

## **4**

### **NEW CONTRACT FOR PROVISION OF CULTURAL INTERPRETATION SERVICES**

**The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, October 30, 2007, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. Access Alliance be awarded a three-year contract for the provision of Cultural Interpretation Services.
2. Council authorize the Commissioner of Community and Health Services to execute the contract, subject to the approval of Legal Services as to form and content.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

The current multi-year contract to provide cultural interpretation services to clients of the Community Services and Housing Department will expire on December 31, 2007. This report requests Council approval to enter into a new multi-year contract with Access Alliance, who was the successful proponent under a Request for Proposal process.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

##### **3.1 Cultural Interpretation Services ensure equal access to services for clients who cannot speak English**

The Community Services and Housing Department provides translation services to applicants and clients who cannot speak English. This translation is an enhanced cultural interpretation service where the interpreter also considers the client's cultural and religious background when translating the client's needs to York staff, while at the same time, translating the concepts of the role of government and social services to the client.

The Department delivers services to individuals and families who are facing economic challenges, and assists them towards self sufficiency, employment, and integration into the community. Culturally specific language interpretation provides equal access to these services and supports for our diverse York Region communities.

In 2006, the Department responded to approximately 1,200 requests for cultural interpretation services. The majority of interpretation requests have been for Cantonese,

Mandarin, Tamil, Russian, Farsi, and Italian speaking residents. Other languages are interpreted as well.

### **3.2 Request for Proposal was issued to continue interpretation services**

A Request for Proposal (#P-07-24) for the provision of Cultural Interpretation Services, coordinated through the Supplies and Services Branch, was issued on June 19, 2007 and closed on July 10, 2007. Submissions from five proponents were received and evaluated by a Selection Committee chaired by Supplies and Services staff and comprised of staff from the Family and Children's Services, Housing Services, and Employment and Financial Support Branches. Under the Purchasing By-law where the highest overall scoring proponent is not submitting the lowest cost proposal, Council's approval must be obtained.

## **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

### **4.1 The Selection Committee assessed all proposals**

The Selection Committee assessed the five proposals using the Region's Evaluation Process to assess qualifications, experience and service deliverables. Points were totalled to reflect technical points, financial value and total weighted scores. Table 1 provides the results for the technical proposal scores.

**Table 1**  
**Technical Proposal Scores**

| <b>Name of Company</b> | <b>Technical Proposal Score</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Access Alliance        | 72                              |
| Elspeth Heyworth       | 60                              |
| Able Translation       | 56                              |
| Bridge Translations    | 46                              |
| Interpreters Group     | 32                              |

The three proponents with the highest technical scores (Access Alliance, Elspeth Heyworth and Able Translation) were invited to a presentation and interview process.

### **4.2 Access Alliance is recommended as the successful proponent based upon highest total weighted score**

Access Alliance, Elspeth Heyworth and Able Translation attended an interview where they presented their services to the selection committee. After the complete assessment, including interviews and presentation, weighted scoring was applied. Access Alliance emerged with the highest weighted score. References were then checked for Access Alliance. The reference checks were excellent with a high level of recommendation.

Access Alliance is the recommended proponent, despite a higher estimated total cost than Elspeth Heyworth (\$32,735 over a three year period) and Able Translation (\$23,735 over a three year period). Total costs have been estimated based on projected service levels, however actual costs will be dependent on client needs and actual service hours provided. The total weighted scores for the three proponents with the highest technical scores are noted in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Weighted Scores**

| <b>Name of Company</b> | <b>Technical Proposal Score</b> | <b>Total Weighted Score</b> | <b>Estimated Total Costs (excl. taxes)</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Access Alliance        | 72                              | 90.1                        | \$342,350                                  |
| Elspeth Heyworth       | 60                              | 79.8                        | \$309,615                                  |
| Able Translation       | 56                              | 75.3                        | \$318,615                                  |

#### **4.3 Access Alliance weighted score reflects strong qualifications**

Access Alliance was determined to have a broader range of experience and qualifications in the field of cultural translation.

- Access Alliance interpreters must have passed the Cultural Interpreter Language and Interpreting Skills Assessment Tool or the Interpreter Language Skills Assessment Tool.
- Access Alliance works in partnership with the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture to develop training modules and set professional standards.
- Access Alliance provides training to agencies that offer Cultural Interpretation Services.
- Access Alliance provides their interpreters with over one hundred hours of training and professional development.
- Access Alliance has experience working with other regional municipalities that experience interpreter issues similar to those in York Region.

Access Alliance's services, presentation, customer responsiveness and professionalism were determined to be of the highest quality.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Community and Health Services Department has been budgeting for, and utilizing, cultural interpretation services for the past ten years. The costs of providing Cultural Interpretation Services are contained in the Department's annual Business Plan and Budget. This service is a very important part of the Department's ongoing strategy for providing accessible, responsive and cost effective service to its residents.

**6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

Residents in York Region benefit by the provision of high quality Cultural Interpretation Services that enable non-English speaking residents equal access to services that meet their needs.

**7. CONCLUSION**

The provision of high quality Cultural Interpretation Services from Access Alliance will enable vulnerable residents in the Region to access the services they require while ensuring accountability to the public.

For more information on this report contact Elizabeth Wagle, Director of the Family and Children's Services Branch, David Rennie, Director of the Employment and Financial Support Branch or Sylvia Patterson, Director of the Housing Services Branch, in the Community and Health Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.