



Request for Applications (RFA) Addendum

ADDENDUM DATE ADVERTISED: February 5, 2024

ORIGINAL DATE ADVERTISED:

Title: Language Access Program: Community Language Services

Number: 2024ODIR533RFA

Due Date: No later than February 23, 2024

Contact: Kishan Scipio, cpres-ODIR@kingcounty.gov

This Addendum provides the following clarifications and additional information about the referenced solicitation.

- I. **ALTA Language Skills Assessment for Interpreters.** This assessment will be given by an outside agency over the phone. If your application qualifies you, you will be contacted to set up an appointment. The agency will score an applicant based on:
 - Comprehension: understanding of complex sentence structures
 - Vocabulary: knowledge of a mix of common and more complex words
 - Grammar: structure of sentences
 - Communication: clear and easy to understand

Each of these areas are scored on a scale that includes Beginner, Beginner Plus, Intermediate Minus, Intermediate, Intermediate Plus, Advanced Minus, Advanced, Advanced Plus, Superior Minus, Superior and Superior Plus. Applicant must receive an ALTA score of Advanced Plus or higher to qualify. See Exhibit E for scoring criteria.

1. Can we have a separate meeting in Spanish so that indigenous speakers can hear more about this process and program?

A: While we would like to accommodate this request, the formal process for a Request of Applications must be equitable. We would not be able to have a separate meeting only in Spanish.

2. Can you provide the list of languages that are required to apply?

A: We do not have a list of languages that are specific or required, but we do have a list of King County Language Tiers. These tiers are developed using the following data sources: American Community Survey PUMS 2019, OFM/Office of the Superintendent of Public Institutions: Limited English Proficiency Students 2016, KC District Courts: Cases Requesting Interpretation, 2019-20, WIC Interpreted Visits, 2019-20 King County WIC, and Public Health Clinic Visits 2019-20. Data last updated 02/21. These languages are the most spoken by residents of King County in order of population:

Required Tier 1: Spanish

Recommended Tier 2: Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, Russian, Korean, Ukrainian, Tagalog, Arabic, Amharic

Encouraged Tier 3: Dari, Punjabi, Tigrinya, Japanese, Marshallese

We also recognize that there are many languages not indicated in the Tiers that we also support. We do encourage all native speakers to apply and acknowledge that many of the languages in the Tiers are most requested. If your language is outside of these tiers, there may not be as many projects to complete.

3. Can you clarify on "if you are already have a King County contract", are you referring to any King County employee within any department?

A: Our first round of Contractor pool development was early last year. Those who qualified were given letter agreements or contracts and do not need to apply to this process. King County staff are not eligible to apply for this RFA.

4. Can you explain how to take ALTA test for individuals who are not certified?

A: If you are not certified, we will set up an appointment for you to have a phone or video test with ALTA via email. ALTA will record and score it and send us the results. It should take approximately 30 – 45 minutes. If you pass at the Advanced Plus level, you will be given a contract with the Community Language Access Services team.

5. Can a community-based organization (CBO) apply for this program?

A: No, community-based organizations cannot apply. We encourage CBO individual staff to apply for the program independent of their role within the community-based organization. We recognize the valuable service that all our CBO partners play in helping Public Health connect with the communities we serve. And staff at CBOs have deep ties to the community. That is why our program centers Community Language Service Providers, and offers a \$70 / hour rate for translation, community review and interpretation. Also, we are encouraging our Equitable Contracting team within Public Health to consider ways that contracts can include money for language access moving forward.

6. What about relay interpretation?

A: For this particular RFA, we did not include that method of interpreting. Relay interpretation is when an interpreter interprets a language being spoken into a similar language, then relay the information to a second person who interprets the similar language into a community language. For example, English, to Spanish to Indigenous language. In Public Health, one of our criteria for assigning interpreters to a project is all interpreters are either certified, accredited, or tested via ALTA services.

7. Is the interpreter test taken after submitting the application or before?

*A: The interpreter test is taken **after** applying and meeting the qualifications. If qualifications have been met, then a test will be scheduled for you. The Community Language Service Provider manager will set up an appointment for you to have a phone or video test with ALTA via email. ALTA will record and score it and send us the results. It should take approximately 30 – 45 minutes. If you pass at the Advanced Plus level, you will be given a contract with the Community Language Access Services team. will call to ask about your availability, then a meeting will be scheduled with ALTA. Information for the test will be emailed. For indigenous applicants that qualify for the program, instructions about how to create an audio file will be emailed.*

8. Are there specific questions that would be asked on the ALTA interview?

A: We do not have a list of the questions that are asked of applicants by ALTA. Their test is intended to test knowledge on a variety of subjects, in various scenarios. We recommend brushing up on vocabulary and practicing with a friend or relative before taking the test.

9. What is the role of a community reviewer?

A: The role of Community Reviewer is an important one. What sets our program apart from large agencies is the localization we provide to translations. We contract with Community members who will use their lived experience, and connection to community to help develop translations that will resonate and be well understood. The pairing of a translator and community reviewer is to help both team members develop a translation that is accurate, cohesive, grammatically correct and flows naturally. When we use an agency to translate, and we do sometimes, our best practice is to send that agency translated document to a Community Reviewer to ensure that people in our region will understand what is being said.

10. Why are the Community Language Services RFA materials not translated into other languages?

A: For the Community Language Services program, an individual must have a strong understanding of, and competence in the English language. The nature of the information a Community Language Service Provider is being asked to translate, review or interpret is very important. If someone needs an interpreter to understand the needs of the program, scope of work and assessments, or messages that are being sent, it could create a “telephone scenario”. Meaning that information can be lost in that translation or interpretation.

11. Where would we be able to find the recording of this meeting?

A: A recording of this session, and a list of the questions with answers is posted to the RFA website.

12. What constitutes a Language Access Services Agency vs an Individual with an LLC?

A: If you are one person that has created an LLC, then you should plan to fill out the Individual Application and take the assessments. If you are an Agency, please submit the application for Agencies, and include your hiring practices, how you vet your providers, and payment structure.

13. To be an interpreter, do you need to have a copy of the DSHS or another accreditation?

A: Having a certification or accreditation is ideal, however if you do not have those and you qualify for the program, you will be tested to determine your skills

14. What documents are required for individual to apply?

A: The documents required to apply are:

- 1. Completed and signed Exhibit G: RFA Cover Page (MS Word).*
- 2. Completed Exhibit A: Application Individuals (MS Word) or Completed Exhibit A-1: Application Corporations (MS Word)*
- 3. Completed Exhibit B: Microsoft Word Skills Assessment_(MS Word) [Translators and Reviewers only]*
- 4. Completed Exhibit C Part 1: Translation Assessment (MS Word) [Translators and Reviewers only]*
- 5. Completed Exhibit C Part 2: Translation Assessment PowerPoint (MS Powerpoint) [Translators and Reviewers only]*
- 6. Interpretation Certifications (Interpreters only)*
- 7. Agency ONLY: Current Rate Sheet and written Hiring Practices*

15. What are the rates for Agencies?

A: Agencies can set their own rates, and a current rate sheet should be included with the Application as well as written hiring practices.

16. How do you determine how long something takes for people to translate to pay them per hour instead of per word?

A: Our method of paying Community Language Services Providers by the hour instead of per word is an acknowledgement that translation is not a "word for word" process. Community Language Service Providers (CLSP) are contracted individuals and small agencies who provide culturally relevant language access services resulting in accurate, timely, and effective communications for King County's linguistically diverse communities. CLSP are compensated at \$70 / hour for their work instead of the per-word industry standard to reflect the value of transliteration, cultural competency, local conditions, and quick turnaround time. The workflow for the project is determined by the budget and we assign projects to meet those constraints.

All other terms of Request for Applications (RFA) 2024ODIR533RFA remain unchanged.