noted for the contract length. Most RFPs have a set timeframe for the contracts (ie: 2 or 3 years). What is the expected timeframe for this contract?***
Consistent with established practices and protocol, the initial term for an executed agreement is generally one year with three (3) annual renewal terms if subsequently elected.
- Q3. On page 5, the document outlines Attachment 1 and refers to the AOPC's relative rate schedule. No attachment has been provided. Can the Courts provide the correct document?***
Attachment I was initially omitted from the RFP but subsequently posted to the Court's website. Please also access the link <http://www.pacourts.us/judicial-administration/court-programs/interpreter-program/interpreter-resources> for Act 172 as well as all the AOPC Rules & Regulations pertaining to Interpreters.
- Q4. On page 5, the Courts noted that they expect to follow the same practices noted in the current AOPC terms and conditions regarding parking and travel reimbursement provisions. Does the Court wish to see rates that are inclusive of all travel as opposed to reimbursement, etc?***
No. Consistent with the AOPC compensation schedule, interested vendors should provide an itemized rate schedule illustrating their best pricing possible to perform the requested services. Any/all reimbursement requests must be accompanied by receipts.
- Q5. On page 5, we strongly believe that the AOPC's policies regarding cancellations will mean very few interpreters would be willing to accept assignments from the Courts if the current policies are used. Does the Court intend to follow the same policies outlined in the AOPC's website or will they honor the policies used by interpreting agencies to manage their subcontractors? (AOPC Interpreter Resources: <http://www.pacourts.us/judicial-administration/court-programs/interpreter-program/interpreter-resources>).***

The FJD is obligated to follow AOPC policy; however, interested vendors are invited to submit their internal policies which may be entertained and presented to the AOPC for approval.

Q6. *In the RFP on page 11, Section (xiii) Surety for Proposals, can you clarify if a bond required for this RFP?*

A surety will not be required at this time; however, the FJD reserves the right to require a surety at a later time.

Q7. *Section 5, subsection E. "Criteria for Selection" states that Cost will be "weighted heavily but will not necessarily be the deciding factor in the selection process." Can you please provide a more specific breakdown of how each of the selection criteria will be weighted?*

As stated in the RFP, fees are weighed heavily but are not the determining factor in any solicitation. Once the FJD receives vendor proposals, the appointed Selection Committee will determine the breakdown of how each of the selection criteria will be weighted.

Q8. *What percent of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas current on-site volume is handled by each of the following:*

- *FJD's full-time interpreters?* Four full-time Spanish interpreters.
- *Per-diem/freelance interpreters?* Approximately 10-15 percent.
- *Interpreter agencies?* Approximately 85-90 percent.

Q9. *Who are the incumbent providers for the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas?*

There is no contracted incumbent at this time. The FJD uses interpreters off the AOPC interpreter roster as well as several available agencies as needed.

Q10. *How many courtrooms and judges are in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas?*

The First Judicial District consists of the Court of Common Pleas, which is broken down into the Trial Division, the Family Division and the Orphans Division as well as Municipal Court and Municipal Court Traffic Division. Throughout these branches, the FJD has courtrooms in multiple locations within Center City, Philadelphia. For more detailed information concerning the Philadelphia Courts, please access the FJD's 2017 Annual Report via the following link <https://www.courts.phila.gov/pdf/report/2017-First-Judicial-District-Annual-Report.pdf>

Q11. *Can FJD please provide historical on-site interpreting usage data for the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, i.e. hours and/or appointments by language?*

For year 2015, the FJD had 5,161 interpreter requests in over 60 languages; year 2016, 4,152 requests in over 60 languages; year 2017, 4,650 requests in over 65 languages.

Q12. *In awarding the contract, is greater consideration given to a qualified local business as well as one certified by the National Minority Development Council and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council?*

The FJD will consider all proposals equally.

Q13. *Does the FJD (RFP page 7, section 5d, iii) require the names, resumes, qualifications, references and experience and outcomes of similar projects for interpreters who are independent contractors, including those of all languages offered by the bidder or is this only required for support employees or employees who are interpreters? There are some languages that are rarely requested and there are multiple interpreters available for common languages. Providing this information will require much time and expense; the bidder invests a substantial amount of money acquiring and entering into agreements with interpreters.*

The FJD requests that interested vendors provide detailed personnel responses to illustrate your ability to perform the requested services and support your proposal.

Q14. Will the FJD agree not to directly contact the interpreters identified and not to disclose their names to anyone else (such as AOPC to solicit attendance at educational programs)?

As stated in the RFP, the FJD is seeking qualified agency(ies) to serve in the capacity of Court Interpreter Services Agency. We have in the past sent information to our vendors to distribute to their staff to participate in our shadowing program at the FJD. It is a free program and gives interpreters training on proper legal interpretation in the courtroom.

Q15. On page 5, section 2, the last paragraph states: "Selected Vendors shall pay their interpreters according to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts ("AOPC") Interpreter Program's relative rate schedule;" the bid may contain "overages outside of the AOPC Compensation Schedule" and all contracts "will be subject to standard AOPC terms and conditions, including but not limited to, its parking and travel reimbursement provisions":

- **may a bidder pay the interpreter less than the amount set forth on the AOPC Compensation Schedule?**
- **may a bidder propose prices in its proposal that are higher than the AOPC Compensation Schedule?**
- **may a bidder propose a cancellation fee of more than one hour (typical industry standard) if the cancellation occurs with less than one business day's notice, even if the interpreter has not yet started an assignment?**
- **may a bid require mileage reimbursement at the IRS rate?**
- **may a bid require mileage reimbursement if the interpreter travels fewer than 50 miles round trip?**
- **may a bid require reimbursement for parking regardless of whether free parking exists within a five block radius of the assignment location?**
- **may a bid require payment for travel time when travel to the assignment is less than two hours one way from the interpreter's normal business address or location?**
- **may a bid propose travel time at a rate greater than half the minimum hourly compensation rate of the interpreter?**

See Q5.

Q16. Will more than one agency be awarded a contract from this RFP?

As stated in the RFP, the FJD is seeking qualified agency(ies) to serve in the capacity of Court Interpreter Services Agency.

Q17. Why is Widener University Delaware Law School included in RFP page 12, section xxii?

The FJD has collaborated with Widener University Delaware Law School since 2008 in running annual interpreter training programs. Interested vendors will be subject to the FJD's standard confidentiality provisions regarding information obtained from the FJD.

Q18. Do you want the 5 copies of the RFP as well?

Yes, all proposals must be submitted in 5 copies.

Q19. For the statement of the problem, are you referring to the constant need and void of needing American Sign Language interpreters and under the work plan demonstrate how Integrity Interpreting can eliminate that issue by providing certified and legally trained ASL interpreters? Should the format of all 4 requirements be in bullet form, paragraph form, or its own individual page?

State in succinct terms your understanding of the services required by this RFP. The format of your response is at your discretion. Please respond to all requirements of the RFP.

Q20. For the price, are you looking for an all-inclusive rate, or can it be a fixed hourly rate plus the general understanding of mileage, toll, parking reimbursements?

In consideration of the terms and conditions of the RFP, it is requested that each interested Vendor provide their best pricing possible to perform the requested services.