

STATEMENT OF WORK

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS Ombudsman)

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Background

The CIS Ombudsman has the statutory mission to: (1) assist individuals and employers in resolving problems with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); (2) identify serious and pervasive problems stakeholders encounter in dealing with USCIS; and (3) propose changes to mitigate identified issues. By statute, the CIS Ombudsman submits an annual report to Congress by the 30th of June.

In its draft Language Access Plan for 2024-2027, the CIS Ombudsman committed to following the DHS Policy on Language Access: *It is the policy of DHS to provide meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency to operations, services, activities, and programs that support each Homeland Security mission area by providing quality language assistance services in a timely manner.* Therefore, our office will incorporate language access considerations into routine strategic and business planning, identify and translate crucial documents into the most frequently encountered languages, and provide interpretive services where possible.

1.2. Scope

The Statement of Work (SOW) covers Foreign Language Services. Services requested include translation, interpretation (on-site, telephonic and, virtual/video), and transcription. The purpose of this SOW is to obtain high quality, timely services to carry out the CIS Ombudsman mission, ensuring meaningful access to limited English proficient (LEP) persons.

2.0 REQUIREMENTS

2.1 The Contractor shall provide language services through qualified linguists as specified in the DHS Language Services II strategic sourcing vehicle. DHS Language Services II BPA provides foreign language services for approximately 180 languages and dialects.

2.2 The CIS Ombudsman requires language services for anticipated and/or routine interactions as well as language services that support emergency situations. Therefore, the Contractor shall have the capacity to meet higher demands and fulfill critical and time-sensitive language needs.

2.3 The Contractor shall be able to provide support during normal working hours and unexpected situations in all U.S. time zones.

2.4 The Contractor shall furnish the necessary labor personnel and materials (equipment, travel, and ancillary labor) required to satisfy the Task Order requirements. Language service may be required at any location within the United States and its territories. The Contractor shall supply qualified language specialists to work on-site at the locations required from local sources when possible. Cost associated with local travel shall not be charged to the CIS Ombudsman.

2.5 The contractor shall have rigorous quality control processes for all language services provided as detailed within the SOW. These quality control reports shall be made available to the Program Office for review and verification at any time upon request.

2.6 The Contractor shall have the capability of telecommunication technology (i.e., landline, cell phone, video communication (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom), email, fax, and basic internet function) to provide services.

3.0 LANGUAGE SERVICES REQUIRED

In order to fulfill the CIS Ombudsman's mission, the office require routine access to a full range of language services delivered in a variety of contexts. The contractor shall be prepared to serve LEP persons in languages listed in Appendix A of the SOW.

DHS Language Services II BPA includes foreign language interpretation, translation, and transcription services. The CIS Ombudsman is seeking a task order in support of work performed on-site at any location CIS Ombudsman personnel or contract staff are located within the continental United States and its territories.

The CIS Ombudsman has a need to meet its current requirements through a language line service for the Program Office and contract staff that provide accessibility during normal working hours and unexpected situations. The language line established by the Contractor shall be equipped to provide language services for most frequently requested languages and less common languages, on an on-demand basis.

The CIS Ombudsman requires these services to be delivered in diverse contexts with the skills and knowledge as set forth in this SOW.

The Contractor shall furnish all personnel, supervision, equipment, materials, transportation, and other items necessary to perform the services described in the SOW.

A detailed description of the work required, any specialized personnel skillsets, and the place of performance will be set forth within the SOW.

The CIS Ombudsman and contract staff are authorized to request language services under the task order so they can fulfill their official agency duties without delay.

3.1 COORDINATING AND SCHEDULING REQUEST

The PM or COR shall be responsible for coordinating and scheduling interpreter request at least five (5) business days in advance for on-site language interpretation services. However, the Government may require immediate language service as soon as within one (1) hour of user's request for service. The PM or COR shall provide pertinent information related to the assignment, including date, time projected length of assignment, type of assignment, location, on site POC, on site POC phone number.

4.0 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS/TASKS

- a. The Contractor shall meet all task order requirements by providing linguists who meet the personnel qualifications set forth in Section 6.1 of this SOW which is in accordance with Section 4 of the DHS Language Services BPA PWS Attachment A.
- b. The Contractor shall establish a custom, direct phone line dedicated to CIS Ombudsman personnel.
- c. The CIS Ombudsman requires language services for anticipated and/or routine interactions as well as language services that support surges and emergency situations. Therefore, the Contractor shall have the ability and capacity to rapidly increase its staffing level for any given language in an expedited manner to meet time sensitive CIS Ombudsman language needs.
- d. For both routine and unexpected situations, the Contractor shall be able to provide support during normal working hours and unexpected situations for all categories of language services described in this SOW. Upon award, the selected Contractor shall provide at least two designated points of contact (POC). At least one POC shall be able to answer finance, funding, or billing related questions, and one shall be able to answer service-related matters such as the progress and status of linguist clearances, quality assurance, staffing questions, and the production of reports.
- e. POCs shall be available during normal business hours, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET (business hours can be flexible if a Contractor is in another time zone). The Contractor shall provide POCs who have the authority to make decisions, or who can obtain them easily, and who are also familiar with the contract requirements and CIS Ombudsman needs.
- f. The Contractor shall demonstrate how it will ensure that all linguists who will perform work under this task order meet the minimum personnel qualification requirements as outlined in this task order. The Contractor shall also include a contingency plan for replacing or substituting linguists when those originally assigned to the task order are not able to perform or meet the task order

requirements.

- g. The Monthly Usage Report shall include the following:
- Date and time of contact;
 - Requesting CIS Ombudsman employee (federal) or contractor's name and PIN;
 - Requesting employee's division;
 - Language that was interpreted/translated/transcribed; and
 - Telephone interpreter call request: date, start, end, total minutes, and total duration.

5.0 LANGUAGE SERVICES REQUIRED

As stated under Section 2.1(a) of the DHS Language Services BPA PWS, the general requirements of FC1 include language services as defined under GSA Schedule 738II Language Services - Translation Services (381-1) and Interpretation Services (382-2). The Contractor shall have the ability to provide all of the services listed in this SOW.

5.1 Foreign Language Interpretation

The CIS Ombudsman requires interpreters for its public engagements, which are often conducted virtually but may include in-person events. CIS Ombudsman may also need periodic interpretation of phone calls and voicemails from customers.

The Contractor shall provide foreign language interpretation by interpreting oral communication to and from English and foreign languages telephonically, via video communication, or in-person. Interpretation includes but is not limited to simultaneous, consecutive, sight translation, telephonic and voiceovers. Interpreter forums may include meetings, conferences, briefings, and training.

The Contractor shall provide interpretation services in all languages indicated in Appendix A.

The Contractor shall have the ability to telephonically assist CIS Ombudsman employees and contract staff in identifying a LEP individual's primary language, when encountered. There may be instances in which an individual encountered may be illiterate or not speak one of the languages listed. In the Contractor's response to this task order, the Contractor shall communicate how it plans to perform the responsibility to identify a LEP individual's primary language, as needed.

Telephonic Interpretation: The Contractor shall provide interpreters telephonically to support calls placed by CIS Ombudsman personnel and contract staff that need to communicate with CIS Ombudsman customers and stakeholders. The need for language interpretation services is based on case assistance inquiries from non-LEP individuals. Therefore, it is impossible to know exactly how many hours' worth of calls the Contractor will receive in any given period of time. Therefore, the CIS Ombudsman does not guarantee a minimum amount of call volume the Contractor will incur, nor can it predict which months, days, or time of day will be the busiest.

- The Contractor shall provide toll free prompt access to skilled linguists.

- When taking calls, linguists shall be located within the continental United States and its territories (i.e., Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.). Although it is not a qualifying factor, the Contractor shall notify the CIS Ombudsman in their response to this task order if they have the ability to record calls should a situation arise in which it is requested.
- Each linguist shall identify themselves before initiating interpretation by a unique code that the Contractor has assigned to maintain confidentiality.
- The Contractor shall have a back-up plan in place to address any malfunction of its technical systems used to support telephonic interpretation without interruption.
- The Government shall not be charged for calls made unless a call is placed to the vendor that results in the actual use of interpretation services. The Government shall not be charged for calls scheduled then cancelled by CIS Ombudsman staff, calls abandoned by the interpreter, instances when confidentiality is violated or when an interpreter is recused for bias, when connectivity is lost, or when the interpreter does not demonstrate required fluency.

Performance will be evaluated to determine whether or not it meets the requirements of the task order. When the COR advises the Contracting Officer that Contractor performance is problematic, the Contracting Officer may deem it appropriate to issue a Contract Discrepancy Report.

5.2 Foreign Language Translation

The CIS Ombudsman requires translation of many kinds of written documents, including but not limited to tipsheets, forms, website content, social media posts, presentations, audio recordings, scripts, flyers, and posters. The CIS Ombudsman may require the Contractor to make an audio recording of a translation as well. The Contractor shall provide translation services in a timely manner in all languages indicated in Appendix A.

The Contractor shall establish a quality assurance process to verify the accuracy of the translation, and the process shall include and respond to CIS Ombudsman feedback. Each translation is to be a complete, precise, and idiomatically correct rendering from the source language into the target language. The translation is to be reviewed and certified by the Contractor as a true and accurate translation of the document that meets the needs of the target audience and follows the CIS Ombudsman style and translation guidelines.

5.3 Foreign Language Transcription/Captioning Services

The CIS Ombudsman requires transcription services converting speech from audio/video sources or other formats into a written or electronic text document to and from English and foreign languages. The Contractor shall provide services in all languages indicated in Appendix A.

The Contractor shall provide foreign language transcription by interpreting oral communication (live or recorded) to and from English and foreign languages and transcribing it into written, electronic and/or multi-media material/format showing verbatim words from the conversation or the recording. The end product is stored on a removable media with a printed copy or provided electronically, depending on agency personnel preference.

Materials include but are not limited to legal, medical, policy, video subtitling, audio recordings and captioning. Transcription includes formatting, proofreading, text adaptation, editing, graphic design, and desktop publishing. Specialized certifications or knowledge base (e.g., medical or court certified) may be required as needed.

Each transcription is to be a complete, precise, and idiomatically correct rendering from the source into the target language and is to be reviewed and certified by the Contractor as a true and accurate translation of the document that meets the needs of the target audience.

5.4 Desktop Publishing

Translation includes formatting, proofreading, text adaptation, editing, graphic design, and desktop publishing. The Contractor shall also ensure that translations are 508-compliant. Specialized certifications or knowledge base may be required (e.g., medical or court certified) as needed.

6.0 CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL

The Contractor shall provide all necessary personnel to meet task order requirements and provide effective management of the task order, including but not limited to program/project management, human resource management, performance management, quality assurance, administrative support, and supervision of all Contractor staff. Contractor supervisors shall perform proper oversight of all Contractor employees. Contractor supervisor(s) shall perform supervisory/management activities to ensure that Contractor employees have necessary skills, information, and tools to perform tasks and that task order requirements are properly met. All Contractor employees shall address personnel and program issues through their supervisors and not directly through CIS Ombudsman's management personnel.

6.1 Language Specialist Personnel Qualifications

All Contractor personnel providing services under this task order shall meet the minimum qualifications and proficiency levels set forth in the DHS Language Services II BPA under Tier 2, Minimum Requirements.

7.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Contractor shall provide all Task Order specific reports in electronic format with read/write capability using applications that are compatible with DHS workstations (i.e., Windows 7™ or later the Microsoft Office™ Applications). The Task Order reports listed below shall be submitted via email to the CIS

Ombudsman Task Order COR and other CIS Ombudsman officials designated post award.

7.1 Monthly Usage Report

The Contractor shall submit a monthly report using Microsoft Excel format and data values. The report shall include the following data elements: (1) requesting Division (2) Service Type (i.e., interpretation/translation/transcription) (3) language requested (4) total requests (5) total hours per request by language (6) total cost for each (and accumulative amount for the given performance period) (7) number of answered, abandoned, and missed calls by the Contractor (8) connection time to linguist (9) amount of time CIS Ombudsman employees wait in queue to speak with a Contractor operator. Upon award, the Contractor and the CIS Ombudsman will agree upon a standard format to report this information.

Separately, within the Monthly Usage Report, the average time for a CIS Ombudsman employee to be connected with an interpreter upon calling the Contractor's custom number for CIS Ombudsman personnel and contract staff shall be provided.

8.0 CONTRACT TYPE

This is a time-and-materials (T&M) contract.

9.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The Task Order period of performance is for a 12-month base year plus three (3) 12-month options.

10.0 PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

In-person services may be required at any location within the United States and its territories. The Contractor shall provide language services remotely via landline, cell phone, video communication (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom), and e-mail to agency staff at any location domestically or internationally. However, linguists providing telephonic or electronic language services shall be located within the continental United States and its territories (i.e., Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.).

11.0 TRAVEL

No materials, including travel, are required for this effort.

12.0 Section 508 Requirements (include in the SOW, PWS, or SOO)

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (classified to 29 U.S.C. § 794d) requires that when Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use information and communications technology (ICT), it shall be accessible to people with disabilities. Federal employees and members of the public with disabilities must be afforded access to and use of information and data comparable to that of Federal employees and members of the public without disabilities.

All products, platforms and services delivered as part of this work statement that, by definition, are deemed ICT shall conform to the revised regulatory implementation of Section 508 Standards, which are located at 36 C.F.R. § 1194.1 & Appendixes A, C & D, and available at

eCFR :: 36 CFR Part 1194 -- Information and Communication Technology Standards and Guidelines. In the revised regulation, ICT replaced the term electronic and information technology (EIT) used in the original 508 standards. ICT includes IT and other equipment.

Exceptions for this work statement have been determined by DHS and only the exceptions described herein may be applied. Any request for additional exceptions shall be sent to the Contracting Officer and a determination will be made according to DHS Directive 139-05, Office of Accessible Systems and Technology, dated November 12, 2018 and DHS Instruction 139-05-001, Managing the Accessible Systems and Technology Program, dated November 20, 2018, or any successor publication.

Appendix A: List of languages

CISOMB requires services in the following languages:

- Amharic
- Arabic*
- Armenian
- Bengali
- Burmese
- Cabo Verdean Creole
- Chinese – Mandarin (simplified)*
- Chinese – Cantonese
- Creole
- Dari*
- French*
- Haitian Creole*
- Hindi
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Korean
- Malay
- Nepali
- Pashto*
- Polish
- Portuguese*
- Punjabi
- Rohingya†
- Russian*
- Somali*

- Spanish*
- Swahili (Kiswahili)
- Tagalog
- Tamil
- Ukrainian*
- Urdu
- Vietnamese*

* Currently a top language needed