

**Q&A's #1 to
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Telecommunications Relay and Captioned Telephone Services
RFP # F50B2400063
June 7, 2012**

Ladies/Gentlemen:

This list of questions and responses is being issued to clarify certain information contained in the above referenced RFP. The statements and interpretations contained in the following responses to a question by potential Offerors are not binding on the State, unless as addendum expressly amends the RFP.

Question 1: Section 1.2, Page 8 – What is the definition of a blocked call?

Answer: Please see the definition the State has provided in Section 1.2. The State does not understand your question unless you provide further clarification. Please restate the question.

Question 2: Section 1.4, Page 11 – Contract Duration. Will the state be amendable to an initial contract term of 3 years and either a two year option or two one year options upon mutual agreement?

Answer: No. The State desires a five year contract term.

Question 3: Section 3.2.4.11, Page 25 – Since the relay provider is not able to ensure how other carriers bill their subscribers, will the state be amenable to the following change for this section?

Section 3.2.4.11, Page 25 – Toll Call Access and Rate- The Contractor shall provide (as defined in 47 CFR Part 64) for inter-LATA and intra-LATA toll call access to the Relay Center for calls that originate or terminate in Maryland or are made by Maryland residents using the default provider's long distance carrier of choice for inter-LATA and intra-LATA calls, at no greater than the rate for those same types of calls that can be made without Relay.

Answer: The “using the default carrier of choice” is acceptable only if all relay callers have the ability to use this service on a per call basis and if the cost for each call is not greater than a call made without the use of Relay. Describe in detail your procedure to ensure compliance with this requirement in a manner that is consistent with 47 CFR Part 64 and this RFP to ensure that the consumer is not charged a greater rate for a Relay call than a call without the use of Relay.

Question 4: Section 3.2.5.5, Page 27 - Primary Relay Center. Please clarify if the primary relay center must handle all traffic including Spanish and STS?

Answer: No. - STS and Spanish may be processed in a center other than the Primary Maryland Relay Center. However, if they are processed in the Primary Center they are included in the 100% in-center goal as well as the minimum 90% in-center requirement. See Addendum #2

Question 5: Section 3.2.5.5, Page 27 - Will the state be amenable to allowing 75% of calls handled through a primary center with the other 25% part of normal overflow?

Answer: The State does not understand the reference to Section 3.2.5.5 in the original question and assumes that you mean Section 3.2.3.5.

No. Per Section 3.2.3.5, the goal is for the Primary Relay Center is to process 100% of all Maryland Relay calls. The minimum requirement is 90%. (See Addendum #2)

Question 6: Section 3.2.8.22, Page 33 - Will the state agree to the following suggested change?

Access to Carrier of Choice - The Contractor shall provide access to the customer's choice of Inter-LATA (interstate) and Intra-LATA (intrastate) Telecommunications carriers through the Relay Service **as long as the requested carrier is a participating carrier through the COC platform** to the same extent and price such access is provided to standard telephone users in Maryland.

Answer: No, "using the default carrier of choice" is not acceptable". Describe in detail your procedure to ensure compliance with this requirement in a manner that is consistent with 47 CFR Part 64 and this RFP to ensure that the consumer is not charged a greater rate for a Relay call than a call without the use of Relay.

Question 7: Section 3.2.11.3 A, Page 35 - Dedicated Outreach Staff Person. Will the state consider the contractor using one of their current outreach managers located in another state?

Answer: No. The 'Dedicated Outreach Staff Person' must be co-located with the State PM.

Question 8: Section 3.2.11.3 A, Page 35 - Will the state please verify/clarify the number of events desired/required per year?

Answer: The Contractor shall ensure that this Dedicated Outreach person has sufficient equipment and all other resources including financial, necessary to participate in advertising and outreach for at least one-hundred fifty (150) events per contract year per contract.

Question 9: Section 3.2.12.6, Page 38 - International Inbound. Does the state currently have an inbound international number that can be ported to a new provider?

Answer: The State does not have an inbound international number that can be ported to a new provider. Maryland Relay has always used the Provider's Inbound International phone number. The Relay contractor provides inbound International calling in which the relay user pays to place a call from an International location to the Relay provider's center. The provider then places the outbound call to a destination within the United States free of charge and relays the conversation for the Relay caller.

Question 10: Section 3.2.12.8, Page 38 - Since the relay provider does not have access subscriber accounts of wireless providers, it is unable to *ensure* that a wireless provider bills its subscribers who access Maryland Relay according to the requirements in this

section. Will the state be amenable to modifying this requirement to only apply to a provider's own wireless subscribers?

Answer: The State is not amenable to modifying this requirement. Please describe in detail how you will comply with this requirement as described in Section 3.2.12.8 on Page 38.

Question 11: Section 3.2.12.9, Page 38 - Similarly to the previously mentioned section, since the relay provider DOES NOT have access to subscriber accounts of wireless providers, it is unable to *ensure* that flat rate plans purchased by wireless users allows them to access the Maryland Relay without incurring any additional charge. Will the state be amendable to modifying this requirement to only apply to a provider's own wireless subscribers?

Answer: No. The State is not amenable to modifying this requirement.

Question 12: Section 3.3.7, Page 69 - Minimum Staffing Requirements for CTS. May the contractor use the same individual identified in the TRS section to perform the like duties outlined in this section? For instance, does the state require two outreach staff persons, one for TRS and the other for CTS, or is can one individual handle both areas?

Answer: One staff person is required for each contract no matter how many contracts are awarded to a successful bidder.

Question 13: Section 3.3.7, Page 69 - If the contractor is providing both TRS and CTS, what is the expectation for total outreach annual events? Is the state suggesting there would be a total requirement of 300 events, or would it be 150 total events to include both TRS and CTS?

Answer: Each contract has a separate requirement that must be met. The requirement is 150 events for TRS and a separate 150 outreach events for CTS.

Question 14: Att. F, Page 130 - Column H, Estimated Volume. This sheet includes volume estimates that are significantly different from those shown on Attachment N. Will the state please advise which volume estimates should be used?

Answer: See Addendum #1, Item #3. It corrects Attachment N. Attachment N contains the number of calls per month. The average call duration is equal to three session minutes. Attachment F contains session minutes.

Question 15: Att. F, Page 130 - Will the state please provide the current price per minute for TRS and CTS?

Answer: No. This is proprietary information.

Question 16: Percentage of Calls Required to be processed in Primary Center, Section 1.2, Item 55: Primary Center stipulates that Contractor must designate a Primary Center through which a minimum of 90% of Maryland Relay Calls are processed. Section 3.2.3.5 states that the Contractor's goal should be processing 100% of Maryland Relay calls using the Primary Relay Center and that "upon transition cutover" the selected primary center will immediately begin processing no less than 95% of all Maryland

Relay calls. Contactor respectfully requests that the State clarify the minimum required percentage to be processed by the Primary Center after the 90-transition period.

Answer: The goal is 100% and the minimum is 90%. The 95% should be 90%. (See Addendum #2, Item #1).

Question 17: Section 2.2.1 – Copy of Original Contract with CapTel, Inc.

Contractor understands that the State needs assurance that the Contractor has an agreement with the sole technology provider and requests a letter and copy of contract as proof.

However, many contracts contain non-disclosure clauses which prevent bidders from providing copies of the contract. In light of this, would the State modify the requirement to accept a letter from CTI confirming the Contractor's agreement?

Answer: The State does not have an answer to this question at this time. This question will be answered in a later Question and Answer Set.

Question 18: Section 3.2.4.15.9 – Non-Traditional TRS Call Types

Could the State please provide examples on the types of calls that it would classify as non-traditional TRS Call Types?

Answer: Please see Section 1.2 Abbreviations and Definitions, #46 & #72

Question 19: Sections 3.2.4.15.10.2.4, 3.2.4.16, and 3.2.4.18 – Specialty Call Types

Will the State please clarify if the Speech-to-Speech calls, Spanish Translation Calls and Operator Services calls are included or excluded from the percentage of calls allowed to be processed in other call centers?

Answer: If the Contractor processes them in a separate center they are not included. If the provider does not have a separate center for these call types, they are to be included. (See Addendum #2)

Question 20: Section 3.2.4.19 – Operator Services

Will the State please clarify if the Operator Services center is required to have designated trainer and meet the interpreters/translator requirements?

Answer: Yes, the Operator Services center is required to have a designated trainer and meet the interpreters/translator requirements.

Question 21: Section 3.2.12.10 – System Billing Standards and Access

Will the State clarify if Contractors are required to provide Call Detail Records on a monthly basis or simply available, upon request, for purposes of audit and monitoring?

Answer: Monthly Call Detail records are not required monthly. Call Detail Records shall be required upon request.

Question 22: Section 3.2.13.1 – Calls Transferred Outside of Primary Center

This requirement states that Contractors will document any events, to the States' satisfaction, when any calls are transferred outside of the Primary Relay Center. However, the RFP appears to permit ten percent of calls to be processed by other Centers. Will the State please clarify if this requirement is only applicable for calls over the allowable percentage or if it applies to all calls processed outside of the Primary Center?

Will the State please provide an example of the type of documentation that would be acceptable to the State?

Answer: This documentation requirement is applicable to ALL calls transferred outside the Maryland Primary Center. An Email notification describing the reason that the requirement was not met is required to be sent to the State PM. Reasons beyond the Provider's control would be an example of an acceptable reason. (i.e. a break in service in an IXC network that transports TRS calls).

Question 23: Section 3.2.13.5 – ASL Translation/Interpretation

Will the State please provide the total number of Maryland TRS calls that are currently translated/interpreted by hour, by day of the week and per month?

Answer: The monthly ASL translated calls for the current contract year is 84.5 calls/month.

Question 24: Section 3.2.17.2.(E) – Maryland Relay Certification

Does the State have a Maryland Relay Certification program in place today? Will the State share its current Maryland Relay Certification tests?

Answer: No. Section 3.2.17.2.(E) states- “The Contractor shall have testing procedures...”. This is the Contractor's responsibility. Please respond in detail to this requirement.

Question 25: Section 3.2.19.4.1 – Technical and Business Support to Ad-Hoc Reporting

Will the State explain what is meant by “The Contractor shall provide the State the ability to perform ad-hoc reporting on the platforms and applications used by the Contractor in its reporting.” Is the State requesting the ability to run ad-hoc reports using a database maintained by the Contractor?

Answer: The State is not requiring new platforms and/or applications for the provision of the ad-hoc reporting.

Question 26: Section 3.3.11.2 – End-of-Contract Transition

Will the State please provide for review the incumbent vendor's “Transition-Out” plan?

Answer: No. This is proprietary information.

Question 27: Attachment I – Monthly Reports

Will the State please provide samples of the standard reports templates described in Attachment I?

In addition, as a part of Item 3, subsection (a) Backup reports for YTD/Summary Reports, the State is requesting data sorted by seconds in queue with twenty separate intervals. This appears to be the same information as the Delayed Call Reports (3.2.19.5.3 (D)) with different increments. Is the State open to consolidation of these reports?

Answer: The State will not provide samples of the standard reports templates described in Attachment I. The Contractor is given just the fields required in order to let them format the information and work with the State PM on final report formats. The State is open to working with the Contractor on the presentation of all reports.

Question 28: Historical Call Volumes

Would the State please provide additional call volume information including the number of calls and billable session minute information for each call type by month for the last twelve months?

Answer: No. The State will not provide additional call volume information.

Question 29: Liquidated Damages

Will the State please provide the amount and frequency of liquidated damages under the current contract?

Answer: No. The State will not provide the amount and frequency of liquidated damages under the current contract.

Question 30: Current Rates

Will the State please provide the current price per minute for TRS and CapTel?

Answer: No. This is proprietary information.

Question 31: Monthly Recurring Charge

Is the State open to paying a Monthly Recurring Charge (MRC) for all fixed costs such as Outreach?

Answer: No. All fixed costs such as Outreach are to be included in the billable rates submitted in Attachment F – Price Proposal Form.