



IFB ADDENDUM #1

To: All Bidders
From: Rita V. Brousseau, Chief Procurement Officer
Date: May 26, 2020
Re: Telephone Answering Services RFP 2020-1A

This Addendum modifies and forms a part of the Bid Set documents dated May 18, 2020.

This Addendum consists of the following: Four (4) typed pages.

Where any items called for in the bid documents are supplemented here, the supplemental requirements shall be considered as added thereto. Where any original item is amended, voided, or superseded here, the other provisions of such items not specifically amended, voided, or superseded shall remain in effect.

Answers to bidder's questions:

- Question:** Is a copy of the current pricing available?
Answer: \$2,340.00 per month, 3,000 minutes included with a .75 per-minute overage charge.
- Question:** Will evaluations/interviews be conducted in-person?
Answer: No evaluations or interviews will be conducted with proposers. A committee selected by LHA's CPO will evaluate all proposals in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c.30B.
- Question:** Section 2.0 - How many proposals were submitted on the April 13, 2020 due date? What was the reason for the cancellation?
Answer: One proposal was submitted; it was rejected as pricing was beyond our approved budget.
- Question:** Section 2.0 - What are the Average Handling Times (AHT) for current and previous calls?
Answer: As stated in the RFP, AHT information is not available.
- Question:** Section 2.0 - Can you provide a time frame for when the majority of all the calls are received? What are the time frames?
Answer: No, this information is not available.



6. **Question:** Section 2.3.1 ii. Will LHA provide specific instructions on how the water is turned off on their equipment (toilets), or what equipment is installed in their units?
Answer: Yes.
7. **Question:** Section 2.3.2 - Confirm the times listed are all Eastern Standard Times? Will the LHA require a specific Area Code for the telephone number provided?
Answer: Yes, all times are EST. Yes, a 978 area code will be required.
8. **Question:** Section 2.6 - Will LHA answer calls during business hours? And if calls ring 5 times, will the center answer after that time period? If the vendor is to answer 24 hours a day, can the calls be answered more quickly?
Answer: Yes, LHA will answer calls. If the staff is unavailable, it will then be answered by the answering service and the protocol listed in this RFP shall commence.
9. **Question:** Section 2.7 iv. - Please provide costs previously incurred by the prior/current vendor for mishandling dispatched calls.
Answer: None.
10. **Question:** Section 2.9 - Is the use of a translation service acceptable?
Answer: So long as it does not delay a response to the tenant.
11. **Question:** Section 5.5 - Contract Service Standards - Are vendors required to be licensed by the State of Massachusetts or is a license from the State of origin acceptable?
Answer: A license from the State of origin is acceptable.
12. **Question:** Attachment H - For the additional minutes for inbound/outbound calls - is this the requested rate for calls that exceed the 2200 calls per month?
Answer: It would be the rate for calls in excess of the proposer's allotted monthly minutes.
13. **Question:** Attachment H - Patch minutes - Is the per minute rate for calls patched directly to a Property Manager quantity a request for a rate of per minute with a maximum of 10 minutes per month? Is there a maximum of patches per month? How much is the current vendor charging per month?
Answer: The UOM for the Patch Minutes in the RFP is an estimate of the number of minutes in aggregate of all calls patched directly to a Property Manager. Pricing is on a per-minute basis. We do not have the information of the current charges from the incumbent vendor.
14. **Question:** What percentage of calls each month are Spanish speaking? What percentage of calls each month are Khmer speaking?
Answer: We do not have that information.
15. **Question:** Will the initial training be on site or via teleconference?



Answer: It will depend on the conditions at the time of implementation and will be discussed at that time.

16. **Question:** What is the budget for this project?

Answer: Approximately \$40,000.00 per year.

17. **Question:** Can you provide actual data to show how many calls came in each month for the past year?

Answer: No, this information is not available.

18. **Question:** It looks as if the Lowell Housing Authority is looking for answering services, provided by live agents. We think we are able to develop a system with a (trilingual) automated, menu-guided attendant that can answer 99% of all questions. That can be a very efficient solutions as it will be far cheaper than a solution with live agents and thereby lowering overhead costs. Would LHA be willing to consider such a proposal?

Answer: All solutions will be considered. Vendors are reminded to submit their Plan of Service in their Technical Proposal submission.

19. **Question:** Are the services being provided by the current vendor similar in nature to those listed in this solicitation?

Answer: Yes, the same.

20. **Question:** How many LHA properties and units does this bid cover?

Answer: Approximately 1,655 units throughout 17 properties.

21. **Question:** Is the requirement in Section 2.8 (“Average Wait Time”) in relation to a proposal requirement for all interested bidders or is it only a regular reporting requirement for the selected vendor?

Answer: It is a proposal requirement.

22. **Question:** In the requirement under Section 3.1.4 (“B.) Experience”), is it LHA’s intention that the proposer should include workflows from current housing authority clients?

Answer: Yes.

23. **Question:** Under Minimum Qualification #7 on page 24, there is a requirement for a Non-Collusion form, Tax Compliance form, and Clerk Certificate; however, the requirements list on page 2 does not list these forms and we cannot find them within the solicitation package. Is the listing on page 24 in error? If not in error, can LHA provide the required forms?

Answer: These requirements are listed in Attachment G which must be signed and submitted by the proposer.

24. **Question:** For each of the properties in this bid, does LHA use a rotating on-call staff person per call? (e.g., if an on-call person needs to be dispatched for an emergency,



25. does the next emergency call [if it comes more than an hour after the first call, per Section 2.3.3.ii] go to a different on-call staff member?)

Answer: We have night coverage until 1am. Then the emergency calls go the managers and they call in staff. Calls go the office mangers phone during the day after 5 rings it's forwarded to the answering service who will send out an email to the property manager that the call originated from unless it's an emergency an they will call the manager.

26. **Question:** Page 12 mentions the need for a phone number for LHA to forward their calls to in the event that LHA phone lines go down; does this need to be a different forward-to number than the one that maintenance calls would normally be directed to?

Answer: No, LHA has enough coverage between the maintenance line, managers line and assistant's line. The answering service will need a backup line on their end.

NOTE TO ALL BIDDERS: YOU MUST ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF ALL ADDENDA ON YOUR BID SUBMISSION FORM WHERE INDICATED OR INCLUDE A COPY OF ADDENDA IN YOUR BID SUBMISSION.