Letter of Clarification #1
FOREIGN AND SIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION SERVICES RFP

To: All Contractors/Vendors/Providers

From: James Blunt, Buyer II
       CC: Sharon Brauner, Buyer III
       CC: Nina Cook, Purchasing Manager

Date: April 10, 2018

RE: Foreign and Sign Language Translation Services RFP

For the benefit of all Contractors/Vendors/Providers submitting proposals and to avoid possible confusion in response to the proposal documents are clarified as follows. Please note this Letter of Clarification is hereby incorporated into the proposal document and shall supersede any previous specification or provision.

1. Questions #1. Our company does not have a local office in Houston but it is owned by our parent company, which has a local office in Houston. Will this office qualify as a Local Office under Section IV (K)?

   Answer #1: Yes, your local office owned by your parent company does qualify.

2. Question #2. Our company provides American Sign Language interpreting services but it does not provide Foreign Language/Translation services. Will you accept a bid for only ASL interpreting services?

   Answer #2: Yes, bids for ASL interpreting services only will be accepted.

3. Question #3. Who is your current provider(s) of ASL onsite services?

   Answer #3: The Harris Center has a pool of providers.

4. Questions #4. What are the current ASL onsite interpreting rates for your onsite provider(s)?

   Answer #4: The current incumbent hourly bill rate cannot be given out at this time.

   Text of the Texas Public Information Act
   2014 Public Information Handbook
   Office of the Attorney General
   § 552.104. Exception: Information Related to Competition or Bidding, (a) Information is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if it is information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder.

   A formal written Open Record Request may be requested after Contract is awarded for this RFP.
5. **Questions #5.** How many ASL interpreting hours did you use last year?

   **Answer #5:** The Agency requested 617 hours of interpretation services.

6. **Question #6.** Will you accept a proposal for Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) for ASL as a supplemental service?

   **Answer #6:** The Agency is not accepting at this time proposals for Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) for ASL as a supplemental service.

7. **Question #7.** What percentage of your interpreting assignments are for last minute needs (less than 2 full business days’ notice)?

   **Answer #7:** Less than five percent of our interpreting assignments are for less than two full business days’ notice.

8. **Question #8.** What are the improvements that you would like to see from your current provider?

   **Answer #8:** The Agency would like to see better quality of service, timeliness and availability of trilingual staff.

9. **Question #9.** What language services does The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD currently utilize?

   **Answer #9:** The Harris Center currently uses face to face/Onsite and over the phone interpretation/telephone interpretation.

10. **Question #10.** How many providers does The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD currently utilize to provide language services?

    **Answer #10:** The Harris Center currently has four contractors providing language services.

11. **Question #11.** Can The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD please provide historical usage data and/or estimated usage data for the language services it currently utilizes?

    **Answer #11:** In fiscal year 2017 The Harris Center processed over eight thousand request for face to face and over the phone Interpretation combined.

12. **Questions #12.** Can you please provide a list of the specific language services The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD is looking to contract through this RFP (e.g. telephone interpreting, video remote interpreting, on-site interpreting, translation, etc.)?

    **Answer #12:** There is a current need for face to face, over the phone, sign language and written translation.

13. **Questions #13.** Why is The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD looking for a new language services provider?

    **Answer #13:** Current contract expires August 31, 2018.
14. Question #14. Do you prefer a locally based vendor?

Answer #14: Yes, a local based vendor is preferred but not necessary.

15. Questions #15. Have you considered Over the Phone or Video Remote Interpreting instead of face to face?

Answer #15: The Agency currently uses over the phone services. At this time the Agency is not setup for Video Remote Interpreting.

16. Questions #16. Does Harris have a need for translation (written) services?

Answer #16: Yes, there is a need for translation (written) services.

17. Question #17. Are the incumbents invited to this RFP?

Answer #17: Yes, the incumbents are invited to provide a proposal.

18. Questions #18. Any particular needs or requests related to this RFP?

Answer #18: See page 10, in the RFP, Section VI, Scope of Services and Evaluation Questions and page 12, Section VIII, Proposal Reply Page.

19. Questions #19. Is HUB certification or Hub sub-contracting a requirement to qualify for this RFP?

Answer #19: HUB certification is not a requirement to qualify for the RFP. As stated in the Section III, Item M, (page 5) the Agency will make a good faith effort to utilize Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB).

20. Question #20. If we are unable to provide the financial information in Section III (J), will we be disqualified as a bidder?

Answer #20: Section VII, Proposal Contents, states that the latest audited financial statement or a letter from your CPA must be submitted as additional documents with your RFP.

21. Questions #21. Section III, Item N (M/W/DBE Certification) requests that vendors, “Please submit proof of City of Houston M/W/DBE certificate.” If a vendor is a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certified by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), can we supply that certificate to satisfy this requirement?

Answer #21: Yes, provide MBE certification as proof you are a minority owned business. As stated in Section III, Item N, the Agency will make a good faith effort to utilize Minority/Woman and Disadvantage Business.

22. Questions #22. By "foreign" interpretation services, are you referring to non ASL interpretations such as MSL (Mexican Sign Language) for example? Is there a list of sign language variations you can share with us?

Answer #22: Foreign is mainly for other languages such as Vietnamese, Arabic, etc... As for Sign Language, we’ve used native signers, CDIs and/or Trilingual signers (Spanish Signing and other signing languages) as needed.
23. **Questions #23.** This RFP refers interchangeably to "translation" and "interpretation" services, but we believe that the terminology usage is mistaken. Is the Harris Center looking for a service to provide INTERPRETATION (which is spoken, provided over the phone, through video, or in person) or TRANSLATION (which is written, like with pamphlets, forms and other forms)?

**Answer #23:** The majority of our request services is for interpretation. However, we need translation services for written pamphlets and other forms.

24. **Questions #24.** Do you know the total language services spend last year and further broken down by interpreting vs translation? We are trying to understand the volume of this RFP.

**Answer #24:** We processed an overall total of 8,751 requests for our fiscal year 2017. This number includes sign language and all other languages. Each appointment could be 1 (one) hour to 4 (four) hours at a time. Depending on the need. An intake takes 3-4 hours per appointment. This could be in a clinic or at a person’s home.

25. **Question #25.** Can companies from Outside USA apply for this (example: India or Canada)?

**Answer #25:** No.

26. **Questions #26.** Does the vendor need to come to The Harris Center location for meeting?

**Answer #26:** Vendors will need to attend meetings with clients at The Harris Center clinics or at the patient’s home.

27. **Questions #27.** Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA (example: India or Canada)?

**Answer #27:** No.

28. **Question #28.** Can we submit the proposals via email?

**Answer #28:** No, Section III, General Instructions, Item C in the RFP indicates all proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope and delivered to the cited address by Tuesday, April 17, 2018, at 10:00 A.M. No proposals will be accepted after 10:00 A.M.

29. **Question #28.** What are the main challenges Harris is seeing with this service?

**Answer #28:** The main challenges are staff arriving on time, quality of service and quick response to no shows of staff.

This Letter of Clarification #1 is hereby incorporated in the RFP document and shall supersede any previous specification or provision in conflict with the Letter of Clarification #1. All responding Contractors are directed to respond accordingly. Contractors are required to add this Letter of Clarification #1 to the original RFP document.