

# Deaf of Hard and Hearing Services Solicitation for Proposals Program Year 2023-24

## Questions and Answers

1. **Is this application intended exclusively for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) program’s participants residing within California, or is it open to individuals located outside the state of California to apply as well?**

Applying organizations must align with the grant’s stipulated requirements, including the ability to function within the America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC). They are required to offer in-person services for a minimum of three days per week in specified California geographical areas designated as target regions by the Employment Development Department (EDD) as target areas.

For a list of DHH [AJCC](https://edd.ca.gov/Office_Locator/) sites, please reference Appendix C of the Solicitation for Proposals (SFP).

1. **Although community support is mentioned in one section, there is no explicit requirement provided for the submission of letters of support. Is the inclusion of letters of support necessary in this context?**

There is no requirement to submit letters of support.

1. **Provide an explanation for the $150,000 funding increment in the DHH SFP. What factors were involved in determining this specific amount?**

The DHH Grant amount was determined by a review of the available federal funding, as well as considerations to market salary rates for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and other comparable occupations. Each DHH Grant applicant must determine the details of their respective budget and staff wages to successfully meet the grant requirements.

1. **Considering the significant demand for qualified interpreters who expect higher compensation than what EDD/DHH currently offers, it seems reasonable to consider reallocating funds more flexibly. This would help meet the ongoing need for interpreting services through subcontractors. What strategies are being considered to fulfill this requirement?**

The DHH Grant for Program Year 2023-2024 (PY 23-24) expects applicants to cover interpreting services costs through subcontractors in the budget. This information should be included in Exhibit F: Budget Summary Plan under "H. Contractual Services" and in Exhibit F 2: Budget Narrative under "Contractual Services." It's crucial that contracted interpreters can fulfill the required services of the DHH Grant, including job development, placement, individualized career services, and employment support.

1. **The DHH SFP states that EDD maintains the focus of minimizing disruption or discontinuance of employment services to DHH. However, hybrid schedule causes a disruption to services due to limited availability within the offices.**

The DHH Grant intends to prevent or minimize the disruption or discontinuance of EDD employment services to the deaf and hard of hearing by funding DHH operators to be co-located within the AJCC EDD-staffed offices. The DHH grant provides the flexibility of a hybrid schedule with the intent of supporting DHH grantees and their respective DHH staff to have an option for telework/work-from-home schedules; the hybrid schedule is not mandatory but is an option.

All EDD-staffed AJCCs providing services accessible to the public, and it is recommended that the DHH grantee engages in discussions with the EDD site manager at each AJCC locations where the DHH staff with be situated. These conversations will determine the optimal-in office days and timings for scheduled activities.

1. **Will EDD allow the utilization of Deaf Centered offices for the additional 2 days, in conjunction with the mandated hybrid schedule of at least 3 days a week at AJCC offices, to enhance employment services for DHH? Deaf Centered offices experience a higher volume of clients due to full ASL communication accessibility and the availability of wrap-around services from other departments.**

DHH staff’s location on scheduled hybrid days is at the discretion of the DHH operator, if the subgrantee can meet the grant requirements and be available to be contacted by EDD staff located in the AJCC.

1. **“To address the challenges directly related to the requirement of certified interpreters through a national registry, the EDD has expanded the option to include additional cultures of sign language interpreters and certification that may be considered.” “Grantees awarded funding for the DHH program will be able to determine if these interpreters will qualify and perform to their satisfaction for the EDD/DHH program”—Does this imply that certification are no longer required.**

As per the DHH SFP, the qualification and professionalism standards for staff delivering sign language interpretation will be established by the grantee responsible for administering the DHH grant, including the discretion to incorporate additional sign language interpreter cultures and relevant certifications, as outlined on page 8.

1. **Do AJCC site Managers need to approve staff absences for deaf agency employees under the EDD/DHH program? Is this approval required from the Executive Director and Program Manager of the deaf agency for staff under the EDD/DHH program? Is communication with the site manager sufficient, or is their approval necessary?**

The language in the SFP that necessitates approval from AJCC site managers for staff absences is inaccurate; this phrasing will be corrected through an errata. The DHH subgrantee staff are not required to seek approval for staff absences; nevertheless, it is obligatory for DHH subgrantees to notify the co-located AJCC management of staff absences. This requirement is essential to ensure compliance with office protocols, safety/evacuation procedures, and to maintain parties informed about the presence of DHH staff on in-office or hybrid days.

1. **If a single proposal is submitted for offering services across multiple geographic areas, is it permissible to consolidate all of them into a single Performance Goals Matrix covering these various geographic areas, rather than generating a separate matrix for each individual geographic area?**

Please provide separate Performance Goals Matrices for each geographical area/office.

1. **Is the Executive Summary a part of the Notice of Intent, a separate form, or an email attachment?**

The Notice of Intent is not mandatory; instead, it serves a purely administrative purpose. The Notice of Intent email collects crucial details such as the organization's name and potential proposal submission plans. Please be aware that there is no requirement to provide any accompanying documents at this stage.

1. **If a single proposal is submitted for multiple geographic areas, can the consolidation of all into one Resource Utilization Chart be considered, rather than creating separate charts for each geographic area?**

Please submit a consolidated Resource Utilization Chart for the complete proposal.

1. **Is it a requirement to generate Exhibit F and F2 for each geographic area within a single proposal?**

A single comprehensive Budget Summary (Exhibit F) and Budget Narrative (Exhibit F2) are mandatory. If an organization operates across multiple geographic areas, please submit one total Budget Summary and Budget Narrative for the entire grant, rather than preparing separate ones for each geographic area.

1. **Does the $150,000 increase in the total available award amount for all organizations imply the possibility of requesting higher amounts than usual, like a Cost-of-Living Adjustment?**

Every DHH grant applicant must establish the specifics of their budget and staff wages to meet the grant requirements effectively.

1. **Does the organization’s employment of a workforce comprising deaf or hard of hearing individuals, to cater to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are also deaf, make it eligible for assistance?**

DHH grant primarily facilitates services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals without funding supplementary workforce programs. Nevertheless, the services offered under the DHH grant program can potentially benefit other deaf and hard of hearing individuals in different programs. According to DHH SFP pages 8-10, the awardee holds the discretion to select and hire qualified staff capable of fulfilling all grant prerequisites, if granted DHH funding.

1. **The utilization of ASL interpreters as EDD staff members per office presents a challenge encountered by all. Is there a solution to avoid this matter, considering the current shortage of ASL interpreters available?**

The staffing scenarios of awards grantees will undergo individual evaluation by the Program Manager. As outlined in DHH SFP pages 8-10, it is advised that the grantee assigns two staff members to designated AJCC sites based on the contracted hours specified. If a grantee opts for reduced staffing, they are required to furnish written justification for the reduction. Furthermore, it is essential for one of the staff members to be a proficient American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for the deaf.

1. **Will EDD permit staff to work from Deaf Centered offices on days when they are not at AJCC, and can the allocation of rent expenses be covered?**

The DHH grant offers a hybrid schedule option to support DHH grantees and their corresponding staff members, granting them the choice for telework or work-from-home arrangements, although the hybrid schedule remains non-obligatory. EDD currently offers office space within AJCCs at no cost. The decision regarding the location of DHH staff on hybrid days lies within the discretion of the DHH operator. This location must ensure compliance with grant requisites and availability for communication with EDD staff situated in the AJCC. Should a grantee seek to incorporate rent expenses for two non-AJCC location days, a reasoned justification is necessary. This rationale should articulate the benefits to the DHH program and its beneficiaries. Submission of this justification to the Project Manager is required, with prior approval by the EDD being a prerequisite.

1. **Is the requirement of three days at the designated AJCC office specified as a weekly or monthly frequency?**

This will be corrected through an errata – Revision will include, “staff must work a minimum of three days a week at their designated AJCC sites”.

1. **Which line item should be used for Administrative Staff Salaries, under Salaries or Administrative Costs 10%?**

In Exhibit F - Budget Summary, incorporate Program Staff Salaries under Line-Item A. Additionally, on Page 2, please insert an extra row for Administrative Staff Salaries at the table's bottom.

For Exhibit F2 - Budget Narrative, Section A. Staff Salaries, please ensure inclusion of both Program and Administrative Staff salaries in the provided table.

Once Upon receiving the award, the Program Manager will collaborate with the subgrantee to offer guidance and collect supplementary information concerning the grant budget, as necessary. It's essential to note that administrative costs must not exceed ten percent of the total project budget.

Any additional EDD program evaluation opportunities that may go through the solicitation for proposals process will be found directly on the EDD public site – [Workforce Development Solicitation for](https://edd.ca.gov/en/jobs_and_training/wdsfp_workforce_development_solicitations_for_proposals) [Proposals](https://edd.ca.gov/en/jobs_and_training/wdsfp_workforce_development_solicitations_for_proposals), as well as the [California Grants Portal](https://www.grants.ca.gov/).