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**DCAT5-21-045 Refugee Immigrant Guide Coordination Services**

**Bidders’ Q&A**

**Written Questions**

1. Q. Attachment I breaks down numbers of clients served over six years of RIG services. Is their data on the average number of days of service by client, in addition to the greatest length of service a provider can anticipate to provide to refugee clients?
2. Information on average number of days of service are not available and will not probably be available. It can vary a lot. JCS cases may take 3 to 6 months, but can take longer. DHS cases typically take longer, especially if children are removed from the home.
3. Q. Will there be established benchmarks for numbers of clients served moving forward in FY21 and beyond?
4. There are no specific benchmarks for numbers of clients served because we cannot predict cases involved in DHS and JCS. This is not a high-volume service but you can review the timespans in Attachment I and numbers served during each timespan to gain an understanding of how the numbers ebbed and flowed.
5. Q. Page 30 of the RFP lists the most common languages requested over six years. What do the asterisks after Swahili and Arabic indicate?



1. That was an omission. The asterisks indicate that those languages were from a variety of countries/culture groups.
2. Q. Are there any established education or credential requirements for RIGs, RIG advocates, or the RIG Program Coordinator?
3. There are no educational requirements although it would be in the Contractor’s best interest to have someone with multi-language/multi-cultural supervisory experience coordinating the services and someone with multi-language/multi-cultural interactions experience serving as advocate.
4. Q. What changes have been made between this contract and the prior contract?
5. The current contract is not an indication of the current services as it has morphed a lot over the course of the contract due to it being a new service and constant building on lessons learned. The services described in this solicitation are, however, more indicative of the services currently being provided at this time.
6. Q. Is prevention a focus of this contract? If so, what expectations are there around prevention activities? What types of activities are allowed if the Bidder wants to implement prevention activities with stakeholders?
7. For the sake of this Q&A, we shall define prevention services as services provided to children and families who are not system involved but are at risk of system-involvement. The current contract has not been able to provide many prevention services as most of the focus has been on providing services to children and families who are involved in Child Welfare or Juvenile Court Services. There were concerns that the funds available would not be able to support much in the way of prevention.

The current contract has covered RIG activities on a small number of prevention cases brought to the attention of the Stakeholders’ team. The current contractor also has coordinated a few DHS 101 trainings and JCS 101 and 102 trainings to a variety of Refugee groups in the community as a way to educate parents. The current contractor also conducted some language/culture-specific Courageous Conversations to obtain feedback from Refugee groups.

1. Q. Will Spanish speaking immigrant groups be served?
2. No, as there are more interpreting and ethnic-based organizations in our community for Spanish speaking residents. However, if there is a more obscure dialect or language that is encountered for a Latino client, then the Stakeholders’ group can consider using the services of a RIG if an interpreter for that culture/language group can be located, vetted and trained.
3. Q. Are there any immigrant groups not able to be served by this contract?
4. Please refer to Q&A 7.
5. Q. Do subcontractors need to be identified at the time of proposal submission or can they be identified upon award of the contract? (Page 5-Section 1.3.1. 1g)
6. Subcontractors should be identified at the time of the submission of the bids and information for each subcontractor included on separate Subcontractor Disclosure Forms, Attachment C of the RFP. Subcontractors can be added after the contract is awarded with approval from the Decategorization Board.
7. Q. Will the RIG Advocate serve as advocate for RIGs of both the Bidder and subcontractors or solely the Bidder? (Page 6-Section 1.3.1. 2)
8. How it works now is that the Contractor will have an Advocate available in situations where the subcontractor does not have one available, but the subcontractor should be able to supply their respective Advocate personnel when it is warranted.
9. Q. Are there penalties associated with not meeting performance measures? (Page 7-Section 1.3.2)
	1. Has the current contractor been penalized when language capacity is lacking among the contractor and subcontractors?
10. There have been very few instances where a language-appropriate RIG has not been able to be located. That being said, the contractor will be expected to locate a language-appropriate RIG when requested and, if this deliverable cannot be met by the contractor on a regular basis, then the Polk Decategorization Board will make a decision regarding continuation of the contract.
11. Q. Is the budgeted $300,000 per year for each year of the contract or $300,000 total for the entire 6 years of the contract? (Page 17-Section 3.3)
12. Per Section 3.3, Contract Budget, of the RFP, Cost proposals may not exceed $300,000.00, for the entire term of the contract, including any extension years. That means the total is for entire 6 years of the contract. Averaged over the life of the contract, if renewed up to the 6-year maximum, would be $50,000.00 per year.
13. Q. What course of action will the Agency take if referrals to the program exceed the budget? What will the expectations be of the Bidder and subcontractors in that scenario?
14. So far, under the current contract, referrals have not exceeded the budget, which has been $50,000.00 per year. It is expected that the contractor would track expenditures and notify the Decategorization Coordinator if it appears that referrals are trending in excess of the budget. The services will most likely need to terminate for the remainder of the contract year if funds are maxed out for that fiscal year.

The Contractor is responsible for reimbursing subcontractors and notifying them if services are temporarily halted due to depleted funds.

1. Q. What is the reimbursement structure for these services: per hour, per day, per youth, all-inclusive, etc?
2. The Bidder will need to determine their reimbursement structure for these services. RIG services are very much like Interpreter services.
3. Q. What are the average monthly referral trends for RIG service?
4. There are not average monthly referral trends of clients served because we cannot predict cases involved in DHS and JCS. This is not a high-volume service but you can review the timespans in Attachment I and numbers served during each timespan to gain an understanding of how the numbers ebbed and flowed
5. Q. Page 5, Section 1.3.1 “Deliverables”, g. of RFP states: “The Contractor shall sub-contract with a minimum of at least 2 other agencies currently providing services to Refugees and Immigrants in order to meet the diversity of languages for RIG services.” Could you please provide the names of the current subcontractors in Iowa State who meet the diversity of languages for RIG services?

A. There is not a list with that information. There are several agencies in Polk County who could serve as subcontractors. You can reach out to the Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa (RACI) at <http://refugeeallianceofcentraliowa.org/> to find out more about local language and culture appropriate services.

1. Q. Who is the current RIG Contractor and what is the reimbursement rate under current contract?
2. The current contractor is EveryStep. They reimburse based on the position and time spent on delivery of services for their own coordination, advocate and RIG services, and then they also reimburse the subcontractors for their services related to delivery of contracted services.
3. Q. How many contracts does the Agency anticipate to award under this RFP?
4. One contract only.
5. Q. Can the Agency confirm the educational requirements for RIGs who are employed to implement this program (i.e. high school diploma, bachelor’s, etc.)?
6. There are no educational requirements although it would be in the Contractor’s best interest to have someone with multi-language/multi-cultural supervisory experience coordinating the services and someone with multi-language/multi-cultural interactions experience serving as advocate. Please refer to RFP Section 1.3.1.a. and b. on RIG requirements.

“a. Persons from Refugee and Immigrant communities shall be identified, properly screened and vetted as safe contacts to serve as RIGs.

b. RIGs shall have a minimum of 2 years interpretation experience and be able to demonstrate proficiency in English and one or more refugee or other immigrant languages.”

1. Q. Would the RIGs providing the services be able to provide treatment services through another provider contract in addition to the Guide Coordination Services?
2. It has been our experience that the RIG services do not entail enough work to keep any Interpreter/RIG busy for 40 hours per week. It is helpful to have other services within your agency or the subcontractor agency which utilizes the RIG. Please refer the page 2 of the RFP, Bidder Eligibility Requirements:

“The Agency will only consider proposals for contract award from bidders who currently have on staff or as contracted staff Refugees and Immigrants who are bilingual or multilingual, who are proficient in English and one or more Refugee and/or Immigrant languages, and who have experience with cultural bridging services.”

1. Q. Given that the small size of refugee communities may result in possible dual relationships (personal and professional), can the Agency provide guidance to potential contractors on best practices for continuing to provide supportive services?
2. Typically the families being served will drive whether or not a particular RIG can be used if a conflict of interest should arise. Please refer to Attachment II of the RFP, pages 31 and 32, for Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest and Ethics required training for RIGs and Advocates. The Bureau of Refugee Services can provide this training or other approved entity.
3. Q. Will contracting agencies only be provided referrals that match with the language spoken by the employed RIGs for that contractor?
4. The contractor will be expected to have a variety of languages and culture groups at their disposal through their own services as well as through that of their subcontractors. The contractor will make all attempts to find a language-appropriate interpreter/RIG. The Stakeholders’ group discuss options for addressing this if that becomes too difficult for certain languages.

**Oral Questions from Bidders’ Conference Call**

1. Q. Will there be languages/cultures referred for RIG services that are not listed in Attachment I (pages 29 & 30) of the RFP?
2. Yes, as we are unable to predict language or culture of future Child Welfare or JCS clients. Also, this can be impacted by any changes in the Refugee groups that get admitted into the United States in the future.
3. Q. Are there time requirements for how long a person has to reside in the U.S. before serving as a RIG?
4. Not necessarily. Often there are Refugees who serve as interpreters while in their respective Refugee camps/locations prior to U.S. entry and could qualify as long as they have proficient English language skills and Scope of Work deliverables 1.3.1.1.a and b. are met and they attend the required trainings.
5. Q. Who is identified as the client? Is it usually the youth/child? And, do we have numbers of the minors from the numbers of resettled and secondary resettled Refugees?
6. The child is typically the client for both DHS and JCS purposes, but the RIG most often works with the parents in tandem with the Child Welfare Social Worker (SW) and Juvenile Court Officer (JCO). The child could be born in the U.S. or have acclimated quickly to U.S. culture and language but often the parent has not acclimated as quickly, so the RIG and RIG Advocate can be helpful to the SW or JCO to bridge that difference.

We do not have the numbers of minors out of the total number of resettled and secondary resettled Refugees, although the Bureau of Refugee Services could be contacted to obtain that estimate.

1. Q. Can RIGs and Advocates attend FTDMs if invited?
2. Yes, if the SW or JCO invites them.
3. Q. Will the list of bidders be posted to the Bid Opportunities website?
4. No, but the Issuing Officer can be contacted to obtain that information.
5. Q. Will specific culture trainings be provided to DHS and JCS, as referenced in Attachment II, pages 31 and 32 of the RFP?
6. Yes, this will be expected as requested by either agency. It will be infrequent but it has been something requested by both Agencies and would be helpful especially on language and culture groups who are experiencing higher system involvement.
7. Q. What is the difference between the RIG role and interpreter role?
8. Scope of Work, Deliverables 1.3.1.1.f. and h. indicate the main differences between a RIG and an interpreter. The pre-conference and de-briefing with the SW and JCO provides the opportunity for culture learning to occur and, hopefully, help the SW or JCO learn how to better connect with their families. In addition, being able to help a SW or JCO get clients connected to a linguistically and culturally appropriate service could facilitate getting the families what they need to get through the system quickly.
9. Q. Could there be sharing of Coordinator and Advocate responsibilities; i.e., would it be allowed?
10. Yes. It occurs in the current contract.
11. Q. Regarding Letters of Reference, page 16 of the RFP, Section 3.2.5.1.4, can references from other agencies with whom we have collaborated be provided as language and literacy barriers could prohibit some Refugees from being able to provide Letters of Reference.
12. Yes, but it is preferable to have client references. If the client is unable to write, then an explanation of the relationship and services provided to that client could be described along with a phone number to contact the client. If an interpreter would be needed for us to talk to the client, then specifics regarding the language and interpretation should also be included in the letter.