

RFP QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

- 1) This RFP seeks to contract with an entity who will work collaboratively with MECDHH/GBSD to provide high quality interpreting services. The RFP mentions a “Point of Contact Interpreter” at each site.
 - a. How many POC interpreters are there? 3 (one at Portland High School, one at Lyman Moore Middle School in Portland and one at East End Community School in Portland).
 - b. How many sites are there? There are four academic department sites (the three above and Portland Arts and Technology High School)
 - c. Are the POC interpreters staff of MECDHH/GBSD or contractors? contractors
 - d. Are the POC interpreters certified? yes
 - e. Are the POC interpreters registered in Maine as “licensed interpreters”? yes
 - f. What is their role in coordination of interpreters at each site? POC (Point of Contact) gather information and/or data as needed to share with the Interpreter Coordinator; they receive feedback for the Interpreter Coordinator to consider and assess efficacy; and, make last minute changes/adjustments to assignments or schedules as needed (basically, they are the lead interpreter at the school and serve as a communication conduit)
- 2) Sometimes the RFP refers to interpreters as “staff” and in other place calls them “contractors”
That was an error on my part due to the fact that I was writing two separate RFPs at the same time and missed this in proofing. All interpreters are contractors...none will be staff
 - a Please clarify the fiscal relationship the interpreters have with the school system. Interpreters submit invoices for the hours worked to the Interpreter Coordinator for final approval. The Interpreter Coordinator then passes them on to the business office where the invoices are paid every other week. Payment can be made via direct deposit.
 - b. Are they W-2 contractors or benefited employees? W-2 contractors
 - c. Are they sub-contractors?
They contract individually with MECDHH/GBSD based on set criteria and a tiered pay scale.
 - d. How many interpreters are in this or each of these categories at present?
- 3) On page 2 it requests the entity to work with the CDS data system “CINC” for invoicing. Does this imply that interpreters are billing the school system for their work? Please elaborate on the CINC data system.
CINC is the data system that is now used by Child Development Services with whom we (MECDHH) contract to provide services for children aged birth through five. Only those

Interpreters assigned to Child Development Services will need to use this data system to input their hours

4) Who pays for new hires to complete a criminal background check?

CHRC fingerprinting with the state would suffice and the individual will need to pay for this.

5) On page 3 “1. Hiring” there is a bullet that says “implement appropriate rules and guidelines related to discipline, curfews and behavioral expectations.” Does the MECDDH/GBSD have a published handbook outlining these expectations?

This should not have been in the RFP, my apologies. It was missed in proofing and is part of a different RFP I was working on

6) Is there language in the MECDDH/GBSD handbook or other written guidance to the duties, roles and responsibilities of a coordinator of interpreting services?

The job of Interpreting Coordinator is outlined in the RFP. That description was taken from the current job description of Interpreter Coordinator (formerly a staff position) and the duties associated with that job.

7) Please clarify the term mentioned on page 4 “linguistic feedback”.

Assessing how effective an interpreter is in various situations and/or linguistic settings (students, staff, etc.) Are they aware of the linguistic needs of the "client" and are they able to match their interpreting to those individual needs.

8) Would you consider a proposal offering a different model of practice that includes more than coordination? A model that would also include employment of interpreters and Point of Contact interpreters to be an inclusive package that would/could use its own scheduling and invoicing system to provide interpreting services? Not at this time

9) No date was provided in the RFP for when we could expect to receive answers. When do you think we will receive answers to these and other vendor questions?

June 21

10) Will the RFP questions and answers be made public to all bidders?

Yes, once the deadline for questions arrives (June 19), all questions and responses will be made public for all bidders to review.

11) Upon first reading, this RFP seems to be addressing two types of needs; day to day scheduling of interpreters, and administrative needs for managing the interpreter pool and coordinating services with MECDDH/ GBSD Administration. Can you confirm this is the scope of this RFP?

Yes, this is the scope of this RFP. Some oversight of interpreter skill and quality will be part of "managing" the interpreter pool.

12) In reviewing sections marked “Overview” and “Purpose and Scope of Service”, many of the expectations of the Coordinator for recruiting, screening, onboarding, training, and supervision

of the interpreting team are consistent with an employer/employee relationship. Will the pool of interpreters be employees of MECDHH/GBSD?

No, they will not be employees of MECDHH/GBSD. Each Interpreter will have an individual vendor contract with MECDHH/GBSD, as will the winning bidder of the RFP. The winning bidder of the RFP will assume responsibility for offering training, screening, etc. as part of the work that they are contracted for.

13) In our practice, we work with both staff and independent contract interpreters. We provide training, supervision, professional development opportunities for our staff interpreters. Independent contractors in our pool maintain their independent status by completing their professional development and other requirements at their discretion and provide the required documentation for our files. What practices are in place to ensure the independent status of contract interpreters with regards to training and oversight?

At this time, our Interpreter Coordinator has performed those duties. It is our expectation that these same tasks will be performed by the winning bidder.

14) I do not see proof of Liability Insurance as a requirement. Will you be adding that requirement for contract interpreters?

YES

15) Section 1.2.1 says “Implement appropriate rules and guidelines related to discipline, curfews and behavioral expectations”. Could you please clarify this item? Is it referring to the Coordinator implementing to interpreters, or interpreters implementing to students?

This was, unfortunately, included in error. Although the RFP went back and forth with proof readings, I have also been working on a different RFP for a student housing and clearly I overlapped them and added this piece in error.

16) In section 1.1 it states, “Ensure that interstate criminal background checks and fingerprinting are completed on all staff;” Is this requirement in addition to the CHRC fingerprinting background check done by the State of Maine? In our experience, different contracting agencies have varying preferences for the background check. Can you clarify which checks you specifically want done?

CHRC will suffice.

17) Do you have a scheduling system for interpreters the Coordinator would use, or would we be able to use our scheduling system?

We do have an effective system that has been set up by the current Interpreter Coordinator and handled via First Class. That said, if the winning bidder has or creates a more effective system, we would certainly be open to considering a change.

18) Section 1.5 requests “~~six~~ (7)” paper copies. How many copies of each proposal would you like submitted?

7

19) The RFP mentions the ASLPI. Will MECDHH/ GBSD be providing that assessment to interpreters?

MECDHH/GBSD will facilitate the process and provide the space. Individual interpreters will have to schedule and pay for this if they do not currently have it.

20) If interpreters hold ED:K-12 or RID certification, do they also have to have results from the ASLPI?

No, they do not. This requirement is for those who do not hold those certifications yet

21) Training is mentioned several times. Can you clarify what types of training the Coordinator would be expected to provide?

The Interpreter Coordinator will coordinate/facilitate training for topics such as: Mandatory Reporting; Confidentiality and Ethics; Educational Interpreting; IEP related training.

a. Can you provide a list of trainings that were provided in the past year?
Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality and IEP related training

22) Is the contract term for 12 months or for the school year? If for the school year, how many weeks?

The contract is for 12 months.

23) Can you provide the total number of interpreting hours used this year?

There are 11 interpreters at Portland High School/ PATHS. The total average interpreting hours for both PHS and PATHS were 13,227 for the academic year not including travel.

There are 2 interpreters at Lyman Moore Middle School. The total average interpreting hours for LMMS was 2,405, not including travel.

There are 6 interpreters and 1 cued speech transliterator at East End Community School. The total average interpreting hours for EECS was 8,417' not including travel.

We have 1 interpreter covering the preschool classroom needs on Mackworth Island. The total average interpreting hours for MECDHH preschool was 740, not including travel.

There are 5 interpreters at CDS preschool sites. The total average interpreting hours for CDS preschools was 3,700, not including travel.

We have 10 community interpreters that cover department meetings, board meetings, administrative meetings (both on site and in Augusta), and step in to sub in classes when needed. The total average interpreting hours for these needs was, 8,500 not including travel. The current Interpreter Coordinator has covered needs at all sites. She has also interpreted for Public School Outreach visits around the state and for meetings in Augusta. These duties will also need interpreter coverage.

24) Can you provide the number of interpreter hours per week?

(Please, see response to question #23)

25) The coordinator position is capped at 25 hours a week. Is this an average, or a hard stop? If a hard stop, who is the point person for coordination after 25 hours?

25 hours is the weekly max....one could look at a monthly max of 100 hours if that is easier and more efficient and provides more flexibility

26) Can you describe what measures are in place to maintain the confidentiality in the bidding process, and to avoid conflict of interest in the reviewing of the bids?

We are not involving the former coordinator in the process.

We are not employing any interpreters who submit or plan to submit a bid in meetings/discussions related to this RFP.

Prior to these meetings, we directly asked this question and only use interpreters who say a firm "no, I will not be bidding on the RFP" for coordination of interpreting services".

27) Can you please confirm the due date for the RFP?

June 23 by 4:00 PM

29) Can companies from Outside **USA** apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)

It would be highly unlikely that a company from out of the USA, or even out of Maine, would be awarded the bid.

30) Would we need to come over there for meetings?

Yes

31) Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside **USA**? (like, from India or Canada)

No, that would not be workable for MECDDHH/GBSD

32) Can we submit the proposals via email?

As is the expectation for all bidders, you would need to comply with all requirements in the RFP including the 7 paper copies.

33) Just a quick submission/formatting question... I am wondering if a proposal that offers two options would be accepted/considered. There doesn't seem to be language about that in the RFP requirements and I don't want to disqualify my proposal with the intent of being flexible

For example;

Same qualifications and guaranteed services offered with a rate structure of:

Option A- \$\$/hr

OR

Option B-flat rate per week

Yes, that type of proposal will be considered.