

RFP 17-014: Transcribing NYS Exams and Related Materials into Braille Questions and Answers Summary

Fiscal and M/WBE:

1. **Question:** In Appendix B, it is stated that pricing will be evaluated based on average “price per braille page.” The first pricing table in the Appendix is headed “Price Per Page of Regular English Print Transcribed into Braille.” Please confirm whether pricing for transcription should be by output braille page or input print page.

Answer: The vendor will provide prices, and will be paid, per *Braille page* transcribed and reproduced, not per English print page. The cost score will be based on the average price per Braille page, as provided in the Cost Proposal.

2. **Question:** Can we submit the proposals via email?

Answer: No, please see the instructions in the Submission section of the RFP.

3. **Question:** The link at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/comprocontracts/17-014-braille/home.html> indicates that the RFP does NOT establish any M/WBE goals; however, the phrasing in RFP #17-014 appears to re-establish M/WBE goals. Should the M/WBE section in the RFP be ignored?

Answer: This RFP does not establish M/WBE goals. The “M/WBE and Goal Equal Employment Opportunities Requirements and Obligations Under New York State Executive Law, Article 15-A” contains standard terms and conditions that apply to all contracts.

4. **Question:** On Page 36, section I. B. of the sample State of New York Agreement, reference is made to funding limits in the first and subsequent periods of the contract. Are there any established funding limits applicable to this RFP?

Answer: The value of each contract period, and the total multi-year value of the contract, will be estimated. This will be an estimated value contract that is rate-based and utilization-driven. The vendor will be paid quarterly for the actual number of braille pages transcribed and reproduced, according to the rates established in the approved Cost Proposal.

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Program:

1. **Question:** No. 10 on page 10 states, "A thermographic printing process, using granulated ink, is the required method for producing raised-line tactile graphics". Are collage tactile graphics that are thermoformed acceptable?

Answer: No. Collage tactile graphics that are thermoformed is not an acceptable method for producing raised-line graphics under this contract.

2. **Question:** In Section 6, Attachment C: Test Sample Pages is a sample page for Global History and Geography. We would like to make sure that the map is transcribed as part of the submission, but the map in the RFP is unusable as it is too blurry. Is there a clearer version of that map available?

Answer: Yes. AssessmentRFP@nysed.gov emailed on 3/31/2017: There has been a revision to RFP #17-014, Transcribing New York State Exams and Related Materials into Braille. *Attachment C: Test Sample Pages* (contained in 6. RFP Attachments) was not in the proper format for transcribing into braille.

The following changes have been made:

- 1) 6. RFP Attachments is now a PDF;
- 2) Additions to first paragraph of *Attachment C* are in red font;
- 3) The three test sample pages no longer contain the header "RFP# 17-014" or list the subject; and
- 4) The term Earth Science was replaced with Living Environment.

Please access the updated *Attachment C: Sample Test Pages* on the RFP webpage here: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/comprocontracts/comprocontracts.html>.

3. **Question:** If awarded the contract, is the Contractor required to go to Albany, NY for meetings?

Answer: Yes. Refer to Section 1.10 of the RFP, Program Manager and Responsibilities: "the program manager is required to: 1. Travel to Albany to meet with NYSED staff at the start of the contract period. An introductory meeting of one full day or as otherwise mutually agreed upon shall be held in Albany within thirty days of final contract approval. After that initial introductory meeting, the vendor may be called upon to travel to Albany up to at least one time per year throughout the duration of the contract."

4. **Question:** Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)

Answer: There are no across the board prohibitions on non-US vendors, nor on work being performed in other countries. Be aware that there are travel requirements, however. Bidders must ensure that they comply with New York

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State assurances as stated in *Appendix A* of the contract language and, in addition, Chapter 1 of the Laws of 2012, which amends State Finance Law by adding section 165-A known as the Iran Divestment Act of 2012.

5. **Question:** On page 10, under 1.7 NYSED Specifications and Requirements for Transcribing Braille, #10 – states 'a thermographic printing process, using granulated ink, is the required method for producing raised-line tactile graphics. Would NYSED be open to the superior technique of swell touch graphics for this contract?

Answer: No. As indicated in answer to Program question #1 above, thermography (granulated ink) is the required method for New York State tests. It has been found to be particularly suitable for our test graphics and is familiar to students.

6. **Question:** How many, if any, of the exams in the May/June exam period will be reproductions of exams transcribed for January? Similarly, how many of the exams required for August will be reproductions of exams transcribed for either January or May/June? In other words, roughly how many of the exams per exam period will be NEW & require transcription?

Answer: For Braille test takers, NYSED provides reproductions of existing Braille test forms for three of the four Regents Exams in science. For all of the other NYS exams, NYSED provides a fresh transcription in Braille for each administration and does not reuse existing test forms. (See tables, “Braille Transcriptions Completed for the 2015-16 School Year” and “Estimate of Existing Braille Transcriptions NYSED Requested to be Reproduced” on page 9 of the RFP.) June is the primary administration for Regents Exams and will typically require more test titles and more copies in Braille of each than administrations in January or August. The elementary and intermediate level exams in science are only administered once per year.

7. **Question:** Regarding Page 11, item 16 under 1.7 NYSED Specifications and Requirements for Transcribing Braille: “These files must be maintained for the life of the contract”. Can you please confirm the use of Corel, Duxbury and or Braille 2000 is sufficient for maintaining the files?

Answer: NYSED is not specifying which software the contractor should use to develop the Braille transcriptions. The vendor must save the files it creates with its chosen software.

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8. **Question:** Page 2 of the RFP states “Package D—2 CD-ROMs, labeled CD-ROM-RFP#17-014- Do Not Open” and Page 21 states “Package D—CD-ROM is to include: Package A, B (excluding transcribed sample test pages) C and D in separate unprotected files in Microsoft Office products (Word & Excel)”. Considering the fact that, according to Page 2, Package D is the CD ROMS, it is unclear how Package D is to include Package D (as instructed on Page 21). Are there any items besides the items listed below we must include in Package D (on each of the two CD ROMS)?
- Package A—Submission Documents labeled, Submission Documents - RFP #17-014 Do Not Open
 - Package B—Technical Proposal labeled, Technical Proposal - RFP #17-014 Do Not Open, excluding sample test pages.
 - Package C—Cost Proposal labeled, Cost Proposal – RFP #17-014 Do Not Open

Answer: For Section 2.2 Packaging: Remove "and D" from the description for Package D. This is an error. Also, from 5. SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS: Remove “and D” from the chart for Quantity/Content of Package D. This is the same error.

9. **Question:** What file formats will the source files be provided in? If pdf, please indicate if they will be text extractable. If a mix of sources will be provided (such as NIMAS, non-extractable pdf's, text-extractable pdf's, rich-text-format, other), please provide additional data on what percentage of files will be provided in the different formats. Note: Attachment C - Samples was a mostly non-extractable (i.e. image based) MS Word Document.

Answer: The actual exam PDFs will be a mix of text-extractable (exam questions, answers, instructions) and non-text-extractable (scanned images) elements. NYSED can also provide them with native InDesign and Quark files and any associated native art files (Illustrator). NYSED estimates that close to 100% of the exams contain both text and images. Refer to Section 1.6: “Past editions of secondary-level Regents Exams and Elementary- and Intermediate-Level Science Tests and related materials are available on the NYSED website at: <http://www.nysedregents.org>.”

10. **Question:** On Page 6, Glossary of Terms, a professional transcriber is defined as “a person who obtains certification through the NLS or CNIB.” On page 10, section 1.7, paragraph 1, it states, “The individual(s) providing literary braille transcriptions under this contract should be certified by the...NLS...” and does not include CNIB certification. Similarly, paragraphs 3 and 6 mention NLS and not CNIB certification. Will equivalent or greater certification by CNIB qualify a transcriber under the terms of the RFP?

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Answer: NYSED considers certification by the Canadian Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to be comparable to certification by the NLS and qualifies as a transcriber under the terms of this RFP.

11. **Question:** On Page 8, section 1.5, Background, it is stated that “NYSED will require the contractor to provide transcriptions of some State exams in English Braille North American Edition (EBAE) and others in UEB...” In Attachment C, vendors are requested to provide samples under the rules of “EBAE and UEB.”

Please confirm that transcription of content with mathematical material in UEB should be transcribed in accordance with The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) publication Guidance for Transcription Using the Nemeth Code within UEB Context, as Approved June 2016 --

<http://www.brailleauthority.org/ueb/nemeth-guidance/Nemeth%20Guidance%20Final.pdf>. If another standard is to be followed, please advise.

Answer: It is correct that the transcription of content with mathematical material in UEB should be transcribed in accordance with the most current version of The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) publication “Guidance for Transcription Using the Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts”. As of the release of this RFP, the most current version of this publication was approved June 2016.

12. **Question:** On Page 10, section 1.7, item 11 states, “If a tactile graphic does not fit within the constraints of a standard braille page, then foldouts will be used.” Is resizing graphics to fit within the constraints of an 11 by 11.5 inch braille page an acceptable alternative to foldouts for this contract?

Answer: No. Resizing graphics to fit within the constraints of an 11 by 11.5 inch braille page is not an acceptable alternative to foldouts for this contract. If a tactile graphic has information that cannot fit within the constraints of the BANA codes for tactile graphics, the contractor must obtain NYSED’s prior approval to change, modify, or eliminate information contained in the printed original copy.

13. **Question:** What date was the Braille bid posted on Contract Reporter?

Answer: The Braille RFP#17-014 was posted to the New York State Contract Reporter (NYSCR) on Friday, 3/17/2017.

14. **Question:** Could you please email me the RFP/RFI Document for RFP#17-014 Transcribing New York State Exams and Related Materials into Braille.

Answer: The complete RFP can be found on the NYSED website at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/compprojects/compprojects.html>.