

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
 Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 18 Apr 00

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
 Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **CULTURAL INTERPRETATION SERVICES**
CONTRACT NO. 00200-96175-P01

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee and Council approve the award of contract No. 00200-96175-P01 for cultural interpretation services to the Cultural Interpretation Services of Ottawa-Carleton (CISOC) at an estimated annual cost of \$258,300 for a proposed contract period of two years ending March 31, 2002.

BACKGROUND

The need for appropriate cultural interpretation and translation services became apparent to Social Services in 1990. Prior to 1991, Social Services relied on client's relatives, friends, volunteers and/or other agencies' staff to provide these services. However, in most cases the interpreters did not have the knowledge or understanding of the rules and regulations of the social assistance system, nor did they have appropriate training and skills. Therefore, the interpretation services provided were not reliable and consistent. In cases where relatives or volunteers provided the services, conflict of interest was an issue, as was confidentiality.

In 1991, Social Services started using community agencies to provide cultural interpretation services (for example Cultural Interpretation Services of Ottawa-Carleton, Immigrant and Visible Minority Woman Against Abuse and Languages for Life) to address these concerns.

These agencies provide services with Cultural Interpreters:

- who are tested for language competencies;
- who are graduates of the basic Cultural Interpretation Training Program, which covers:
 - a) Professionalism, including roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, neutrality;
 - b) Interpreting skills and cultural bridging techniques;
 - c) Information on major user organisations, such as the Social Services.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

With the on-going need for cultural interpretation services and an ever growing market of agencies providing these specialized services, the Department felt that it was time and prudent to test out the market. Social Services, in conjunction with the Supply Management Division, decided on a Request for Proposal as the selection process, for the Department not only wanted to evaluate price, but also evaluate a proponent's ability to provide the services.

A Request for Proposal was issued by the Supply Management Division and made available to interested proponents through the MERX bid distribution network. A total of two responses were received for this highly specialised service from:

- Languages of Life Inc., Ottawa, Ontario
- Cultural Interpretation Services of Ottawa-Carleton, Ottawa, Ontario

EVALUATION

A thorough evaluation was completed for both proposals by a team comprised of members of the Social Services Department and a representative from the community who is a certified translator and a full professor of Cultural Interpretation and Translation from the University of Ottawa. Supply Management Division guided the process. Proponents were rated on the following evaluation criteria, in accordance with the Request for Proposal document:

- Experience and Qualification of Firm (25 points)
- Comprehensive Ability to Meet Regional Needs (40 points)
- Demonstrated Understanding of Assignment (10 points)
- Financial Consideration (25 points)

The evaluation team recommends awarding the contract to Cultural Interpretation Services of Ottawa-Carleton as this firm offers "best value" to the Region as determined by attaining the highest score out of the 100 available points. A further two-year contract extension may be exercised upon the mutual consent of both parties. Any extension will be contingent upon satisfactory service during the preceding term (the service purchased is subject to evaluation and review by the Region), a continued need by the Region, acceptable terms and conditions for the ensuing period, and approval of budgetary funding.

EXPENDITURE JUSTIFICATION

Cultural interpretation services are required to ensure access to Social Services programs and services by individuals and families from various ethno-cultural groups within the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. The lack of such services would have a negative impact on Social Services' ability to deliver services to persons in need. Cultural interpretation services take on various forms depending on the needs of the service and the client: in office or community site interviews, message relay and translation of documents related to client services. Funding for these services is necessary to ensure that the client is made aware, in his/her language, of their rights and responsibilities for entitlement to social assistance and for staff to deliver services in a timely manner. The purchase of such a specialized service guarantees reliable and accurate services for clients.

The role of the Cultural Interpreter is strictly interpretation and translation. Cultural interpretation is a highly specialized service. Social Services does not recruit staff to perform this task, nor does it make it a practice of utilizing staff with additional language skills to interpret for other staff. In effect, our staff are not trained interpreters, and such a practice would take staff away from their primary duties of administering and delivering services and programs.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT (AND APPROVAL)

	\$
Approved Budget to Date	233,000
Total paid and Committed	<u>(25,288)</u>
Balance Available	207,712
THIS REQUEST	<u>(258,300)</u>
Balance Remaining	<u><u>-25,300</u></u>

Funds are available in the 2000 Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) Budget, account numbers 157611-507185 and 157621-507185.

*Approved by
Dick Stewart*

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

I concur,

*G. Ford on behalf of
the Finance Commissioner*

DS/mc

