

# ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



## STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 7/14/2021

**Staff Report No.** 17-222b

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**TO:** AC Transit Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Michael A. Hursh, General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Contract Option with American Customer Care

### ACTION ITEM

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

Consider authorizing the General Manager to exercise the first of two one-year options to extend AC Transit's contract for call center services with American Customer Care.

#### **STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:**

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service  
Initiative - Service Quality

The call center is an integral part of service quality as it answers customer calls addressing travel and trip planning services as well as receives feedback or concerns about AC Transit service including complaints, commendations, lost and found claims, and any other inquiries relating to District services.

#### **BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:**

The cost of the option year is \$318,000, set by the contract terms, and is included in the upcoming fiscal year operating budget.

#### **BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:**

American Customer Care (ACC) is currently in its eleventh year of providing call center service for AC Transit customers. The District's current contract with ACC covers the period of September 21, 2018 through September 20, 2021. Under the contract, the District may exercise two one-year options. Staff recommends that the District exercise a one-year option for the following reasons:

1. Cost: ACC continues to provide quality service at a reasonable cost. Each of the two option years include a modest cost increase over the annual cost of the first three-year period. With increased cost of living and rising operational costs, a higher-priced contract would likely result from a new procurement effort.
2. Established Quality Controls: District Customer Relations staff and ACC maintain an active and collaborative relationship, including regular monitoring of calls in addition to ongoing review of call statistics and trends. District staff consistently provide feedback to ACC regarding call quality, need for additional training in particular areas, and if necessary, removal of an agent from our contract.

3. Reliable Service: The current staff of over twenty call agents includes several veteran agents and supervisors, with the same Project Manager since program inception. ACC staff are very familiar with the District's operations and are well-versed in utilizing multiple travel and trip planning tools and applications, such as 511, the District's website, and operations bulletins to be able to conduct travel and trip planning, answer general questions, and register feedback. Call agents are experienced in handling detour information and assisting customers with alternate planning for special events (i.e., major service disruptions and street festivals). They have demonstrated the ability to ramp up quickly for both planned and unexpected events affecting transit. ACC contracts with Language Services to provide interpreters in over 200 languages to meet the District's LEP and Title VI language goals, providing the opportunity for all customers to provide feedback and obtain travel assistance.
4. Compliance with Contract Requirements: ACC has consistently met or exceeded service level agreements for abandoned rate and call response time as required by the contract.

**ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:**

There are no known disadvantages to exercising the one-year option. The advantages are cited above.

**ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:**

Staff began the solicitation process in March but decided additional time is needed to adequately conduct a broad outreach to afford small local business owners and disadvantaged business enterprises the opportunity to participate. If staff continued with the solicitation process to secure a new contract by expiration of the current contract in September, timeline allowed only two weeks for businesses to participate, which may result in a lack of diversity and inclusion in proposals submitted.

**PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:**

Staff Report 17-222a: Call Center Services Contract Award

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

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