

# Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

# Solicitation for Proposals Program Year 2025-26

# Questions and Answers

1. **Page 5 of the SFP states, “*Grantees will be responsible for any charges related to the secure operation of videophones required for program operations*”. Can you please clarify if the grantees are only responsible for the staff videophone, or all videophones, including the staff videophone in the staff cubicle and the public videophone in the EDD lobby for client purposes?**

Grantees are responsible for the video phones necessary for program operations, such as in staff cubicles. Video phones that are accessible to the public, such as in the lobby of an EDD office, are maintained by the EDD.

2. **Page 8 of the** **SFP states, “*Staff delivering employment services under the DHH grant must not provide direct assistance with UI, DI, or other EDD services required by statute to be provided by state merit staff*”. Can you please clarify this, as all our staff are under the employment services program.**

The Department of Labor issued its final rule related to Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act staffing on November 24, 2023. This guidance requires that Unemployment Insurance (UI) services be provided by state merit staff. The State has extended this to Disability Insurance (DI) and other services that are operated by the EDD, such as Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA).

The role of grantees regarding these services is to facilitate access, not provide the service directly, which creates a liability risk for the State and the grantee. Support for these activities may include translation of documents, interpretation services to facilitate communication with merit staff, or other efforts that do not involve advising customers on topics such as program eligibility or requirements.

3. **Regarding staffing requirements,** **is the Staff Interpreter position still a requirement?**

On-demand communication services must be made available, including interpreter services by a professional interpreter who possesses a comprehensive skills certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or the equivalent. Applicants must clearly identify how they will fulfill the interpreter services requirements. Please refer to page 7 of the SFP, section *B. Staffing Qualifications*, for further information.

4. **Page 8 of the SFP states, “*Staff funded through the DHH grant may charge time to the grant for activities related to outreach to individuals eligible to enroll in grant services*”. Where should we report to charge time to the grant for activities related to outreach to individuals eligible to enroll in grant services? Monthly reports – Monthly Status Report (MSR) / Quarterly Status Report (QSR)? If CalJOBS, which reports?**

Costs for staff time to conduct outreach and share information about program services with individuals who are eligible to enroll in grant services are reported to the Staff Salaries and Staff Benefits line items. Grantees should report outreach efforts in the required monthly/quarterly narrative reports. CalJOBS entries are not required for outreach to eligible individuals.

5. **Page 10 of the SFP states, “*For reference, when considering a proposed budget and number of participants, the average cost per participant in previous DHH SFPs was $4000*”. Staff reported the Wagner-Peyser (WP) participants in CalJOBS via the WP application. The CalJOBS Enrolled Individuals List showed several repeat participants because their WP application had expired after 90 days, as their services are still ongoing. Those repeat participants had to reapply for WP. Do those repeat participants get counted separately in the number of participants & cost per participant? Because the repeat participants are presently counted in the Enrolled Individuals List.**

Cost per participant is calculated upon the award amount divided by the number of participants. A participant should be counted one time if they are enrolled within the same program year. It is advised that staff utilize options in CalJOBS to avoid a participant’s Wagner-Peyser application closing if the participant is expected to continue with services. Awardees should seek technical assistance from their project manager if they require support with CalJOBS.

6. **Page 12 of the SFP states, “*These clients are not required to be enrolled or have active status in the DHH program. Grant funds may be used to cover these activities*”. I am curious about UI or DI benefits that require a CalJOBS account to receive the EDD Customer Account Number for the state benefit login. Would they be considered WP participants if staff assistance were provided? Would that also include clients who are not located in geographical areas?**

The quoted section refers to occasions when grantee staff may be called upon to support customers in their communications with state merit staff delivering UI, DI, RESEA, or other services. Such individuals are not required to have a WP application completed to verify eligibility for grant services to be provided. Costs for staff time to facilitate this communication are billable to the grant.

Per Workforce Services Directive (WSD) 24-05, CalJOBS Activity Codes, a Basic Career Service that is staff-assisted or an Individualized Career Service causes an individual to become a grant participant and would require a WP application to be completed to verify eligibility prior to being provided.

Individuals who are provided with grant services must be enrolled in CalJOBS regardless of their geographic location.

7. **If we are not able to hire a staff interpreter, is it ok to contract 100% with an interpreting services agency for 2025-2026? This would help meet the ongoing need for interpreting services through subcontractors. What strategies are being considered to fulfill this requirement?**

The EDD and this solicitation do not set a rate of compensation for staff.

Determination of program funding requested should consider factors specific to the service area, such as cost of living in the service area, prevailing wages for staff roles, and reasonable costs for proposed services to the target population. Please refer to page 3, section *B. Availability*, for further information.

On-demand communication services must be made available, including interpreter services by a professional interpreter who possesses a comprehensive skills certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or the equivalent. Applicants must clearly identify how they will fulfill the interpreter services requirements. Please refer to page 7, section *B. Staffing Qualifications*, for further information.

8. **Regarding Appendix D, what kind of definitions do you need us to report in CalJOBS Case Notes’ subjects for DHH PY 25-26? For example, the old definitions for 2024-2025 included Interpreting (Employment), Interpreting (Other), Desk Counseling, etc. Would the new definitions for 2025-2026 be Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, etc.?**

The definitions in Appendix D do not directly impact CalJOBS case note naming conventions. Selected grantees may receive additional support with CalJOBS case note recommendations within the grant’s launch webinar, supplemental resources, and/or individual technical assistance from the grant’s project manager.

9. **For the DHH PY 25-26, are we expected to use the templates for the Quarterly/Monthly Status Report and End of Project report again?**

Awarded organizations will receive reporting templates at the start of the project.

10. **Page 6 of the SFP states, “*The ability to secure community, including written endorsement of local officials, employers, the Workforce Development boards(s) within the applicant's service region, and organizations of and for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing*”. How many letters of support are recommended? Where should they be placed in the submission order, and is a PDF document acceptable for this?**

There is no requirement for or recommended minimum number of letters of support to include in your proposal. However, these letters will help to support proposals and may strengthen an applicant's response to Section 5.1 of Exhibit A. If submitting letters of support, please compile all letters into a single PDF document labelled “*Letters of Support*”.

11. **Page 9 of the SFP states, “*Grant funds may not be used to provide services or subsidize costs otherwise required of employers by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA requires that employers provide reasonable accommodations for the purpose of applying, interviewing, onboarding, and accommodations necessary for performing a job once hired. Grantees choosing to assist employers with offsetting the cost of such accommodations must not bill the grant for these services*”. Can you clarify this section? It says employers are responsible for all the accommodations. Are job development interpreters' roles or interpreter agencies not to be involved in any of these areas anymore? Section C. mentions that awardees are required to complete communication services for all preparatory, job placement, and follow-up activities. One of the biggest roles of the JCI is to assist with interviews and communication for orientations and job counseling for follow-up services.**

The purpose of DHH funding is to assist deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) job seekers with a variety of case management services to aid in obtaining and retaining unsubsidized employment.

As part of these efforts, job development professionals may connect participants with employers by working with both parties to identify employment opportunities that are suitable for program participants. Activities associated with job development may include but are not limited to performing outreach to employers to assess available job openings, securing a participant a job interview, conducting information sessions with employers, assisting employers with understanding available resources to fulfill accommodation needs for interviews, onboarding, and day-to-day employment etc.

12. **We noticed that previous SFP guidance allowed for the use of CODAs and ITP students in the Interpreter role, but the current FY 25-26 SFP appears to now require certified interpreters (RID/EIPA). This change significantly impacts our ability to recruit, as certified interpreters typically are not interested in hybrid roles that include both interpreting and employment services. Could you please clarify the rationale behind this change in removing CODA/ITP students as qualified candidates?**

Per California Unemployment Insurance Code (CUIC) 11002, “communication services shall include interpreter services by a professional interpreter for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing possessing the comprehensive skills certification of the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) or the equivalent.”

13. **For the past two years, we have been unable to successfully recruit ASL interpreters for the Employment Services Interpreter position. There has been a notable shift in the local interpreter workforce, with interpreters preferring full schedules of diverse, community-based interpreting work and seeking greater flexibility. Despite our outreach efforts, we have not been able to attract viable candidates. Given this trend, we respectfully propose that the ASL Interpreter position be made optional rather than required. Instead, we would like to add a second Employment Support Specialist to the staffing structure, resulting in a team of one Program Director and two Employment Support Specialists. We currently rely on freelance interpreters for interviews, job fairs, and other communication facilitation needs, and we plan to increase the Interpreter line item in our budget to support this continued use of certified professionals.**

Per CUIC 11002, “communication services shall include interpreter services by a professional interpreter for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing possessing the comprehensive skills certification of the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) or the equivalent.” Applicants must clearly identify how they will fulfill the interpreter services requirements. Please refer to page 7 of the SFP, section *B. Staffing Qualifications*, for further information.

14. **May we request to change the title “Job Development Specialist” to “Employment Support Specialist”? We believe this better reflects the nature of the role and improves clarity for both staff and clients.**

The EDD and this SFP do not prescribe job titles for grantee staff roles. However, organizations should avoid job titles that may give the perception of grantee staff being employees of the EDD.

15. **Is it allowable to consolidate two physical office locations into one? Given transportation barriers for many job seekers, our staff often meet with clients off-site, and we’ve found this approach more effective and accessible. Maintaining multiple office locations may no longer be necessary given our service delivery model in working with job seekers.**

If an applicant proposes to serve more than one location, the proposal should outline all areas they wish to serve and the proposed delivery model for services.

16. **On page 12 of the SFP, the language suggests that Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff may be called upon to interpret for DHH job seekers. Could you please clarify this, as DHH staff should not be expected to serve in lieu of certified interpreters?**

On-demand communication services must be made available, including interpreter services by a professional interpreter who possesses a comprehensive skills certification from the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or the equivalent. Applicants must clearly identify how they will fulfill the interpreter services requirements. Please refer to page 7 of the SFP, section *B. Staffing Qualifications*, for further information.

17. **How has the new reporting approach been beneficial in programs providing programmatic assessment of services? Will the EDD bring back the old monthly reporting templates used for tracking services? Has EDD thought of using an Excel template for reporting to add in formulas for cells to calculate the funding of enrollment/placement services?**

Services for this grant are required to be recorded in CalJOBS. The EDD reviews services provided reports from CalJOBS, along with narrative reports from awardees, to develop a full picture of the program.

Narrative reporting templates, along with other resources, will be distributed during the project launch phase. Templates are currently under review for possible enhancement.

18. **With the changes in the Federal Government will it have an impact on the total budget intended for this program?**

The EDD has not received information that would have an impact on the available grant budget at this time.

19. **The Program Locations list** **shows Santa Ana/Garden Grove. Does that mean the AJCC center, if located somewhere other than Garden Grove, needs to move back to that location for this new program year? We are currently in the Bay Area and Santa Ana.**

The locations listed in the SFP are for consideration of priority only. If an applicant proposes serving a geographical area not listed, the proposal must clearly identify the deaf and hard of hearing population and the need for services in that area and demonstrate why those needs are not currently being met. The EDD will review the request and determine the suitability and availability of space for co-location to determine if another area not listed can be approved.

20. **Could you please** **clarify whether commitment letters are for new grantees only?**

Commitment letters are a requirement for all applicants who are providing leveraged resources. This applies to both repeat and new applicants.

21. **Will the announcement be made before July 1st, as our fiscal year ends June 30?**

The awards will be announced once the funds have been approved and authorized. All dates after the final proposal submission deadline are approximate and may be adjusted as conditions dictate without an addendum to this SFP.

22. **What is the maximum funding per applicant?**

There is no predetermined maximum award amount per applicant. Determination of program funding requested will consider factors specific to the service area, such as cost of living in the service area, prevailing wages for staff roles, and reasonable costs for proposed services to the target population.