



**City of Tacoma**  
**Citywide**

**Translation and Transcreation Services**  
**RFP Specification No. CT23-0110F**

**QUESTIONS and ANSWERS**

All interested parties had the opportunity to submit questions in writing by email to Tad Carlson by 3:00 pm on August 7, 2023. The answers to the received questions are provided below and posted to the City's website at [www.TacomaPurchasing.org](http://www.TacomaPurchasing.org): Navigate to *Current Contracting Opportunities / Services*, and then click *Questions and Answers* for this Specification. This information IS NOT considered an addendum. Respondents should consider this information when submitting their proposals.

**Preproposal Meeting Questions**

- Question 1:**                    **Who is the current vendor**  
*Answer 1:*                    *We currently have a single provider under contract but City users are ordering services from providers outside of that agreement. The intent of this RFP is to provide a variety of options, under contract for City users to have options when needs arise.*
- Question 2:**                    **Do you know if the vendor has to be registered with City of Tacoma (business license) or with WA State?**  
*Answer 2:*                    *Not to reply but ultimately yes. Post award, the supplier will need to be authorized to work in Washington State and the City of Tacoma.*
- Question 3:**                    **What's the contract ceiling amount?**  
*Answer 3:*                    *There is no ceiling. We are targeting \$50,000 as an initial not to exceed on contract but actual spend will depend on ordered and delivered services. If demand exceeds \$50,000 and amendment will be required but there is no firm cap.*
- Question 4:**                    **What languages have been your biggest demand and what has been the biggest challenge?**  
*Answer 4:*                    *In order of use in Tacoma: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Ukrainian, Khmar, Tagalog*  
                                      *Vietnamese – challenge is dialect*  
                                      *Kamar/Tagalong – written language is a challenge since they are largely verbal*  
                                      *Chinese is coming*
- Question 5:**                    **Can we use the references for the example of projects section of the proposal as well?**  
*Answer 5:*                    *yes*

- Question 6:** Can we apply for certain services and not others?  
**Answer 6:** Yes
- Question 7:** Thanks! Will this contract be extended to other divisions, such as Tacoma Pierce Health Dept.?  
**Answer 7:** *It will be piggyback-able but other public entities will not of unless they piggyback the agreement. It will be available to Tacoma Police, Tacoma Fire, Tacoma Public Library, Tacoma Public Utilities.*
- Question 8:** It says telephone and video service should be 24 hrs 365 days, we don't hold those hours, can we still apply? (Reg. hrs 9am-5pm M-F)  
**Answer 8:** *Yes, please respond with all services you are able to provide and specify any availability and/or limitations to when you are able to provide services.*
- Question 9:** Can you elaborate a bit on the expected split between your needs for interpretation and written translation services? That is, where is more volume typically / expected?  
**Answer 9:** *Vital information must be made available in specified languages. The demand for written translation tends to be greater than the demand for interpretation. According to the federal law, all vital documents must be translated.*
- Question 10:** For pricing - Are you looking for one group price for each tier (1, 2, 3), or can we price individual languages?  
**Answer 10:** *We haven't a set pricing structure in mind. Please include a comprehensive pricing list, inclusive of all administrative costs, in the manner that you typically charge.*
- Question 11:** You haven't mentioned volume for all the services. Please let us know volume for each services.  
**Answer 11:** *We are entering our language access plan and so our needs are evolving. Many of these are as-needed and part of what we are trying capture via these new contracts is what kind of services are used and at what frequency.*
- Question 12:** Budget is in the range of 50,000 to 150,000/- Pls elaborate.  
**Answer 12:** *See number 3.*
- Question 13:** Re: Transcreation Ambassadors. Must these be based in Tacoma proper, or can we utilize ambassadors who are familiar with the broader linguistic community in the Western Washington region?  
**Answer 13:** *Cannot give a hard no but we have a strong preference for ambassadors that are a part of, and therefore familiar with, the specific populations of Tacoma.*
- Question 14:** How many On-Site Interpretation (OSI) services are pre-scheduled?  
**Answer 14:** *City events are prescheduled. Meeting customer needs are those that come in randomly and therefore are not prescheduled, so we ask for 2-4 working days to get the service required. That provides us with some time to arrange/schedule with the providers.*

- Question 15:** Similarly, on Transcreation Ambassadors, based on the RFP document it appears that some of the needs for this service don't require on-site/regional presence in COT. Can we submit a response for our services in the transcreation ambassador section e.g. for providing transcreation and review, presentations etc if we are based outside the region ? (I understand that for a lot of the Transcreation Ambassador scope it is highly advantageous to be based in COT or local area.)
- Answer 15:* You can respond as long as the Transcreation Ambassadors are available to provide service in Tacoma.
- Question 16:** Do you work with Pierce County Emergency Services on any of your programs?
- Answer 16:* Not sure how closely we work but the work of this contract is going to originate from the City.
- Question 17:** How many expedited documents are required in a month?
- Answer 17:* We really do not have a very comprehensive overview of past usage and additionally, with past and upcoming changes the historical data would probably not be reflective of future use anyway.
- Question 18:** What is the turnaround time for routine translation document of more than 10 pages?
- Answer 18:* This depends on the scope (number of languages) for the project.
- Question 19:** Shall we provide rush rates for written translations? Shall we provide minimum fee rates?
- Answer 19:* Yes please include a comprehensive rate sheet including fees for expedited services as applicable.
- Question 20:** Are you currently utilizing machine translation in any capacity, maybe for internal consumption?
- Machine Translation is only utilized for website purposes, but it comes with a disclaimer that says it is a machine translation and may have some mistakes. We apologize for it and offer an active translation if needed or requested.*
- Question 21:** Do you have any anticipated projects within the city (2023/2024) that will likely mean an uptick in service needs?
- Answer 21:* Yes. We are in implementation and each department is identifying what is vital information. Once that discovery is complete, departments will be reaching out for translation of their documents. Example is forestry and housing who both have initiated their projects already. In addition to identifying Departments' vital information, the COT will advertise the availability of language services at no cost in April-May 2024. This will definitely increase the demand for these services.
- Question 22:** How important is pricing (vs. quality or speed of service) in the selection of a vendor and can you provide any existing pricing from incumbent or legacy vendors for document translation?

**Answer 22:** *Pricing comprises 20% of the scoring for submittals. Qualifications and processes comprise significantly more so, pricing matters but qualifications matter more. Users are going to have a variety of contracts to choose from so pricing may become a factor at the time of order as well so pricing should be as competitive as possible.*

**Question 23:** **Do you have in place at present or will you soon be implementing any centralized tools or technology to manage translations across all the COT departments that'll be affected by this RFP/effort, and if not are you interested in a vendor mentioning this in their response at all?**

**Answer 23:** *Yes, please include a description of any such offerings but be sure to separate this from a thorough response to the specific scope laid out in the RFP and complete response to the items from Content to be Submitted.*

**Question 24:** **If we are not located in Tacoma or Washington state, but do business there, are we still eligible to apply for things other than transcreation?**

**Answer 24:** *Yes, you need not provide all services to respond.*

**Question 25:** **Do you plan to cap/limit the number of vendors selected for this contract?**

**Answer 25:** *No.*

**Question 26:** **Do you want the coordination/management worked into the fees then rather than separate line on the invoice?**

**Answer 26:** *This needs to be incorporated into the pricing structure that is submitted. The City of Tacoma does not pay fees so administration of the contract on the supplier side, must be included in the unit pricing that is supplied.*

**Question 27:** **What kind of applications/ programs are you aware of that are most often used for documents that need translation? Microsoft word, etc? Ok if this info isn't available right now --> similarly, do you have needs for pricing for desktop publishing of translated documents from a vendor?**

**Answer 27:** *MS Word is ideal and PDFs are widely used. For more complicated languages, if there is a need for desktop publishing we will be asking for pricing as the project. For projects in complicated languages, we may ask for additional support with graphic design, if the provider is available to deliver it. We will ask in advance. If your firm provides graphic design services, it should be mentioned and priced.*

**Question 28:** **You do not use translation tables?**

**Answer 28:** *Yes we use translation tables but we will sometime ask you to provide that and sometime we will have graphic design done by the supplier. Other times, we will ask a supplier to just accuracy check. Other times, we will ask a supplier to check for accuracy after the design is done. The time spent checking should be charged as well.*

**Question 29:** **Will you need ADA remediation services to make documents accessible?**

*Answer 29:* *ADA compliance is a focus for city documents and so any documents produced by the supplier should be as accessible as possible. If ADA remediation is a service offered by a respondent, please include pricing structure for those services in the response.*

**Question 30:** **Is there any reference material that outlines the style needed for written translations? Style Guides, Glossaries, etc?**

*Answer 30:* *At this moment we don't have style guides but we will tell you our requirements (specific dialect, literacy level, etc.) before the assignment starts.*

**Question 31:** **Is Machine Translation with Human Post edition accepted?**

*Answer 31:* *Machine translation is not our preferred method, but we won't check how you make a translation. We will check and evaluate the quality and accuracy of the final translation delivered. We work with transcreators to review the final product.*

**Question 32:** **What Spanish variant is needed? Can we safely assume it's es-US? Spanish US can be used for some documents.**

*Answer 32:* *Sometimes, depending on the document or need, we may ask for Spanish from Latin America, mostly Mexican. This is because we have communities of recent immigrants, and they may not be familiar with the US Spanish. Same for communities who come from an indigenous background and barely understand the Spanish of their country of origin.*

**Question 33:** **If an audio recording is received as source, what type of delivery/process is required? Plain transcription, transcription and written translation, translated audio file (voiceover), captions?**

*Answer 33:* *It all depends on the need. We may need only a transcription and translation or we may request voiceover and captions if needed.*

#### **Questions received via email:**

Several questions were asked in many different forms but I have collected them into a single encompassing question and answer below.

**Question 34:** **Are partial bids accepted?**

*Answer 34:* *Yes, please submit for the services that you offer. Vendors need not offer all scoped services in order to be awarded a contract. A respondent need not be able to provide all languages, types of service or specifically the ambassador role to be considered for award of a contract. Responses can be for as little as a single service and be considered but obviously there is a desire to award one or more contracts with vendors that have broad offerings.*

**Question 35:** **Are multiple awards expected for the same service?**

*Answer 35:* *Yes, we are intending to award multiple contracts for translation and transcreation services and we anticipate overlap in offered services.*

- Question 36:** **If multiple awards are made, how will the work be apportioned?**  
*Answer 36:* *Department users will have access to pricing sheets for all executed contracts and will be able to select their vendor from the list based on pricing as well as their experience working with each vendor.*
- Question 37:** **What is the estimated value/budget of the contract?**  
*Answer 37:* *Individual contracts will begin at \$50,000 although that is not a guarantee of spend as actual spend will depend on ordered and delivered services. As City needs are ever-evolving we are not able to give an accurate estimate at what spend would be over the complete term.*
- Question 38:** **What is the Period of Performance?**  
*Answer 38:* *Please see the contract term section of the RFP.*
- Question 39:** **Could you please share past usage statistics broken down by service and language?**  
*Answer 39:* *One of the items we are trying to capture with these contracts is the type of language service, the language and the frequency. We do not have good data on former usage and our needs are expected to grow significantly so historic usage is probably not reflective of future use. The City of Tacoma is implementing its Language Access Plan. This implementation will increase the use of language services. Capturing the data you described here is essential.*
- Question 40:** **What is the name of the incumbent(s) and their contract number(s)?**  
*Answer 40:* *Please see Addendum 1 which includes former and existing contracts.*
- Question 41:** **Did the incumbent cover every single assignment successfully?**  
*Answer 41:* *We have had good performance out of previous vendors. This RFP is really intended to expand the options and capacity more than to mitigate existing problems.*
- Question 42:** **What challenges have you faced with similar scope of work from vendors you worked with?**  
*Answer 42:* *The biggest challenge has been making sure the translations and interpretations really match the languages spoken by our communities (for example, a translation in Latin American Spanish will be more effective than one in Peninsular/European Spanish)*
- Question 43:** **If there is no incumbent, please describe how you are obtaining these services up to now and what you are paying for the service.**  
*Answer 43:* *There is a single supplier currently under contract but many services are rendered by individual departments ordering services on their own.*
- Question 44:** **Can we ask for a debriefing in case we are not awarded?**  
*Answer 44:* *Yes. Debriefings will not be provided until all awarded contracts are fully executed.*
- Question 45:** **Is simultaneous interpreting needed too?**  
*Answer 45:* *Yes.*

- Question 46:** In what formats are the documents to be translated? Are there InDesign files?  
*Answer 46:* Most of our documents come in written versions. Word and PDF are the most popular formats. If the file comes in InDesign or another graphic software, you can request its text version.
- Question 47:** What is the average length of an interpreting assignment?  
*Answer 47:* We do not have good historical data and even if we did, it would likely be a poor representation of future volume.
- Question 48:** What are the evaluation criteria and how much weight is given to pricing?  
*Answer 48:* Please see the evaluation criteria section.
- Question 49:** Where would face-to-face interpreting assignments take place?  
*Answer 49:* There are a variety of venues and situations that require face-to-face interpreting from large public events to customer consultations. 95% of our assignments take place in the City of Tacoma. If there's any exemption, we will notify the provider with enough time in advance. We work mostly locally.
- Question 50:** What mathematical calculation will be used to evaluate pricing?  
*Answer 50:* The pricing score for each service will be awarded based on where in the range of responses it lies. Overall pricing will likely be an average of scoring per service offered. There is some ambiguity in how we will score these in the end because we are not sure how many different pricing structures to expect.
- Question 51:** Can we request feedback on the samples and how they were graded?  
*Answer 51:* Scoring sheets can be requested although scoring materials will not be provided until all awarded contracts are fully executed.
- Question 52:** What level of language are you seeking in translations (e.g., third-grade English vs. specialized, technical language for professionals)?  
*Answer 52:* There will be two scenarios. 80% basic level of English, 20% specialized (sometimes we have legislation, codes, Specific procedures, and/or other technical materials)
- Question 53:** How does the City currently organize their requests?  
*Answer 53:* Largely, city users currently seek out providers on their own as needs arise.
- Question 54:** Can parking and mileage be billed separately for Onsite interpretation or does it have to be included on the fees and charges?  
*Answer 54:* Parking and mileage must be included in the hourly rate. Most of the services that will be requested will be within the city limits and we would expect the hourly rate charged to include the ability to travel and park.

*We believe there is an adequate local translator pool that significant travel should not be required for local on-site translations. If a particular project requires extraordinary travel, it will be handled on a case by case basis.*

**Question 55:** **Can we use vendors outside the US for remote interpreting and translation services?**

*Answer 55: Please see the City's Terms and Conditions for details on vendors outside the United States.*

**Question 56:** **This question concerns Section 3. Scope of Service and Deliverables, subsection 3.5 Written Translation. Therein the City indicates that that the awarded vendor(s) could be required to support audio recordings. Could the City please provide more information as to what this service entails?**

*Audio recordings are used to pre-record messages in different languages for emergency situations (evacuations , or other safety protocols), or to record PSAs for radio advertisement.*

**Question 57:** **This question concerns Section 10. Content to Be Submitted, subsection 10.1 Qualifications/Experience of Firm. Therein, the City requests that the prospective vendor provide an example of transcreation work your firm has completed. Could the City please confirm that this is only required if a prospective vendor is submitting a response to the transcreation portion of the RFP?**

*Answer 57: Yes, if your firm does not provide transcreation services, we will not be expecting a sample.*

**Question 58:** **For 3.10 Data Collection & Reporting Requirements: At a minimum, Successful Proposer(s) must provide the total number, duration and dollar value of orders for Language Assistance Services purchased, as well as more specific client-level data. Successful Proposer(s) also must provide data, on a quarterly basis, about: the type of Language Assistance Services provided; source language of service; participating COT program or support office and staff; phone numbers; COT program office code; date of COT request for services; date, frequency and duration of service rendered; client/participant name; and other data points as determined by COT.**

*Answer 58: Broadly, we would be looking for reporting that describes how many in person, phone, virtual meeting, document translations are provided broken down further by source and destination languages.*