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Questions and Clarifications

RFQ: Language Translation and Interpretation Services

MCOE 2026-RFQ-005

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RFQ Submission Requirements and Evaluation

1. Is there a page limit for the Statement of Qualifications submission? The RFQ does not appear to specify one

   A1. No, there is no page limit for the Statement of Qualifications submissions. However, we request that your submission remain concise and only include necessary information.

2. We understand that vendors may submit qualifications for Aggregate 1 – Translation Services, Aggregate 2 – Interpretation Services, or both. Is there a preference for vendors offering both aggregates? Does the evaluation assign greater importance to any particular service or delivery modality?

   A2. There will not be a preference for vendors offering both, nor will we assign greater importance to any particular service or delivery modality. The MCOE is of equal need for both translation and interpretation services, and therefore seeks qualified candidates for those services.

3. Can we ask for a debriefing in case we are not awarded?

    A3. We would take this request into consideration.

4. What mathematical calculation will be used to evaluate pricing?

    A4. Please see “Attachment C - Fee Proposal” for criteria to be used in evaluating pricing.

5. [Vendor] is interested in submitting a proposal for Aggregate 1, written translation services only. All services would be performed remotely, without transportation, on-site visits, or direct contact with students. Given the nature of these services, would MCOE consider waiving or modifying the automobile liability and abuse/molestation liability insurance requirements for a contractor providing exclusively remote written translation services?

    A5. The MCOE would consider waiving the Automobile Liability Insurance, but not the Sexual Abuse/Molestation coverage.

Minimum Qualifications and Certifications

6. Attachments A1 and A2 require five (5) years of experience within the most recent seven (7) years providing services to a California public school district, Community College district, University of California system, or California public agency. Would MCOE consider equivalent experience providing the same services to public school districts or public agencies in other states as meeting this requirement, or is the California-specific requirement a firm threshold with no exceptions?

    A6. The MCOE would consider applicants with equivalent experience in other states than California, but ask that you specify this in your submission.

7. If a respondent holds active contracts with large public school districts outside of California (for example, contracts with school districts serving 100,000+ students), does that experience satisfy the intent of the minimum qualification, or must the experience be exclusively within the California public education system?

A7. The MCOE would consider applicants with equivalent experience in states outside of California. We ask that you specify this in your submission.

8. Are there any company-level certification requirements, such as MBE, DBE, SBE, or California-specific certifications, beyond the minimum qualifications outlined in the RFQ?

A8. At this time there are no additional certification requirements.

9. Are there any Small Business Enterprise (SBE) or Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) preference clauses? If so, must vendors hold certifications issued by the State of California, or are national or other state certifications accepted?

A9. At this time there are no SBE or MBE preference clauses.

10. Attachment A1 requires to possess five (5) years of experience obtained within the most recent seven (7) years providing language translation services for a California public school district, Community College district, University of California system, or a California public agency. Can we participate if we have that experience with other states?

A10. Yes, the MCOE would consider applicants with equivalent experience in states outside of California. We ask that you specify this in your submission.

11. Qualifying California experience: For Attachments A1 and A2, may respondents count qualifying experience gained through an acquired company whose operations, personnel, and client relationships have been integrated into the respondent? If so, what supporting documentation is required?

A11. The MCOE would consider respondents with this type of experience. Please be as specific as possible in your application when describing the qualifying experiences of your team.

12. I would appreciate clarification regarding the minimum qualification in Attachment A1 requiring five years of translation experience with a California public school district, California community college district, University of California system, or California public agency. How should a respondent demonstrate compliance with this requirement if the required qualifying experience is held by a proposed subcontractor or key translator who would perform the translation services under the contract?

A12. The MCOE would consider respondents with qualifying experience proposed through a subcontractor. You would need to be specific in the submission explaining this, and would need to list who this person or people are and include their qualifications, certifications, etc

Contract Terms and Award Structure

13. What is the anticipated term of the contract (base period and any option years)?

A13. The MCOE has not yet determined the anticipated term of the contract.

14. Will task orders be distributed among all awarded vendors on a rotating basis, assigned based on vendor ranking, or allocated based on specialization or language capacity?

A14. The MCOE has not yet determined the distribution of task orders.

15. What is the anticipated initial contract term? Will the resulting contracts include renewal options, and if so, for how many additional years?

A15. The MCOE has not yet determined the anticipated term of the contract.

16. Are multiple awards expected for the same service?

A16. The MCOE has not yet decided the number of contract awards.

17. If multiple awards are made, how will the work be apportioned?

A17. The MCOE has not yet determined the work apportionment. This will depend on submissions received and contracts awarded.

18. What is the Period of Performance?

A18. The MCOE has yet to determine the Period of Performance.

19. What is the anticipated contract duration, including renewal options?

A19. The MCOE has not yet determined the anticipated contract duration.

Pricing, Fees, and Billing

20. Does MCOE have a minimum engagement or hourly minimum for on-site interpretation assignments (for example, a two-hour minimum per appointment)?

A20. The MCOE does not have an hourly minimum.

21. How does MCOE define "rush" or "urgent" requests for purposes of any applicable rush rates, and what is the expected standard turnaround time for routine translation requests?

A21. The MCOE defines “urgent” as something requiring immediate action, attention, or a prompt response. These requests would have different requirements based on the need. Previous examples of urgent may be a turnaround time of two hours to 24 hours. Standard turnaround time also depends on the department making the request and the needs of each department. Previous examples of “standard” may include two days to five days.

22. Regarding Attachment C – Fee Proposal, could MCOE confirm whether respondents must complete every rate category or only those applicable to their proposed aggregate(s) and services? Are there any specific pricing units, minimum charges, or surcharge structures that MCOE requires beyond those indicated in the template?

A22. Respondents should complete only those applicable to their proposed aggregate(s) and services. There are no other specifics that the MCOE requires.

23. To add additional languages to the cost sheet, can we use categories such as "All other European languages"?

A23. Please be specific as to which languages you are adding.

24. Template-word billing: For translation services, could MCOE clarify how template words are identified and excluded from the billable word count, and whether reusable templates will be provided to the selected vendor?

A24. For purposes of this RFQ, "template words" refers to standardized text for which the MCOE provides an existing, approved translation that can be reused without modification. Such words would be excluded from the billable word count. The MCOE may provide existing templates or previously translated materials when available. For documents that do not

contain reusable, previously translated content, the full word count requiring translation would be considered billable. Vendors are not automatically expected to identify and exclude every repeated word or phrase across all MCOE documents.

25. Could MCOE share historical annual spending or service volumes, ideally broken down by translation, remote interpretation, and in-person interpretation?

A25. Historical annual spending begins around $45,000 across the organization.

Historical Usage, Budget, and Incumbent Vendors

26. Can MCOE identify the current incumbent vendor(s) providing language translation and/or interpretation services?

A26. The current vendor is American Technical Translators.

27. Is MCOE able to share the approximate annual volume of services utilized under any existing or prior contract, including estimated word counts for translation and estimated hours for interpretation, broken down by language if available?

A27. The volume of translation and interpretation services utilized by the MCOE varies annually based on departmental needs. As such, the MCOE is unable to provide a reliable estimate of annual word counts for translation or service hours for interpretation, including a breakdown by language.

28. Can MCOE provide a list of languages that have been requested over the past two to three years, along with relative frequency or volume for each?

A28. Historically, the MCOE language access needs have included Spanish, Arabic, Creole, Korean, and American Sign Language; however, this list is not exhaustive and does not limit the languages that may be requested during the term.

29. Is MCOE able to share the rate ranges currently being paid for translation (per word) and interpretation (per hour or per minute) under any existing agreement? This would help respondents calibrate competitive and realistic pricing.

A29. The current rate ranges for “per word” translation are $0.30 for Spanish translation and $0.35 for other language translations. The current rate ranges for interpretation are $55.00/hr to $90.00/hr with a two hour minimum. The current rate range for simultaneous conferences is $120.00/hr.

30. What is the approximate annual spend on language access services under the current or most recent contract?

A30. Historical annual spending begins around $45,000 across the organization.

31. Can the County provide any information about your incumbent vendor, rates, or historical usage data for this RFQ.

A31. Our current vendor is American Technical Translators. Please see A29 for current rates.

32. What are the estimated annual volumes in words, pages, minutes, or hours for this solicitation? Could MCOE provide historical utilization by language for both translation and interpretation services?

A32. The volume of translation and interpretation services utilized by the MCOE varies annually based on departmental needs. As such, the MCOE is unable to provide a reliable estimate of annual word counts for translation or service hours for interpretation, including a breakdown by language.

33. Approximately what percentage of the anticipated contract volume or expenditure is attributable to Spanish translation and Spanish interpretation, respectively?

A33. Spanish represents the majority of the MCOE's translation and interpretation needs; however, service volume varies annually based on departmental needs. As such, the MCOE is unable to provide a reliable percentage breakdown of anticipated expenditures or service volume by language for translation and interpretation services.

34. Could MCOE provide a breakdown of historical or estimated expenditures by service category, including written translation, in-person interpretation, telephonic interpretation, video remote interpretation, and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation?

A34. The MCOE's translation and interpretation service needs vary annually based on departmental requirements. As such, MCOE is unable to provide a reliable breakdown of historical or anticipated expenditures by service category.

35. What is the estimated value/budget of the contract?

A35. Historical annual spending begins around $45,000 across the organization.

36. Could you please share past usage statistics broken down by service and language?

A36. The MCOE's translation and interpretation service needs vary annually based on departmental requirements. A comprehensive breakdown of historical usage statistics by service type and language is not currently available.

37. Did the incumbent(s) cover every single assignment successfully?

A37. The MCOE is not providing an assessment of incumbent vendor performance as part of this RFQ process.

38. What challenges have you faced with a similar scope of work from vendors you worked with?

A38. The MCOE is not providing an assessment of previous vendor performance or challenges encountered as part of this RFQ process.

39. Could you please provide the incumbent rates for each of the services requested in this solicitation?

A39. Please see A27 for current rates. Please note, this may not be an exhaustive list of all services requested in this solicitation.

40. If there is no incumbent, please describe how you are obtaining these services up to now and what you are paying for the service.

A40. The MCOE has a vendor we are currently working with.

41. Do you have in-house linguists who handle part of the work?

A41. The MCOE does not have an in-house linguist.

42. What is the average length of an interpreting assignment?

> **A42**. The duration of interpretation assignments varies depending on the nature of the request and departmental needs. As such, the MCOE is unable to provide a reliable average assignment length.

43. What is the average number of words in a document needing translation?

> **A43**. The length of documents requiring translation varies depending on the nature of the request and departmental needs. As such, the MCOE is unable to provide a reliable average word count per document.

Translation Service Requirements

44. Does MCOE maintain an existing translation memory, glossary, or style guide that the awarded vendor(s) will be expected to use or maintain?

> **A44.** The MCOE's translation and interpretation needs vary by department. Any existing translation memories, glossaries, or style guides relevant to a specific assignment may be provided to the selected vendor(s), as applicable.

45. Does MCOE permit the use of artificial intelligence (AI) or machine translation in the delivery of translation or interpretation services? If so, should vendors provide separate pricing for AI-generated translations, human-reviewed AI translations (hybrid services), or both?

> **A45**. The MCOE does not permit the use of artificial intelligence (AI) or machine translation in the delivery of translation or interpretation services.

46. In what formats are the documents to be translated? Are there InDesign files?

> **A46**. Documents requiring translation are typically provided in Microsoft Word or PDF format. However, file formats may vary depending on departmental needs and the nature of the request. The MCOE cannot confirm whether InDesign files will/will not be included in future translation requests.

47. Could you please confirm whether vendors may submit qualifications exclusively for written Spanish translation services, without offering interpretation or

additional languages? I would also appreciate clarification on whether vendors providing services remotely from outside California are eligible to participate.

A47. The MCOE is open to vendors who exclusively provide written Spanish translation services. Please be specific in your submission about the languages you provide services for. The MCOE is open to considering vendors outside of California.

Interpretation Service Requirements

48. For in-person interpretation, what is the typical geographic scope within Marin County? Are there specific school sites or offices where on-site interpretation is most frequently needed?

A48. The MCOE operates classroom programs at various school sites throughout Marin County. In-person interpretation services may be requested at the MCOE's main office in San Rafael or at school and program sites throughout the county, including locations in San Rafael, Novato, Mill Valley, Larkspur, and other Marin County communities. Specific locations and frequency of requests will vary based on departmental and program needs.

49. For ASL interpretation services, does MCOE require Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI) in addition to hearing ASL interpreters for any assignments?

A49. The MCOE does not require Certified Deaf Interpreters.

50. For interpretation services, approximately what percentage of assignments is expected to be delivered in person (on-site) versus remotely (telephonic, video, or web-based)?

A50. The method of delivery for interpretation services varies annually depending on departmental needs and the nature of the request. As such, MCOE is unable to provide a reliable estimate of the percentage of assignments anticipated to be conducted in person versus remotely.

51. For ASL interpretation specifically, is in-person service delivery mandatory, or is video remote interpreting (VRI) acceptable?

A51. In-person ASL interpretation services are preferred; however, video remote interpreting (VRI) may be considered on a case-by-case basis,

depending on the nature of the request, meeting size, and specific accessibility needs. The MCOE will determine the appropriate method of service delivery based on the requirements of each assignment.

52. Where would face-to-face interpreting assignments take place?

A52. The MCOE operates classroom programs at various school sites throughout Marin County. In-person interpretation services may be requested at the MCOE's main office in San Rafael or at school and program sites throughout the county, including locations in San Rafael, Novato, Mill Valley, Larkspur, and other Marin County communities. Specific locations and frequency of requests will vary based on departmental and program needs.

53. If an on-site interpreter is not available, are you amenable to a remote Interpreter?

A53. The use of remote interpretation services may be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the request, meeting size, and specific interpretation needs. Certain assignments, such as large in-person meetings or events, may require an on-site interpreter. The MCOE will determine the appropriate method of service delivery based on the needs of each assignment.

54. Interpretation delivery modes: May respondents proposing Aggregate 2 offer only remote interpretation services, including OPI, VRI, and remote ASL, or must they also provide in-person interpretation?

A54. Respondents may submit proposals offering only remote interpretation services.