



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES &
SERVICE TO THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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Subject: Questions & Responses, RFP #24RFP9740, State of South Dakota

In accordance with the subject Request for Proposal (RFP), the following are answers to questions which have been submitted prior to January 19, 2023, 5:00PM CT. These questions are for informational purposes only; they do not alter the requirements specified within the RFP. Any changes to the RFP will be accomplished by the Office of Procurement Management through the use of an addendum.

***The State's responses will be indicated by red font after each question**

Question 1: **1.13 Length of Contract:** Will the state consider a 2-year base period with up to three 12-month options to be exercised on the mutual written agreement of the parties? There are numerous changes to TTY-based Telecommunications Relay Service regulations coming that are expected to have an effect on what services will be provided to state TRS users. For example, **from the FCC's Report and Order (16-169):**

- 1) FCC Order 16-169, (<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-16-169A1.pdf>) Paragraph 83: **Additionally, we seek comment on whether the incorporation of RTT into the provision of TRS operations should be mandated or only allowed. Along these lines, we seek comment on the appropriate regulatory treatment for RTT in the TRS context. Specifically, given that RTT is a text-based form of communication – as is TTY-based TRS and IP Relay, should this feature be subject to the same regulatory treatment that applies to TTY-based TRS, or would it be more appropriate to consider this akin to IP Relay for purposes of the Commission's TRS rules?**
- 2) FCC Public Notice DA 23-662, (<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-23-662A1.pdf>) **The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB or Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) seeks comment on a Petition for Limited Waiver filed by T-Mobile Accessibility (T-Mobile) seeking waiver of the requirement that the TTY-based relay service be capable of communicating with the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) format. T-Mobile contends that the ASCII format is now obsolete and has very few users.**

It is anticipated that TRS services will continue to be modernized to take advantage of new technologies available. By creating shorter contracts, the state can more nimbly react to the market and regulatory changes. This will also allow the state to take advantage of new technology over the life of the contract which benefits the State and for all South Dakota Relay users. Ideally, a two-year contract term with two 1-year renewal optional renewal periods will allow the state to receive competitive pricing while taking advantage of stable provider relationships.

State's Response: We would consider an initial two-year contract with three one-year extensions.

Question 2: **1.4 Submitting your Proposal:** Will the state be willing to accept the proposal in electronic format and with DocuSign signatures (instead of ink signatures)?

State's Response: Yes, we will accept electronic proposals.

Question 3: **4.2.5.1.12 Video-Assisted Speech-to-Speech (V-A STS):** Will the state be willing to remove VA STS feature? (This is not a mandate feature under the FCC TRS minimum standards.)

State's Response: We would accept proposals without this feature and can discuss this matter further during the contract negotiation period if selected.

Question 4: **4.3.12.1 Service Level and Liquidated Damages:** Will the state provide the Liquidated Damages amount and/or will that be negotiable during the contract negotiation period on or after March 12, 2024?

State's Response: Yes, this matter will be discussed during the contract negotiation period.

Question 5: **4.3.13.2 Relay Conference Captioning (RCC) (optional):** A pre-assigned PIN system may be established to prevent misuse. Will the state accept an alternative solution that prevents misuse of RCC?

State's Response: Yes, we would accept options developed to ensure the security of RCC.

Question 6: **4.9.1 Operational Readiness and Service Transition/Implementation:** "The proposal shall include an Implementation Plan for service beginning on June 1, 2019". T-Mobile wants clarification on the date and that it should be June 1, 2024.

State's Response: Yes, this is an oversight on our part. Contract will begin June 1, 2024.

Question 7: **4.9.7.1 Service Delivery Timeframes:** “Full South Dakota TRS contract operations begin on June 1, 2019”. T-Mobile wants clarification on the date and that it should be June 1, 2024.

State's Response: Yes, this is an oversight on our part. Contract will begin June 1, 2024.

Question 8: **5.4 Outreach:** Will the SD Department of Human Service continue to provide an annual budget of \$100,000.00 to collaborate with the state on pre-approved media buys, sponsorships, and marketing materials?

State's Response: Marketing budget will be discussed as part of the contract negotiation process. The state is willing to consider proposed outreach plans.

Question 9: **9.0 Cost Proposal:**

- Does the state want to see the cost proposal for Price Per Minute (PPM) session time?
- Does the state want to see the cost proposal options for Price Per Minute (PPM) only, Monthly Recurring Charges (MRC) only and PPM + MRC?

State's Response: The State would like to see a comprehensive cost proposal including both Price Per Minute (PPM) and Monthly Recurring Charges (MRC).

Question 10: **9.3 Cost Proposal:** T-Mobile would like an explanation of what a 15-minute unit of service is and how this is calculated?

State's Response: 15-minute unit of service billing is the standard billing practice for the Division of Rehabilitation. However, for purposes of this proposal, other billing methods will be accepted and evaluated.

Question 11: Why has this bid been released at this time?

State's Response: The current contract and RFP cycle is scheduled to end on May 31, 2024.

Question 12: Can you please provide greater explanation of your expectations related to any required subcontracting to minority-owned, women-owned, or other types or categories of small or disadvantaged businesses? For example, what is required with the proposal, and what is required to comply during the term of the contract?

State's Response: We do not have any specific requirements regarding categories for subcontracting.

Question 13: Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders

submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories?

State's Response: The State will accept alternate fee structures as part of the proposal. Final fee structure will be part of the contract negotiation process with the entity selected.

Question 14: Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable.

State's Response: Our current vendor has complied with all terms of the current contract and provides services as described in the contract.

Question 15: Has the current contract gone full term?

State's Response: Yes, the current contract has gone to full term.

Question 16: Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised?

State's Response: Yes, we are at the end of the RFP cycle.

Question 17: Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested services?

State's Response: T-Mobile was awarded the RFP and has been providing services under this RFP cycle since 2019.

Question 18: To what extent will the location of the bidder's proposed location or headquarters have a bearing on any award?

State's Response: The bidder's location will not impact the bidder's candidacy for award.

Question 19: How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates?

State's Response: Current billable fees are categorized by Monthly Recurring Charges, Usage Charges, and One-Time Charges. Telecommunication Billable Sessions are charged at \$1.77 per minute and Relay Conference Captioning are charged at \$3.55 per minute.

Question 20: What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?

State's Response: In the current fiscal year, a total of \$60,615.73 has been paid. The fiscal year runs from June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024.

Question 21: Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?

State's Response: Previous experience will be taken into consideration but is not required.

Question 22: What is the minimum required total call capacity?

State's Response: We do not have a minimum required total call capacity.

Question 23: What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity?

State's Response: The State follows current FCC regulations regarding all issues surrounding call capacity, hold time, transfers, and call management.

Question 24: What is the maximum hold time?

State's Response: The State follows current FCC regulations regarding all issues surrounding call capacity, hold time, transfers, and call management.

Question 25: What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator?

State's Response: The State follows current FCC regulations regarding all issues surrounding call capacity, hold time, transfers, and call management.

Question 26: What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call?

State's Response: The State follows current FCC regulations regarding all issues surrounding call capacity, hold time, transfers, and call management.

Question 27: What is the maximum percentage of calls that can be terminated by the caller without resolution?

State's Response: The State follows current FCC regulations regarding all issues surrounding call capacity, hold time, transfers, and call management.

Question 28: Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors?

State's Response: The State follows current FCC regulations regarding all issues surrounding call capacity, hold time, transfers, and call management.

Question 29: What is the required degree of dedication for the call center? (Can call centers work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?

State's Response: We do not have a set requirement for dedication of the call centers or operators. This can be part of the contract negotiation process.

Question 30: What is the required degree of dedication for the operators? (Can operators work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?

State's Response: We do not have a set requirement for dedication of the call centers or operators. This can be part of the contract negotiation process.

Question 31: Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?

State's Response: Yes, a verification system or a pre-recorded operation before contacting an operator is allowed.

Question 32: What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained?

State's Response: The State follows current FCC regulations regarding all issues surrounding call capacity, hold time, transfers, and call management.

Question 33: What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications?

State's Response: The Department of Human Services follows a destruction policy of six years. Recording and storage requirements can be negotiated as part of the contract negotiation process.

Question 34: What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center?

State's Response: This data is managed by the current contract holder at this time.

Question 35: What is the current average wait time for phone calls?

State's Response: This data is managed by the current contract holder at this time. Per the most recent report, 96.54% of calls were answered in 60 seconds or less.

Question 36: What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications?

State's Response: This data is managed by the current contract holder at this time.

Question 37: What is the current average after-call work time for operators?

State's Response: This data is managed by the current contract holder at this time.

Question 38: Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English?

State's Response: Percentage of calls received in English is 99.7%.

Question 39: Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish?

State's Response: .3%

Question 40: What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak?

State's Response: This data is managed by the current contract holder at this time.