1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Commission for the Deaf (hereinafter referred to as DHH/LCD) issues this Request for Information (RFI) with the intent to determine the interest and capabilities of provider organizations to provide an operational Regional Services Center in the New Orleans region (Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and Terrebonne parishes) for provision of advocacy and accessibility services to persons with deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing loss and/or speech impairment. The LCD/contractor partnership will allow for ongoing oversight, data collection, and technical assistance to promote advocacy and accessibility to public and private services for persons with deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing loss and/or speech impairment.

DHH/LCD welcomes all responses to this RFI from qualified providers. This RFI is intended to learn of potential provider interest and capabilities if, in fact, the Department chooses to enter into a social services contract. This is not a Request for Proposals, although responses to the RFI may be used to assist DHH/LCD in selecting providers to offer participation in a social services contract using the evaluation process and criteria in section 5 below. The process uses specialized criteria to provide an objective determination of capacity based upon the needs of the target population served.

DHH/LCD will not pay for the preparation of any information or response submitted in response to this RFI, nor will the Department award a contract or pay for any use of response information.

1.2 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 with deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing loss and/or speech impairment. DHH/LCD have determined that accessibility services to persons living throughout Louisiana may be provided more cost-effectively through contracts with regional organizations rather than through a state-operated facility with state personnel.

1.3 Guiding Principles

A social services contract for operation of the proposed Regional Service Center shall be consistent with the following principles agreed upon by LCD and the provider:

1. The provider will remain committed to promoting, coordinating and facilitating services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and related amendments, for that facility for the duration of the social services contract.
2. Services, quality, safety, and stability of the Regional Service Center will continue at no less than the current level for the term of the social services contract.
    a. The LCD Technical Guidance Manual will be used to assess and guide quality improvement.
    b. The Executive Director/Owner of the Regional Service Center will serve as the point of contact with the LCD program staff who will serve as contract monitors.
    c. The Regional Service Center will be operated within the assigned region and in a facility that is fully accessible and near any available public transit services.
    d. The provisions of the contract pertaining to provider responsibilities will be consistent with the mandates for legislated accessibility services (R.S. 46:2352)

1.4 Scope of Services

This RFI is soliciting information about potential providers' interest and capacity in establishing, operating, and maintaining one Regional Service Center in the region of New Orleans (Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist and Terrebonne parishes).

The facility shall be fully accessible and near any available public transit in the region.

Persons to whom services shall be provided are those with deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing loss and/or speech impairment. Some but not all of these individuals may have other disabilities (e.g. tinnitus/balance problems). Communication styles may include: American Sign Language, tactile American Sign Language, pidgeon-style sign language, home-signs, Cued Speech transliteration, and/or verbal, written, or captioned communication in English.

1.5 Program Requirements

1. Regional Service Centers will promote, coordinate, and facilitate accessibility of all public and private services for persons who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, hard of hearing, or whom have speech impairment, to include: provision of American Sign Language interpreting, Cued Speech transliterating, and captioning services; distribution of and training for specialized adaptive telecommunications equipment; and administrative services for application, determination of eligibility, and provision of hearing aids and related services; and advocacy services which will also include serving as a liaison with the Department of Health and Hospitals LA-Hear Coordinators (Office of Public Health) for children ages 0-3; as well as outreach activities and on-site visits to each parish within the center's domicile every six months.

2. The Regional Service Center will employ, provide through contract, or provide through other means sufficient professional and non-professional staff to meet programmatic requirements and the needs of the people supported upon initiation and throughout the term of the contract. Depending upon the unique needs and preferences of the people supported, this includes but is not limited to:

a. Advocacy

b. Accessibility services – American Sign Language interpreting, captioning; application, determination of eligibility and training of persons on the use of LCD loaned amplified and adaptive telephones and trouble-shooting for those devices; application, determination of eligibility, and coordination of professional hearing aid services.

c. Outreach activities and on-site visits – to each parish within the RSC's domicile every six months.

3. The provider will use the LCD Technical Guidance Manual, but will also have policies and procedures for professional services.

4. The provider will work collaboratively and cooperatively with the LCD staff to implement services according to the terms of the contract as well as in accordance with the LCD Technical Guidance manual.

5. The provider must maintain adherence to all applicable federal and state regulations for facilities serving persons with disabilities and will meet all conditions of participation annually for the term of the contract.

6. The provider shall establish and maintain an adequate training program with qualified trainers for training direct support staff and programmatic employees for the term of the contract.

7. The provider will have policies and procedures on complaint resolution to address any complaints or concerns regarding provision of services, or the lack thereof.

1.6 Operational Requirements

1. The provider will be properly credentialed to do business in Louisiana and will maintain certification of good standing with the Secretary of State.

2. The provider will have and maintain the management and organizational capacity to operate the facility for the term of the contract.

3. The provider shall have the financial resources and financial stability adequate to establish and operate this facility successfully for the term of the contract.

4. The provider will provide to the LCD monthly invoices and performance reports of services and outreach activities in accordance with the goals, objectives, and deliverables of this contract.

5. The provider will ensure that the Regional Service Center is open for services and staff are available Monday-Thursday 8:00 AM - 4:30PM; and Friday 8:00 AM-12:00PM; with staff also available by telephone after-hours for emergencies (i.e. requests for interpreting).

6. The provider will make a good faith effort to hire or contract for professional services (e.g. interpreting) with qualified personnel listed on the LCD Registry of State-Certified Interpreters.

7. The provider will assume responsibility for its personnel providing services hereunder and shall make all deductions for Social Security and withholding taxes, contributions for unemployment compensation funds; and/or certify that payments made to sub-contractors (e.g. interpreters) for work performed shall be reported to the Internal Revenue Service for which sub-contractors will receive an IRS 1099-Misc reflecting miscellaneous income upon which they shall be taxed.

8. The provider will have and maintain an Emergency Management and Continuity of Operations plan providing for effective provision of services during emergency and/or crisis.

9. The provider will participate in transition support, data collection and monitoring specified in the contract. Any requested facility access, information, documents or employees will be made available to designated LCD staff person(s) for determining compliance with the contract or for data collection specified in the contract.

10. The LCD will make available transition support, technical assistance, and consultation, at LCD's discretion.

11. The standard term of the contract will be three (3) years. Change to this timeframe may be made by either party for just cause when notice is provided in writing thirty (30) days advance notice.

1.7 Insurance Requirements

The provider will maintain comprehensive liability insurance in accordance with general industry standards for small businesses.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

2.1 RFI Coordinator

Requests for copies of the RFI and written questions must be directed to:

Louisiana Commission for the Deaf
Naomi DeDual, Executive Director
Post Office Box 44008
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
1-800-256-1523
Naomi.dedual@la.gov

Additional copies of this RFI are available in electronic form on the LCD website, via email, or in printed format by contacting the RFI Coordinator.

2.2 Responder Inquiries

DHH/LCD will review written inquiries regarding RFI requirements or Scope of Services on or before the date specified in the Calendar of Events. DHH/LCD reserves to the right to modify the RFI should a change be identified that is in the best interest of the State of Louisiana.

Written inquiries and requests for clarification of the content of this RFI should be submitted via email to Naomi DeDual at naomi.dedual@la.gov Responses to each of the questions presented will be sent by email to every potential responder and posted to the DHH/LCD website: http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/318

2.3 Calendar of Events

Event	Date
Advertise RFI	July 13, 2012
Information Meetings for Potential Responders	July 26,2012
Deadline for receiving written questions	July 27, 2012
Deadline for written response to questions	August 3, 2012
Response submission deadline	August 17, 2012
Review of information and selection of participants	August 24, 2012

Note: The State of Louisiana reserves the right to amend and/or change this schedule of RFI activities as deemed necessary.

3. RESPONSE INFORMATION

3.1 Response Content

Providers interested in responding to this RFI must submit a capability statement of no more than 20 pages that details the ability to perform the aspects of this CEA described above. Detailed material such as organization charts, copies of original documents such as from the Secretary of State's office, or copies of training materials, etc., may be attached to the 20-page statement. Specifically, the capability statement should describe/include the following:

1. The name of the organization and the date it became operational.
2. Certification from Secretary of State that the company is in good standing.

3. Documentation of the responder's fiscal capacity to operate the proposed program, including but not limited to:
   a. A letter of credit from the company's financial institution.
   b. A statement of assets & liabilities, and
   c. Audit results from responder's Certified Public Accountant.
4. A statement of the responder's involvement in litigation that could affect this work should be included. If no such litigation exists, responder should so state.
5. For programs that have previously served as state contractors, there must be no findings of failure to meet any conditions of participation for the last three years; and has a satisfactory record of integrity, judgment and performance. Contractors who are seriously delinquent in current contract performance, shall in the absence of evidence to the contrary or compelling circumstance, be presumed to be unable to fulfill this requirement.
6. A business plan including how the organization is positioned to provide an accessible office in the assigned region with staff physically available Monday – Thursday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM and Friday 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM; as well as staff availability by telephone/video phone after hours and emergencies.
7. A description of all current business services currently provided by your organization, including any services to the DHH Medicaid program.
8. The total number of consumers served by the organization in State Fiscal Year 2012.
9. A description of the organization's experience and qualifications, or that of sub-contractors, (i.e. freelance interpreters) with providing accessibility (i.e. interpreting, telecommunication access loans, coordination of professional hearing aid services) services to persons with hearing loss, deafness, deaf-blindness, and speech impairment.
10. A copy of your curriculum and procedures for training staff.
11. A description of the proposed staffing and organizational chart including:
    a. Proposed staff ratios
    b. If similar facilities are operated by the responder staff ratios and organizational chart for similar facilities the organization operates,
    c. Roster of contract professional staffs, including interpreters, independent living specialists, licensed clinical social workers, etc.
    d. A statement regarding the responder's intent and willingness to hire personnel with deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing loss, and/or speech impairment.
    e. A statement regarding the responder's interest and willingness to use contractors currently working with DHH/LCD (i.e. interpreters).
    f. A description of employee pay and benefits, including as appropriate,
       i. Pay scales/rates, including any policies/procedures for longevity pay,
       ii. Policies and procedures on recruitment and retention,
       iii. Health insurance,
       iv. Retirement, and
       v. Leave (vacation and/or sick) policies,
       vi. Data on retention/turnover rates for similar programs operated by the responder, if any.
12. A description of the organization's experience with providing services to the population identified in the RFI including details on how the organization successfully supports this group.
13. A description of adequate experience, training, and resources necessary to serve the special needs of the identified population referred for service for the term of the CEA; including but not limited to the following areas: aging, behavioral health issues, substance abuse/dual diagnosis disorders, co-existing medical conditions and requisite needs, assistive technology, telecommunication relay services, or other nuances of services to this population.
14. A copy of the organization's Quality Assurance/Enhancement policies and technical guidelines.

15. A statement of certification that the organization agrees to EEOC compliance and certify their agreement to adhere to the mandates dictated by Title VI and VII of the Civil Right Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972, Federal Executive Order 11246, the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Act of 1975, and agrees to abide by the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as well as keep informed and comply with all federal, state, and local laws, ordinances and regulations which affect their employees or prospective employees.
16. A copy of the responder's current and/or proposed policy and technical guidelines on:
    a. Abuse and neglect, and
    b. Critical Incident Reporting and Management.
17. A copy of the responder's emergency preparedness and evacuation plan.
18. A list and description of vehicles and transportation resources to be used to access this facility (including public transit services within walking distance of the facility).
19. A description of preventive and general maintenance plans and procedures.
20. A statement that the organization has made no attempt to suppress competition.

3.2 Response Location

The fully completed response must be received by the RFI Coordinator by the deadline date specified in the Calendar of Events. Electronic mail submissions are acceptable.

3.3 Ownership of Response

All materials submitted in response to this RFI become the property of the State of Louisiana.

3.4 Proprietary Information

Only information, which is in the nature of legitimate trade secrets or non-published financial data, may be deemed proprietary or confidential. Any material within a response identified

3.5 Cost of Preparing Response

The State of Louisiana is not liable for any costs incurred by prospective responders submitting a response. Costs associated with developing the response and any other expenses incurred by the provider in responding to this RFI are entirely the responsibility of the responder, and shall not be reimbursed in any manner by the State of Louisiana.

3.6 Errors and Omissions in Response

The State of Louisiana will not be liable for any errors in response. The State of Louisiana, at its option, has the right to request clarification or additional information from a responder.

3.7 CEA Award and Execution

The submission of responses to this RFI does not obligate the State of Louisiana to execute an CEA.

3.8 Code of Ethics

Responders are responsible for determining that there will be no conflicts or violations of the Louisiana Ethics Code in the process of responding to this RFI.

4. RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS

4.1 Response Submission

Responses must be received on or before the date specified in the Calendar of Events. Responders mailing their responses should allow sufficient mail delivery time to ensure receipt of their response by the time specified. The response package must be submitted to:

Louisiana Commission for the Deaf
ATTN: Naomi DeDual, Executive Director
Post Office Box 44008
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
1-800-256-1523
Naomi.dedual@la.gov

The State of Louisiana requests that one original and one copy of the response which is signed by those company officials or agents duly authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the organization, be submitted to the RFI Coordinator; and accompanied by a Board Resolution or Letter of Sole Ownership reflecting those officials or agents duly authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the organization.

4.2 Cover Letter

A cover letter must be submitted on the responder's official business letterhead.

4.3 Response Format

Responders should submit a written capability statement of no more than 20 pages of text that addresses by paragraph number each item in Section 3.1 above. Supporting documentation, such as manuals, curricula, survey reports, etc. may be referenced in the text and attached. The statement and attachments must include information to satisfy evaluators that the responder has the appropriate experience, and qualifications to perform the scope of services as described herein. Responder must respond to all areas requested.

4.4 Certification Statement

The responder must sign and submit the Certification Statement. A downloadable copy is posted with this RFI.

5.0 REVIEW AND FOLLOWUP

5.1 Review Team

Responses will be reviewed by a team to be designated by the Deputy Secretary. Members of the review team will be trained on their responsibilities prior to reviewing responses. At a minimum, the team will be composed of:

- Two representatives from the Commission for the Deaf office,
- A representative from the DHH Office of the Secretary,
- A representative from the Commission for the Deaf,
- A representative from the DHH Office of Management and Finance.

The Deputy Secretary may choose to add representatives to the review team if she determines a need to do so. All members appointed shall be free of any conflicts of interest.

5.2 Evaluation of Statements of Capability

The review team will review the copies of the response and make a recommendation to the Department.

In determining which Responder to recommend to the Department, the review team will first evaluate and rank the responses based on the required content. Then the team will apply the following priorities. For responses that satisfactorily indicate the needed capacity, priority in selection will be given to responder according to the following criteria:

1. Provider demonstrates staff training exceeding minimum requirements in both quantity and quality (providing services to persons with hearing loss, deafness, deaf-blindness, and speech impairment).
2. Provider demonstrates higher pay and greater retention of direct support professionals.

If no responses meet the priority criteria then the original ranking will apply.

After receiving the review team recommendations, the Department may take other factors into account at that point, including, but not limited to, the provider's history in working with the Department, and the ability to adequately provide contracted services in the assigned region.

If there are no responses for this RFI, the Department reserves the right to directly contact providers who may have the needed capacity in order to provide accessibility services to the target population.

5.3 Follow-Up

Responders will be notified of the Department receipt of their RFI response and whether or not after review the Department wishes to enter into a contract with the responder. The name of organization to be offered a contract as part of this process will be made public.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

The undersigned hereby acknowledges she/he has read and understands all requirements and specifications of the Request for Information (RFI) and other posted documents referenced in the RFI and is prepared to provide accessibility services in the proposed regional area.

OFFICIAL CONTACT: The State of Louisiana requires that the responder designate one person to receive all documents and the method in which the documents are best delivered to that person. Identify the contact name by printing clearly on the lines below:

Name of Official Contact:_____

A. Email Address:_____
B. Facsimile Number including Area Code:_____
C. U.S. Mail Address:_____
_____
D. Telephone Number: (_____)_____

Responder certifies the above information is true and grants permission to the State or Agencies to contact the above-named person to verify the information provided.

By its submission of this response and authorized signature below, responder certifies that:

(1) The information contained in its response to this RFI is accurate;

(2) Responder complies with each of the mandatory requirements listed in this RFI and will meet or exceed the functional and technical requirements specified herein.

Authorized Signature:_____

Typed or Printed Name:_____

Title:_____

Company Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____State:_____Zip Code:_____

_____/_____

Name and Title Date