

March 31, 2006

To: All Prospective Proposers

From: Houston Community College System

Subject: Informational Letter #1 - Request for Proposals for Sign Language Interpretive and C.A.R.T. Services (Project No. 06-13)

The following written questions were submitted to Houston Community College System ("HCC") by vendors interested in the subject solicitation for:

Sign Language Interpretive and C.A.R.T. Services.
Project No. 06-13
Questions and Answers

Question No. 1: Interns – Interpreter Interns are typically not paid and do not replace qualified interpreters. Is HCC suggesting to use interns in place of certified interpreters?

HCC Response: No,

Comment No. 1: Resumes – My Company would not be agreeable to providing interpreter resumes.

HCC Response: This is a requirement of the Request for Proposals.

Comment No. 2: Financial Statements – My Company is privately held and would not be willing to provide private financial statements.

HCC Response: See response to Comment No. 1.

Question No. 2: Multiple contracts – Our pricing would be based on a sole contract. Our pricing would be higher if multiple contracts are awarded. How do you suggest we include this information?

HCC Answer: Each price proposal should be structured in accordance with the requirements of the Request for Proposals. The basis of preparation and submission of a price proposal is the business decision of the company submitting a proposal.

Question No. 3: Payment and Performance bonds – These are typically for construction awards. Our previous work with HCC indicates these are not a concern. Could these be eliminated?

HCC Answer: No.

Question No. 4: Review Notes and course Outline – This will require extra time. Is HCC willing to pay extra for the time involved?

HCC Answer: HCC will pay for **all** services rendered and accepted in accordance with the terms and conditions of a resulting contract.

Question No. 5: Fees – we do not use graduated fee schedule by interpreter level, nor do most agencies across the country. Can a flat fee be proposed?

HCC Answer: HCC is requesting pricing as outlined in the Request for Proposals.

Question No. 6: Reassignment – My Company would suggest that time frame, campus and interpreter qualifications should be considered when making reassignments.

HCC Answer: This will be taken under consideration.

Question No. 7: Attendance sheets – My Company has an integrated electronic system for scheduling and billing which minimizes any errors and prevents the unintentional release of confidential information. Signing attendance sheets is an antiquated system no longer in use in most settings. There are a number of risks, not to mention the headache of tracking enormous amounts of paperwork. My company suggests eliminating this from the contract.

HCC Response: See Amendment No. 2.

Question No. 8: What type of guarantee of timely payment is HCC willing to offer? Other contracts with delinquent payments are charged finance charges and late fees. Is HCC willing to put these in the contract?

HCC Response: Generally, payment of correctly prepared invoices is made by HCC within 30 calendar days after receipt by the Accounting Department (please refer to Paragraph 19 of Exhibit D, General Terms and Conditions).

Question No. 9: Audit and availability of records – My Company’s financial records are not available for duplication.

HCC Answer: This is a requirement of the Request for Proposals.

Question No. 10: Given the number of items, do you suggest we apply noting our modification, or will these items disqualify our proposal? Please let me know how to proceed.

HCC Response: The decision to apply must be made by your company. HCC will evaluate all responsive proposals (please refer to the Instructions to Proposers, Paragraph 3 entitled: Eligibility for Award).

Question No. 11: Our first question has to do with value. Can you tell us what the annual expenditure for HCC to purchase interpreter services has been for interpreters working in the classroom for student access and then how much has been spent to provide services for employees of HCC? What are the projected budgets for these two line items?

HCC Answer: The contract expenditures for a 12-month period are as follows:

- a. Students/Classrooms: approximately \$ 993,000
- b. Employees: approximately \$75,000

The projected budgets for the two line items are:

- a. Students/Classrooms: approximately \$ 1,000,000
- b. Employees: approximately \$80,000

Question No. 12: Second question has to do with expectations of the contracting agency... Does HCC plan to sub contract "coordination" and "provision of direct services" to an outside agency? In other words, do you plan to move all services to the contract or is this contract only to provide services when the needs exceed capabilities on on site staff? What is the organizational structure at HCC? Does the College plan to fill the interpreter coordinator vacancy? Will this person offer sub contract work to an outside agency only after HCC staff have been fully utilized or after their own efforts and outside resources have been exhausted? Perhaps you are looking to agencies to offer an alternative to what you have been doing in the past?

HCC Answer: This solicitation is being issued with the intent of selecting and awarding a contract to a contractor to perform all of the services as outlined in the Scope of Services (please refer to Attachment No. 3).

Question No. 13: Lastly, the Bid, as I read it, asks for a considerable amount of personal and proprietary information which would become "open record" once a contract is awarded. Our industry is not one in which tangible goods are offered for sale. It is our operating systems and knowledge of resources, going above and beyond levels of certification that give us value in the community and specifically our value as a contracting agency to HCC. Specific information regarding financials, administrative support personnel and specific qualifications of direct service personnel are proprietary in nature. Does HCC offer any protection to bidders who provide proprietary information?

HCC Answer: Any information contained in a proposal and identified, as "proprietary information" will be treated as such by HCC. Any open record requests will be handled in accordance with HCC General Counsel advice and the State of Texas statutes.