



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

Transforming lives

**REQUEST FOR
QUALIFICATIONS AND QUOTATION
RFQQ No. 2334-829**

DSHS Administration:
Human Resources

Solicitation Title: Executive Recruiting Services

Solicitation Schedule (the full schedule is found under RFQQ Section C.1)	
Event	Date/Time
Virtual Bidders Conference	8.29.2023 at 1:00 p.m. Pacific Time
Bidders Questions are Due	9.6.2023 by 1:00 p.m. Pacific Time
Responses are Due	10.9.2023 by 1:00 p.m. Pacific Time
Anticipated Contract(s) Executed Start Date	12.1.2023
Contract(s) Estimated Performance Period	2 years, with an options to extend for two additional 2 year periods (a total of 6 years).

Responses must be submitted to

James O'Brien, RFQQ Coordinator
Department of Social and Health Services
Facilities, Finance and Analytics Administration
Central Contracts and Legal Services
Email: james.obrien2@dshs.wa.gov

Solicitation and Amendments are posted on:

DSHS Procurement Website: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ffa/procurements-and-contracting>

-and-

WEBS Website: <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/>

Applicable WEBS Commodity Codes: 961-30: Employment Agency and Search Firm Services, 958-74: Personnel Management Services; and/or 952-43: Family and Social Services

Auxiliary Aids and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Services:

DSHS will provide access to this Solicitation document to individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficient individuals. Please contact the Coordinator to request auxiliary aids and services.

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Attachments (all are posted separate from this RFQQ document)

- Attachment A: Sample Contract
- Attachment B: Sample Submission Letter
- Attachment C: Bidder Certifications and Assurances
- Attachment D: Bidder Response Form
- Attachment E: Bidder Inclusion Plan

SECTION A CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

1. Purpose

This competitive solicitation is issued to assist the Human Resources Division (HRD) of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in seeking highly qualified contractor for DSHS executive level recruiting services. The awarded Contractor will provide professional recruitment services for agency leadership positions on an as-needed basis. The awarded Contract will be used on a project by project basis. DSHS staff will continue to recruit for the majority of its open positions and compensation for the executive leadership recruitments is available only through award and completion of a project work order.

The Apparent Successful Bidder is expected to be an experienced firm who provide demonstrated expertise and experience in the successful recruitment of executive level leaders.

2. Background

The Department of Social & Health Services, Washington's largest state agency, with over 16,000 staff, provides some type of shelter, care, protection and/or support to 2.4 million of our state's 7.2 million citizens.

A single mission ties DSHS' Administrations together: *To Transform Lives*. Our values include: *Diversity and Inclusion, Honesty and Integrity, Pursuit of Excellence, Open Communication, and Commitment to Service*.

DSHS is comprised of three support Administrations and seven direct service Administrations. Each service Administration provides specialized services to Washington state citizens in need.

- Aging and Long-Term Support Administration supports seniors and people with disabilities living with good health, independence, dignity, and control over decisions that affect their lives.
- Behavioral Health Administration supports sustainable recovery, independence and wellness through funding and delivering effective prevention, intervention and treatment services for youth and adults with mental health conditions and their families.
- Developmental Disabilities Administration supports people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their families to get services and supports based on need and choice.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Administration provides unemployment services and counseling to individuals with disabilities who want to work but experience barriers due to physical, sensory and/or mental disability.
- Economic Services Administration works to build a Washington without poverty and injustice by helping children, adults, and families so they can reach their full potential through various programs; providing tools and

resources to build well-being including cash grants, food and medical assistance, employment-focused services, refugee assistance, disability determinations and child support collection.

- Technology Innovation Administration provides technology solutions that enable Washingtonians to easily identify and access life-changing health and human services.
- Facilities, Finance and Analytics Administration provides the necessary stewardship of DSHS' physical, financial and intellectual resources by safeguarding the resources needed to care for and support clients.
- The Office of the Secretary supports the success of all programs within the agency through technology services, human resources, equity, diversity, and inclusion, Indian policy, communications, innovation and strategy, public records requests and many more critical central services.

Please review the DSHS [Our Future Transformed](#) booklet to learn more about our agency.

From recruitment to mentoring to leadership development, DSHS' Human Resources Division (HRD) works to attract the next generation of DSHS public servants, while leveraging the expertise and mentorship of seasoned leaders. To learn more about DSHS' Office of the Secretary and the Human Resources Division, please review [OOS's Strategic Plan](#) booklet.

While DSHS' HRD's staff are very skilled in a variety of diverse recruitments, the division currently does not have sufficient resources to conduct extensive nationwide executive leadership recruitments.

3. Project Scope

With this solicitation, HRD is looking to locate a highly qualified Contractor to conduct executive level position targeted nationwide recruitment searches. While not a requirement, it is desirable the Apparent Successful Bidder also have specific knowledge of and recruitment experience in one or more of DSHS' areas of focus listed above.

DSHS anticipates 1 to 2 executive level recruitments will be conducted annually. As needed, DSHS shall issue the Contractor the specifics for each recruitment, via a project work orders.

4. Period of Contract Performance

DSHS intends to award one Contract for the Services described in this Competitive Solicitation. The initial period of performance under the Contract shall be 2 years, the beginning of December 2023 through the end of November 2025. The term of the contract may be extended by amendment up to 2 times, for up to 2 years per amendment, in the sole discretion of DSHS. The total possible years for the awarded Contract is 6 years. Additional services that are appropriate to the scope of this Solicitation, as determined by DSHS, may be added to the Contract in a mutually agreeable amendment.

SECTION B DEFINITIONS

Additional definitions for Contract-specific terms are found in the Sample Contract set forth as Attachment A to this Solicitation and shall apply to those terms as they are used in this Solicitation. The following terms have the meanings set forth below:

Agency or DSHS – The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

Amendment – A unilateral change to the Solicitation that is issued by DSHS at its sole discretion and posted on WEBS.

Apparent Successful Bidder or ASB – A Bidder submitting a Response to this Solicitation that is evaluated and is identified and announced by DSHS as providing the best value to the Agency. Upon execution of a Contract, the ASB is referred to as the successful bidder or the Contractor.

Authorized Representative – An individual designated by the Bidder to act on its behalf who has the authority to legally bind the Bidder concerning the terms and conditions set forth in this Solicitation and related documents.

Bid – An offer, proposal or quote for goods or services and all related materials prepared and submitted by a Bidder in response to this Solicitation. The terms Bid, Quotation, Response and Proposal are all intended to mean the same thing.

Bidder – An individual, organization, public or private agency or other entity submitting a bid, quotation, response or proposal in response to this Solicitation.

Contract – A written agreement entered into between a successful Bidder and DSHS as a result of this Solicitation.

Complaint – A process that may be followed by a Bidder prior to the deadline for Response submission to alert DSHS of certain types of asserted deficiencies in the Solicitation.

Coordinator or Solicitation Coordinator – An individual or designee who is employed by DSHS within the DSHS Central Contracts and Legal Services Office and who is responsible for conducting this Solicitation.

Debriefing – A short meeting a Bidder may request with the Coordinator following the announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder for the purpose of receiving information regarding the review and evaluation of that Bidder's Response.

Diverse Candidate – The individual characteristics a person has that makes them unique. This could include demographic diversity (gender, race, age, sexual orientation, etc.), experiential diversity (affinities, abilities, hobbies, etc.), and cognitive diversity (how we approach problems and look at things, etc.).

Procurement – The broad process of identifying goods and services for purchase or acquisition, of effecting the purchase or acquisition, and of managing the purchase or acquisition. This Solicitation is a part of an overall Procurement process. Despite the broader meaning attributed to "procurement", for purposes of this Solicitation, the terms Solicitation, RFP/RFQ/RFQQ and Procurement are interchangeable.

Project – The undertaking or work for which contracted Services are being requested pursuant to this Solicitation.

Project Work Order – A Work Order is issued by DSHS for a specific recruitment to identify the position and detailed expectations for the Contractor. Project Work Orders are issued on an as needed basis and DSHS does not guarantee assignment of a Project Work Order.

Protest – A process that may be followed by a Bidder after the announcement of the apparent Successful Bidder to alert DSHS to certain types of alleged errors in the evaluation of the Solicitation.

RCW – The Revised Code of Washington. All references to RCW chapters or sections shall include any successor, amended, or replacement statute.

Responsible Bidder – An individual, organization, public or private agency, or other entity that has demonstrated the capability to meet all the requirements of the Solicitation and to meet the elements of responsibility. (See [RCW 39.26.160 \(2\)](#))

Responsive Bidder – An individual, organization, public or private agency, or other entity who has submitted a Response that fully conforms in all material respects to the Solicitation and all its requirements, in both form and substance.

RFP/RFQ/RFQQ – The request for proposals, qualifications, quotations, or qualifications and quotations set forth in this Solicitation document.

Scope of Work – The Project or work scope set forth in this Solicitation Document that identifies DSHS' contractual needs and requirements.

Services – Labor, work, analysis, or similar activities provided by a contractor to accomplish a specific scope of work.

Washington Small Business – An in-state business, including a sole proprietorship, corporation, partnership, or other legal entity, that certifies under penalty of perjury that they are Washington Small Business as defined in [RCW 39.26.010\(22\)](#).

Solicitation or Competitive Solicitation – A formal process providing an equal and open opportunity for bidders culminating in a selection based upon predetermined criteria. A Competitive Solicitation requests the submission of responses, quotations or proposals for the consideration of DSHS in contracting to meet its needs. This RFP/RFQ/RFQQ is a Solicitation.

Solicitation Document – This RFQQ document, including all attachments and all amendments that are issued by the Coordinator.

Statement of Work – The detailed description services to be performed by the Contractor and set forth in the Contract.

Subcontractor – An individual or other entity contracted by Bidder to perform part of the services or to provide goods under the Contract resulting from this Solicitation. Subcontractors, if allowed, are subject to the advanced approval of DSHS.

Veteran-owned business – A business that is certified by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) in the state of Washington. (See [RCW 43.60A.200](#))

WEBS – Washington’s Electronic Business Solution, the Bidder notification system found at <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/> and maintained by the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services.

SECTION C
EXPLANATION OF SOLICITATION PROCESS

1. Solicitation Schedule

The Solicitation Schedule set forth below outlines the tentative schedule for important events relating to this Solicitation. Except as modified in an Amendment issued by the Coordinator, the dates and times listed through the date of Response Submission are mandatory deadlines. The remaining dates are estimates and may change without the posting of an Amendment. Failure to meet the Response deadline will result in Bidder disqualification.

Action	Date
Prospective Bidders should register as a Vendor on WEBS using one of the commodities code on the cover page of this Solicitation in order to receive notifications.	Immediately
Bidders must RSVP (via email to the RFQQ Coordinator) for the virtual Bidders Conference by 1 p.m. p.m. Pacific Time.	8.28.2023
Bidder Conference virtually at 1 p.m. Pacific Time.	8.29.2023
Bidders may submit written questions or requests for change in Solicitation Requirements until 1 p.m. Pacific Time.	9.6.2023
DSHS posts responses to Bidder questions.	9.11.2023
Bidders may submit written Complaints by 5 p.m. Pacific Time.	9.29.2023
Bidders must submit Response by 1 p.m. Pacific Time.	10.9.2023
DSHS evaluates Written Responses.	10.11 to 10.18.2023
(Optional) DSHS checks the top-ranked Bidders' reference checks	10.20.2023
(Optional) Oral Evaluations, if requested by DSHS.	11.1.2023
DSHS announces the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) on WEBS and begins contract negotiations.	11.8.2023
DSHS notifies unsuccessful Bidder(s).	11.8.2023
Bidders may request a Debriefing Conference until 5 p.m. Pacific Time.	11.13.2023
DSHS holds Debriefing Conferences, if requested.	11.15.2023
Deadline for submission of Protests by Bidders who participated in a debriefing conference.	Five business days after date of Debriefing
DSHS considers Protests, if any, and issues determination.	Within 10 days of receipt
Contract(s) Execution/Start Date.	12.1.2023

2. Posting of Solicitation Documents

DSHS shall post this Solicitation, and all amendments and announcements relating to this Solicitation, on WEBS. WEBS can be accessed at: <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/>. In order to inform the largest number of potential bidders about this opportunity, DSHS

shall also post documents relating to this Solicitation on the Procurements page of the DSHS website, found at:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ffa/procurements-and-contracting>

All Bidders must register as a vendor on WEBS, using an appropriate commodities code listed on the front page of this Solicitation, and download this Solicitation from WEBS. This should be done as soon as possible in order for Bidder to receive notifications automatically generated on WEBS, but no later than the date set forth on Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule for Announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s).

3. Amendment, Cancellation/Rejection of Responses, Reissuance of Solicitation

DSHS may amend or add to, retract from or cancel this Solicitation at any time, in whole or in part, and without penalty. DSHS may reject all Responses and cancel or reissue this Solicitation. All amendments and notifications of cancellation shall be posted on WEBS. In the event of a conflict between amendments or between an amendment and this Solicitation Document, the document issued latest shall control.

4. Communications regarding Solicitation

Upon the posting of this Solicitation, all communications concerning this Solicitation must be directed to the Coordinator listed on the cover page of this Solicitation document. With the exception of the Response, which shall be submitted as provided in Section D, Instructions Regarding Content, Format and Submission of Written Responses, communications with the Coordinator should be sent via email. DSHS may disqualify any Bidder who communicates with anyone in DSHS other than the Coordinator regarding this Solicitation.

DSHS considers all oral communications unofficial and non-binding on DSHS. Bidders should rely only on written statements issued by the Coordinator. Email shall be considered an official method of communication unless otherwise specified in this document.

5. Bidder Conference (attendance optional)

Bidders are invited to attend a Bidder Conference which shall be held for approximately 1 hour on the date and time set forth on the Solicitation Schedule in Section C.1. While attendance is not required, the Bidder Conference is an opportunity for Bidders to learn more about the RFQQ and services requirements. At the Bidder Conference, Bidders will have an opportunity to ask questions and to hear presentations from knowledgeable DSHS personnel. DSHS shall collect and answer all questions asked at the Bidder Conference, along with the PowerPoint presentation, and post on the DSHS procurement website and on WEBS as an Amendment to this Solicitation. Bidders may only rely upon information that is included in this Amendment in preparing their Proposals.

Prior to the RSVP deadline date and time set forth on the Solicitation Schedule, Section C.1, Bidders must contact the RFP Coordinator via email to express their interest to attend the virtual Bidder Conference. Bidders may have up to two staff in attendance.

6. Questions and Answers

Bidders may send written questions concerning this Solicitation to the Coordinator by the date and time set forth on the Solicitation Schedule in Section C.1. for submission of Questions. Questions should be sent via email and should include the number and title of this Solicitation in the subject line.

DSHS may consolidate Bidder questions and shall respond by posting one or more Amendments on WEBS and on the DSHS Procurement website on or around the date specified in the Solicitation Schedule. Only Bidders who have properly registered and downloaded the original Solicitation directly via the WEBS system: <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/> will receive notification of Amendments and other correspondence pertaining to this Solicitation.

7. Request for Change in Solicitation Requirements

If Bidder believes that this Solicitation contains requirements which would unreasonably prohibit or restrict Bidder's participation or believes that different requirements would provide better value to the State, Bidder shall submit a written explanation of the issue together with proposed alternative requirements to the Coordinator no later than the deadline for Bidder Questions as stated in the Solicitation Schedule set forth in Section C.1. The Coordinator shall not be required to consider requests for changes after this date. If any changes are made to the Solicitation requirements, an Amendment setting forth those changes will be posted on WEBS.

8. Complaints

In the event a Bidder believes that this Solicitation either: a) unnecessarily restricts competition; b) contains an unfair or flawed evaluation or scoring process; or c) contains inadequate or insufficient information to permit preparation of a Response, the Bidder shall submit a written complaint to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will forward the complaint to the DSHS Chief of Central Contracts and Legal Services for review. The complaint shall include a proposed remedy and shall be submitted no later than five business days prior to the date when Responses are due. DSHS shall post its response to the Complaint on WEBS and on the DSHS procurement web page.

Should a Bidder's complaint identify a change that would be in the best interest of DSHS to make, DSHS may issue an Amendment modifying this Solicitation. The DSHS decision regarding a complaint is final and no further administrative appeal is available. If no complaint is filed, a Bidder cannot later file a protest based on any of the above complaint criteria.

9. Minority & Women's Business Enterprises (MWBE) and Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises

In accordance with the legislative findings and policies set forth in RCW 39.19, 43.60A.200, 39.26.240 and 39.26.245, the State of Washington encourages participation by Veteran-owned business enterprises and Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), either self-identified or certified by, respectively, the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). While the State does not give preferential treatment, it does seek equitable representation from the veterans, minority and women's business communities.

Participation by Veteran-owned and MWBE contractors may be either on a direct basis in

response to this Solicitation or as a subcontractor to a contractor. However, no preference will be given in the evaluation of Responses, no minimum level of MWBE or Veteran-owned business participation shall be required, and Responses will not be evaluated, rejected, or considered non-responsive on that basis.

Bidders may contact the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) at <http://omwbe.wa.gov/> and/or the Department of Veterans Affairs at <http://www.dva.wa.gov/program/veteran-owned-business-certification> to obtain information on certified firms for potential subcontracting arrangements or for information on how to become certified. Nothing in this section is intended to prevent or discourage participation from non-MWBE firms or non-Veteran-owned businesses.

10. Auxiliary Aids and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Services

DSHS will provide access to this Solicitation document to individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficient individuals. Please contact the Coordinator to request auxiliary aids and services.

If an individual believes that the Department has discriminated against them on the basis of a protected status, please contact the DSHS Investigations Unit for the Nondiscrimination Policy Brochure and complaint process. The brochure can be found at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Non-discrim%2022-171.pdf>

11. Accessibility

The Apparent Successful Bidder(s) under this solicitation will be required to represent and warrant that they will exercise commercially reasonable efforts to comply with the Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Standard 188.10 – Minimum Accessibility Standard located at <https://ocio.wa.gov/policy/minimum-accessibility-standard>. The ASB will additionally be required to regularly review its systems and at the commencement of the Contract, and annually thereafter, certify to DSHS that their Services meet OCIO Standard 188.10.

12. Cost to Prepare Response

DSHS will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Bidder in preparing, conducting a site assessment, or submitting a Response to this Solicitation.

13. Acceptance of Solicitation Terms

In submitting a Response, Bidder must include a signed Submission Letter in the form set forth on Attachment B, as well as signed Bidder Certifications in the form set forth on Attachment C. Bidder must acknowledge that in submitting a Response, it accepts all terms of this Solicitation Document, including all of its Attachments, and that Bidder's Response constitutes a binding offer. Bidders may not alter or redline the solicitation terms or requirements in their response. Submitting altered or redlined solicitation terms or requirements in the Bidder Response may result in bidder disqualification.

14. Joint Responses

If Bidders submit a joint Response with one or more other persons or entities, these persons or entities must designate a prime Bidder. The prime Bidder will be DSHS sole point of contact through the Procurement process. If selected as Apparent Successful Bidder, the prime Bidder shall sign the contract and any amendments and will be liable and responsible to DSHS for all performance under the contract.

15. Withdrawal of Responses

After a Response has been submitted, Bidders may withdraw their Response at any time up to the Response due date and time as specified in Section C.1, Solicitation Schedule. A written request to withdraw the Response must be submitted to the Coordinator. After withdrawing a Response, the Bidder may submit another Response at any time up to the Response submission date and time.

16. Ownership of Responses

All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation become the property of DSHS, unless received after the deadline in which case the Response shall be returned to the sender. DSHS shall have the right to use any of the ideas presented as part of the process in any manner as it deems appropriate or beneficial, regardless of whether it is contained in a Response that results in selection for a Contract.

17. DSHS Award Options; Improvement of Offers

After Responses are received and written evaluations are completed, DSHS may (but shall not be required to) request best and final offers from one or more Responsible and Responsive Bidders. The written Responses of Bidders invited to provide a best and final offer may be re-evaluated and the point values may be adjusted based upon changes to pricing or proposed services, deliverables or methodologies that are included in a best and final offer, prior to DSHS' determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s).

Alternatively, after reviewing all Responses, DSHS may enter into negotiations with the highest ranked Responsive and Responsible Bidder in order to determine if the Response may be improved before identification of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s).

DSHS shall not be required to request best and final offers or to enter into negotiations and reserves the right to make a Contract award without further discussion of the Response. Therefore the Response should be submitted on the most favorable terms that Bidder intends to offer.

18. (Optional) Oral Interviews

After Responses are received and written evaluations are completed, DSHS may request that one or more Responsible and Responsive Bidders participate in an oral interview. If this option is elected, additional points shall be awarded as set forth in Section E.3, Evaluation Criteria and Scoring of Responses.

19. Announcement of Successful Bidder

DSHS shall announce the Apparent Successful Bidder on WEBS on the date indicated in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. All announcements of Apparent Successful Bidder are subject to the negotiation of a Contract satisfactory to DSHS.

Bidders may request a debriefing conference with the Coordinator to discuss information regarding the review and/or evaluation of their Response and may, under certain circumstances, file a formal protest requesting that DSHS provide an identified remedy if Bidder believes certain types of errors occurred. A more detailed description of these processes is set forth in Section F, Debriefing and Protest Procedure.

20. Ethics, Policies and Law

This Solicitation, the evaluation of Responses, and any resulting contract will be made in conformance with applicable Washington State laws and Policies.

Specific restrictions apply to contracting with current or former state employees pursuant to RCW 42.52. Bidders should familiarize themselves with the requirements prior to submitting a Response. Bidders must include, in their Letter of Submittal, information regarding any current or former state employees who are employed by, or subcontracted with, Bidder.

SECTION D
INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING CONTENT, FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN RESPONSES

Bidders shall submit their Responses utilizing the forms set forth on Attachments B, C, D and E to this Competitive Solicitation. Each Attachment represents a separate section of the Response. Failure to complete and submit all required Attachments, and to sign them, if applicable, may result in Bidder disqualification. Responses should be typed in 12 point font and should be submitted in the following order with each section of the Response clearly labeled. Please note that Section 4 of Attachment D should be submitted separately.

1. Attachment B: Response Submission Letter (Required, not scored)

All Bidders must submit a completed response submission letter in the form and with the minimum contents set forth on Attachment B, which must include all of the required acknowledgments and information. The Response Submission Letter must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually. Bidder's completed and signed Attachments B, C and E, together with any documents that are required to be attached, and Bidder's answers to administrative questions set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Response Form, comprise the Administrative component of the Response.

2. Attachment C: Bidder Certifications and Assurances (Required, not scored)

All Bidders must submit the Bidder certifications and assurances form set forth on Attachment C, signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually. Bidders may not alter or redline the Bidder Certifications and Assurances form in their response. Submitting altered or redlined solicitation terms or requirements in the Bidder Response may result in Bidder disqualification.

3. Attachment D: Bidder Response Form (Required, Portions Scored)

Using Attachment D, Bidders must provide answers to the questions set forth on the Bidder Response Form to demonstrate satisfaction of administrative requirements and, as applicable to this Solicitation, their qualifications, approach and proposed pricing to provide the services as outlined in this Competitive Solicitation, including the Sample Contract set forth on Attachment A. The total number of points allocated to each Section is indicated.

The Bidder Response Form is posted separately from this Solicitation document in Microsoft Word format. Except for limits that are noted on the Bidder Response Form, Bidders may utilize as much space as is reasonably required to respond to each question, provided all questions are repeated and remain numbered and ordered as set forth in Attachment D. If additional pages are needed, they should be attached to the page containing the initial portion of the response to a question and should be marked clearly to indicate that they provide a continuation of Bidder's answer to a specific numbered question. Bidders should not submit product brochures, white papers, customer testimonials, cut sheets, or other pre-prepared materials in response to any of the questions unless specifically requested.

Bidders must submit complete, well-organized explanatory answers that address all of the specific questions asked in the Bidder Response Form. Bidders should not assume that evaluators will be familiar with their businesses before conducting the evaluation.

Use of Attachment D assures that Bidder responds to specific questions in space immediately below those questions and helps to avoid confusion among evaluators about the question that is being responded to. In awarding points, evaluators shall not be obligated to search through the Bidder's answers to questions other than the one being reviewed in order to locate text that is responsive to the question being reviewed. Failure to use the form set forth on Attachment D (with the applicable questions set forth immediately above Bidder's answers), failure to respond to all questions and/or failure to submit any documents requested in the Bidder Response Form may result in Bidder disqualification.

If Bidder is awarded a Contract, DSHS may require that Bidder's Response to the Bidder Response Form be incorporated, in whole or in part, into the Contract.

4. Attachment E: Contractor Inclusion Plan (Required, not scored)

All Bidders must submit the Bidder Inclusion Plan form set forth on Attachment E, signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually. DSHS requires that Bidder submit this inclusion plan template as part of their Response. Once submitted, the Inclusion Plan template becomes part of the contract if awarded to the Bidder.

The Bidder shall also include an anticipated list of small and diverse subcontractors or vendors who may provide services on the project. Responses should reflect the Bidder's sincere efforts to include diverse small businesses. Businesses listed in the plan must be certified by OMWBE or DVA, or registered in WEBS as a Washington small business. If a company is not certified or registered but may be eligible for certification, the Bidder should encourage the company to become certified.

Inclusion goals are aspirational. No preference is given for inclusion plans or goals in the evaluation of Responses. While no minimum level of OMWBE certified, Veteran-owned, or Washington Small Business participation will be required as a condition for receiving an award, the plan must include the actions the contractor will take to increase subcontracting opportunities for those business types.

Submitting altered or redlined solicitation terms or requirements in the Bidder Response may result in Bidder disqualification.

5. Proprietary Information/Public Disclosure

Materials submitted in response to this Solicitation shall be deemed public records as defined by RCW 42.56. All Responses and accompanying documentation shall become the property of DSHS upon receipt, and will not be returned.

The Bidder's Response must include, on Attachment D, a statement identifying the pages of its Response, if any, which contain information the Bidder considers proprietary (for the purposes of public disclosure). Each page claimed to be proprietary must be clearly marked by stating the word "Proprietary" on the lower right hand corner. Bidders must be reasonable in designating information as proprietary or confidential. **Bidders may not**

mark their entire Response proprietary. Doing so will not be honored and will disqualify your Response from further consideration.

If DSHS receives a request to view or copy a Bidder's Response, DSHS will respond according to applicable law and DSHS's policy governing public disclosure. DSHS will not disclose any information marked "Proprietary" in a Response without giving the Bidder ten days' notice to seek relief in superior court per RCW 42.56.540.

Bidders may not include any DSHS client information in their Responses. Doing so will result in disqualification of the Response from further consideration. If you wish to include examples of any forms or processes, use a blank form or ensure that all client information is completely redacted.

6. Submission of Responses

Responses must be stored in an acceptable electronic format and, if applicable, hard copy format, as set forth in Section 7, below. Responses must be emailed directly to the Coordinator at the email address provided on the cover sheet of this Solicitation Document. Responses must be received by the Coordinator in their entirety on or before the due date and time set forth in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule, unless a posted Amendment to this Competitive Solicitation changes this due date and time. Bidder's completed version of each of the Attachments B, C, D, and E to this Competitive Solicitation shall be included as a separate attachment to the Bidder's email(s).

Bidders assume all risks for the timely submission of the Response. Bidders are responsible for allowing sufficient time to ensure timely electronic receipt of their Response by the Coordinator and, in Solicitations that also require that hard copies of the Response be submitted, to ensure timely receipt via other delivery methods. DSHS does not assume responsibility for problems with the Bidder's email, network or problems with the mail, parking, traffic or the services of any third party courier. However, if DSHS email is not working properly, appropriate allowances will be made.

DSHS will not accept late Responses, nor grant time extensions for individual Bidders. DSHS will disqualify any Response and withdraw it from consideration if it is received after the Response submission due date and time.

7. Acceptable Electronic Formats for Submission of Responses

Attachment D, Bidder Response Form, should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Other Response documents must be formatted in Portable Document Format (Adobe Acrobat PDF) or Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint. Spreadsheet documents must be submitted in Microsoft Excel and in a live, unprotected file that includes all formulas, macros, and computations that are relied on or used to calculate any rates or values presented therein. When scanning documents to be submitted in PDF format, scanner resolution should be set to at least 200 dots per inch.

NOTE: DSHS cannot receive emails that are larger than 30MB. To keep file sizes to a minimum, Bidders are cautioned not to use unnecessary graphics in their Responses. If your Response approaches or exceeds 30MB, you must break it up and send it by more than one email so that no single email exceeds 30MB.

8. Alternative Submission Methods

Bidders wishing to request an alternative method for submitting their Response must contact the Coordinator at least 10 days before the Response Submission Date. No alternative submission method will be accepted unless agreed to by the Coordinator in writing prior to the Response deadline.

SECTION E EVALUATION OF RESPONSES

1. Response Responsiveness; Administrative Review

All Responses will be reviewed by the Coordinator to determine compliance with administrative and minimum qualification requirements and instructions specified in this Solicitation. DSHS may reject a Response as nonresponsive at any time for any of the following reasons:

- Incomplete Response
- Submission of a Response that proposes services that deviate from the scope and technical requirements set forth in this document and Attachment A, Sample Contract, except as permitted in an Amendment to this Solicitation
- Failure to meet the minimum Bidder qualifications or to comply with any requirement set forth in this Solicitation Document, including Attachments
- Submission of incorrect, misleading, or false information
- History of prior unsatisfactory contractual performance

The Coordinator may contact any Bidder for clarification of the Response. If a Response is deemed non-responsive, it shall be removed from further consideration. DSHS shall notify non-responsive Bidder(s) of this determination and the supporting reasons. Bidders whose Responses are found to be non-responsive shall be disqualified from further evaluation and shall be notified in writing.

If a Response meets all administrative and Bidder qualification requirements and submittal instructions, DSHS shall continue with the Written Evaluation and, if applicable, the Oral Evaluation.

2. Errors in Bidder Response

Bidders are responsible for all errors or omissions contained in their Responses. Bidders will not be allowed to alter Response documents after the deadline for Response submissions.

DSHS reserves the right to contact any Bidder for clarification of Response contents. In those cases where it is unclear to what extent a requirement has been addressed, the evaluation panel may, in their discretion and acting through the Coordinator, contact a Bidder to clarify specific matters in the submitted Response.

DSHS reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities contained in any Bidder Response.

3. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring of Responses

Following the administrative review, Responses shall be evaluated and points shall be awarded for the written response components of the Response, as applicable, based upon Bidder's responses to the questions set forth in Attachment D, Bidder Response Form. Additional evaluation points may be awarded for specific criteria not included in Attachment D, Bidder Response Form only if set forth in this Section.

The maximum number of points available for each Bidder is 1,350. The maximum number of points that may be assigned with respect to specific questions is set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Proposal form. The overall breakdown for assignment of points in evaluating Proposals to this Solicitation is as follows:

Quotation Response.....	100 maximum points
Written Response.....	900 maximum points
(Optional) Oral Interview	100 maximum points

Total 1	1,100 maximum points

EO 18-03 Response.....	50 maximum points
Washington Veteran-owned Business.....	100 maximum points
Washington Small Business.....	100 maximum points

Total 2	250 maximum points

Total Competition Possible Points.....	1,350 maximum points

4. Evaluation of Quotations

While all are not scored, Bidders are required to answer all questions within Attachment D, Section 5. The Bidder who offers the lowest commission percentage rate (based on the vacant position’s highest possible salary) of the Quotation Response, question 5.A. of Attachment D, shall receive the maximum number of available Quotation Response points. Bidders offering higher percentage will receive proportionately fewer Quotation Response points based on the lowest percentage rate as follows:

$$(\text{lowest percentage/highest percentage}) * \text{available points} = \text{total quotation points awarded}$$

Bidder	Low-Cost Calculation <i>EXAMPLE</i>			Calculated Quotation Score
	Commission Rate %	Low Cost %	Points Available	Points Awarded (Max 100 Points)
Bidder A	40%	0.50	100	50
Bidder B	20%	1.00	100	100
Bidder C	30%	0.67	100	67

In the above scenario, Bidder B receives the maximum points allowed.

Bidders should note that they are only allowed to provide one rate to be used for the term of the awarded contract. So to give Bidders a better understanding of the potential worth of the awarded Contract, DSHS expects that the recruited positions’ highest possible salaries may range between \$129,000 and \$215,000.

5. Written Response Evaluation Process

DSHS shall designate an evaluation team of at least three (3) evaluators to review, evaluate, and score the written question responses. These evaluators will be selected

based on their qualifications, experience, capability and background. If Oral interviews or presentations are conducted additional evaluators may supplement or replace some or all of the individuals performing the written evaluation.

Evaluators shall assign scores up to the maximum points available. Individual evaluator points will be totaled and the average points for each Bidder will be calculated. The Bidder's average points earned for each question will be added together to determine the Bidder's total written evaluation points.

6. Evaluation Points to Washington Small and Veteran-owned Businesses

In accordance with [DES Policy 090-060](#) Supplier Diversity, DSHS shall consider awarding evaluation points to Veteran-owned and/or Washington Small Businesses.

DSHS will evaluate Responses for best value and provide preference points in the amount set forth in Attachment D, Bidder Response Form, to any Bidder who certifies that they are Washington Small Business (as defined in [RCW 39.26.010\(22\)](#)) or Veteran-owned Business.

7. Evaluation for Executive Order 18-03 (Firms without Mandatory Individual Arbitration for Employees)

Pursuant to RCW 39.26.160(3) (best value criteria) and consistent with [Executive Order 18-03 – Supporting Workers' Rights to Effectively Address Workplace Violations](#) (dated June 12, 2018), DSHS will evaluate Responses for best value and provide preference points in the amount set forth in Attachment D, Bidder Response Form, to any Bidder who certifies that their firm does NOT require its employees, as a condition of employment, to sign or agree to mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers.

Successful Bidders who certify that their employees are NOT required to sign these clauses and waivers as a condition of employment will have an EO 18-03 section added to their contract incorporating this response and requiring notification to DSHS if they later require their employees to agree to these clauses or waivers during the term of the contract.

8. Bidder References (Optional)

Once the written evaluations are completed, DSHS may contact the references provided by the top-ranked Bidder(s) in order to investigate past performance and validate information in Bidder Responses. In submitting a Response, Bidder agrees that it shall hold harmless DSHS and any individuals identified as references from and against liability resulting from the provision of information or the receipt and use of that information in evaluating Bidder's Response.

While additional points may be awarded for superior performance and reliability as demonstrated through references (see Section E.3. above), references will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. DSHS may reject a Response and consider a Bidder as non-responsible if a reference provides negative information about a Bidder's past performance.

DSHS may, at any time, require additional or substitute references to determine the Bidder's experience and level of responsibility. If the reference check process reveals information that should properly be considered in evaluating Bidder's responses, DSHS may, in its sole discretion, reconvene the evaluation panel to reconsider the evaluation scoring in light of the information obtained.

9. (Optional) Oral Interview/Evaluation

In addition to evaluating the written response, DSHS may invite one or more of the highest scoring Bidders to interview which shall be separately evaluated.

10. Selection of Apparent Successful Bidder

The Bidder that receives the highest total number of possible points will be presented to DSHS management for consideration as a finalist for the Apparent Successful Bidder.

The selection process shall determine which Bidder provides the best value in meeting the needs of DSHS. Selection of the Apparent Successful Bidder depends upon DSHS' assessment of multiple factors, including Bidders' qualifications, capabilities, efficiency, experience, reliability, responsibility, integrity, quality of proposed services and deliverables, timeliness, cost and potential impact on DSHS' needs. DSHS may consider whether the Response encourages diverse contractor participation; whether the Response provides competitive pricing, economies and efficiencies; whether the Bidder considers human health and environmental impacts; whether the Response appropriately weighs cost and non-cost considerations; and life cycle cost, as applicable. DSHS may also consider a Bidder's performance on prior State or other contracts and may reject Responses of any Bidder who has failed to perform satisfactorily under any previous contract with the state or another party. DSHS reserves the right to select a Bidder whose Response is deemed to offer the best overall value and that is in the best interests of DSHS and the State of Washington.

DSHS management shall make the final determination as to which Bidder, initially designated as finalist(s), shall be officially selected and announced on WEBS as the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) on or about the date and time set forth in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. DSHS may also notify the Apparent Successful Bidder and the unsuccessful Bidder(s) of its determination via email on or about the date and time specified in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule.

DSHS' decision will be subject to the execution of a Contract satisfactory to DSHS within a reasonable period of time following the announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder on WEBS. In the event the parties are unable to reach agreement on the final details of a Contract, consistent with Attachment A, Sample Contract, DSHS shall have the option of negotiating with the next highest ranked Bidder and of revising the announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder.

**SECTION F
BIDDER DEBRIEFING
AND PROTEST PROCEDURE**

1. Debriefing Conferences

No later than 5:00 p.m. on the third business day following the posted announcement of Successful Bidder(s) on WEBS, Bidders may send an email to the Coordinator requesting a Debriefing Conference. Unless a different date is agreed upon by the Coordinator, the Debriefing Conference will be held on a date designated in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. Discussion at the debriefing conference will be limited to the following:

- If the Bidder's Response was rejected, the reason for its rejection
- Evaluation and scoring of the Bidder's Response
- Critique of the Response based on the evaluation
- Review of Bidder's final score in comparison with the other final scores

No comparisons between Responses will be allowed during the Debriefing Conference, which shall be conducted by telephone, unless the Coordinator agrees to an in-person meeting, and shall last for a maximum period of thirty minutes.

2. Grounds and Filing of Protests

A Bidder who has participated in a Debriefing Conference may file a formal Protest if the Bidder asserts that there are facts that indicate error in the evaluation of Responses on one or more of the following grounds:

- Bias, discrimination or conflict of interest on the part of the evaluator or in the process
- Mathematical errors in computing the score
- Non-compliance with procedures described in the Solicitation document or in DES policy

Protests must be emailed to the Solicitation Coordinator and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) on the fifth (5th) business day following the day of the Bidder's Debriefing Conference. The Protest must adhere to the requirements set forth in this Section or it will not be considered. This Protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to Bidders from DSHS under this Solicitation.

Protests must include the protestor's mailing address and phone number and the name of the individual responsible for filing the Protest. The Protest must state the Solicitation number and title, the grounds for the Protest, specific facts to support these grounds, and a description of the relief or corrective action being requested.

Protests not based on one of the grounds set forth in this Section will be rejected. It is not grounds for a protest to question an evaluator's professional judgment on the quality of a Response or DSHS' assessment of its own needs or requirements.

3. DSHS Protest Review Process

The Coordinator will immediately forward any Protest to the Chief of Central Contracts

and Legal Services to assign to a Protest Coordinator for review. The Protest Coordinator, an individual who was not involved in the Solicitation, will consider the record and all available facts and will endeavor to issue a decision within ten business days following receipt of the Protest. If additional time is required, the protesting party will be notified of the delay.

In the event a Protest may involve the conduct of or information submitted by another Bidder that also submitted a Response, such Bidder will be given an opportunity to submit its views and any relevant information on the issue(s) raised by the protest to the Solicitation Coordinator.

4. Determination of Protests

The Protest Coordinator shall issue a written determination regarding the Protest. This written determination shall include one or more of the following determinations:

- Upholding DSHS determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder on the basis that there are insufficient facts to establish the alleged error; or
- Upholding DSHS' determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder on the basis that there are only technical or harmless errors in DSHS' evaluation process; or
- Finding errors and identifying actions which may be taken by DSHS, such as:
 - Correction of errors and reevaluation of all bids,
 - Cancellation and reissuance of the Solicitation (in which case all the Bidders will be notified), or
 - Other corrective actions as may be appropriate

There is no further administrative process or remedy available within DSHS to appeal the determination that resulted in a Protest. If the protesting party does not accept DSHS' determination, the protesting party can seek relief from Superior Court in Thurston County, WA.

**SECTION G
CONTRACTING PROCEDURES**

1. Contract Execution

The Apparent Successful Bidder is expected to sign a contract with DSHS that is substantially the same as Attachment A, Sample Contract, included with this Solicitation, and to enter into any subsequent Contract amendments that may be required to address specific work or services.

DSHS reserves the right to require that some or all of Bidder's Response be incorporated into the Contract, and to negotiate the specific wording of the Statement of Work, based on the requirements of this Solicitation and the terms of the Response submitted by the Apparent Successful Bidder. If changes are requested as part of the Response, DSHS may consider, but shall be under no obligation to agree to, modifications to the General Terms and Conditions of Attachment A, Sample Contract.

If the Apparent Successful Bidder fails or refuses to sign a Contract within ten business days of delivery by DSHS, DSHS may elect to designate the next highest-ranked finalist as the Apparent Successful Bidder.

2. Insurance

The Apparent Successful Bidder shall provide evidence of its compliance with the insurance requirements included in Attachment A, Sample Contract.

3. Non-Endorsement

The award of a Contract is not an endorsement by the State or DSHS of the Bidder or Bidder's Services and shall not be represented as such by Bidder in any advertising or other publicity materials.

By submitting a Response to this Solicitation, the Bidder agrees to make no reference to DSHS in any literature, promotional materials, brochures, sales presentations or the like without the prior written consent of DSHS.

4. Background Checks

Individuals who will be performing the Contract on behalf of the Apparent Successful Bidder may be required to undergo background checks. Individuals who have disqualifying results (showing crimes and/or negative actions) may not be permitted to provide Services under the Contract.

5. Electronic Payment

The State prefers to utilize electronic payment in its transactions. The successful Bidder will be required to register in the Statewide Vendor Payment system, <https://ofm.wa.gov/it-systems/statewide-vendorpayee-services>, prior to submitting a request for payment under their Contract. No payment shall be made until the registration is completed.

6. Subcontractor / Prompt Payment & Retainage

The Apparent Successful Bidder (ASB) is required to pay each subcontractor for satisfactorily completed work performed under this prime Contract within thirty (30) days from the receipt of each payment the ASB receives from the Agency. ASB further agrees to return any retainage payments to each subcontractor within thirty (30) days after the subcontractor's work is satisfactorily completed and any liens have been secured. Any delay or postponement of payment within this time period may occur only for a good cause following written approval of the Agency. In addition, the Agency will not pay the ASB for subcontractor work unless the ASB can show that a prompt payment method for subcontractors is established.

If the Contract that results from the Solicitation includes the use of a subcontractor(s), the above clause will be added to the Contract requiring prompt payment and retainage for subcontractor(s).