

Amendment to Blanket Contracts 47020940, 47020934 and 47020935 issued to 911 Interpreters Inc. for the Provision of Over the Telephone Interpretation Services

Date: September 7, 2021

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Medical Officer of Health and Chief Procurement Officer

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request authority from the Economic and Community Development Committee to amend existing Blanket Contracts 47020940, 47020934 and 47020935 issued to 911 Interpreters Inc. for the provision of Over the Telephone Interpretation Services, increasing the contract values by a total of \$424,000 net of all applicable taxes and charges (\$431,462 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries) for Toronto Public Health, Toronto Employment and Social Services and Toronto Fire Services.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a prolonged and significant increase in interpretation services that could not have been anticipated when the original contracts were awarded in 2017. Consequently, it is necessary to increase the value of the contracts to ensure the continued delivery of this critical service to Toronto residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health and the Chief Procurement Officer, recommend that:

1. The Economic and Community Development Committee, in accordance with Section 71-11.1C of the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 71 (Financial Control By-Law) grant authority to amend Blanket Contracts 47020940, 47020934 and 47020935 issued to 911 Interpreters Inc. for the provision of over the Telephone Interpretation Services by a total combined additional amount of \$424,000 net of all applicable taxes and charges (\$431,462 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries), increasing the total value

of the contract from \$1,532,700 to \$1,956,700 net of all applicable taxes and charges (\$1,991,138 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The combined requested amendment to increase the value is \$431,462 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries.

Funding for the Blanket Contract Amendments is available from the City Council-Approved 2021 Operating Budgets for Toronto Public Health, Toronto Fire Services and Toronto Employment and Social Services. Funding details are shown in Table 1 (below):

Table 1: Financial Impact Summary

Division	Contract Number	Cost Centre/Cost Element	2021 (Net of Harmonized Sales Tax Recoveries)
Toronto Public Health	47020940	PH 4082 CE 4995	\$ 226,925
Toronto Employment and Social Services	47020934	C01299 CE 4995	\$ 203,520
Fire Services	47020935	FR0013 CE 4424	\$ 1,018
		Total	\$431,462

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information as identified in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of July 26, 2017, the Bid Award Panel adopted Item BA33.1 "Award of Request for Proposal 9112-17-7018 for the provision of Over the Telephone Interpretation Services", and granted authority to award a Blanket Contract to 911 Interpreters Inc. with a total potential value of \$1,327,095 net of all applicable taxes and charges (\$1,350,451 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries) for a three (3) year period from the date of award to August 31, 2020, with the option to renew for two (2) one (1) year periods, all in accordance with the requirements of the Request for Proposal document.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.BA33.1>

COMMENTS

Background

Toronto is one of the most multicultural and linguistically diverse cities in the world. In 2011, over half of Toronto residents were born outside of Canada. There are more than 180 languages and dialects spoken by residents of the city.

The City of Toronto's (the "City") motto, "Diversity Our Strength" reflects the values and traditions of Toronto as a diverse and welcoming city. The City makes every effort to ensure that language is not a barrier to accessing services by providing information about City programs, services, and engagement activities in languages that reflect the linguistic diversity of the city. Over-the-phone interpretation services are an important part of this effort. They enable City staff to communicate with the residents of the City in their own language, facilitating their access to information and engagement with City services and programs.

The City contracts with external vendors to provide over-the-phone interpretation services on its behalf. A Request for Proposal (RFP) 9112-17-7018 was issued on May 12, 2017 for the provision of Over the Telephone Interpretation Services, which resulted in an award to 911 Interpreters Inc. and the issuance of 16 Blanket Contracts, including contracts 47020940, 47020934 and 47020935, with a total combined amount of \$1,327,095 net of all applicable taxes and charges (\$1,350,451 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries).

Since the contracts have been put in place, City staff have amended the contract under delegated authority. The accumulated amendment amount, as of August 13, 2021, for this procurement has reached \$499,018 in total. The current total value of the contract is \$1,532,700.

Increased use of over-the-phone interpretation services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Multiple City divisions use contracted over-the-phone interpretation services to support their operations and have experienced an increase in the demand for these services as a result of the pandemic. To ensure service continuity, the City's existing contracts with the vendor must be increased by an additional amount of \$424,000 net of all applicable taxes and charges (\$431,462 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries). The specific divisional needs driving this request are outlined below.

Toronto Public Health

Toronto Public Health (TPH) has taken extensive measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, support the Ministry of Health in the provincial roll-out of the COVID-19 Vaccine Program, and maintain critical public health programs. In carrying out these activities, TPH has relied more heavily on interpretation services to ensure residents

receive critical information about how to keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe and healthy.

During the global pandemic it is now more important than ever that non-English speaking residents have access to critical information about COVID-19 and vaccines. Toronto Public Health is responding to active COVID-19 cases; undertaking emergency preparedness activities in response to the emergence of the more transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus; and implementing the largest and most complex immunization campaign undertaken in history. These strategies are vital to achieving the long-term goals of decreasing rates of community transmission, preventing and containing outbreaks, and immunizing Torontonians.

Toronto Employment and Social Services

Throughout the pandemic, Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) has continued to provide services, primarily over the phone where clients have required interpreter services due to a lack of available community supports. Toronto Employment and Social Services is expecting a surge in Ontario Works applications and a subsequent increase in caseloads that will be sustained into 2022, as the federal income support benefits program is set to expire this fall. The increase in activity will translate into the need for additional translation services to support TESS's clients. Additionally, in applying an equity lens to service provisioning, TESS will be expanding the criteria for interpreter service access to ensure applicants and clients who need critical services can equitably engage with TESS to meet their needs to qualify for financial benefits and receive social services. For the reasons noted above, TESS will require greater access to interpreter services for Toronto residents accessing its services and programs.

Toronto Fire Services

Toronto Fire Services is requesting a small increase of \$1,000 net of all applicable taxes and charges, given the challenge in identifying future expenses due to unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is prudent to add the requested amount increase of \$1,000 in order to keep the contract in compliance until the next option year is exercised in September 2021.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health

Sandra Lisi on behalf of Mike Pacholok
Chief Procurement Officer