

**NYS Department of State**  
**Office for New Americans**  
**Request for Proposals #16-ONA-2**  
**Questions and Answers**

**Updated 7/11/16**

**Q1: I found mention in the EO26 of 6 languages in my internet searching, but what are the 6 languages?**

A1: Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Italian, Korean and Haitian Creole.

**Q2: Does the current contract holder have a knowledge base system created already? If so, will that be transitioned or shared with the new contractor?**

A2: The current contract holder has a database of referral information that is proprietary to that contractor.

**Q3: Does the current contract holder have a customer relationship management (CRM) tool created already to capture call data and provide reporting? If so, will that be transitioned or shared with the new contractor?**

A3: See A2.

**Q4: What is the current staffing plan for the hotline? i.e. current number of employees servicing contract**

A4: Staffing plans for the current hotline are proprietary to the current contractor.

**Q5: Is there any call reporting to demonstrate trends? i.e. peak hours, days, languages needed, etc.**

A5: We do not have call reporting to demonstrate trends.

**Q6: What are the required languages for the directory of resources?**

A6: The directory of resources is not developed by the Office for New Americans, it is developed by the vendor for their internal use. As such the language that it is written in would be at the discretion of the vendor.

**Q7: There was a brief mention of coaching, is the current contractor performing any call quality reviews? i.e. listening and scoring calls**

A7: Yes. However, there is not a requirement for coaching. However quality control is an important component in the proper operation of the Hotline service.

**Q8: Anonymity was discussed, is there any requirements as far as security? i.e. background checks, recorded calls, computers, etc.**

A8: While there are no security requirements, confidentiality of the calls and the information gathered within is important to servicing the immigrant community. Vendors must be committed to confidentiality and refrain from sharing any data without consent of the Office for New Americans.

**Q9: Pricing: Text messages are a future expansion, but would they be a per message charge for every incoming/outgoing or a one-time charge for a conversation?**

A9: It would be a one-time charge for a conversation.

**Q10: Is there a proposed date as to when the expansion for text messaging will be required?**

A10: No, the texting service start date would be part of a negotiation between the successful vendor and the Office for New Americans. The RFA focusses on capacity for the service provision.

**Q11. Which languages are most frequently used by callers of the hotline?**

A11. Language use varies over time and region. An eligible applicant, if awarded, shall be required to have the capacity to conduct phone conversations in any language spoken in New York State.

**Q12. What is the current publicity for the hotline as provided by the ONA?**

A12. While ONA publicizes the hotline on all its public material, hotline publicity is in the purview of the winning applicant.

**Q13. Can you provide historical call and referral volume?**

A13. No. An eligible applicant, if awarded, shall be required to have the capacity to answer a minimum of 20,000 calls a year and provide a minimum of 30,000 referrals annually.

**Q14. According to the budget form the pricepoint for resource database creation and maintenance has been set in the RFP, is this true?**

A14. Yes. See Appendix 3

**Q15. Is it the intent that grant funds will support a single hotline or will a single phone number that provides relevant information and referral also be considered?**

A15. A single phone number will be considered but it must a) be a toll free 800 number or 800-like number, b) meet all requirements of the RFA, and c) cannot solely be a pass through to a county-run or municipally run service.

**Q16. According to the proposal bid form, appendix 3 – it seems that ONA is allowing \$1000 for database development and \$500 for annual update. Is this correct?**

A16. Yes

**Q17. Under the “Calls and Referrals for Area Services” section of the RFA (on page 4), it is expected that the Hotline will “have strict and comprehensive privacy measures in place to protect the identity of the callers”. Is there an analogous requirement for those who text to the Hotline?**

A17. Yes

**Q18. Under the “Calls and Referrals for Area Services” section of the RFA (on page 4), it is expected that the Hotline will “have strict and comprehensive privacy measures in place to protect the identity of the callers”. Are there specific privacy requirements that applicants are expected to adhere to?**

A18. Confidential information shared with the hotline, including phone number, cannot be made public.

**Q19. Under the “Eligible Expenses” section of the RFA (on page 7), it is expected that facility rental costs not exceed more than 20% of the total approved budget. Will ONA be requesting a line item budget to ensure that the grantee meets this requirement? If so, is ONA requesting a line item budget to be submitted with our proposal or at a later point in time?**

A19. While we do not require a line item budget, the provider must attest and maintain documentation showing that facility rental costs do not exceed more than 20% of the total approved budget.

**Q20. Under the “Eligible Expenses” section of the RFA (on page 7), it is expected that facility rental costs not exceed more than 20% of the total approved budget. Should the facility rental costs be detailed and explained in the budget narrative of our proposal?**

A20. The budget narrative should explain how facility costs are worked into the proposed rate.

**Q21. Under the “Capacity” section of the Application Format described on page 8 of the RFA, it is expected that job descriptions be included for each proposed staff position, for funded staff and in-kind staff. Does this mean that applicants should**

**include job descriptions for staff who are included under our administrative overhead pool, who are indirectly involved in the operation of the program (e.g., fiscal, administrative, contract management, executive, HR, IT, Facilities, etc.)? Please clarify.**

A21. No. Job descriptions are only required for those directly working on service provision, not the administrative overhead pool.

**Q22. Under the Evaluation section addressing the Budget (on page 11 of the RFA), there is a description of the Cost Proposal Evaluation methodology. Can you please clarify and explain, using an example if possible, how this evaluation method would work in the scoring of applications?**

A22. Cost Proposal Evaluation - The lowest bidder must receive the maximum number of points awarded for the cost component (20 points). The other bidders will receive a proportional score using the formula of  $z = (x/y) \times 20$  where:

Cost Proposal Evaluation

- $x$  = lowest total cost;
- $y$  = total cost for the bidder being scored;
- $z$  = normalized cost score for bidder being scored; and
- 20 = total cost points.

**Q23. Under the Evaluation section addressing the Budget (on page 11 of the RFA), there is a description of the Cost Proposal Evaluation methodology. Can you please define the criteria used to determine the “best value”, as used in this section, to determine the awarding of points for a total of 20 for this section? In particular, how will staff experience, training costs, cost of data management system, etc. be weighed to prevent automatically awarding 20 points to the lowest bidder?**

A23. The lowest cost bid must receive the maximum number of points awarded for the cost component. Other criteria is evaluated in other sections of the evaluation which when combined with the cost evaluation will combine for a final score. The best value is not based on cost alone.

**Q24. Under the “Budget” section of the Application form on page 21 of the RFA, applicants are asked to provide a budget narrative “clearly linking costs to specific proposed services and activities”. Should applicants provide a justification based on the rate per unit for each payment point (thus describing general costs ascribed to the achievement of those activities and targets), or are applicants expected to detail staffing costs and specific operational costs that are proposed for the achievement for these activities/targets?**

A24. In this section of the RFA, the applicant must detail all costs that comprise the rate per unit.

**Q25. Under the “Budget” section of the Application form on page 21 of the RFA, applicants are asked to provide a budget narrative “clearly linking costs to specific proposed services and activities”. Will the budget narrative be scored? If so, how much will this section be counted toward the overall budget score of 20 points?**

A25. While not scored, the narrative must fully describe and correctly correspond to all components of the proposed rate per unit cost.

**Q26. Under the Introduction section of the RFA on page 2, the intention of this RFA is to “establish a toll-free multilingual hotline...”. Is it the expectation that texts to the Hotline will also be free to all those texting? Texting costs depend on what carrier the caller uses. Most, but not all carriers, provide free texting; however, we are informed that it would be impossible for us to tell if a caller is charged for a text. Therefore, if the RFA requires free texting to the Hotline, we would need to work out an arrangement between ONA and various carriers that charge for texting service to allow texts to the Hotline to be free of charge. Is this an arrangement that ONA would be able to coordinate with the organization awarded this contract? Please clarify.**

A26. The Hotline provider may not charge the user for the texting service. However, all standard carrier charges apply.

**Q27. Under the Introduction section of the RFA on page 2, the intention of this RFA is to “establish a toll-free multilingual hotline...”. Some of those who text to the Hotline may have cell phone numbers with area codes identified as out-of-State. We are exploring whether there may be additional costs for responding to these texts. Is it possible that ONA will pay for the cost of texts to out-of-State individuals who text to the Hotline?**

A27. No

**Q28. Under the Introduction section of the RFA on page 2, the intention of this RFA is to “establish a toll-free multilingual hotline...”. We are considering options to make text announcements to those who give consent, in follow up to their inquiries. Will ONA pay for these types of text announcements?**

A28. No. ONA will only reimburse what is in the negotiated rate.