

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Spanish Language Services “On Call” List and Contract Authorization

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve “On Call” List for Spanish Language Services for a Period of Three Years and Authorize the SJCOG Executive Director to Negotiate and Sign Contracts on a Project Specific Basis for a Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$50,000 Over Three Years

DISCUSSION:

SUMMARY:

SJCOG staff is seeking approval of an “on call” list of five vendors to provide Spanish language services for SJCOG public engagement, community outreach, education, marketing, and advertising initiatives.

SJCOG received nine statements of qualifications; all were found to be responsive to the RFQ and reviewed by the selection committee. The five top ranked vendors are recommended for the on-call list for future services. The five vendors are shown below in order of final ranking. Rates vary depending on volume and type of service requested.

- FSB Strategies
- Lazar Translation and Interpretation
- Grafica Design*
- Rivera Associates*
- Lionbridge

*Firms in San Joaquin County

RECOMMENDATION:

SJCOG staff recommends that the SJCOG Board approve the “on call” list for a period of three years and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and contract with vendors on an individual project basis to provide Spanish language services. Vendors on the on-call list will receive individual assignments on an as-needed basis, but the total amount of services (from all vendors) to SJCOG will not exceed \$50,000 over three years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The budget for this contract will not exceed \$50,000 over the three-year contract period. The cost for these services will be paid for with funds from the relevant program area. The majority of service requests over the next eighteen months are expected to be for the Regional Transportation Plan work element.

BACKGROUND:

In December 2016, the SJCOG Board adopted the Public Participation Plan, including an updated Limited English Proficiency Plan. The Plan is intended to ensure that SJCOG's language assistance measures reflect the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons, meaning individuals for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. For San Joaquin County, more than 40% of the county's residents speak a language other than English at home. The three largest language groups in San Joaquin County include: Spanish (26%), Tagalog (Filipino) (2.6%), and Khmer (Cambodian) (1.4%). The LEP Plan determined that translation of vital documents and access to services should be provided in the Spanish language as a matter of course, and upon request and subject to available resources, SJCOG will provide translation into Tagalog and Khmer languages.

To improve meaningful access to SJCOG services by LEP populations, on January 12, 2017, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was distributed to seek Spanish language interpreters and translators to provide on-call services for SJCOG. The deadline for submissions was January 30, 2017. Proposers were asked to submit work samples that demonstrated their experience, specialized knowledge and abilities as Spanish language translators and interpreters.

Solicitation Process

SJCOG Staff conducted research to assemble a target mailing list of Spanish language service providers to receive the solicitation. The research included vendors that have performed prior work with SJCOG, an inquiry to a few staff and colleagues at other agencies on whether they knew of/worked with any vendors, as well as a list of local organizations and partners who work with the Hispanic/Latino population in San Joaquin County.

In addition to an e-mail solicitation to the above-mentioned target list, the RFQ was distributed to SJCOG's environmental justice resource list. SJCOG's Environmental Justice list is comprised of a broad range of 30 public stakeholder and underserved community groups that do not typically participate in regional planning efforts. It was also posted on SJCOG's website and various social media channels.

Review Process

SJCOG received nine Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) in response to the RFQ. Two local vendors (located in San Joaquin County) submitted proposals out of the total nine received.

Staff reviewed the SOQs and the accompanying portfolios to establish a list of pre-qualified Spanish language service providers for a period of three years. The review committee was comprised of five SJCOG staff that represented the agency's divisions of Public Information, Planning/Programming, and Administrative Services.

Each proposal was reviewed on quality, breadth, and depth of direct experience. Specifically, the selection committee looked at:

- Experience working with public agencies on similar deliverables (e.g. government affairs and administration, public decision-making processes, urban and transportation planning documents, public outreach materials related to civic engagement)
- Quality of materials in the portfolio, including the range/diversity of work samples; work samples providing a clear demonstration of the type of services being offered, including video/audio recordings of a mock on-site translation service and/or document translation samples
- Value in terms of services and expertise, measured against fees
- General customer service and quality assurance tools and procedures offered by the vendors
- List of current or previous clients and range of assignments

The advantage of the on-call list, in lieu of selecting just one firm, is that it gives SJCOG the ability to tap into wide-ranging expertise and depth in skill sets depending on the assignment. At the conclusion of the review process, SJCOG staff developed a recommended shortlist that, as a whole, was most responsive in performing the following:

- On-site interpretation services for public meetings and workshops located in San Joaquin County
- Document translation services ranging from short documents to lengthy technical reports or planning documents
- Ability to implement emerging technologies, such as telephonic and remote video interpretation services
- Strategic communications services - going beyond simple translation and/or interpretation to providing cultural context that improves community engagement and understanding
- Ability to perform desktop publishing, in addition to translation services
- Option to add additional languages down the road, including the two other language groups identified within the SJCOG LEP Plan—Tagalog and Khmer

NEXT STEPS:

Following Board action, the SJCOG Executive Director will negotiate contacts with individual vendors on a project-by-project basis.

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