



**HOUSTON**  
HOUSING AUTHORITY

Transforming Lives & Communities

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The Houston Housing Authority ("HHA"), has issued this Amendment No. 4 to RFP 22-35 Call Center for the purposes of answering the following question that was submitted to "HHA" by the published due date:

**Question 1:** Will the solicitor provide the HHA Policies along with the HUD regulations during this bid process to assure there is no misinterpretations of said policies and regulations?

**Answer 1:** Not during the bid process, but can be provided to winning contractor.

**Question 2:** Will solicitor provide/or recommend training program for staff prior to startup?

**Answer 2:** Winning contractor will have to arrange their own training with Elite Software.

**Question 3:** Page 44, Item 11 – References using the HHA's IT software for processing transactions. Can the HHA please give examples of the types of transactions that will be required?

**Answer 3:** The "transactions" that would be required are placing accurate notes in the Elite System, there are no financial "transactions" that take place.

**Question 4:** Are these financial in nature?

**Answer 4:** No.

**Question 5:** Page 45, Item 28 – How does the current contractor for this call center handle hearing impaired clients?

**Answer 5:** We utilize MasterWord for hearing impaired callers, if required.

**Question 6:** Does the HHA have a translator service that can be used by the winning bidder?

**Answer 6:** Yes, we utilize MasterWord

**Question 7:** Page 6, 8.3.4.3 requests demonstrated successful past performance of proposed team and committed personnel as it relates to the ability to perform in compliance with all applicable contractual requirements in the area of HVC and Public Housing. Must the proposed offeror have past experience with HVC and Public Housing or will demonstrated past performance in any call center setting meet the requirement and be acceptable?

**Answer 7:** Past experience with HVC and Public Housing is not required.

**Question 8:** Page 6, 8.3.4.5 requests demonstrated past experience working with targeted population described in this solicitation. Is this a requirement for the offeror, or will demonstrated past experience for other call center operations meet the requirement and be acceptable?

**Answer 8:** Past experience is not required.

**Question 9:** Is there a living wage requirement for customer service representatives for this contract?

**Answer 9:** Wages should be per local, state and federal guidelines based on the location of the call center. HHA will not dictate what the selected contract pays their employees.

**Question 10:** If so, can you please provide the current rate?

**Answer 10:** Not Applicable.

**Question 11:** What is the current hourly rate for the existing four customer service representatives?

**Answer 11:** HHA cannot provide this information.

**Question 12:** What is the expected number of customer service representatives that you require to meet your expectations?

**Answer 12:** HHA is not going to dictate the number of representatives that the selected contractor has available, but you should consider the average number of calls per day, the benchmarks for hold time and the average handle time to figure out the number of representatives required.

**Question 13:** Can the current customer service representatives be hired by the awarded contractor?

**Answer 13:** Yes.

**Question 14:** If awarded and select the primary option one for staffing, is the expectation that our staff consists of 100% HHA customers?

**Answer 14:** No.

**Question 15:** If not is there an expected percentage?

**Answer 15:** No.

**Question 16:** Will the Government please clarify if this software used by HHA to record notes is the Emphasys Elite System?

**Answer 16:** It is Emphasys ELITE.

**Question 17:** Will the Government please clarify what functionality they are expecting for the IVR since the desire is for each call to be answered by a live person?

**Answer 17:** We are open to discussion with the awarded contractor as to the complete functionality of the IVR.

**Question 18:** Will the Government please clarify that they only want an IVR to answer calls after hours and what functionality they want for the IVR during after-hours time?

**Answer 18:** See answer to number 17.

**Question 19:** Does the Emphasys Elite System do ticket tracking?

**Answer 19:** No.

**Question 20:** Can the Government please provide their current call transfer process?

**Answer 20:** The awarded contractor is expected to submit a call center policy and procedure for review and approval, which would include this process.

**Question 21:** Will the Government please provide their desired target call abandonment rate?

**Answer 21:** Between 5% and 8%.

**Question 22:** Will the Government please provide their target desired average speed of answer?

**Answer 22:** Within 5 rings.

**Question 23:** Will the Government please confirm that the average call handle time is 10 minutes?

**Answer 23:** Our average call handle time is 3 minutes.

**Question 24:** Will the Government please provide their desired target call handle time?

**Answer 24:** Less than 5 minutes.

**Question 25:** Will the Government please confirm that they do not want a voicemail functionality for after-hours calls?

**Answer 25:** No voicemail, if the IVR cannot handle the callers inquiry, they should be instructed to call back during normal operating hours.

**Question 26:** Q&A #5 says that all calls should be answered by a live person, which would eliminate the need for an IVR during work hours, yet in Q&A #25, the answer suggests that calls can be answered by an IVR during work hours. Will the Government please clarify whether or not they want an IVR during work hours or only for after hours?

**Answer 26:** See answer to number 17.

**Question 27:** Does the Government have a list of "simple questions" or "frequently asked questions" for which the IVR can help answer? If so, can you please provide?

**Answer 27:** This would need to be discussed with the winning contractor.

**Question 28:** Will the Government please provide an estimated award date?

**Answer 28:** October or November.

**Question 29:** Will the Government please clarify their desired transition in time (30-, 60-, 90-days before Go Live)?

**Answer 29:** Target is January 2023.

**Question 30:** Given the Governments desire to go live in January 2023, Will the Government please clarify how the holiday season factor into the transition time?

**Answer 30:** Actual time frame will need to be discussed with winning contractor.

**Question 31:** Will the Government please clarify if the desired go live date is January 1, 2023 or January 30, 2023?

**Answer 31:** See answer to number 30.

**Question 32:** Will the Government please provide how long it currently take them to train any new agents they hire?

**Answer 32:** 3 weeks instructional and 1-week hands on.

**Question 33:** Does the Government have any existing training materials or content or will contractors need to create content and/or materials from scratch?

**Answer 33:** We do have an internally created manual that could be provided for Elite.

**Question 34:** Does the Government desire to keep their existing call center representatives and have them transfer over to the contractor?

**Answer 34:** We would like to keep our reps as the next “escalation” level or subject matter experts; however, if they wish to work for the contractor, we will not deny them that opportunity.

**Question 35:** Will the Government please clarify and/or provide HUD's requirements for recording and storage?

**Answer 35:** 3 years, but this is subject to change, based on government and agency requirements.

**Question 36:** Does Emphasys Elite have a knowledgebase function?

**Answer 36:** No.

**Question 37:** Does Emphasys Elite already have HUD regulations built into it?

**Answer 37:** No.

**Question 38:** Can the Government clarify the number of seats, operators, and supervisors they desire under this contract?

**Answer 38:** Refer to answer number 12.

**Question 39:** Can the Government clarify if a 5 hour wait time is acceptable?

**Answer 39:** No, it is not.

**Question 40:** If not, please provide the desired average wait time?

**Answer 40:** 2 minutes is the desired wait time.

**Question 41:** Will the Government please provide their attrition rating?

**Answer 41:** No.

**Question 42:** Will the Government please clarify what information will be tracked in the CRM?

**Answer 42:** This will need to be discussed with awarded contractor.

**Question 43:** Will the Government please clarify that this scope of work does not include any outbound calls?

**Answer 43:** It does include outbound calls if requested by the client.

**Question 44:** Will the Government provide more information on their existing quality scorecard?

**Answer 44:** See attached "Point of Service QC" document.

**Question 45:** Does the Government have any desired quality metrics? If so, please provide them.

**Answer 45:** Representatives must have an 80% or higher quality check on their calls. 10 calls per month are reviewed for each representative. 80% average on all calls combined.

**Question 46:** Will the Government please provide more detail on the type or level of background checks that they will require?

**Answer 46:** This will be up to the winning contractor; however, they should be capable of handling sensitive information.

**Question 47:** Will the Government please clarify if these call volumes include abandoned calls?

**Answer 47:** No, only the calls that reach the queue.

**Question 48:** Will the Government please clarify if these call volumes only include calls answered?

**Answer 48:** Yes.

**Question 49:** Will the Government please clarify if these call volumes include repeat callers?

**Answer 49:** Yes.

**Question 50:** Answer 18 in Q&A says 41 is the average...is that a percentage of overall calls abandoned, or average calls abandoned per day, week, or month?

**Answer 50:** Per month. This was for the month of August 2022.

**Question 51:** Unless you provide some desired Service Level metrics, you will get varying quotes from Vendors as they will use different standards of performance. Can you provide any ranges for the following?

- a. Average Speed of Answer 5 minutes or less
- b. Average Handling Time 6 minutes or less
- c. Calls Abandoned Percentage/Rate
- d. 90% of calls answered within 5 minutes
- e. 3-minute hold times

**Answer 51:** Calls answered within 5 rings, handle time should be within 10 minutes, less than 10% abandon rate, 90% of calls on hold answered within 2 minutes, no more than 2-minute hold time.

**Question 52:** A question was asked how long training would be. How long does it currently take to train an internal employee to be proficient with these types of calls so we can determine accurate training cost for time needed in our pricing?

**Answer 52:** See answer number 32.

**Question 53:** There may be some conflicting Information in Q&A, you've stated your system of record is Emphasys Elite (Public Housing Authority Software). Would we be given access to utilize this? Standard operations are to use your existing system to document and notate accounts for service efficiency.

**Answer 53:** Yes, you will be given access to Emphasys Elite.

**Question 54:** It's our understanding that HHA has reduced the queue capacity to only hold 300 calls. Will the capacity return to normal with the new provider coming onboard and would you anticipate a change to the 25,000-30,000 expected monthly call volume?

**Answer 54:** Yes, it will change to the normal call volume.

**Question 55:** In the call volume chart provided in your response to Question #123 provided in Amendment No. 2, there are two months where call volume exceeded 55,000 calls (well above the 25-30,000 avg call volume). Can you share what the call driver(s) were for those increases?

**Answer 55:** Call volumes may increase based on weather conditions the previous day or on the day after a holiday.

**Question 56:** In your response to Question #5 provided in Amendment No. 2, its stated that "we want all calls to be answered by a live agent.". Can IVR be used to route incoming calls to skill-based/language-based queues (English/Spanish) in order to connect them to the appropriate live agent?

**Answer 56:** Yes.

**Question 57:** Why has this bid been released this time?

**Answer 57:** HHA has decided to outsource the service.

**Question 58:** Can you describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable?

**Answer 58:** Not applicable.

**Question 59:** Are there any specific business needs for HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY that are not currently being met by the call center?

**Answer 59:** No.

**Question 60:** Is the current scope expanding from that of the incumbents?

**Answer 60:** No.

**Question 61:** If this is a term contract subject to renewal, what is the term and the maximum number of option periods?

**Answer 61:** See Section 3.0 of the solicitation.

**Question 62:** Has the current contract gone full term?

**Answer 62:** There is not an incumbent.

**Question 63:** Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised?

**Answer 63:** Not applicable.

**Question 64:** Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested?

**Answer 64:** See Answer 62.

**Question 65:** How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates?

**Answer 65:** Not applicable.

**Question 66:** What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?

**Answer 66:** Not Applicable.

**Question 67:** Can you provide a complete list of the means of inbound and outbound communication the call center must accommodate?

**Answer 67:** Phone.

**Question 68:** Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?

**Answer 68:** No.

**Question 69:** What is the minimum required total call capacity?

**Answer 69:** Please provide a recommendation as part of your submittal.

**Question 70:** What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity?

**Answer 70:** Please provide a recommendation as part of your submittal.

**Question 71:** What is the maximum wait time?

**Answer 71:** Wait times should not exceed two minutes.

**Question 72:** What is the maximum hold time?

**Answer 72:** 2 minutes.

**Question 73:** What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator?

**Answer 73:** 0%.

**Question 74:** What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or return call?

**Answer 74:** 90%.

**Question 75:** What is the maximum percentage of calls that can be terminated by the caller without resolution?

**Answer 75:** Less than 10%.

**Question 76:** Is there a minimum or a maximum number of operators and supervisors?

**Answer 76:** See answer number 12.

**Question 77:** What are the call center's hours of operation?

**Answer 77:** 8am to 6pm Monday thru Friday

**Question 78:** What are the required language options?

**Answer 78:** English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

**Question 79:** What is the required degree of dedication for the call center?

**Answer 79:** The facility itself does not need to be dedicated to HHA.

**Question 80:** What is the required degree of dedication for the operators?

**Answer 80:** Based on HHA's call volume, the operators should be 100% dedicated to HHA.

**Question 81:** Are call Housing Authority required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?

**Answer 81:** They can connect to IVR system, if all operators are busy, the message should state that they are being placed in the queue.

**Question 82:** What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained?

**Answer 82:** The recording should start from the moment the operator answers the line to the moment the call is disconnected. Retention will be per local, state and federal guidelines, local and state being Houston, Texas.

**Question 83:** What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications?

**Answer 83:** Retention will be per local, state and federal guidelines, local and state being Houston, Texas.

**Question 84:** What information is to be included in call logs?

**Answer 84:** Notes should be recorded in Emphasys as to the caller's request and the information provided as a record of the call. A separate call log, that can be consolidated by all operators, should be submitted monthly as a back-up in the event that there is a system failure. This should also show how long a caller was on hold and how long it took for the operator to resolve the issue, and how the call was terminated. This can be used as support for item 33 under scope of work.

**Question 85:** What was your average monthly call volume over the past year?

**Answer 85:** 25,500 per month

**Question 86:** What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center?

**Answer 86:** 13 seats and 2 supervisors.

**Question 87:** What is the current average wait time for phone calls?

**Answer 87:** The average wait time for August was 7.5 hours.

**Question 88:** What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications?

**Answer 88:** 6 minutes.

**Question 89:** What is the current average after-call work time for operators?

**Answer 89:** 2 minutes.

**Question 90:** What is the current average after-call work time for operators?

**Answer 90:** 2 minutes.

**Question 91:** Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish?

**Answer 91:** Less than 3%.

**Question 92:** What time of day, days of the week or times of the year do calls typically peak?

**Answer 92:** Mondays and the day after a holiday.

**Question 93:** Will you consider extending the due date for this proposal to allow sufficient time to respond to the responses to vendor questions?

**Answer 93:** HHA cannot extend the due date any further.

**Question 94:** What is the call flow?

**Answer 94:** The current flow is the IVR answers the call, the next available operator answers the call per the queue, operator works with the client to resolve the issue, the call is terminated at resolution, operator has two minutes to complete notes in Emphasys.

**Question 95:** Will calls go to the HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY internal call center first, then be routed to the provider's call center?

**Answer 95:** No.

**Question 96:** Will there be an IVR prompt that sends calls to the Provider's call center as appropriate?

**Answer 96:** Calls should go directly to the contractors call center.

**Question 97:** Is the toll-free number an existing toll-free number used today? Does the Provider need to provide a separate toll-free number?

**Answer 97:** We do not currently have a toll-free number; however, that can be discussed with the winning contractor.

**Question 98:** Does the cloud contact center software include a case management system?

**Answer 98:** No.

**Question 99:** If not, will the case management system be required from the provider?

**Answer 99:** Not applicable.

**Question 100:** When outbound calling is required, is that performed through the Houston Housing Authority, or would it be through the contractor's dialer software?

**Answer 100:** If you are utilizing a call back system, then it would be the contractor's software. If you are transferring a call to an HHA representative due to escalation, we will discuss this capability with the winning contractor.

**Question 101:** Of the volumes provided, is the Respondent expected to handle all volumes or only a percentage of each tier as overflow?

**Answer 101:** All volumes.

**Question 102:** If percentage, what percentage of Tier 1 and Tier 2 should Respondent assume own Houston Housing Authority help?

**Answer 102:** N/A

**Question 103:** Would the Respondent provide a CRM database?

**Answer 103:** HHA does not have a CRM database, the winning contractor would have access to the Elite system, which contains client files and notes, but does not necessarily record all interaction.

**Question 104:** Please confirm any system uptime will not be impacted by systems outside of the respondent's control.

**Answer 104:** Please refer to Exhibit C Draft Contract Section 23.18.

**Question 105:** For documentation of the HIPAA training, what sort of documentation will satisfy this requirement?

**Answer 105:** Not applicable.

**Question 106:** Is there more detailed volume data available that shows incoming call volume by week, day, or interval?

**Answer 106:** No.

All other terms and conditions in the solicitation shall remain the same.

*Austin Crotts* 9-15-2022  
**Austin Y. Crotts MA**  
**Interim Procurement Manager,**  
**Houston Housing Authority**



*A Fair Housing and Equal Employment Opportunity Agency. For assistance: Individuals with disabilities may contact the 504/ADA Administrator at 713-260-0353, TTY 713-260-0547 or [504ADA@housingforhouston.com](mailto:504ADA@housingforhouston.com)*



**Point of Service QC**

CSR Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's Name / Reason for Call \_\_\_\_\_ Not on WL \_\_\_\_\_

Caller's Name / SS#/Client ID \_\_\_\_\_

Quality Assurance Monitor \_\_\_\_\_ POS Score 98

<b>CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	Points	Actual
Utilized required greeting	2	
Requested HOH / LL Social Security or Client ID Number and verified name	4	
Verified Email and Phone Number	10	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>16</b>	

<b>PROFESSIONALISM</b>	Points	Actual
Uses caller's name	4	
Displayed customer focus	5	
Demonstrates enthusiasm and positive attitude	5	
Uses proper phone hold / mute procedure	5	
Shows empathy / apologizes for any inconvenience	6	
Maintains positive alert tone	6	
Uses proper grammar and clear, concise terms – verbal and written communication	4	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>35</b>	

<b>ACCURACY</b>	Points	Actual
Utilizes HCVP, Public Housing and Call Center Standard Operating Procedures	6	
Utilizes First Call Resolution	6	
Identifies and utilizes correct course of action, clearly explain the process and or next steps	6	
Properly updates phone numbers, email and documents client's inquiries accurately in Elite System	15	
Gathers appropriate information & probes effectively	6	
Properly refers participant / caller to appropriate internal / external resources resolution	6	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>45</b>	

<b>CLOSING</b>	Points	Actual
Summarized issues discussed and provided correct timeline	2	
Utilized required closing	2	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4</b>	

<b>Bonus</b>	Points	Actual
For "Going above and Beyond"	5	

**Overall**



**STRENGTHS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**I have reviewed the POS with my Supervisor and understand my strengths and opportunities for improvements.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature – Customer Service Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature – Supervisor**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Today's Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Today's Date**

When Applicable Use the Next Page



Customer Service Quality Assurance Incident Report

CSR Name:	Client Name:
Date:	Address:
	EID:

1. Failed to follow Customer Service or HCVP Policy
2. Failed to follow First Call Resolution
3. Failed to clearly explain the process and or next steps to Tenant or Owner (LL)
4. Failed to provide correct information
5. Failed to enter notes in Elite
6. Elite notes were unclear or pertinent information was missing
7. Email was incomplete, unclear or pertinent information was missing
8. Failed to utilize Customer Service Escalation Process
9. Perception complaint by client regarding CSR professional behavior as unfavorable ( i.e. rude)
10. (Lobby staff) Failed to adequately review RFTA packet before accepting and issuing a receipt

11. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Previous Quality Assurance Incidents:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor / Manager Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Customer Service Representative Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CSR signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor / Manager Signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_