

Addendum No. 1 to RFP 26-73



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Procurement and Contracting Services
JAKE WILSON
MAYOR

To: All Parties on Record with the City of Somerville as Holding
RFP 26-73 Language Access Services

From: Thupten Chukhatsang

Date: 5/14/2026

Re: Question and Answers

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Please acknowledge receipt of this Addendum by signing below and including this form in your proposal package. Failure to do so may subject the proposer to disqualification.

NAME OF COMPANY / INDIVIDUAL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE/FAX/EMAIL: _____

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUAL: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ADDENDA:

Addendum #1 _____ **#2** _____ **#3** _____ **#4** _____

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Questions and Answers

| # | Question | Answer |
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| 1. | Is this contract a first time bid or a re-bid? | This is the second time the City has released the RFP for Language Access Services. The first was about 3 years ago. |
| 2. | Is there an incumbent? If, “yes” who is it? | The RFP intended to award multiple contracts in multiple service categories. In the previous RFP, the City awarded 5 contracts in total to Baystate Interpreters, Community Interpreter Services, CETRA Language Solutions, Cross Cultural Communication Systems, Lionbridge, and Rosetta Languages. |
| 3. | Can you share the actual prices your organization is paying in the actual contract? | For translations, we are paying between 0.11/word to 0.20/word. For interpretation, we are paying \$60 - \$125/hour (two hours minimum). For over-the-phone interpretation we are paying \$0.45 - \$1.80 per minute. The price range depends on the language, particular service/expertise, and mode of providing the language access services. |
| 4. | For in person interpretation, how often does your organization need this service? | We use this service between 1-4 times we week for various events and meetings, across multiple languages. There are some weeks that are busy than others. This has steadily increased over the last few years as demand as grown. |
| 5. | Do you need interpretation equipment for simultaneous interpretation or does your organization owns it? | No. We own our own simultaneous interpretation equipment. |
| 6. | Is there a percentage of the contract designated for MWBE companies? | No, there isn't any specific percentage of the contract designated for MWBE companies. |

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| 7. | How many translation requests did your organization have in the last 12 months? | In the past year we have completed approximately 3,700 translations. |
| 8. | What is usually the turnaround for the translation's requests? | Turnaround time expectations for translation requests vary and include urgent same-day translations as needed. The City is interested in learning about the turnaround time and capabilities for translations from the applicants' proposal submission. |
| 9. | In the "Quality Requirements Form" at #1, it states that the applicant has to have "demonstrated success providing language access services (translation and interpretation) to immigrant residents in Massachusetts" - Our experience is nation-wide and well as international, but not specifically for immigrant residents in Massachusetts. Should we apply anyway? And if so, what should we mark in the form in question? | You may still apply. You may respond "yes" if the only criteria you are missing is work in Massachusetts specifically. In your application, please address how your work in other localities supports your ability to work effectively with immigrant residents in Massachusetts. |
| 10. | Does page 3 of the "Massachusetts Living Wage Ordinance" need to be signed? | Yes. |
| 11. | Can we apply for partial services for this bid? If so will it effect the scoring of the bid? | As the RFP states, "Applicants may bid on one or more service categories." The number of service categories you apply for does not impact the scoring of the bid. |
| 12. | What are the most requested services? | <p>In order of frequency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Translation 2. Over-the-phone interpretation 3. Simultaneous interpretation 4. Consecutive interpretation |

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| 13. | What are the primary goals the City aims to achieve specifically for Service Category 1 (Translation Services) through this RFP? | Provide timely and accurate translations to the public that uses consistent and understandable terminology for our community. |
| 14. | Which City departments are expected to utilize Service Category 1 (Translation Services)? | All City departments |
| 15. | Can you provide a breakdown of spend per department for each service category under the previous contract? | We have a centralized language access budget that serves all departments. We spend approximately \$80,000 on translations, \$100,000 on interpretation for events and meetings, and \$50,000 for over-the-phone interpretation. |
| 16. | Can vendors bid exclusively on Service Category 1 (Translation Services) without being disadvantaged in evaluation? | Yes. See response to question #11 as well. |
| 17. | How will translation work be distributed among awarded vendors? For example, will City departments reach out to vendors independently or will the City issue RFQs for each department? | The request process is centralized for all departments through the communications team and determined based on pricing, subject matter, and turn around time at the discretion of the City. |
| 18. | Are non-MA vendors eligible for the work? | Vendors based outside of MA are eligible. |
| 19. | Will vendors who only bid on Service Category 1 (Translation Services) be evaluated equally against vendors who bid on all service categories? | No. |
| 20. | Can the City clarify the weighting of the technical vs. pricing evaluation? | We are foremost concerned with ensuring that we establish contracts with LSPs that meet the needs of the City. |
| 21. | Can historic or anticipated translation volume be shared for the eight top languages? Please note that the total number of words is a more helpful metric compared to the total number of documents or pages. | We may scale over time to 1 million words per year (source language). In prior years we have translated approximately 600,000 words per year (source language). This totals around 3.5 million words per year of translated words (across 6 primary languages that we translate into most frequently). |
| 22. | Is the City able to provide historic or anticipated translation volumes for the other languages listed in the RFP? That is, those languages that fall outside of the top 8. | Translations into other languages outside the top 8 are infrequent at this time. Typically these projects are 1000 words a year or less. |

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| 23. | Does the scope include both English-to-foreign language and foreign language-to-English translation? If so, please provide any available volume information for each direction. | Almost all requests are English into target language. We occasionally (5-10 times per year) have requests for source language to English translation. These projects are typically under 500 words (emails, survey responses). |
| 24. | Under Quality Requirements on page 23, the City states that applicant must have at least three years of demonstrated success providing language access services to immigrant residents in Massachusetts. We have 25 years' experience providing language access services to immigrant residents in New York City and New York State. Does this make us eligible? | Yes. Please see response to question #9 as well. |
| 25. | What are the City's expectations regarding the use of AI or machine translation for Service Category 1 (Translation Services)? Note that our AI-assisted workflow includes thorough editing conducted by professional human linguists. | We understand that many LSPs use AI as part of their workflow, and we always want a qualified human translator in the loop. We are interested in leveraging AI and translation memory as part of the workflow, but not as a full replacement of human translators. |
| 26. | Will separate pricing tiers for fully human workflow vs AI-assisted workflow be accepted? How will the City distinguish bidders' pricing for full human workflows vs AI-assisted workflows? | Yes, we will accept this and encourage it. The price proposal section for Translation includes two rows: one for Translation and one for Translation Review. You may include AI-assisted workflows under Translation Review. You may add supplemental notes to clarify your pricing structure in the "Notes" row in each of the pricing proposal sections. |
| 27. | Does the 1M word capacity per year expectation apply per vendor or overall? | Overall |
| 28. | Is the 1M words per year based on historic volume or anticipated volume? | Anticipated |
| 29. | What percentage of requests are expected to be rush or expedited? | Currently less than 5% |
| 30. | What percentage of projects require desktop publishing, formatting, or related services? | About half of our projects require this. We currently do most of this work manually in-house but would like to reduce the amount of time we spend on this. |

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| 31. | May vendors propose tiered pricing by volume and language combination? | Yes |
| 32. | Is the City open to volume-based discounts tied to annual commitments? | We are open to volume-based discounts |
| 33. | May vendors submit a supplemental rate card? | Yes |
| 34. | What is the anticipated annual budget for Service Category 1 (Translation Services)? | \$70,000 |
| 35. | What were the incumbent vendors' rates for Service Category 1 (Translation Services)? | 0.11/word to 0.20/word with no distinction between full human translation and AI-assisted translation. |
| 36. | Who are the incumbent vendors for Service Category 1 (Translation Services)? | Baystate Interpreters, Community Interpreter Services, CETRA Language Solutions, Cross Cultural Communication Systems, and Rosetta Languages. |
| 37. | What reporting requirements will vendors need to meet? | As stated in the RFP: LSP must be able to provide reports on number of translation requests, languages requested, and word count, as requested. |

--- End of Addendum ---