

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL #17-004

Title: Braille and Large Print Books and Educational Materials for Blind and Visually Impaired Students Question and Answer Summary

Program Questions:

1. Are all transcribing services based only on the NIMAS files and not a physical book?

Answer: No, the vendor should be prepared to transcribe and produce braille textbooks and related core instructional materials from various sources including NIMAS files, other electronic files or a hard copy. However, a physical copy has been the primary source used over the course of the current contract.

2. In order to produce a new braille transcription or a new large print document, are we supposed to use exclusively the NIMAS files or are we also going to receive the original print copy of the document to be transcribed, depending on the case?

Answer: No, the vendor should be prepared to transcribe and produce braille and large print textbooks and related core instructional materials from various sources including NIMAS files, other electronic files or a hard copy. However, a physical copy has been the primary source used over the course of the current contract.

3. Are all large print books generated from only NIMAS files and not a physical book?

Answer: No, the vendor should be prepared to transcribe and produce large print textbooks and related core instructional materials from various sources including NIMAS files, other electronic files or a hard copy. However, a physical copy has been the primary source used over the course of the current contract.

4. Is proofreading is required?

Answer: The vendor is responsible for proofreading materials produced under the contract and assumes responsibility for replacement costs for materials containing errors.

5. How many braille output pages have been completed throughout the term of the last contract?

Answer: The page volume reflected on the bid form is an accurate reflection of the volume of braille output produced over the five-year term of the current contract.

6. How many large print output pages have been completed throughout the term of the last contract?

Answer: The page volume reflected on the bid form is an accurate reflection of the volume of large print output produced over the term of the current contract.

7. In this RFP, we are asked to describe a plan to establish communication and process procedures with NIMAC and the NYS RCVI for preparation and distribution of Braille and large print textbooks. Although we have elaborated a Communication Plan for this RFP, we still need more specific information and instructions (confirming all the parties involved from the first purchase order to the distribution details of the requested document, Braille or large print; confirming the main contact person of RCVI - email and phone number; a clear method of communication between all parties; etc.)

Answer: It is our intent to share specific details and contact information with the vendor awarded this contract. For the purpose of the RFP bid submission, please provide a detailed plan based on information available to you at this point.

8. Will the inserted scanned photo of print textbook cover be provided by the publishers (because the NIMAS only contain the Title Page (copyright), not the front and back cover)?

Answer: The scanned photo of print textbook cover will be provided by the district requesting the book to be enlarged.

9. Concerning the large print binding, do you accept *perfect binding book*?

Answer: Please refer to the specifications sheets on page 34 and 35 of the RFP for the type of binding required. If binding meets the needs of the individual student, equivalent forms of binding will be accepted as indicated on the specification sheet.

10. What should be the minimum and the maximum type size for the large print books? Ex.: 16pt; 18pt; 22pt; 26pt

Answer: The type size required will vary based on the individual needs of the student requesting each item.

11. Concerning the large print production, we must separate a bulky manual (if any) into multiple volumes. What is the minimum and the maximum number of sheets that you want to have in each volume?

Answer: The size of the individual volumes will vary based on the needs of the student requesting each item.

12. About Large Print Specification, concerning meeting the equivalent quality and specifications, would you accept hard covers for print books and workbooks and soft covers for consumable?

Answer: Please refer to the specification sheets on pages 34 and 35 of the RFP. If covers used on materials meet the needs of individual students, equivalent covers will be accepted as indicated on the specification sheet.

Fiscal Questions:

13. The link for Form A on page 18 in the “Request for Proposal”, under Consultant Disclosure Legislation, works; however, the link for Form A on page 2 in the “Submission Documents”, under Consultant Disclosure Reporting, is broken. Because the former link works, we will use it. Are we correct in doing so?

Answer: Yes, the link on page 18 should be used to obtain the Form A (<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/forms/ac3271s.doc>).

14. What type of volume of work you received last year so that we can get an idea of your average braille textbooks and class material requests.

Answer: The approximate volume for the five-year contract period has been provided on the bid form included with the RFP documents. Please refer to this form for approximate volume of each type of material produced.

15. Does a bidding entity outside the State of New York need to be registered in order to do business in New York State prior to bidding?

Answer: If awarded a contract, a vendor must be registered to do business in New York State prior to entering into the contract with the NYS Education Department.

16. Application Checklist items 12-19 are not required, but will a bidder be negatively rated or measured for not including these documents in the bid?

Answer: No, bidders will not be rated negatively for not providing these items with the bid (nor advantaged for providing them). The items listed 12-19 on the application checklist are not scored portions of the RFP bid proposal. However, the selected bidder will be required to provide these forms prior to approval of the contract resulting from the RFP.

17. In the 5 Year Bid Form, is the page rate by input or output page? Similarly, is the 5 year estimated volume by input or output page?

Answer: All page estimates provided on the Bid Form are for output page volume.

18. Concerning the cost per page (for Braille production), should we understand the cost per Print page or the cost per Braille page? Concerning the cost per page (for Large Print production), should we understand the cost per Print page or the cost per adapted page?

Answer: All costs should be calculated based on output volume. Estimates provided are for braille pages and adapted pages for braille and large print production respectively.

19. In the 5 Year Bid Form, under braille specifications, there is no mention whether English Braille – American Edition (EBAE) or Unified English Braille (UEB) is required for literary—which format is required?

Answer: Please refer to deliverable number 2 beginning on page 5 of the RFP. This deliverable indicates that the format of the Braille text will be processed according to the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) code: (<http://www.brailleauthority.org/>). BANA requires that literary text be in Unified English Braille (UEB) code. However, NYS is retaining Nemeth code for mathematics and other technical subject materials.

20. In the 5 Year Bid Form, under braille specifications, it is not clear which type of tactile graphic we are to provide—should we quote Tiger or Swell Touch?

Answer: The vendor for this contract should be prepared to produce tactile graphics consistent with the guidelines provided by BANA at:

<http://www.brailleauthority.org/tg/index.html>.

21. In the 5 Year Bid Form, under large print specifications, is the large print book to be reflowed/redesigned so it's an entirely new book or is it to be a blown up copy that mirrors the original page by page?

Answer: The vendor for this contract should be prepared to produce textbooks and related core instructional materials in the type and format indicated on the order form completed by the student's school district. However, the majority of large print orders are for books that mirror the original book page by page.

22. In the 5 Year Bid Form, under large print specifications, can you clarify whether the large print book is to be in colour or black and white?

Answer: The vendor for this contract should be prepared to produce textbooks and related core instructional materials in the type and format indicated on the order form completed by the student's school district. However, large print books are most often requested in color.

23. When producing a large print document, which of these two options is more likely to be used:

1. scaling (respecting the original layout and using the print copy of the book)

Examples:

- a. 1 portrait 8,5"X11" page enlarge on 1 portrait 11"X17" page (ratio 1:1)
 - b. 1 portrait 8,5"X11" page enlarge on 2 landscape 8,5"X11" or 11"X17" page (ratio 1:2)
2. or a complete text formatting (using exclusively the NIMAS files)? Example:
- c. 1 portrait 8,5"X11" adapted on multiple "portrait" or "landscape" pages (ratio 1:?)

Answer: Either scenario described above could be required as part of this RFP. However, the majority of large print orders are for books that mirror the original book page by page.

24. Should the price per page also include the production cost for the cover, binding, labeling and shipping (Braille and Large Print)?

Answer: Yes, the cost per page should include all aspects of the production costs as well as labeling and shipping.

25. To differentiate the cost of master versus copy, are you able to tell us how many copies would be requested for each master?

Answer: The estimates given on the bid form reflect accurate numbers of copies produced over the life of the current contract.

26. Do you know how many pages on average contain the original Educational Materials?

For example:

-20% English Language Arts and Social Studies (How many pages on average on each title?)

-80% Mathematics and Science (How many pages on average on each title?)

Answer: We do not maintain data indicating the number of pages of each title ordered, however the bid form reflects accurate output volume of each type of production required by this RFP.

M/WBE Questions:

27. Does a 100% women owned entity in another state need to register as a WBE in NY prior to bidding?

Answer: This procurement states NYS Education Department establishes an overall goal of 30% of the total contract amount for MWBE participation and all firms utilized must be certified with the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development before beginning any work on this contract.

Certification qualification may be found at <http://esd.ny.gov/MWBE/Qualifications.html>.
First time applicant certification details may be found at:

<http://esd.ny.gov/MWBE/GetCertified.html>. Firms outside of New York State must first obtain "Authority to do Business in New York State" from the NYS Dept. of State prior to submitting any application for MWBE certification – details are found at <http://www.dos.ny.gov/corps/buscorp.html>.

The contact person on M/WBE matters is available throughout the application and procurement process to assist bidders in meeting the M/WBE goals and can be reached at MWBE@nysed.gov

28. Is a WBE exempt from performing a "Documentation of Good Faith Efforts"

Answer: If bidder is a New York State WBE and achieves Full Participation or 30% participation goals are met, Good Faith Effort documentation will not be necessary. Good Faith Efforts documentation is required for all bids requesting Partial Waivers or Total Waivers.

29. So, we are asking ourselves if the quality of being autonomous and independent can negatively affect our proposal and if subcontracting certified M/WBE enterprises is a condition sine qua non for this RFP?

Answer: This procurement states NYS Education Department establishes an overall goal of 30% of the total contract amount for MWBE participation and all firms utilized must be certified with the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development before beginning any work on this contract.

The contact person on M/WBE matters is available throughout the application and procurement process to assist bidders in meeting the M/WBE goals and can be reached at MWBE@nysed.gov.

30. Also, we want to specify that we have already started the certification process M/WBE, but we don't know yet if we are eligible or not. Do you consider this step as a good faith effort?

Answer: Certification qualification may be found at: <http://esd.ny.gov/MWBE/Qualifications.html>. First time applicant certification details may be found at: <http://esd.ny.gov/MWBE/GetCertified.html>.

Firms outside of New York State must first obtain "Authority to do Business in New York State" from the NYS Dept. of State prior to submitting any application for MWBE certification – details are found at <http://www.dos.ny.gov/corps/buscorp.html>.

The contact person on M/WBE matters is available throughout the application and procurement process to assist bidders in meeting the M/WBE goals and can be reached at MWBE@nysed.gov.