

Questions and Answers for PT, OT, SLP, AUD, and Interpreting for the Deaf Services

1. What agencies do you currently use for PT, OT, SLP, AUD, and Interpreting for the Deaf Services? **Answer: Advance Therapy Services LLC, Grace Therapy Group LLC, All Ways Therapies LLC, EBS, EDU HealthCare, Functional Independence, Mid-South Therapy Solutions LLC, Power of Words Therapy Services LLC, Speaking Life HealthCare, Stellar Therapy Services LLC, Synapse Speech-Language Pathology Group PLLC, The Stepping Stones Group LLC, Therapeutic Focus, and DeafConnect Interpreting Service for the Deaf**
2. What rates do those agencies charge for PT, OT, SLP, AUD, and Interpreting for the Deaf Services? **Answer: Our vendors currently charge \$60.00 per hour and higher.**
3. Will this be a single or multi-award? **Answer: MSCS reserves the right to award multiple respondents.**
4. How many hours of PT, OT, SLP, AUD, and Interpreting for the Deaf Services were utilized in 2022 and 2023? **Answer: This information is not currently available.**
5. How many hours of OT, PT, and SLP services do you anticipate for the 2024-2025 year? **Answer: This depends on student enrollment. Students are identified daily.**
6. What is the annual spend that is projected for the contract? **Answer: The amount depends on the number of students enrolled requiring services and the number of agencies approved.**
7. Does the district provide evaluation/testing materials to providers? **Answer: Yes, for in-person SLPs, SLP/As, Audiologists, PTs, and OTs.**
8. Does the district provide a laptop/computer to providers? **Answer: The District does not provide a laptop / computer to providers.**
9. When is the anticipated award date for this bid? **Answer: 2023-2024 school year. The need is immediate, so services will be needed as soon as Board approval is received**
10. Will the district consider virtual services if our company were to provide the platform, online materials, and online assessments? **Answer: The District will consider virtual services.**
11. Are you currently working with any agencies providing PT, OT, SLP, Audiology, and/or Interpreter services to your District? **Answer: Yes, we are currently working with multiple companies for PT, OT, SLP, Audiology and one company for Interpreting Services: Advance Therapy Services LLC, Grace Therapy Group LLC, All Ways Therapies LLC, EBS, EDU HealthCare, Functional Independence, Mid-South Therapy Solutions LLC, Power of Words Therapy Services LLC, Speaking Life HealthCare, Stellar Therapy**

Services LLC, Synapse Speech-Language Pathology Group PLLC, The Stepping Stones Group LLC, Therapeutic Focus, and DeafConnect Interpreting

12. Who are your current vendors and what prices do they charge? **Answer: See above.**
13. Will the district accept a range of rates for each discipline? **Answer: This is a Request for Qualification. Price will not be evaluated.**
14. Have these vendors been able to meet all of your PT, OT, SLP, Audiology, and/or Interpreter needs? **Answer: No, our current vendors have not been able to meet all our needs**
15. Is it acceptable to include additional services our company provides outside of the scope of the RFP in the event that the district needs other services in the future? **Answer: No.**
16. How many PT, OT, SLP, Audiology, and/or Interpreter (FTE) did each vendor provide to your District for the current 23/24 school year? **Answer: : This depends on enrollment because students are identified daily.**
17. How many PT, OT, SLP, Audiology, and/or Interpreter (FTE) do you anticipate needing for the upcoming 24/25 school year? **Answer: This depends on enrollment because students are identified daily.**
18. Do you require that **clinician** resumes and/or licensure be submitted with the proposal or after award? **Answer: The clinician resumes and or licensure will be required with the proposal**
19. How many hours are in a typical school day (i.e. how many hours are therapists allowed to be on-site and billing)? **Answer: A typical school day is 7 hours; however, we do have hours available after school and some weekends.**
20. How many workdays are they assigned for the school year? **Answer: We operate using a 5-day workweek**
21. What is the average caseload by discipline in your District? **Answer: We utilize guidelines provided by Tennessee Department of Education**
22. What is the anticipated start date for this RFQ? **Answer: The need is immediate, so services will be needed as soon as Board approval is received.**
23. How will vendors be notified of award? **Answer: An Intent to Award Letter will be sent to all respondents that submitted a valid response on time for the RFQ required services.**
24. Will assigned therapists have access to therapy materials, supplies, equipment, evaluation kits, and protocols provided by your schools? **Answer: Yes, for in-person SLPs, SLP/As, OTs and PTs.**
25. Will assigned therapists have access to computers/ laptops and printers provided by your schools? **Answer: Please see response to question #8**
26. Is the contracting agency able to bill for both direct and indirect treatment time (paperwork, meeting, teacher consultations, etc.)? **Answer: Yes, with stipulations.**
27. Do contractors have to travel between schools during the workday? If so, are they required to clock out during travel between schools OR are they able to stay clocked in during travel between schools? **Answer: Yes, for in-person staffing and teletherapy assistants. No, they do not clock out during travel time between schools.**

28. How does the district want us to provide our rates (hourly, daily, etc.) and where does the district want to find this information in our response? **Answer: This is a Request for Qualification (RFQ). Price will not be evaluated.**
29. Does the district require vendors to show "Good Faith Effort" with MWBE subcontracting? **Answer: Not Applicable, as this solicitation does not have an MWBE goal.**
30. Is there a bond requirement for this RFQ? **Answer: No**
31. Does the district require our response to include 3 or 5 references? **Answer: The minimum number of references is three (3), however the respondent can provide more than three references.**
32. Will the district accept electronic signatures on the required forms? **Answer: All forms must be submitted with the response by mail or hand delivered and include a handwritten or electronic signature.**
33. Will the district accept a current copy of our Certificate of Insurance for Memphis-Shelby County Schools in lieu of, or in addition to, Appendix G? **Answer: The successful bidder will be required to provide insurance coverage as shown in General Conditions of RFQ and Contract, prior to beginning any work. This insurance coverage must be maintained throughout the life of the contract. proof that coverage is either currently in place or will be provided must be submitted with the bid. This can be done by one of the two following methods: Complete form "Certification of Insurance Coverage" or Submit a Certificate of Insurance on a form provided by your Insurance Agent.**
34. How does the district prefer our responses to be bound (stapled, binders, clip, etc.)? **Answer: MSCS has no preference on how to bind the response.**
35. What is the maximum hourly bill rate the school district is budgeted to pay for the requested services? **Answer: The information is not currently available.** What was last school year's budget? **Answer: \$8,000,000.**
36. Who are your current providers and what are their bill rates for the requested services? **Answer: Advance Therapy Services LLC, Grace Therapy Group LLC, All Ways Therapies LLC, EBS, EDU HealthCare, Functional Independence, Mid-South Therapy Solutions LLC, Power of Words Therapy Services LLC, Speaking Life HealthCare, Stellar Therapy Services LLC, Synapse Speech-Language Pathology Group PLLC, The Stepping Stones Group LLC, Therapeutic Focus, and DeafConnect. The current price range is \$60.00 per hour and higher.**
37. When awarded the solicitation to provide services, who would be the contact within the district to inquire about open roles for professions related to the RFQ? **Answer: : For SLPs, SLP/As, and Speech-Language Teletherapy Assistants the contact is Kyna Woollery (901) 416-5204; For Interpreters for the Deaf/Audiology the contact is Heather McDonough (901) 416-1191, and OT/PT the contact is Dr. Laurie Bainer (901)416-5213.**
38. Will the district consider proposals from companies that ONLY provide teletherapy in regard to this solicitation? **Answer: Yes, the District will consider proposals from companies that ONLY provide teletherapy.**
39. What is the estimated number of positions needed (part-time vs. full-time)? **Answer: This will depend on enrollment, students are identified daily,**

40. Will the district award more than 1 vendor? **Answer: MSCS reserves the right to award multiple respondents.**
41. Is a local office required? **Answer: No.** Is there a preference for local vendors? **Answer: No.**
42. Are there any obstacles to using Zoom in your district? **Answer: Currently, the District utilizes Microsoft Teams for teletherapy services provision.**
43. Can you apply for some, but not all parts of this RFQ? Or is the expectation that the district will award 1 vendor that can provide all the requested services? **Answer: You may seek awards for some or all of the services. MSCS reserves the right to award multiple respondents.**
44. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada) **Answer: Respondent must have a domestic address in the United States.**
45. Whether we need to come over there for meetings? **Answer: In-person meetings are optional, not mandatory. Respondent must be able to fulfill all required tasks and responsibilities regardless of respondent's base location.**
46. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada) **Answer: Please reference question#44 answer.**
47. Can we submit the proposals via email? **Answer: No. Please reference Section 6.0 Submission Deadline on page 5 of 45 in the RFQ proposal.**
48. Does the District require two letters (transmittal letter AND introduction/cover letter), or is the transmittal letter alone acceptable? **Answer: Both Transmittal and Introduction/Cover Letter are required.**
49. What rate or rates does MSCS plan to pay for the PT, OT, SLP, AUD, and Interpreting services defined in this RFQ? **Answer: Information unavailable**
50. Pages 15 & 16 reference Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLP/A) qualifications. Are there any restrictions on the placement of SLP/As ? **Answer: SLP/As work under the supervision of an SLP.**
51. The TN Board of Communications Disorders and Sciences rules state Speech-Language Pathology Assistants shall work under the supervision of a licensed Speech Language Pathologist. Will MSCS provide SLP supervisors, or will the service provider be responsible for placing a SLPA and a SLP supervisor? **Answer: The District will assign SLP supervisors for SLP/As**
52. Page 16 lists the qualifications for a "Speech Language Teletherapy Assistant". Are out-of-state SLPAs with TN licensure eligible for placement? **Answer: If this question is inquiring about SLP/As, then yes. An out-of-state SLP/A with TN licensure is eligible for placement.**
53. How many service providers do you anticipate selecting via this RFQ process? **Answer: Multiple providers are needed.**
54. Do you accept DocuSign for original signatures for this RFP? **Answer: Yes.**

55. Who are the past vendors and what are the hourly rates paid for all of the disciplines mentioned in this RFP? **Answer: Advance Therapy Services LLC, Grace Therapy Group LLC, All Ways Therapies LLC, EBS, EDU HealthCare, Functional Independence, Mid South Therapy Solutions LLC, Power of Words Therapy Services LLC, Speaking Life HealthCare, Stellar Therapy Services LLC, Synapse Speech-Language Pathology Group PLLC, The Stepping Stones Group LLC, Therapeutic Focus, and DeafConnect. The price range is \$60.00 per hour and higher. This is an RFQ (Request for Qualification).**
56. When is the anticipated award date for this RFP? **Answer: This is an RFQ (Request for Qualification). The need is immediate, so services will be needed as soon as Board approval is received.**
57. Can there be bids for other services mentioned in the RFP? **Answer: Yes, vendors are encouraged to submit for some or all services mentioned in the RFQ. However, you may not include services outside of the RFQ Scope of Services.**
58. Can we bid a pricing range for each item in the RFP? **Answer: This is a Request for Qualification (RFQ). Price will not be evaluated.**
59. Can the district provide a pricing sheet for every line item to bid on in the RFP? **Answer: A pricing sheet is not required to be included in the response. This is a Request for Qualification (RFQ).**
60. How many hours can a contracted employee bill for in a regular school day? **Answer: The contracted employee is able to bill for up to 7.5 hours daily.**
61. In the technical response tab E "The Vendor shall address each major requirement of the RFQ (separated by tabs if substantial)." can you please clarify which major requirements we are supposed to respond to? **Answer: All of the RFQ Scope of Services are major requirements.**
62. Is there a price sheet that is meant to be included or do we create our own pricing sheet? **Answer: Please reference question#59 answer.**
63. Do Shelby County Schools have a cancellation policy in mind should the student that was needing services be absent? **Answer: No, there is no cancellation policy.**
64. Do Shelby County Schools have a cancellation policy in mind should services be cancelled for any reason (outside of weather event/natural disaster)? **Answer: No, there is no cancellation policy.**
65. Is there a missing rate form to complete or missing rate information for this RFQ? **Answer: Please reference question#59 answer.**
66. What is the anticipated need, per service provider discipline, for the upcoming school year? **Answer: This will depend on the number of students and hours of services Recommended on the IEP. Students are made eligible on daily basis.**
67. What are the biggest challenges faced with providing sign language interpreting services? **Answer: There is a shortage of qualified interpreters, especially those willing to work full-time workweeks.**

68. Which zip codes have the highest demand for sign language interpreting?
Answer: 38117 (Sea Isle Elementary, White Station High) and 38120 (White Station Middle)
69. How many enrolled students require sign language interpreting services? How many faculty and staff members need services? Answer: Number of students depends on enrollment, but typically students in 3 different schools.. One current staff member Requires an interpreter.
70. How many total hours of each onsite interpreting and remote interpreting were provided during the Fall 2023 academic semester? Answer: We had 3 full-time District hired interpreters. Additionally, we had 3 DeafConnect interpreters working onsite (which reduced to 2 mid semester). Remote interpreting was used at White Station Middle School as needed.
71. How many total hours of each onsite interpreting and remote interpreting were provided during the 2022 - 2023 academic year? Answer: We had 3 full-time District hired interpreters and started the year with 3 full-time DeafConnect interpreters. By the end of the year we were down to 2 full-time DeafConnect interpreters and used remote interpreters to cover any other student interpreting needs.
72. What are the projected hours for onsite and remote sign language interpreting services for Spring 2024 semester? Answer: We will continue to use our 3 District-hired interpreters and need 5 additional full-time interpreters (onsite preferred, some students can use remote.)
73. Of all SCBE's awarded providers, who were the top 3 highest volume firms for sign language interpreting services for the 2022 - 2023 academic year? How long have they been under contract with SCBE? Answer: Deaf Connect has provided services during the 22-23 School Year.
74. What is the current price range for each onsite interpreting and virtual interpreting for the previously awarded RFQ? Answer: The current price range is \$65.00 per hour and higher.
75. Does the SCBE employ any staff sign language interpreters? If so, how many? Answer: We currently have 3 full-time interpreters employed by the District. All 3 work at White Station High School.
76. Will firms be required to provide all requested services, PT, OT, SLP, AUD, and Interpreting for the Deaf Services? Answer: No, providers are not required to provide all services.
77. Will bids be accepted for remote services only? Answer: Yes, vendors are encouraged to participate.
78. Could you please provide an estimated timeline for the awarding of the contract? Answer: The need is immediate, so services will be needed as soon as Board approval is received.

79. In consideration of the contract award timeline, could you also specify the anticipated start date for the commencement of services? **Answer: Services will be needed as soon as Board approval is received.**
80. What is the policy regarding price increases upon renewals? **Answer: That would part of a newly negotiated contract approved by the Board of Education.**
81. Will SCBE accept Work Bright for employee background checks? **Answer: No**
82. If skills are internally screened upon hiring and continually assessed during employment, how would SCBE approach the eligibility of interpreters without certification to provide services? **Answer: Only certified interpreters will be considered or interpreters meeting the requirements as outlined in the Scope of Services.**
83. Will RID certifications, other state, or national certifications be acceptable to SCBE? **Answer: RID and national certifications are acceptable**
84. In consideration of the RFQ's stipulation on offering a single price per item, could you please provide guidance on whether the following additional service elements—Rush Scheduling Fee, After-Hours Differential, Specialized Scheduled Service, Federal Holiday Rate, and Onsite Interpreting Travel—fall within the scope of this restriction, or if there is flexibility for multiple pricing options for these specific services? **Answer: Per the RFQ Scope of Services, MSCS will negotiate with the recommended awardee for appropriate cost of services.**
85. *Page 6, Section 14.0, Liquidated Damages* - This section states SCBE will purchase others services to “assure the continued operation” in the event Contractor fails to provide services. These expenses are then deducted from the Contractors billed amount. Is SCBE willing to include a timeframe that provides opportunity to cure this matter before these additional steps are taken? **Answer: Vendor performance is always evaluated on an ongoing basis.**
86. Does SCBE anticipate the Contractor to provide services outside of the school location? **Answer: Services may be needed outside of a school location.**
87. Can the district please clarify how needs for vendor supplied contractors will be disseminated to awardees post award? **Answer: Communications (email, telephone calls etc) between the MSCS contacts and vendors will be ongoing regarding the need for specific contractors.**
88. When is the estimated contract award date, and how will the district communicate award status to vendors? **Answer: Services will be needed as soon as Board approval is received. Vendors who are approved for award will be sent a contract to sign.**
89. How many vendors does the district expect to award a contract to for the services requested in this solicitation? **Answer: MSCS reserves the right to award multiple respondents.**

90. Can the district please provide incumbent information and current bill rates for contracts in place for similar services? **Answer: Our current vendors charge various rates that range from \$60.00 per hour and higher.**
91. What is the expected amount of full-time, vendor supplied (OT, PT, SLP, Audiology, and Interpreters) needed during the 2023-24 SY? **Answer: The number of staff needed depends on student enrollment.**
92. Can the district please provide the total amount of full-time, vendor supplied (OT, PT, SLP, Audiology, and Interpreters) utilized during the 2022-23 SY? **Answer: The District is not able to provide the information at this time.**
93. Can the district please provide the total amount of billing, broken down by vendor and classification, for all vendor supplied (OT, PT, SLP, Audiology, and Interpreters) utilized during the 2022-23 SY? **Answer: The District is not able to provide the information at this time**
94. Can the district please describe the supplies and materials that contracted providers will have access to at the district? (wifi, computer access, testing material, office supplies, etc.)? **Answer: Contracted staff will have wifi access, testing materials, and student supplies. Vendor provides laptops.**
95. What travel between schools is expected for these providers? **Answer: The providers will be expected to travel between schools if in person.**
96. Will the district review other SPED service classifications if submitted with the vendor proposal? **Answer: Vendors should submit only for the services outlined in the RFQ Scope of Services.**
97. What are the district expectations of contract providers to assist in Medicaid reimbursement documentation services? **Answer: Yes therapists are expected to document services for Medicaid Reimbursement. Professional therapy services and audiology services must meet professional standards.**
98. What is the average caseload for the providers requested in this solicitation? **Answer: District follows the State's and ASHA-AOTA-APTA guidance on workloads rather than caseloads.**
99. Can the district please clarify the maximum weekly allowable hours approved for providers requested in this solicitation? **Answer: The contracted employee is able to bill for up to 7.5 hours daily.**
100. Will the district accept contract exceptions? **Answer: The question is too general/broad for a clarifying response. Please be specific.**

101. Can the district please clarify the number of professional references needed in this proposal? **Answer: At least three (3) professional and recent references from its customers.**
102. Can the district clarify if rates are needed in the proposal, or will be proposed at a later date? **Answer: No. This is a Request for Qualification. Price will not be evaluated.**
103. Will you be awarding contracts to more than one vendor? **Answer: MSCS reserves the right to award multiple respondents.**
104. Who are your current vendors? **Answer: Advance Therapy Services LLC, Grace Therapy Group LLC, All Ways Therapies LLC, EBS, EDU HealthCare, Functional Independence, Mid South Therapy Solutions LLC, Power of Words Therapy Services LLC, Speaking Life HealthCare, Stellar Therapy Services LLC, Synapse Speech-Language Pathology Group PLLC, The Stepping Stones Group LLC, Therapeutic Focus, and DeafConnect**
105. How many full-time equivalent hours of services did you use for each discipline for the previous school year? **Answer: This information is not available at this time.**
106. What is the current rate you are paying for each discipline? **Answer: Currently we are paying \$60.00 per hour and higher.**
107. What is the expected number of full-time contractors that will be needed for this contract in the 2024-25 school year? **Answer: This will depend on the number of students enrolled with IEP services.**
108. Has the District's current vendor(s) been successful in filling all open positions? **Answer: No, our current vendors have not been able to successfully fill all needs.**
109. Will the District consider utilizing teletherapy when a face-to-face therapist is not available? **Answer: Yes, the District will consider utilizing teletherapy.**
110. What is the starting date for the intended services? **Answer: Services will be needed as soon as Board approval is received.**
111. Is there a missing rate form to complete or missing rate information for this RFQ? **Answer: No. This is a Request for Qualification. Pricing will not be evaluated.**
112. What is the anticipated need, per service provider discipline, for the upcoming school year? **Answer: This will depend on the number of students enrolled with IEP services.**