



TRANSLATION SERVICES RFP Q&As

1. What time is North Penn's pre-bid meeting for this solicitation?
Please refer to the instructions in the RFP for visiting our District website where the information gets posted concerning the RFP and any updates.

2. The SOW mentions Over-the-Telephone interpreting services and document translation. However, the Service Costs matrix asks vendors to provide an hourly rate for In Person Translation. This service is not described in the SOW. Does North Penn require vendors to provide on-site In Person Translation (Interpreting) Services?
No, we do not require in-person translation. In-person translations is not something we have contracted previously but we are exploring the option and may want to utilize it in the future. If you do offer this service please include your information as requested in the RFP.

3. If a vendor cannot provide In-person services, can they still bid on the Telephone Interpreting and Written Translation?
In-person translations is not something we have contracted previously but we are exploring the option and may want to utilize it in the future. We welcome all proposals regardless. Please just be sure to make it clear in your proposal under the service costs that in-person services are not available. Since this is an RFP for services and not a bid, there are different requirements, and the RFP may not necessarily be awarded all to one provider. Ultimately, the District will choose what is best for the District, students, and families from the proposals received and interviews conducted.

4. Telephone Interpreting Services are traditionally invoiced by the minute rather than by the hour. This allows for much more accurate billing and tends to lower costs for users since billing will stop once the user hangs up. Can you amend the Service Cost matrix to allow vendors to bid for Telephone Interpreting Services by the minute?
*Yes. Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**.*

5. Document Translation services are traditionally billed by the word. This allows for transparency in billing since the word count can be agreed upon before work begins. Can vendors bid for translation services by the word?
*Yes. Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**.*

6. For Document Translation services billed by the word, it is the industry standard to provide different per-word pricing for different languages. Some languages are significantly less expensive than others. For example, Spanish tends to be cheaper than Arabic. Can vendors provide different per-word pricing for each language we offer?
*Yes. Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**.*

7. For document translation, it is the industry standard to have a minimum charge per language per order. This means that if the client sends a very short document for translation, the vendor can charge them a flat rate. The minimum charge exists because if clients send very short documents (e.g. 20 words), it may end up costing the vendor more to process and invoice for the translation than the actual amount earned from the short translation. Can vendors include their minimum charge as part of the Service Costs matrix?

Yes. Please see the addendum for [Attachment B.4. - Service Costs](#).

8. Clients often ask translation service providers to provide desktop publishing/formatting services to ensure that translations look optically identical to the English language originals. This service is billed separately from translation, since not all documents require it and a client may not want it. Can vendors include our hourly rate for desktop publishing/formatting services as part of the Service Costs matrix?

Yes. Please see the addendum for [Attachment B.4. - Service Costs](#).

9. Historically, what are the top 10 most requested languages for Telephone Interpreting Services?

Spanish, Bengali, Arabic, Korean, Gujarati, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, French, Chinese, and Russian.

10. Historically, what are the top 10 most requested languages for Written Document Translation Services?

Spanish, Bengali, Arabic, Korean, Gujarati, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, French, Chinese, and Russian.

11. Is this a new or existing contract? If this is an existing contract, who is the incumbent vendor and what were the rates charged on the previous contract?

We have not previously done an RFP for these services. There is an existing contract with Transperfect for the current school year.

Rates are as follows:

Documentation Translations up to \$.23/word depending on language(s) needed, \$.10 per repeat word, \$55/hr for formatting/Project management and \$100 project minimum; Phone Interpretation is \$1.05/minute.

12. Can the District confirm that is a single-award contract?

Since this is an RFP for services and not a bid, there are different requirements, and the RFP may not necessarily all be awarded to one provider. Ultimately, the District will choose what is best for the District, students, and families from the proposals received and interviews conducted.

13. What have been NPSD's biggest challenges in providing translation and interpretation services prior to the release of this RFP?

Costs, dropped calls during the phone translation service, and amount of turnaround time for written documents to be translated.

14. Can NPSD share the projected annual revenue or projected annual volume for over-the-phone interpretation, onsite interpretation, and translation for each contract year? Alternatively, can NPSD share historical spend/volume?
Roughly \$30,000 for over-the-phone services, and we have not done on-site before but we are exploring the option.
15. What is the approximate percentage of on-site/in-person versus remote/virtual interpreting requests?
The majority of the translation services will be over-the-phone translations and written documents. In-person translation is not something we have contracted previously but we are exploring the option and may want to utilize it in the future. If you do offer this service please include your information as requested in the RFP.
16. Can the District share the most requested languages for translation and/or interpretation?
Spanish, Bengali, Arabic, Korean, Gujarati, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, French, Chinese, and Russian.
17. Is the District interested in virtual/remote interpreting (face-to-face interpretation using platforms such as Google Meet or Microsoft Teams) as well as over-the-phone interpreting?
*Yes. Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**.*
18. For written translation services, is formatting/desktop publishing (DTP) in graphic design programs such as Adobe InDesign, Quark Xpress, MS Publisher desired? If so, can suppliers submit an additional line item to accommodate this request?
*This is not something we are interested in at this time. However, should the need arise, we do understand that there would be an added cost. Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**.*
19. Can NPSD expand on the District's onsite interpretation needs (listed on the pricing table)?
We have not done In-Person before as we have used our own staff for on-sight interpretation when needed.
20. Typically, how much notice will be provided for on-site/in-person interpreting requests?
We have not done In-Person before, but if this is an option the company has, it most likely would be language in the contract that a request must be done so many days in advance that the District and Vendor agree upon.
21. What kind of professional development is the District requesting? (e.g. Training on the provider systems, or more general training on language access?)
Training for staff as to how to use the phone call translation system.

22. Can a supplier bid on only one service (ex only on translation)?
Please note that we welcome all proposals regardless. Please just be sure to make it clear in your proposal submission and under the Service Costs response that only that one service is being responded to. Since this is an RFP for services and not a bid, there are different requirements, and the RFP may not necessarily be awarded all to one provider. Ultimately, the District will choose what is best for the District, students, and families from the proposals received and interviews conducted.
23. Can suppliers submit their own pricing sheet? Typically, over-the-phone interpretation is priced per minute, and translation is priced per word. In addition, language groups are frequently used to allow lower pricing for more common languages.
*No, you may not submit your own pricing sheet. Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**. If something is not listed here, you may add supporting documentation and list it as an alternative suggestion if it is something we have not considered.*
24. Are samples to be included with the proposal submission or given later? If included during submission, how would we attach OPI samples?
Please note that written samples are not required but are welcome to be included as part of the RFP submission if desired. Written samples will be requested and OPI will be done as part of the interview process for the selected vendors.
25. On average how many minutes per month do you do over-the-phone translation?
The number of minutes varies depending upon the time of year. For example, we have high months during teacher conferences. The overall average is approximately 2,860 per month.
26. Regarding “continuing education to enhance their skills for working with educational staff and parents of students” (p9, number 5) – does continuing education need to provide CEUs? Is there a particular training or certification that is being referred to?
No it does not need to provide CEUs. We do not provide nor require additional continuing education course work in order to maintain a contract with the District. There is not particular training or certification being referred to. We need to select a vendor that is willing to work with and facilitate conversations with all educational staff and all parents of students who are all of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
27. What is the percentage of Spanish for over-the-phone translation in a month?
Right now around forty (40) percent of our calls are for Spanish translations.
28. In price sheet, all the services cost are required per hour basis, however, as per standard, over the phone translation are quoted per minute basis, and written translation are quoted per word basis. Kindly clarify?
*Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**. If something is not listed here, you may add supporting documentation and list it as an alternative suggestion if it is something we may not have not considered.*

29. Will the contract be awarded to single/multiple vendor(s)?
Since this is an RFP for services and not a bid, there are different requirements, and the RFP may not necessarily be awarded all to one provider. Ultimately, the District will choose what is best for the District, students, and families from the proposals received and interviews conducted.
30. If contract will be awarded to multiple vendors, how will you distribute the work?
*This is the first time we are doing an RFP for these services.
This is not a question we can answer at this time. We will have to see the proposals and decide what would best meet our needs from those proposals and then discuss the distribution of work with the various vendors should we decide to split the award.*
31. What is the estimated contract value?
It depends on the usage. Last year we spent around \$60,000 total on phone translation services and written document translations.
32. What is the estimated volume of written translations?
The volume varies but majority of the written documents are IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) that can be 20-50 pages in length and the forms the District uses that may need translation.
33. How much do you spend on written translation in a year?
Approximately \$30,000 is spent on written translations, most of which are IEPs.
34. How many words do you translate in a month?
The volume varies depending upon need. Sometimes there is no need for oral translations however there may be several forms and IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) that can be 20-50 pages needing written translation.
35. What is the average size of project in words or pages?
Some documents and forms are short, but we also have IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) that can be anywhere from 20 to 50 pages in length.
36. One of the languages that requires translation is ASL (or American Sign Language). Will the district accept responses from firms that provide only remote ASL through video communication, as ASL is a unique language that is neither oral nor written?
*Please note that ASL **is not** part of this RFP. We have a separate contract for those services.*
37. Please provide addresses for locations where onsite interpretation services will be required.
We have not done in-person before as we have used our own staff for on-sight interpretation when needed. It would vary based upon our need and we have yet to determine if it would be in various buildings or centralized.

38. According to page 2 of the solicitation, a “vendor will need to provide professional development for all NPSD staff members. This will include any staff who works with students or families that may speak another language.” Is this not applicable if the vendor bids only for written translation services? If it applies to both translation and interpreting, could the NPSD please provide more details on what professional development training is expected?
Yes, training for staff as to how to use the product, in particular the remote call translation services system.
39. On page 3 of the solicitation, it states that the evaluation committee “may require any and all providers to give an oral presentation.” May this presentation be given virtually, or must it be on-site?
The preference for the evaluation will be on sight. However, we may be able to work out a virtual option if needed.
40. In Attachment B of the solicitation, the Service Costs table lists “Written Translation Services (per hour).” It is industry standard to provide costs/prices for written translations on a per-word basis. May this table be modified to allow prospective vendors provide pricing on a per-word basis? Additionally, many languages have differing costs, and given the breadth of languages listed Attachment E, can prospective vendors provide pricing for each of these languages individually?
Please see the addendum for [Attachment B.4. - Service Costs](#).
41. Which language(s) does NPSD request the most written translation services for?
Spanish, Bengali, Arabic, Korean, Gujarati, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, French, Chinese, and Russian.
42. Which language(s) does NPSD request the most video-based interpretation services for?
We have not utilized video-based translation services previously but, as our population of individuals who speak languages other than English grows, it is an option we may need in the future
43. Which language(s) does NPSD request the most telephonic interpretation services for?
Spanish, Bengali, Arabic - our top three languages requested for phone services.
44. What is the allocated budget for this contract?
The budget for this contract changes yearly and is based on the need for language services. I would say in sum last year we spent about \$60,000 on phone and written interpretations.
45. Are there any Small Business or Minority Business Enterprise preference clause? If yes, does the SBE or MBE have to hold a certification from the State?
We encourage all businesses to apply for this RFP and there is no clause in the RFP for preference. No, the vendor does not need to hold a certificate from the state indicating that they are a SBE or MBE.
46. Are there any certification requirements?
No, there are no specific certifications that are required.

47. In Reference to Attachment B, 4., please confirm that by “In Person Translation Services” you mean “In Person Interpreting”.

Yes, this means in-person interpreting.

48. In Reference to Attachment B, 4., please confirm that by “Oral Translation Services” you mean “Over the Phone Interpreting”.

Yes, this means via telephone.

49. Will a bidder lose points if they do not have previous experience with a school system in PA, but have extensive experience with schools in other states?

Please refer to the RFP, Page 3 under Selection Criteria, for the basis of the scores that will be calculated.

50. Are soft copies submittals accepted? Can we email our proposal to Mrs. Johnston rather than sending it by regular mail?

No, soft copies are not permitted to be sent at the time of the due date. Please refer to the RFP sections:

I. RFP PROCESS AND TRANSLATION SERVICES OVERVIEW

5. Instructions for Submission of Applications

51. How will our proposal be stored and who will have access to the proprietary information contained therein?

Anyone who is involved with the RFP process and interviews will have access to the information. The electronic documents will be uploaded and stored in our purchasing information drive via Google or Dropbox as well as the hard copies being kept on file in the Purchasing office. Anything you provide is subject to the FOIA laws that govern school districts. If something is proprietary and/or confidential, it should be labeled as such. If a RTKR whereby the RFP information is requested and provided, and anything you label as such is challenged by appeal, you will be responsible and have to pay any associated legal fees to defend the claim should the need arise. To date, the District has never had anyone challenge that claim.

52. In case the proposal becomes publicly available, could we mark certain portions of our proposal confidential to avoid such disclosure? Alternatively, could we send two copies of the proposal with the second version redacted, again to safeguard our proprietary information?

If something is proprietary and/or confidential, it should be labeled as such. Anything you provide is subject to the FOIA laws that govern school districts. If something is proprietary and/or confidential, it should be labeled as such. If a RTKR whereby the RFP information is requested and provided, and anything you label as such is challenged by appeal, you will be responsible and have to pay any associated legal fees to defend the claim should the need arise. To date, the District has never had anyone challenge that claim.

If you wish to send a second electronic copy of the proposal already redacted and labeled as such, that would be proactive and very much appreciated.

53. Regarding the “demonstration of phone calls”, please confirm that this will be required during the interview stage.

The “demonstration of phone calls” will be part of one of the interview processes. Ideally, we would have a live call with a translator take place in one or all of the following languages: Spanish, Arabic and Bengali. We would have District employees who speak these languages be part of this process in order to verify the interpreters accuracy.

54. Will there be any urgent document translation needs? If yes, how many and how urgent are they, based on the historical data and future projections?

Yes, we do occasionally have urgent document translation needs, albeit infrequently but they do occur. We would estimate that this occurs about one or two times per year.

55. In what format will documents for translation be sent to us?

The formats for District documents sent are Google Documents or Microsoft Word.

56. Do you anticipate that the documents to be translated will contain graphics, figures, drawings, or other design elements that are not editable in Word, thereby creating a need for desktop publishing? If affirmative, we would ask that this service be added to the pricing table.

*Sometimes there is a need for translating documents that contain graphics, figures, drawings, etc., but it is rare and we do understand that another fee will be added. Please see the addendum for **Attachment B.4. - Service Costs**.*

57. The RFP states that: “All contractor staff members, who will work with North Penn students, must have all of the required Federal and State Criminal and Child Abuse clearances in effect during the duration of this contract.” We would like to ask the District to amend this requirement to be only required for in-person interpreters, as translators and phone interpreters won’t have direct contact with children.

*If a vendor **will not** be coming on-site for translations, they **do NOT** need clearances. However, if it is determined that they will be on-site, we require all 3 clearances (PA criminal, PA child abuse, and FBI fingerprinting). This is state law and we can not waive this requirement.*

58. Will the District consider changing the due date of the RFP?

Yes, the District has considered and we are changing the due date.

The RFP due date is being adjusted because of the number of changes we have made to the requested responses under service costs.

The new due date for the RFP will be Friday, March 1, 2024, at 12:00 noon.