

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Communication and Access Language Services

TAKE NOTICE that, in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4, 34.5 and 34.6, the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) hereby announces the availability of the grant program funds described herein.

Program Name: Communication and Access Language Services

Purpose: This Request for Letters of Interest (RLI) is issued by the New Jersey Department Human Services (DHS), Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) to provide grant funding to New Jersey counties to promote communication and language access for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind residents of all ages. This Request for Letters of Interest (this RLI) seeks to assist counties in providing communication and language access to their residents by providing funding for the following initiatives:

- Installation of hearing induction loops.,
https://www.hearingloss.org/wp-content/uploads/HearingLoopSystems_AGuidetoBestPracticeforServiceProviders.pdf
- Installation of public videophones and associated connectivity costs.
- Expanding access to sign language interpreter services.
<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/caption/>
- Expanding access to captioning services.
<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/assets/documents/CartList.pdf>
- Development and/or provision of community/educational/or healthcare-related programming or services accessible in American Sign Language (ASL).

This is a second-round grant. Only counties that were not awarded funding in the first-round are eligible to apply. Interested counties must submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) that details which entities/areas in their respective counties will be recipients of the funding and for which purpose according to the initiatives listed above. Selected awardees will be fully responsible for coordinating and distributing grant funds awarded through this

RLI as designated in their LOI.

Funds for interpreter and captioning services will prioritize innovative pilot programs with a goal of self-sustainability after expiration of the grant and respondents that show hardship in meeting American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for communication and language access. Potential areas to consider for the funding opportunities are county libraries, local community centers, independent living centers, community theatres, airports, non-profit organizations focused on health equity, county jails, municipal and county government agencies, parent-run organizations/groups and county courthouses. Counties are encouraged to consider multiple initiatives (for example, the county library may be interested in installing a public videophone, hearing induction loop, and in developing programs accessible in ASL; the county jail may only need a public videophone for sign language users who are incarcerated to make a telephone call; parent-run/local community organizations may need expansion of interpreter services). Funds for development of programming, services, or content accessible in ASL can be for either children or adults who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind.

Available Funding Amount: This is a second-round grant. Only counties that were not awarded funding in the first-round are eligible to apply. Total funding available through this RLI is \$600,000. Counties could potentially receive a maximum award of up to \$70,000. DHS has sole discretion on the final award amount(s). Amount of award will vary according to each county's proposed needs. All respondents are advised that the award(s) may be conditional upon final contract and budget negotiation.

Who Can Apply/Bidder Qualifications: To be eligible for consideration for this RLI, the bidder must satisfy the following requirements:

- Respondents must be a county government agency in New Jersey and LOIs can be submitted on behalf of the County Human Service Director, County Executive, County Commissioner, or other relevant position.
- All respondents must discuss and get input from the entities within their County on what areas they can provide communication and language access to deaf and hard of hearing residents.
- All successful awardees will be required to submit a quarterly progress report to DDHH.
- Successful awardees will be required to undergo the Division's deaf and hard of hearing sensitivity training prior to receiving funding.
- Successful awardees will be required to post public signage where hearing induction loops have been installed and/or where sign language interpreting and captioning services are available.
- Successful awardees will be required to organize at least one public relations effort, ex: ribbon cutting ceremony to showcase the product and/or press release recognizing DDHH's funding for this effort and its availability to New Jersey residents.
- Products and promotional materials arising from this funding will be required to

include DDHH logo, examples including but not limited to brochures, flyers, and signage for loops and sign language interpreting and captioning services.

- Sign language interpreters and captionists must be retained through DDHH's online directory. <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/services/caption/>
- By receiving grant funds awardees agree to have their efforts published.
- Successful awardees must get DDHH approval in selecting vendors to provide services. Vendors should have primary experience providing ASL and deaf and hard of hearing services.

Proposal Procedure: Effective January 11, 2024, the Request for Letters of Interest (RLI) is available at <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/providers/grants/>. A proposal must be submitted that comports with the RLI requirements and instructions.

Proposal Receiving Office: The LOIs should be combined into a single PDF document. Respondents should email the combined single PDF document to melissa.spirito@dhs.nj.gov no later than **5:00 pm EST on February 23, 2024**.

Sarah Adelman, Commissioner

Date