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NOTICE OF BID OPPORTUNITY

ISSUE DATE: Friday, September 1, 2023

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS: Friday, September 15, 2023

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: Friday, September 29, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. PDT

The Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (“AOC”) is initiating this informal solicitation to solicit proposals from qualified individuals and businesses interested in performing a study of compensation practices for court interpreters in Washington state as further described in this Informal Solicitation (“Solicitation”).

SCOPE OF WORK SUMMARY: The AOC is seeking an individual or business (“Vendor”) to conduct, analyze, report and communicate an accurate and comprehensive interpreter compensation study to address challenges in providing language access in Superior Courts and Courts of limited jurisdiction in Washington state (“Washington state courts”). The study will provide data driven recommendations for interpreter rates, compensation models, recruitment strategies, and recommendations for implementing the proposed changes.

NOTE: Each interested Vendor must have proposal responses signed by an authorized representative of the responding Vendor.

Proposals must be electronically submitted to Nancy Coverdell at Procurements@courts.wa.gov by the closing date and time with the subject line: “Proposal for Informal Solicitation; 2023 Interpreter Compensation Study.”

Should you have any questions about the specifications in this solicitation, please contact the Solicitation Coordinator, Nancy Coverdell at Procurements@courts.wa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in this solicitation.

INTERPRETER COMPENSATION STUDY INFORMATION SOLICITATION 2023

A. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The AOC is a state agency within Washington's judicial branch providing support to Washington's non-unified courts through a wide range of services. The AOC is committed to ensuring equal access to justice and to increasing informed access to the legal system.

The AOC desires to enter into a Contract with a qualified Vendor to conduct, analyze, report and communicate an accurate and comprehensive interpreter compensation study to address challenges in providing language access in courts. The purpose of this study is to determine a practical, fair compensation model that could be implemented for court interpreters and identify recruitment strategies to enhance language access in Washington state courts. The AOC intends to award as a result of this Solicitation one Contract to perform the services requested.

B. EXPECTED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Regardless of the date of execution of any resulting contractual agreement flowing from this Solicitation, the period of performance is expected to be no more than 3 months. It is anticipated that work will begin upon execution of the Contract and conclude by the close of business on December 31, 2023. If necessary, and at the sole option of the AOC, time extensions and appropriate scope and compensation adjustments may be made to the Contract.

C. COMPENSATION

The AOC anticipates the estimated contract value to be above thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) but below one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000). The total contract value cannot exceed the AOC's Informal Solicitation Threshold of \$100,000. If the AOC determines it is necessary to increase the Vendor's involvement, the AOC may amend any awarded contract to increase the contract value. Such amendment, if any, to increase or decrease the dollar value and extend the period of performance, shall be at the sole discretion of the AOC.

D. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Vendor will be expected to provide the following minimum services:

- Analyzing large data sets provided by the AOC to extract relevant data points, reviewing interpreter rates and hourly minimums, while considering various factors such as geographical diversity, different modalities of interpreting (in-person vs. remote), variations in number of credentialed interpreters (interpreters who are either certified or registered by the AOC) and demand by languages, and interpreter demographics).

- Collecting data from interpreters, courts or other related sources to obtain comprehensive information regarding language access issues and practical suggestions for improvement. Data collection may be conducted through various means, such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups, and will aim to identify specific challenges faced by interpreters and courts.
- Evaluating issues related to competition between courts, states, other public sectors, and private organizations offering similar interpreter services to ensure rate compatibility and establish benchmarks for best practices. The evaluation should address resource utilization, compensation provided to interpreters, challenges related to interpreter availability, and qualification requirements across different organizations.
- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of interpreter compensation and proposing a fair and equitable pay scale across different regions, languages, and modalities of interpreting. The compensation model should incorporate various factors, including cost of living variations, certification status, interpreter profile characteristics such as gender, age, years of experience, and other relevant variables. The analysis also entails examining interpreter supply and demand disparities and recommending targeted recruitment strategies based on these factors.
- Developing feasible and actionable solutions and implementation strategies to help Washington state courts adopt recommended best practices and make necessary changes to improve language access. Key considerations in the development and implementations of these solutions include, but are not limited to, the cost and technology requirements, compliance with state laws, long-term sustainability, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented solutions.
- Communicating and collaborating with representatives of the AOC to collect relevant data, discuss key areas of focus, and incorporate input on equity considerations to work towards a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges in providing interpreter services and identifying strategies to address them.
- Preparing and delivering a final report and data set (compatible with Microsoft Excel and Word) containing all of the information/data, including an executive summary, a description of the process and methodologies used, key findings and recommendations.
- Presenting as requested the conclusions, options, and recommendations to the AOC in a clear and concise manner to facilitate decision-making.

E. VENDOR'S PROPOSAL

The Vendor's Proposal should be brief, but address and/or provide:

- (1) The Vendor's interest in performing the work;
- (2) The Vendor's experience in delivering similar services;
- (3) The Vendor's proposed work plan and description of deliverables;
- (4) The Vendor's proposed schedule to accomplish the deliverables;
- (5) The names and contact details for at least three (3) professional references who can validate the Vendor's experience in offering services of similar scope and nature to the ones included in this Solicitation. The list should include the agency or business name and complete contact information of the client and a point of contact at that agency or business;
- (6) Attachment A—Acknowledgment;

The AOC reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the Proposal submitted. Therefore, a Vendor should submit its Proposal initially on the most favorable terms that the Vendor can offer. The AOC reserves the right to contact a Vendor for clarification of its Proposal during the evaluation process. In addition, if a Proposal is selected, the AOC reserves the right to enter into contract negotiations with the Apparent Successful Bidder ("ASB"), which may include discussion regarding the ASB's approach to meeting the terms of the Contract. Contract negotiations may result in incorporation of some, or all of the ASB's entire Proposal. The ASB must be prepared to accept this Solicitation for incorporation into a Contract resulting from the Solicitation. The Contract may incorporate some or all of the ASB's entire Proposal. At its discretion, the AOC reserves the right to request best and final offers from the Solicitation finalists. It also is understood that the Proposal will become a part of the official procurement file.

F. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward and concise description of the Vendor's ability to meet the requirements of this Solicitation. Standard brochures are not to be included in the Proposal. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

Proposals must be prepared using size 12, Arial or Times New Roman font, standard letter sized pages (8 ½ x 11-inch), using separators for the major sections of the Proposal. Proposals must be on official Vendor letterhead and must be signed by a person authorized to bind the Vendor to a Contract. Proposals must include the following in the order given:

- (1) Vendor name.
- (2) Name and title of proposing Vendor's authorized representative.
- (3) Address.
- (4) Telephone number.
- (5) Statement that proof of required insurance provisions will be provided if awarded a Contract as a result of this Solicitation.
- (6) Statement indicating, as a condition of Contract award, that Vendor will register as a statewide vendor within ten (10) Business Days of notification of Contract award.

Proposals will be evaluated by the AOC based on the response provided to the information requested above. All requirements listed above must be addressed in the Proposal to be considered responsive. The AOC will make the sole determination of clarity and completeness in the responses to any of the provisions in this Solicitation. The AOC reserves the right to require clarification, additional information, and materials in any form relative to any or all of the provisions or conditions of this Solicitation. The evaluation process is designed to award this procurement not necessarily to the Vendor with the lowest cost, but rather to the Vendor whose Proposal best meets the requirements of this Solicitation.

The AOC will not be liable for any errors or omissions in a Vendor's Proposal.

The deadline for submission of responses is 5:00 p.m. PDT on Friday, September 29, 2023 ("Submission Due Date"). Late bids will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration. Requests to extend the deadline to respond will not be granted to ensure fairness to all parties.

Vendors may withdraw a Proposal that has been submitted at any time up to the Submission Due Date. A written request signed by an authorized representative of the Vendor must be electronically submitted via email to the Solicitation Coordinator identified below. After withdrawing a previously submitted Proposal, the Vendor may submit another Proposal at any time up to the Submission Due Date.

Vendors will not be allowed to alter Proposal documents after the Solicitation Due Date listed below. The AOC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor administrative irregularities contained in any Proposal.

Proposals must be submitted electronically to:

Nancy Coverdell, Solicitation Coordinator
Administrative Office of the Courts
Procurements@courts.wa.gov

Faxed proposals will not be accepted and will be disqualified.

The AOC assumes no responsibility for delays in the receipt or delivery of any documents required by this Solicitation.

The AOC reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any or all Proposals and to cancel or to reissue this Solicitation in whole or in part, prior to the execution of a Contract. This Solicitation does not obligate the AOC to contract for the specified services. The final selection will be the Vendor who, in the opinion of the AOC, best satisfy the requirements set forth above. The AOC shall not be responsible for any costs associated with a Vendor's preparation of a bid responsive to this Solicitation.

If the AOC receives only one (1) responsive Proposal as a result of this Solicitation, then the AOC reserves the right to select and award the Contract to the responding Vendor.

G. SOLICITATION COORDINATOR

Any requests for information about this Solicitation should be directed to the following Solicitation Coordinator (“Coordinator”):

Nancy Coverdell, Solicitation Coordinator
Administrative Office of the Courts
Procurements@courts.wa.gov

The Solicitation Coordinator is the sole point of contact at the AOC for this Solicitation. All communication between the Vendors and the AOC upon receipt of this Solicitation shall be with the Coordinator as follows:

Unauthorized contact regarding this Solicitation with other state employees may result in disqualification. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the AOC. Vendors shall reply only to written statements issued by the Solicitation Coordinator.

Specific questions concerning this Solicitation may be submitted in writing to the Solicitation Coordinator at the email address specified above. The Solicitation Coordinator must receive questions no later than September 15, 2023. The AOC will not respond to Vendor questions received after said deadline. All Vendor questions will be compiled by the Solicitation Coordinator for review by the AOC. Responses from the AOC will be presented in written form and provided electronically.

Vendors shall disregard any oral representations they may have received. Proposal evaluation will be based on the material contained in the Solicitation and any amendments to the Solicitation that have been issued.

H. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Materials submitted in response to this Solicitation become the property of the AOC.

All Proposals received shall remain confidential until the AOC announces the Apparent Successful Bidder (“ASB”) or a decision is made not to award this procurement. Thereafter, the Proposals shall be publicly accessible.

Vendors must clearly designate any information contained in a Proposal that is considered proprietary. Each page must be identified, as well as the specific legal reason (e.g., statute, court rule, case law, etc.) upon which the Vendor is making the claim. Each page claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the word

“Proprietary” printed in the lower margins of each page, as appropriate. Marking of the entire Proposal or a substantial portion of the Proposal as proprietary will be determined as non-responsive.

If a request is made to view or obtain a copy of a Vendor’s Proposal, the AOC will comply with applicable public disclosure requirements. If any information in the Proposal is marked as proprietary, such information will not be made available until the Vendor has been given an opportunity to seek an injunction or restraining order against the requested disclosure. Cost Proposals are not proprietary.

ATTACHMENT A - ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Vendor must include a signed acknowledgment that all the provisions, terms and conditions of this Solicitation are agreeable to the Vendor and may, at the AOC's option, be made applicable in any Contract issued as a result of this Solicitation. Proposals that do not include such an acknowledgment may be rejected.

Executing and returning (with the Proposal) the acknowledgment shown below will satisfy this requirement.

The undersigned agrees that all the provisions, terms and conditions of this Solicitation may, at the AOC's option, be made applicable in any Contract issued as a result of this solicitation.

Signature

Date

Printed Legal Name

Title

NAME AND SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSALS AND CONTRACTS

The correct and full legal business name of the Vendor must be used in Proposals received and on Contracts issued as a result of this Solicitation. A trade name (*i.e.*, a shortened or different name under which the firm does business) must not be used when the legal name is different. Corporations must have names that comply with Washington law, which requires a suffix indicating the corporate status of the business (*e.g.*, Inc., Incorporated, etc.). Trade names may be indicated by individuals or corporations with the individual or corporate name followed by "t/a" (trading as) or "d/b/a" (doing business as), respectively. The Vendor's signature on the Proposal, Contract, amendment(s) or related correspondence, must conform to the following:

All signatures must be made by an authorized officer, partner, manager, member, or employee. The signing of this Proposal or a Contract is a representation by the person signing that the person signing is authorized to do so on behalf of the Vendor.