Department of Retirement Systems
RFP 26-07 Court Reporting Services
Questions and Answers

1. Who is the incumbent?
   Answer: Buell Realtime Reporting

2. What is the contract number?
   Answer: 24-06

3. What is the contract value?
   Answer: $30,000

4. Attachment A has no line items. May bidders define their own fee types (for example, appearance fee, per-page transcript rates, per-audio-hour transcription)? Or will DRS issue a revised fee schedule with set line items?
   Answer: DRS has issued an updated fee schedule with our required fees.

5. §3.8 says the cost score is calculated "for each Part of the scope of services." What are the Parts? With several line items and no quantities, how will the "lowest ÷ bidder" formula be applied? Will DRS use estimated volumes or weights?
   Answer: Section 1.6 provides the general anticipated scope for court reporting services that are included in the updated fee schedule.
   Within the updated fee schedule, we will sum to the total of each section to come up with a total figure. We will then apply the calculation of dividing the lowest proposed total cost proposal divided by the current proposal x 15 (total points for cost).

6. The column header says "Per Hour," and contract Exhibit B pays by the hour per "Contractor Resource Name." Transcripts are customarily priced per page. May transcripts be priced per page, with separate rates for the original, copies, and expedited delivery?
   Answer: Exhibit B in the Sample Contract will be updated to reflect the current pricing model determined by the winning bid. DRS has updated the fee schedule to include specified fees.

7. Attachment A requires an all-inclusive rate that includes travel. Contract Exhibit B says DRS will reimburse pre-approved travel at state rates. Which governs?
   Answer: DRS has amended Attachment A to remove travel from the all-inclusive rate. The awarded firm will be subject to state laws in regard to travel, which requires travel to be pre-approved and will be reimbursed at the state travel rates.

8. Attachment C Q14–15 asks about minimum booking fees and cancellation policies, but Attachment A says, "No additional charges will be paid." May bidders propose minimum

appearance fees (half-day or full-day), late-cancellation fees, and after-hours or overtime rates?
Answer: DRS has updated the fee proposal to include our required fees; there is also a section to provide additional services/fees. No additional charges is part of the definition of an all-inclusive fee within Attachment A. This is speaking to no additional charges beyond what is included in the all-inclusive fee.

9. RFP §3.22 requires CGL of $1M per occurrence. Contract Exhibit C requires CGL of $2M/$4M, E&O of $5M/$10M, Cyber of $5M, Crime of $1M, and Stop Gap coverage. Which limits apply? Given 5–10 proceedings a year, will DRS consider lower E&O and Cyber limits?
Answer: DRS is open to negotiations, please provide this request in your contract exceptions list.

10. Attachment C – Technical question 5 is blank. Is a question missing? If so, please provide it. If not, should we keep the original numbering?
Answer: This was an error; DRS has amended Attachment C, Technical Proposal to reflect the correct numbering and updated list of questions for that section in Amendment 1.

Technical Proposal (45 points of the total score)

1. Can you manage a hybrid hearing where some are in person, and some would appear remotely using Zoom? ~~How do you handle real-time reporting and what software do you use?~~
2. What is your process for unclear audio or overlapping speech?
~~3. What technology supports the deposition (in house videographers, remote setup)?~~
3. How do your reporters participate in remote proceedings via Zoom or another web-based service, including how you handle dropped connections or technical failures?
4. What is your accuracy rate on read-backs and how do you verify technical terms?
5. How do you handle errata and corrections? Are errata free of charge?
6. What is your contingency plan if a session runs long or spans multiple days?
7. What are your conflict of interest policies and booking lead times?
8. What are your data security protocols for sealed exhibits, confidential information, and audio recordings or transcripts?
9. Do you have a clear conflict of interest policy and reference list for your booking confirmation?
10. How many hours per week do employee's typically transcribe and what is the average turnaround time?
11. How do you handle proofreading, editing, and quality control?
12. Is there a minimum fee for booking a court reporter, or are charges based solely on the services and time required?
13. What are your cancellation policies?
14. Please verify that you can provide court reporting services statewide where in-person reporting services are required. If you are unable to provide statewide coverage, please indicate which counties you are unable to support.

11. §3.4 – This section says the proposal has “five major sections” but lists only four. Is a section missing?
    Answer: This was an oversight; there are four major sections. DRS has amended Section 3.4 to reflect the change in Amendment 1.

12. §2.13 cites POL DES 090-06, which requires awarding contracts of $150,000 or less to the highest-ranked responsive small or veteran-owned business. What is the estimated contract value? Will this rule apply?
    Answer: DRS has estimated that the contract value for this RFP will be below $150,000. DRS will comply with DES policy 090-06.

13. The security requirements state that DRS data cannot be stored on laptops or other portable devices. Since court reporters use laptops, CAT software, steno equipment, and audio backup devices as part of the normal reporting process, can you clarify how this requirement applies to that equipment?
    Answer: DRS is open to discussions in regard to how and where data is stored. Please add this to your list of contract exceptions.

14. Are expedited, daily or real-time transcripts ever required? If so, should those rates be included?
    Answer: Daily or real-time transcripts are not required. Expedited transcripts of recorded proceedings may be required in very limited circumstances. Real-time is not presently used but court reporters may be asked to read back the last question or answer for clarity. In the last three years, expedited transcripts were not requested. Rates for expedited transcripts, if available, are requested.

15. For each of the last three years, please give: the number of proceedings reported live; their average length in hours or days; how many were in person vs. remote; and the average transcript length in pages.
    Answer: The Appeals Unit conducts hearings in response to appeals filed by members or employers. The Appeals Unit does not track proceedings by calendar year. Accordingly, the information provided in response to this question reflects the total proceedings between January 2023 through October 2026.

    There were approximately 12 appeals requiring live court reporter services. Ten of 12 appeals were managed through remote appearances only. Two of the appeals were conducted in a hybrid format, which required the use of an in person court reporter. The twelve proceedings were between 30 and 240 minutes in length with the average being between 60-75 minutes in length. Transcripts varied in length from approximately 30-120 pages. The average transcript length was between 40-60 pages.

Whether an appeal is conducted in person largely depends on the preferences of the parties. The Appeals Unit cautions that past proceedings are not a reliable indicator of whether future proceedings will be remote, hybrid, or in person.

16. How many recorded proceedings were sent out for transcription each year, and what was their total audio length?
    Answer: Between January 2023 through October 2026, the Appeals Unit had approximately six recorded proceedings sent out for transcription. The total audio length for these six requests was approximately 140 minutes.

17. Do other parties (members, retirees, employers, attorneys) order copies?
    Answer: Other parties of record are permitted to order copies. The Appeals Unit is not involved with other parties ordering a copy of transcripts.

18. Attachment C asks about real-time reporting, videographers and depositions. Are real-time, video, rough drafts or depositions actually in scope?
    Answer: We have modified that particular question in Amendment 1. Please review to see the updated question. The Appeals Unit conducts pre-hearing conferences, oral arguments, and hearings. The Appeals Unit frequently conducts hybrid proceedings where both remote and in-person appearances are possible for the same proceeding (for example, some witnesses may appear remotely). The Appeals Unit seeks to understand whether a firm can manage a hybrid format and what, if any, technology supports hybrid or remote only proceedings. For example, the Appeals Unit routinely supports remote/hybrid appearances through MS Teams or Zoom.

19. §1.3 cites RCW 18.145.080. Is the requirement met by the firm, by each reporter, or both?
    Answer: Each reporter providing services to the Appeals Unit must be certified in Washington State, as required by Chapter 18.145 RCW. The Washington State Department of Licensing, not DRS, manages court reporter licensing. The Appeals Unit cannot accept the services of court reporters who are not licensed in accordance with Washington State law.

20. Are certifications from national organizations(e.g. AAERT, NRCA) acceptable?
    Answer: All reporters providing services to the Appeals Unit must be certified in Washington State as required by Chapter 18.145 RCW. The Washington State Department of Licensing, not DRS, manages court reporter licensing. The Appeals Unit cannot accept the services of court reporters who are not licensed in accordance with Washington State law.

21. Please clarify if there are individual certification requirements for court reporters assigned under the contract besides the company being authorized to work in Washington.

Answer: Each reporter providing services to the Appeals Unit must be certified in Washington State, as required by Chapter 18.145 RCW. The Washington State Department of Licensing, not DRS, manages court reporter licensing. The Appeals Unit cannot accept the services of court reporters who are not licensed in accordance with Washington State law.

22. How many reporter appearances, transcript pages, and recorded transcription requests did DRS have in each of the most recent three years?
    Answer: The Appeals Unit does not track proceedings by calendar year. Accordingly, the information provided in response to this question reflects the total proceedings between January 2023 through October 2026. There were approximately 12 appeals requiring live court reporter services. Ten of 12 appeals were managed through remote appearances only. Two of the appeals were conducted in a hybrid format, which required the use of an in person court reporter. The twelve proceedings were between 30 and 240 minutes in length with the average being between 60-75 minutes in length. Transcripts varied in length from approximately 30-120 pages. The average transcript length was between 40-60 pages.

    Between January 2023 through October 2026, the Appeals Unit also had approximately six recorded proceedings sent out for transcription. The total audio length for these six requests was approximately 140 minutes.

    Whether an appeal is conducted in person largely depends on the preferences of the parties. The Appeals Unit cautions that past proceedings are not a reliable indicator of whether future proceedings will be remote, hybrid, or in person.

23. What is the typical duration of a DRS hearing, pre-hearing conference, or oral argument?
    Answer: Pre-hearing conferences and oral arguments typically last between 30-60 minutes. Court reporters are rarely requested for either. A hearing can last between one to three full days (seven hours/day). Most hearings last one full day (seven hours). Court reporters are always requested for a hearing.

24. Is a transcript always ordered if a court reporter is present?
    Answer: Yes. A court reporter is required for all hearings, and a transcript is ordered.

25. Can other parties order a copy of the transcript?
    Answer: Yes, other parties of record are permitted to order copies. The Appeals Unit is not involved with other parties ordering a copy of transcripts.

26. Of the proceedings requiring a court reporter during the past three years, approximately what percentage were conducted in person?
    Answer: About 20% of the proceedings requiring a court reporter were conducted in person. Whether an appeal is conducted in person largely depends on the preferences of

the parties. The Appeals Unit cautions that past proceedings are not a reliable indicator of whether future proceedings will be remote, hybrid, or in person.

27. What is the typical advance notice provided when scheduling?
    Answer: The Appeals Unit requests court reporters at the time a hearing is scheduled. Generally, notice is provided at least three months in advance of a hearing. Rarely, a court reporter may be requested for a pre-hearing conference or oral argument. In the event a court reporter is required for a proceeding that is not a hearing, requests are made at least three weeks in advance.

28. Does DRS consider individual independent court reporters assigned by a court reporting firm to be "Subcontractors" for purposes of the Access Equity reporting?
    Answer: If the independent court reporter is one of your subcontractors, yes.

29. Looking at the rate sheet, should we provide separate hourly rates for reporter attendance, transcript production, and transcription from recordings, or would DRS prefer one hourly rate that covers all services?
    Answer: The Appeals Unit expects to see a variation of rates for services and not a flat fee.

30. Does DRS anticipate awarding this contract to one court reporting firm or multiple firms?
    Answer: DRS anticipates awarding the contract to one court reporting firm.

31. Are submitted hourly rates fixed through December 30, 2029, and, if the contract is extended, may rates be adjusted for an extension period?
    Answer: Yes, hourly rates are fixed through 2029.If the contract is extended, DRS would consider updated pricing.

32. The estimated contract value is listed as $150,000. Is that amount for the full contract term through 2029, or is it an estimated annual value?
    Answer: Yes, the estimated value for the initial term of the contract (through 2029) will not exceed $150,000. This figure is unlikely to be reached during the contract term. In the last two years, the Appeals Unit spent a cumulative total of $10,000-$12,000 on court reporting services. While the Appeals Unit cannot forecast future appeal caseloads, the Appeals Unit does <u>not</u> anticipate a significant increase in its need for court reporter services.