



**Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health**

Request for Information (“RFI”)

For

Through this RFI, the Louisiana Department of Health (“LDH”), Office of Public Health (“OPH”), Bureau of Family Health (“BFH”), Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (“LCD” or the “Commission”) is seeking a single contractor that can conduct research and/or a needs assessment, provide technological best practices and opportunities, and submit appropriate recommendations that provide a comprehensive, independent, market-ready innovative and inventive solution to the LCD and Louisiana Legislature for the implementation and provision of communications accessibility at the Louisiana State Capitol during legislative hearings. This includes assessing current Capitol technology and processes for requesting accommodations, participating, as needed, in Capitol improvement sub-committee discussions, and drafting a report of findings for the potential implementation of communication accessibility needs. Examples of information to be provided may include closed/open captioning opportunities and procedures for requesting American Sign Language interpretations for individuals who are d/Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing(DDBHH), speech impaired, or others with similar disabilities or impairments.

RFI #: LDH/OPH/BFH/LCD-RFI-Accessibility to Legislative Hearings for DDBHH Persons

RFI Response due date/time:

Friday, July 30, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. (CDT)

NOTE: This Request for Information (“RFI”) is intended solely for informational and planning purposes and DOES NOT constitute a solicitation. Any and all information received may be reviewed and discussed, as appropriate, and may result in an emergency Cooperative Endeavor Agreement(s) or any other processes resulting in award of a contract or agreement of any type or form, for any or all of the services included in the RFI.

Only information that is in the nature of legitimate trade secrets or non-published financial data may be deemed proprietary or confidential by a proposer. Any material within a response to this RFI identified as such must be clearly marked and will be handled in accordance with the Louisiana Public Records Law, R.S. 44:1 et seq. and all applicable rules, regulations, and

policies. Any response marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety may be rejected without further consideration or recourse.

RFI Release Date: July 20, 2021

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I GENERAL INFORMATION

I.1 Background

Act 680 of the 1980 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature provided for the promotion, coordination, and facilitation of accessibility to public and private services for persons who are d/Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, speech impaired, or others with similar disabilities or impairments. <http://legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=100616>. Further, Louisiana Revised Statutes (“R.S.”) 47:1061 states “the monies in the Telecommunications for the Deaf Fund shall be used solely to establish, administer, and promote a statewide program to provide accessibility services and assistive technology for persons who are d/Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, speech impaired, or others with similar disabilities or impairments, including captioning and American Sign Language services to be utilized at the legislature, in the amounts appropriated each year by the legislature to the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf.”

<https://legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=101086>.

The mission of the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (“LCD” or “Commission”) is to protect and promote health and to ensure access to medical, preventive, and rehabilitative services for all citizens of the State of Louisiana. LCD is dedicated to fulfilling its mission through direct provision of quality services, the development and stimulation of services of others, and the utilization of available resources in the most effective manner.

The Commission finds itself at a critical juncture in the response to improve accessibility at our state capitol that meet public accommodation mandates needed that enable all constituents to fully participate in Louisiana legislative hearings. To comply with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Louisiana Legislature is required to implement policies and procedures that will ensure that closed captioning and interpreting services are available. *Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, § 3, 104 Stat. 328 (1990)* (https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_III.htm).

Act 273 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature retained existing law and expanded the use of the monies in the Telecommunications for the Deaf Fund to include captioning and American sign language services to be utilized by the legislature. <http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=232129>. However, this legislation did not provide for the procedure to implement communications accessibility at the Capitol. These accommodations are necessary for Louisiana constituents, particularly our DDBHH constituents, to fully participate in the legislative process in the following areas: to meet with legislators or legislative staff and to attend and participate in legislative committee meetings, hearings, etc.

Recent studies show the impact to our DDBHH communities. These numbers are staggering.

1 The 2020 Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America reported that the United States (“U.S.”) population was 327,011,000 persons in 2019. People with disabilities comprised 13.2

percent of the U.S. civilian population. Specifically, 19,349,000 people were reported to have a hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disability. *Houtenville, A. and Rafal, M. (2020). Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America: 2020. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability (<https://disabilitycompendium.org/annualreport>).*

2 Based on the 2018 Annual Disability Status Report published by Cornell University, 3.6% of persons of all ages in the U.S. reported having a hearing disability. This initiative will impact DDBHH constituents, which according to the 2018 Annual Disability Status Report, comprising approximately 3.9% of Louisiana's population, or 178,296 residents. *Erickson, W., Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2020). 2018 Disability Status Report: United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability(YTI) (https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport_US.pdf).*

This RFI is part of an effort by the Commission to help build partnerships to break down traditional barriers to access. We, at the LCD, are committed to providing people who are D/deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, and those with speech disorders with programs and services to ensure full communication access to the world around them. LCD is determined to ensure DDBHH individuals can exercise their right in the legislative process here in Louisiana. We have determined to partner with an organization to develop a plan to implement accessibility services as required by the ADA at the Louisiana State Capitol in order for DDBHH persons throughout Louisiana to participate more actively in the legislative process.

As a best effort of the State, the Commission is seeking information through this RFI from vendors with expertise and experience in technological communications and community engagement in Louisiana for its future work on the provision of cost-effective structure or policy to identify accessibility needs and recommendations to implement needed accessibility solutions during legislative hearings at the Capitol. Such vendors include, but are not limited to, the following:

Storytellers, marketing/PR firms, community organizations and firms with communications and/or community engagement experience/expertise, and organizations/firms with experience/expertise in conducting rapid research especially in DDBHH communities.

1.2 Purpose of RFI

This RFI is issued for the purpose of seeking an organization to gather information from storytellers, marketing/PR firms, community organizations and firms with communications and/or community engagement experience/expertise, and organizations/firms with experience/expertise in conducting rapid research especially in DDBHH communities (including data analytics/targeting) to help the State (1) develop forward-thinking and progressive processes that provide communications accessibility at legislative hearings for DDBHH persons, and (2) engage, empower, and enrich individuals who are DDBHH to have information and tools to advocate for themselves.

1.3 Project Overview

Priority Consideration

In order to maximize resources efficiently and effectively, the Department will give preference and/or priority consideration to submissions/responses that contain any of the following:

- a. Vendor is based in Louisiana and/or has demonstrated experience engaging communities in Louisiana, especially DDBHH populations
- b. Demonstrated experience/background in public health communications, health equity, and health literacy
- c. Commitment to and demonstrated experience addressing inequities and/or using an equity lens in its work. Submissions/responses that include examples of equity-centered approaches, principles, and considerations will be given preference.
- d. Demonstrated experience/expertise in conducting evidence-based communications and engagement. Respondents who have experience/expertise in conducting rapid research (surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.), especially in DDBHH communities in Louisiana, will be given preference.
- e. Proof from those vendors who are registered with the State and provide evidence, such as their vendor profile, as proof thereof

2 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

2.1 RFI Coordinator.

Requests for copies of the RFI must be directed to the RFI coordinator listed below:

Jana Broussard, Interim Executive Director
Louisiana Commission for the Deaf
628 N. 4th Street, Bin #4
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Jana.Broussard@la.gov

This RFI will also be posted to the LDH website and LaPAC and can be found by accessing the following links: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/category/46> and at <https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/lapac/pubMain.cfm>

2.2 Schedule of Events

Activity/Event Date _____

Public notice of RFI **7/20/2021**

Deadline for questions/inquiries **7/30/2021 at 5:00 pm CST**

Response to questions/inquiries **8/06/2021 at 5:00 pm CST**

Deadline for receipt of response to RFI **8/20/2021 at 5:00 pm CST**

NOTE: LDH reserves the right to deviate from this Schedule of Events at any time and without notice.

2.3 Response Content

2.3.1 Executive Summary

The summary provided should introduce the scope of the response in as much detail as possible. At a minimum, it should include administrative information including the name of the responder's point of contact, his/her phone number, email address, and any other pertinent contact information. The summary should also include a brief recitation of the responder's qualifications and ability and willingness to meet, if not exceed, LCD's requirements as included herein.

2.3.2 Background and Experience

Responders should give a brief description of the following:

- a. Organizational history, structure, and number of years in business
- b. Qualifications of key personnel
- c. Description and role(s) of key community partners (may include community-based providers, legislators, community-based organizations, etc.)
- d. Narrative of experience with effectively improving outcomes associated with communications accessibility, including description of current protocols, workflows, and other supporting data as such

2.3.3 Approach and Methodology

Responders should provide the approach and methodology that they would use to develop a proposal that effectively works toward providing communications accessibility at the Louisiana State Capitol for DDBHH persons. Please include program objectives, methods, timelines, and estimated budget/cost. Describe the following key elements of your quality improvement proposal:

- a. Aim statement (measureable goals)
- b. Theory of change (driver diagram and change package)
- c. Execution theory (logic model)
- d. Measurement plan (data, results, learning)

2.4 Response Instructions

2.4.1 Response Submittal

Response

Responders interested in providing information requested by this RFI must submit responses containing the information specified no later than the deadline for response to RFI as stated herein. The response to the RFI must be delivered at the responder's expense to the RFI coordinator at the email address provided in section 2.1 of the RFI.

The responses must be received by **electronic** copy only to Jana.Broussard@la.gov on or before the date and time specified herein. Email submissions are the only acceptable method of

delivery. Fax, mail, and courier delivery shall not be acceptable. Responders should allow sufficient time to ensure receipt of their e-mailed proposal by the time specified herein.

Responses received after the deadline, corrupted files, and incomplete submissions (*e.g.*, Part 1 and Part 2 of 3 are received, but Part 3 is not) may not be considered.

Questions and Inquiries regarding the RFI

LCD will consider email inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification of the content of this RFI. Any such inquiries, questions, or requests for clarification must be submitted via email only to the RFI Coordinator listed in Section 2.1 above by July 30, 2021, at 5:00 pm CST. Any inquiries, questions, or requests for clarification not received by email, not directed to the RFI Coordinator, or not received by the deadline will not be considered or answered.

Official responses and answers to all inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification will be posted on the LDH website by August 6, 2021, at 5:00 pm CST.

Only the RFI Coordinator has the authority to officially respond to inquiries, questions, and requests for clarification. Any communications from any other individuals shall not be binding on LDH, LCD, or the State.

Additional Instructions and Notifications to Responders

2.4.2 RFI Addendum(a)/Cancellation

LDH or LCD reserves the right to revise any part of the RFI by issuing an addendum(a) to the RFI at any time. Issuance of this RFI, or subsequent addendum(a), if any, does not constitute a commitment by LDH, LCD, or the State to issue an RFP or any other process resulting in award of a contract of any type or form. In addition, LDH may cancel this informal process at any time, without incurring any liability from responders or potential responders.

2.4.3 Ownership of Response

Any and all materials submitted in response to this RFI shall become the property of the State.

2.4.4 Cost of Preparation

LDH shall not be liable to any responders, or potential responders, for any costs incurred that are associated with developing a response, preparing for discussions, if any are held, or any other costs, that may be incurred by a responder or potential responder due to responding to this RFI.