

RFP # EOP-0860801-CT

Administration and Assessment of Court Interpreter Exams

Questions and Answers

1) What level of access will the selected vendor have to Consortium's exams, its developers and current raters?

Answer: Provided the requirements of Section 8.3 of the RFP are met, the selected vendor will have access to Consortium exam content, relevant examination development and rating materials, and access to contact information for current raters.

2) For what languages is Project A applicable?

Answer: As stated in Section 6.1.3 of the RFP, the service provider should have a battery of valid test instruments in multiple languages representative of the demographic needs of California. As further set forth in that Section, more information regarding the language needs in California can be found in the *2005 Language Need and Interpreter Use Study* at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/courtinterpreters/documents/2005languageeed.pdf.

3) Will AOC allow the oral proficiency screening exams for Project A to be administered over-the-phone?

Answer: The AOC will consider various means for the administration of the oral proficiency screening exams provided the proposal meets all requirements set forth in the RFP.

4) How will AOC use the tracking reports indicating the number of times a candidate has taken exams with results from each attempt?

Answer: The AOC will use tracking reports for the oral proficiency screening exams, the written exams, and the oral interpreting exams used for certification to monitor pass rates in relation to demographics and to inform decisions regarding test preparation, training, and recruitment efforts. Additionally, the AOC will monitor attempts at retakes to ensure compliance with policy. As of January 2009, candidates may take the oral proficiency screening exams in English and the target foreign languages

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as many times as needed, but they will not be required to retake exams in languages for which they have passed. Also, as of January 2009, candidates in certified languages who have taken and passed the written exam will have a total of four attempts (with no time limitations) to take and pass the bilingual oral interpreting exam for certification. If they do not pass the bilingual oral interpreting exam in four attempts, they must begin the testing process again, starting with the oral proficiency screening exams. The AOC will require tracking and reporting of test attempts in accordance with these test retake policies.

5) Based on criteria set forth in the RFP, what is a fair fee, AOC's opinion, for the proposed oral proficiency screening exam?

Answer: Using the information contained in the RFP, it is the proposer's responsibility to propose fees for the services specified rather than the AOC specifying what the AOC believes a "fair fee" should be.

6) Based on criteria set forth in the RFP, what is a fair fee, in AOC's opinion, for the proposed administration of exams?

Answer: Using the information contained in the RFP, it is the proposer's responsibility to propose fees for the services specified rather than the AOC specifying what the AOC believes a "fair fee" should be.

7) Based on criteria set forth in the RFP, what is a fair fee, in AOC's opinion, for the proposed analysis of Consortium's exams?

Answer: Using the information contained in the RFP, it is the proposer's responsibility to propose fees for the services specified rather than the AOC specifying what the AOC believes a "fair fee" should be.

8) Does the AOC subsidize interpreter exam fees?

Answer: The test application fees for certified and registered exams set forth in Section 17.4 for Project B are set by the Judicial Council. These fees are not anticipated to change during the term of any contract

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awarded subsequent to this RFP. The AOC does not subsidize interpreter exam fees, and expects vendors to comply with Section 17.0 in proposing their fees for the services of Project B. The AOC acknowledges that proposers Firm Fixed Fee Per Candidate contained in Part II of the Cost/Fee Proposal Table for Project B (Attachment I) will be in addition to the Application Fee Per Exam.

With respect to Project A, the application fees for oral proficiency screening exams should be proposed by the vendor. Application fees for oral proficiency screening exams will be satisfied by the exam applicant, the AOC, or a combination of both.

9. It is our understanding that passing scores on California's Written Interpreter Examinations are currently carried forward and considered valid for a period of two years. For what period of time, if any, will language skills scores (determined by the oral proficiency screening exam) be carried forward and considered valid?

Answer: As of January 2009, the 48 month policy for exam retakes will be dropped. After that date, candidates of certified languages will be required to take and pass oral proficiency screening exams and the bilingual written exam before proceeding to the bilingual oral interpreting exam. Candidates of certified languages will have a total of four attempts (with no time limitation) to take and pass the bilingual oral interpreting exam. The oral proficiency screening exam scores will carry forward and will be considered valid for the duration of time the candidate takes to pass the written and bilingual oral interpreting exam. However, candidates who do not pass the bilingual oral interpreting exam within four attempts will be required to start over in the testing process with the oral proficiency screening exams.

As of January 2009, candidates of registered languages will be required to take and pass oral proficiency screening exams in English and the target foreign language before proceeding to the written exam. Candidates of registered languages will be permitted to take the written exam as many times as needed with no time limitation. Oral proficiency screening exam scores will carry forward and will be considered valid for the duration of time the candidate takes to pass the written exam.

Candidates may take the oral proficiency screening exams in English and the target foreign language as many times as needed or desired. Candidates will not be expected to retake an oral proficiency screening

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exam in a language passed, unless they have not passed the bilingual oral interpreting exam within four attempts.

10) Page 13, 6.2.4.4, Are there any Fee caps? If so, what are they?

Answer: Please refer to the AOC response to question # 8.

11) Page 13, 6.2.5.1, Will the names of the current raters be made available to the selected Vendor?

Answer: No. Oral Proficiency Screening exams are not currently administered by or for the AOC.

12) Page 13, 6.2.5.1, How much are raters currently paid?

Answer: Unknown. Oral Proficiency Screening exams are not currently administered by or for the AOC.

13) Page 19, 7.2.3.1, How many statewide locations are required, and what are the required or preferred locations?

Answer: For the administration of written and oral interpreting exams, the AOC would prefer to have a total of 4-7 statewide test sites geographically located to include the Northern/Bay region, the Northern Central region, and the Southern region (Los Angeles required) of the state. Specific test site locations, as well as the decision for multiple locations, should be determined by trends in candidate registration. In recent years, exams have been administered in the following locations: Oakland, San Francisco, Fresno, Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego.

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14) Part A – Oral Proficiency Screening Exams - What exam characteristics is the AOC looking for in a screening examination – e.g. number of questions, duration of exam, languages assessed?

Answer: As stated in 6.2.4.1, the oral proficiency screening exams in English and in all available foreign languages must measure oral proficiency skills and assess a candidate's ability to comprehend and communicate at the minimum requisite level established by the standard-setting study as outlined in 6.2.2. To the extent possible, the content of the oral proficiency screening exams should align with relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in Attachment G. Documentation must be provided to ensure that instruments meet psychometric standards and that exams assess relevant grammatical structures and conventions, as well as level appropriate vocabulary.

The AOC does not have minimum requirements regarding the number of questions or duration of the exam. The AOC does not have a predetermined list of languages to be assessed with oral proficiency screening exams, although the service provider should have a battery of valid test instruments in multiple languages representative of the demographic needs of California.

15) Part B – Examination Administration for Written and Oral Exams - In what manner does the AOC intend to convey eligibility information to sit for the written examination for those individuals that pass the new Oral Proficiency Screening exam included in Part A of the procurement?

Answer: The AOC will transmit to the vendor administering the written and oral interpreting exams candidate eligibility tracking information in electronic form, hard copy, or both, as may be appropriate.

16) Part B – Examination Administration for Written and Oral Exams - Is the AOC open to suggestions as to the length (in number of days) of each of the testing windows in the Spring and Fall for the written and oral examinations?

Answer: Yes. The AOC would consider suggestions regarding the number of days of the testing windows for the administration of Spring and Fall written and oral interpreting examinations.

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17) Part B – Examination Administration for Written and Oral Exams - Will any preference be given to vendors that can respond to Part A and Part B of this proposal?

Answer: As set forth in Section 2.4 of the RFP, the AOC encourages prospective vendors to bid on all three projects, or a single project, or multiple projects, however, each project will be individually evaluated strictly according to the evaluation criteria specified for that project. Therefore, no preference will be given based on the number of projects on which a vendor proposes.

18) Part B – Examination Administration for Written and Oral Exams - Does the state intend for the individual to pay all fees associated with the written and oral examinations, or will the state incur a portion of the price?

Answer: Please refer to the AOC response to question # 8.

19) In section 6.1.1, the Administration and Assessment of Court Interpreter Exams Request for Proposals states “the service provider will manage the administration of oral proficiency screening exams”. We would like to submit a proposal for RFP# EOP- 0860801-CT Project A, however, we generally do not administer the tests since our testing is automated and non-human rated. Would this disqualify our group from consideration if the courts had to administer the tests? Or should we calculate costs to hire a consultant to administer the tests twice per year? Would this consultant’s resume need to be included in the formal RPF response due November 5, 2008?

Answer: The AOC encourages vendors to seek subcontractors to provide additional expertise and/or services, if and as needed. Proposals must include resumes describing the background and experience of key staff.

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20) In section 6.2.4.1, the proposal states “Administer Oral Proficiency Screening Exams in English and in all foreign languages for which the service has valid exams twice per calendar year.” We have automated assessments in English, Spanish, Arabic and Dutch. To confirm, we would provide assessments in these languages and no others. Does this disqualify us from consideration if we cannot provide language assessments for all languages mentioned in RFP# EOP- 0860801-CT?

Answer: Section 6.2.4.1 is a subset of Project A. As set forth in 6.1.3, the service provider should have a battery of valid test instruments in multiple languages representative of the demographic needs of California. Should a vendor not have the full breadth of languages representative of these demographic needs, the AOC encourages vendors to seek subcontractors to provide additional services, if and as needed.

21) In section 6.2.4.3, the proposal states, “Service provider will ensure verification of candidate’s identity, confidentiality for all testing candidates and safeguarding to avoid exam compromise at test sites.” To confirm, we would need to offer a proctored, off-site test location to administer the tests?

Answer: The AOC will consider various means for the administration of the oral proficiency screening exams. However, the selected vendor will need to demonstrate the ability to conduct uniform test administrations to accommodate candidates in multiple statewide locations. The service provider must also demonstrate the ability to ensure verification of candidate identity, confidentiality for all testing candidates, and safeguarding to avoid test compromise.

22) In section 9.2.3.1, the proposal states, “References support service provider’s ability to provide required project Deliverables as specified in Sections 6.2-6.2.8 of Project A of this RFP based on past experience or similar contracts. How many referrals are required and/or requested?

Answer: Section 13.2.5 states that a responsive proposal should include names, addresses, and telephone numbers of a minimum of three (3) clients for whom the consultant has conducted similar services. The AOC may check references listed by the consultant.

END OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS