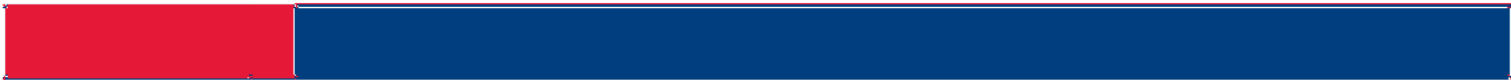




Family &  
Community  
Services

# Guidelines for Recontracting Homelessness Services (2017-2020)

These Guidelines have been developed to support Districts lead the recontracting of homelessness services



# Document approval

These Guidelines have been endorsed and approved by:

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Mychelle Curran  
Executive Director  
Community, Homes and Place  
Approved: <insert date here>

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Recontracting Homelessness Services Guidelines

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# 1 Purpose of Guidelines

## 1.1 Purpose

These Guidelines have been designed to provide guidance to Districts in relation to the recontracting of homelessness services from July 2017 to June 2020.

They aim to ensure that the recontracting process is undertaken transparently and consistently across Districts and in alignment with FACS corporate objectives and broader strategic directions.

These Guidelines have been developed in consultation with Service System Commissioning and representatives from FACS Districts.

Members of the Recontracting Homelessness Services Working Group have also provided input and advice on the development of these Guidelines.

The following documents are linked to these Guidelines:

- FACS Contract Governance Guidelines
- SHS Practice Guidelines
- Joint Working Agreement (JWA) Guidelines
- Quality Assurance System (QAS) Guidance Note

## 2 Context

### 2.1 Background

In November 2015, the Minister for Family and Community Services (FACS) announced the extension of contracts for homelessness services to 2020.

The decision to recontract services seeks to increase stability in the sector and to strengthen existing JWAs. As such, the recontracting process provides an opportunity to:

- Update program-level documentation to better reflect the strategic context in which services are delivered; and
- Strengthen aspects of service delivery, where there is consensus to do so.

## 3 Acronyms

The table below is a list of terms, key words and/or abbreviations used throughout this document.

Term	Definition
PLA	Program Level Agreement
SPD	Service Package Description
SDS	Service Delivery Schedule
CIMS	Client Information Management System
JWA	Joint Working Agreement
ERO	Equal Remuneration Order
CPI	Consumer Price Index

## 4 Scope and application

These Guidelines are to be used by FACS District staff with responsibilities for recontracting homelessness service providers.

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the FACS Contract Governance Framework and related Guidelines.

### 4.1 In Scope

The commitment to extend homelessness contracts to June 2020 will apply to services funded under the following programs:

- Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Program;
- Service Support Fund (SSF);
- Inner City Restoration Fund; and
- Two Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP) services funded ahead of the HYAP select tender process.

### 4.2 Out of Scope

The Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE) and youth crisis 24/7 accommodation funding will be funded until mid-2018 as per current contracts and any extension will be subject to funding availability.

HYAP Stage Two services are currently funded until June 2020 and are also out of scope for this process.

## 5 Objectives

Recontracting homelessness services until June 2020 aims to:

- Improve outcomes for clients.
- Provide increased stability to the homelessness sector through funding certainty.
- Allow service providers to consolidate and strengthen existing service models.
- Provide support for JWAs to be maintained and strengthened
- Acknowledge good practice in service delivery
- Streamline and improve quality assurance processes
- Increase the focus of contract management on client, system and community outcomes
- Develop contracting mechanisms that support best practice and innovation
- Increase value for money to NSW Government
- Further build the capacity and capability of the homelessness sector
- Reduce red tape for service providers

## 6 Assumptions

The process for extending homelessness contracts to June 2020 is based on the assumption that National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) funding will be extended. \$30m per annum is provided under the NPAH. Currently no certainty exists regarding its continuation, which may have implications on the broader system.

It is assumed that the current funding envelope will be maintained. The following is also assumed under the recontracting process:

- Program-level funding will be maintained, noting Consumer Price Index (CPI) and SACS ERO increases are expected.
- District-level funding will be maintained.
- Minimum annual client target numbers will be maintained. As part of this, the focus on early intervention will be maintained (e.g. client numbers for the 'staying home' portion of a service's case mix will be maintained).

- Joint Working Agreements (JWAs) will be maintained and, where required, strengthened. Resources have been made available to assist JWAs where required (e.g. JWA Guidelines, Industry Partnership projects etc.)
- For the purposes of recontracting, service providers will not be deemed as performing unsatisfactorily unless there is a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in place, the goals and objectives of this Plan are not being achieved, and the provider is not engaging with FACS.
- Co-contributions agreed through the 2014-2017 contract negotiations will remain in place.
- No additional funding will be made available for the recontracting of services.

## 7 Joint Working Agreements (JWAs)

Maintaining and strengthening existing Joint Working Agreements (JWAs) is a key objective of the recontracting process.

Support and advice for JWAs and sub-contracting arrangements is available under the SHS Industry Partnership and through FACS Service System Commissioning and Homelessness Branch. Contact details are listed under Section 16 – Support and Advice.

JWA Guidelines for Homelessness Services will be circulated with these guidelines as a separate document, together with a sample JWA template. The template has been developed as a guide document only, for providers who may benefit from a reference tool when setting up extension agreements or amendments. It is not a requirement of the recontracting process.

If a Lead Entity or District identifies aspects of a JWA or sub-contracting arrangement that could be strengthened, initial discussions will take place at the District level, before a proposal is submitted to Homelessness Branch.

Identified areas for strengthening could include increasing the representation of Aboriginal organisations in a JWA or creating stronger linkages with community housing providers.

Where significant concerns for the viability of JWAs have been identified, the relevant FACS District will work with the Lead Entity to aim to resolve the issue(s). This will include referring the organisation to available support. FACS will not consider any proposals that seek to alter or 'split' service packages.

There are significant risks associated with lead or collaborating entities proposing to change their JWA or subcontracting arrangements.

Should a Lead Entity propose changing their JWA or subcontracting arrangements, FACS will be required to consider whether the lead is able to demonstrate they are capable of delivering the services.

Where continuation of an existing relationship is deemed to be unviable or detrimental to clients, FACS Districts will liaise with Homelessness Branch to determine whether there is an evidence-based case for change.

District recommendations will be considered by Homelessness Branch on a case by case basis, in consultation with Service System Commissioning.

In line with ensuring consistency of processes across all Districts, approval of any changes to JWAs sits with FACS Homelessness Branch.

## 8 Updates to Program Level Agreements (PLAs)

Across FACS, significant reform and service improvement developments are underway that will shape and inform the way in which services are delivered from 2017 onwards.

As such, special conditions will be incorporated into the Program Level Agreement (PLA) to make clear the responsibilities of FACS and homelessness services.

Proposed draft special conditions are set out below. Please note that PLA conditions listed below are draft only at this stage, to be further refined as part of the recontracting process through consultation with associated program areas and FACS Legal.

### 8.1 NSW Government Human Services Agreement

NSW is working towards adoption of a single standard agreement suitable for both Government agencies and NGOs when contracting for most human services. During the period of contract extensions to 2020, it is expected that the Government Human Services Agreement will replace the Funding Deed currently in place with FACS service providers, including homelessness service providers.

<p><i>Proposed PLA Special Condition:</i> During the life of this contract the current Funding Deed may be replaced by the NSW Government Human Services Agreement, and the PLA with the Funding and Service Schedule. This will not impact on client targets, service, delivery, etc.</p>
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## 8.2 JWAs

In line with FACS' intent to strengthen JWAs as part of the recontracting process, a special condition will be inserted in PLAs clarifying the responsibility of lead entities to inform FACS of intended changes to agreed JWA arrangements. Clause 21.1 of the Funding Deed already stipulates that the service provider must receive written consent from FACS to enter into and change any subcontracting arrangements.

*Proposed PLA Special Condition:* The Lead Entity is responsible for informing FACS of any proposed change to a JWA arrangement negotiated in relation to this contract.

## 8.3 Strengthening the focus on client outcomes

FACS is committed to implementing outcome-based contracting progressively over time. However, it is recognised that few of the building blocks required for transitioning to outcomes-based contracting are currently in place. Work is underway to develop a long-term strategy for transitioning to this contracting approach. FACS will consult further with the sector in the coming months on outcomes-based contracting. The initial focus from 2017 will be on establishing agreed program-level outcomes, improving data collection and outcomes measurement and setting baselines. The following initiatives will guide and shape the strategy for outcomes-based contracting:

- **FACS Client Outcomes Framework** – a framework to enable the systematic tracking of client outcomes across services, sectors and Districts. Building a link between evidence, programs and performance, and effectiveness in influencing client outcomes, the framework enables measurement of client progress in seven key outcome domains important to wellbeing – safety, home, health, education, economic, social and community, and empowerment.
- **Homelessness Strategy** – FACS is developing a Homelessness Strategy in NSW focused on preventing homelessness. The strategy will look at setting a clear direction for both government and non government sectors, and better coordination and collaboration between sectors and services to deliver outcomes-focused services which intervene earlier to prevent homelessness.

*Proposed PLA Special Condition:* Over the course of the contracting period FACS intends to more closely link funding to client outcomes and for services to collaborate in this process.

## 8.4 Clarification of access to Client Information Management System (CIMS) data and data sharing

FACS is building its data capacity based on CIMS. To better reflect the NSW context and priorities and to better support future monitoring and reporting on

client outcomes, PLAs will set out data requirements for providers who do not use CIMS.

*Proposed PLA Special Condition:* Wording to be developed with advice from FACS Legal Services, but broadly it will specify:

- data requirements for providers who do not use CIMS.

## 8.5 Funding Agreements

- **Relationship between SHS contracts and DVRE funding** – temporary funding rolled out to improve specialist homelessness services' capacity to provide after hours responses and increase accommodation for people experiencing domestic and family violence

*Proposed PLA Special Condition:* DVRE funding also awarded under this PLA is approved through a separate funding source, and cannot be combined with homelessness services funding. Any extension to DVRE funding will be progressed separately subject to funding availability.

- **Relationship between SHS contracts and Youth Crisis 24/7 Accommodation funding** – temporary funding rolled out to enhance the capacity of youth crisis accommodation services to provide 24/7 supervision and support to young people experiencing homelessness

*Proposed PLA Special Condition:* Youth Crisis 24/7 Accommodation funding also awarded under this PLA is approved through a separate funding source, and cannot be combined with homelessness services funding. Any extension to the Youth Crisis 24/7 Accommodation funding will be progressed separately subject to funding availability.

## Related Initiatives

The following policy considerations are running parallel to the recontracting process.

- **Early Review of the SHS Program** – independent review undertaken to understand how the homelessness program and sector is operating since the reform, and how service providers have taken the FACS service descriptions, tools and policies and applied them to their local circumstances, as well as the impact of the changes on clients and providers.
  - *Findings of the Early Review will inform the recontracting process, e.g. JWAs, data sources for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, appropriate baselines for assessing effectiveness and efficiency.*
- **Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Program reform** – FACS is undertaking a reform of the TEI Program to better support families and children, and make sure the service system reflects and responds to local needs across our communities.

- *This reform is being carried out concurrently to the recontracting of homelessness services. It is expected that a number of resources will be required to work on deliverables across both projects at the same time.*
- **Registration of Tier 3 community housing providers** – FACS will be coordinating compliance returns for Tier 3 community housing providers in March/April 2017.
  - *This process will involve a number of homelessness service providers at the same time as they are negotiating their homelessness service contract extensions. Generally they will be smaller providers less able to absorb resourcing pressures. Alignment/staging of concurrent processes where possible will alleviate impact and assist providers manage more effectively.*

## 9 Updates to Service Descriptions

In conjunction with the recontracting of homelessness services, a revised Service Package Description (SPD) will be generated. The main areas to be revised will be the sections relating to the Specialist Homelessness Services Program Outcomes and Background.

Minimal change is expected to the service delivery aspects of the SPD, and only where consensus has been reached between the District, service provider/s and FACS Homelessness Branch.

### 9.1 SPD - Specialist Homelessness Services Program Outcomes

The revised 'Specialist Homelessness Services Program Outcomes' section will include references to the progressive implementation of Outcomes Based Contracting, and alignment with FACS Outcomes Framework and the Homelessness Strategy.

### 9.2 SPD - Background

The Background section will be revised to reflect the current strategic context in which services are delivered. This will include references to the FACS Outcomes Framework and the Homelessness Strategy.

## 10 Quality Assurance System (QAS)

The SHS Quality Assurance System (QAS) is founded on work undertaken by the Australian Government, states and territories to develop a National Quality Framework (NQF). The QAS aims to achieve better outcomes for people who

are homeless or at risk of homelessness by improving the quality and integration of services they receive.

**Current requirements and future directions of the Quality Assurance System** – Providers have the option of an online or paper based system, to assess the compliance of their service to the SHS quality standards, and also develop a quality improvement plan. Homelessness service providers are currently expected to self-assess their compliance through either of these systems (required by 31 October 2016). A Factsheet has recently been developed for service providers, outlining the objectives and benefits of the QAS, and the role of FACS, providers and the IP in ensuring compliance requirements are met. For reference the Factsheet is attached as a separate document to these Guidelines as **Appendix B**.

- *Through the recontracting process FACS is looking into the current and future direction of the QAS in line with a commitment to streamline administrative processes for the sector. Homelessness Branch is also working with the Industry Partnership to identify possible improvement options.*

## 11 Translating and Interpreting Services

Currently service providers requiring access to translating and interpreting services, request registration to Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) through FACS. Interpreting services are accessed by contacting TIS National directly. Expenditure is charged by TIS National to a FACS account, and invoiced to FACS on a monthly basis.

The future funding model for translating and interpreting services for homelessness services is being considered in the context of homelessness services' contract extensions from 1 July 2017.

Not all the organisations registered and currently receiving interpreting assistance through the FACS a/c are lead entities, with a number of the organisations being JWA parties, as well as refuges attached to service packages.

Homelessness Branch's contact information does not always contain details of the refuges, etc. attached to service packages. To help ensure allocation of funding under the future model is as equitable as possible, and provided to services in line with need, Districts are requested to consider the requirement of interpreting assistance and need for services, when undertaking recontracting discussions with providers.

The feedback provided by Districts will be combined with the expenditure data received by Homelessness Branch from TIS (Translating and Interpreting Service), and used to inform the future funding model and funding allocations.

While this project is not officially part of the recontracting process, it is being considered in the context of contract extensions. Logistically the recontracting process is the most appropriate platform for obtaining information from Districts and providers integral to ensuring the most equitable model can be determined and implemented from 1 July 2017.

## 12 Roles and Responsibilities

Key roles and responsibilities for the recontracting process are as follows:

### 12.1 FACS Central Office

#### **Homelessness Branch**

- Drive, oversee and manage recontracting process.
- Develop recontracting approach, design and implementation of the associated policies, procedures and processes.
- Support Districts with briefings and advice.
- Provide Districts with information and data to enable assessment of current contracts.
- Disseminate information and key outcomes from Recontracting Working Group.
- Manage communication with stakeholders, including Districts, peak homelessness organisations and the sector.
- Manage resolution of issues and decision-making for retendering of contracts (if required).
- Drive the program strategy including program operational and performance plans.

#### **Service System Commissioning**

- Provide advice and guidance on JWA and subcontract agreements and processes.
- Provide advice on specific contracting issues.
- Ensure alignment of recontracting processes with FACS' contracting funding cycle.

### 12.2 FACS Districts

- Manage contract relationships with lead service providers.

- Lead standard performance appraisals with providers. Identify and escalate risks, issues and concerns to FACS Homelessness Branch.
- Manage recontracting issues within parameters set by Homelessness Branch.
- Lead contracting negotiations with providers at a local level.
- Present evidence-based cases for required improvements to Homelessness Branch for endorsement, if required. Requested changes are to be within the advised and agreed recontracting parameters.
- Manage approval requests for contract extension with Homelessness Branch, and confirmation with lead providers.
- Ensure PLAs and other relevant resources are completed and uploaded to COMS for implementation from July 2017, in line with the FACS Contracting and Payment Systems Funding Calendar.

## 13 Project Milestones

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Provision of guidance documents, data and related information to FACS Districts	October 2016	Homelessness Branch
Provisional discussions between Districts and providers	October / November 2016	Districts / providers
Consultation on new program documentation	November / December 2016	Homelessness Branch
Finalisation of program documentation	December 2016	Homelessness Branch
Contract negotiations	March 2017	Districts / providers
Commencement of new contracts	July 2017	Homelessness Branch / SSC / Districts

## 14 Opportunities for enhancing service delivery

Enhancement of services to better meet client need and/or fill identified gaps will only be considered where there is consensus for change between the District, service provider/s and FACS Homelessness Branch.

All recommendations for strengthening services are to be considered by Homelessness Branch as part of the consensus process, before endorsement is granted and providers notified. In line with ensuring consistency of processes across all Districts, approval of District recommended changes will lie with FACS Homelessness Branch.

The key steps for District and Homelessness Branch prior to implementation of the contract extensions are:



Any agreed enhancements to service delivery will need to be undertaken within existing resources (i.e. no increase in funding) and will need to ensure client targets are maintained or increased.

## 15 Process steps

### 15.1 Standard Contracting/Accountability Processes (Districts)

- Undertake annual contract performance discussions with providers.

- Review accountability documents completed by services through the Contracting Portal (Contract Managers).
- Complete risk assessments for Corporate and PLAs in the Contracting Portal.

## 15.2 Specific Recontracting Processes (Districts)

- Review data provided by Homelessness Branch to inform recontracting discussions.
- Undertake initial recontracting discussions with providers (using the Checklist document included at **Appendix A**).
- Obtain Executive Director District approval of the Checklist template for each homelessness service.
- Submit completed Checklist templates to Homelessness Branch, noting especially that recommended enhancements to services are to be considered by Homelessness Branch before being progressed further.
- Work with Homelessness Branch to revise submissions if required.
- Following ED, CHP endorsement of Checklist templates, undertake recontracting negotiations with providers.
- Work with Homelessness Branch to finalise services and update Service Package Descriptions where appropriate.
- Work with Homelessness Branch on the retendering of individual services if required.
- Work with Homelessness Branch and Service System Commissioning to set up new PLAs, service plan, etc. in COMS.
- Issue PLAs to service providers, obtain sign-off and upload signed PLAs in COMS.
- Schedule quarterly payments in COMS.
- *Liaise with Homelessness Branch throughout the recontracting process for clarification of queries or issues as/when required.*

## 15.3 Specific Recontracting Processes (Homelessness Branch)

- Provide data and resources to Districts to inform recontracting process and discussions with providers.
- Review submitted District recommendations. Work with Districts to revise submissions if required.
- Present reviewed submissions to the ED, CHP for approval.



- Advise Districts of recommendation outcomes.
- Work with Districts to finalise services and update Service Package Descriptions where appropriate.
- Work with Districts and FACS Procurement to undertake retendering of individual services if required.
- Finalise documentation revision and issue to Districts.
- Work with Districts and Service System Commissioning to ensure all data and documentation for approved services is entered in COMS and payments scheduled.
- *Liaise with Districts throughout the recontracting process to clarify queries or issues, and provide updated information and/or support as/when required.*

The recontracting of homelessness services objectives are aligned to the FACS Corporate objectives. They have been designed to promote and ensure a transparent and consistent approach to the recontracting process across all Districts.

## 16 Support and advice

Further support and advice throughout the recontracting process can be sought through the following services:

### 16.1 All processes

Joe Parsons, Manager, Homelessness Branch  
 Ph: 02 8753 8468  
 e-mail: [joe.parsons@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:joe.parsons@facs.nsw.gov.au)

Gail Petrie, A/Senior Program Officer, Homelessness Branch  
 Ph: 02 8753 8477  
 e-mail: [gail.petrie2@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gail.petrie2@facs.nsw.gov.au)

### 16.2 JWA / Contracting-specific issues

David Whyte, Manager Prudential Oversight, Service System Commissioning  
 Ph: 02 9716 2701  
 e-mail: [david.whyte@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:david.whyte@facs.nsw.gov.au)

### 16.3 Other support contacts

#### **The Industry Partnership**

*Please contact:*

Ph: 02 8354 7602 or

e-mail: [project@shssectordev.org.au](mailto:project@shssectordev.org.au)

### **Homelessness Peak Organisations**

Homelessness NSW

Katherine McKernan, CEO

Ph: 02 8354 7605

e-mail: [katherine@homelessnessnsw.org.au](mailto:katherine@homelessnessnsw.org.au)

DVNSW

Moo Baulch, CEO

Ph: 02 9698 9777

e-mail: [ceo@dvnsw.org.au](mailto:ceo@dvnsw.org.au)

Yfoundations

Michael Coffey, CEO

Ph: 02 8306 7900; 0425 228 758

e-mail: [Michael@yfoundations.org.au](mailto:Michael@yfoundations.org.au)

### **General JWA Advice**

Justice Connect

Savi Manii, Manager Advice (NSW), Not-for-profit Law

Ph: 02 8599 2115

e-mail: [savi.manii@justiceconnect.org.au](mailto:savi.manii@justiceconnect.org.au)

## **17 Appendices**

Appendix A – Districts Recontracting Checklist

Appendix B – QAS Factsheet (separate attachment)

## Appendix A

### HOMELESSNESS SERVICES CONTRACT EXTENSION (2017-2020) – PROVISIONAL DISCUSSIONS

Please complete the attached template for each Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) contract in your District<sup>1</sup> and send a scanned copy of the Executive Director District approved (and signed) template to [SHSProgram@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SHSProgram@facs.nsw.gov.au) by **9 December 2016**.

#### APPROVAL

POSITION	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

*Please note:*

*District recommendation of proposed contract improvement or change does not represent endorsement. All recommendations are to be submitted to FACS Homelessness Branch for consideration. Approval of recommendations lies with FACS Homelessness Branch.*

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<sup>1</sup> Including all services funded under the Service Support Fund and Inner City Restoration Fund

<b><i>Contract Information (as per the Service Description)</i></b>	
District	
Service Package Name (e.g. SHS, SSF, Inner City Restoration, etc.)	
PLA ID	
Service Provider Name	
Service Name	
Existing funding (per annum)	
Existing priority cohorts	
Existing LGAs covered	
Existing short service description	
Existing non-client service delivery activities (e.g. SSF)	
<b><i>Initial discussions with service providers</i></b>	
Are there any areas relating to the service that require strengthening?	
Proposed enhancements to service or additional focus areas	
Evidence base for proposed enhancements or additional focus areas	

Implications for service system	
Outcomes of discussion with service provider	
Has the service provider completed the Quality Assurance System (QAS) self-assessment? ( <i>Request for verbal confirmation from provider only</i> )	If no, please direct provider to one of the following relevant contacts:  <a href="mailto:project@shssectordev.org.au">project@shssectordev.org.au</a> or  Asha Richardson, Senior Program Officer, Homelessness Branch ( <a href="mailto:asha.richardson@facs.nsw.gov.au">asha.richardson@facs.nsw.gov.au</a> )
<b>Co-contributions</b>	
Does the current contract include agreed co-contributions?	
Will these co-contributions be recommitted in the next round of recontracting?	
If no, what, if any, impact does this have?	
<b>Joint Working Agreements (JWA)</b>	
Is this service package delivered via a JWA?	
Are there aspects of the JWA that require strengthening? If so, what are these?	
What additional support is required, if any, to strengthen the JWA?	
Are any changes to JWAs proposed? If so, what are these?	

Are these changes supported by the District?	
What discussions have taken place between the lead entity and collaborating parties? What were the outcomes?	

***Translating and Interpreting Services (Not technically a part of the recontracting process, but direction of future funding model being considered in line with contract extensions from 1 July 2017)***

Does service require and/or access translating and interpreting services?	
If so, are translating and interpreting services accessed by the Lead Entity/collaborating parties/refuges/outlets, etc.?	
Details of entity/entities accessing translating and interpreting services. What is the approx. no. of calls and cost incurred <u>per entity</u> per month?	
What is the District's assessment of service's need / priority level for access to translating and interpreting services?	