



REQUEST FOR
QUALIFICATIONS AND QUOTATION
No. 2434-846

DSHS Administration:
DDA and AL TSA/RCS

Title: **Contracted Residential Evaluators**

Solicitation Schedule	
Event	Date and Time
DSHS posts Competitive Solicitation.	April 4, 2024 by 5:00 PM PDT
Pre-Bid Conference (See Link in Section C, Paragraph 5 of this RFQQ)	April 10, 2024 at 11 AM PDT
Bidder questions are due	April 11, 2024 by 5:00 PM PDT
Proposals are due	May 6, 2024 by 5:00 PM PDT
Anticipated Contract Start Date	July 1, 2024
Estimated Contract Performance Period	July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028

Responses must be submitted to Donna Beatty, Solicitation Coordinator, Department of Social and Health Services; Facilities, Finance and Analytics Administration; Central Contracts and Legal Services
Email: Donna.Beatty@dshs.wa.gov

Solicitation and Amendments will be posted on:

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

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

Applicable WEBS Commodity Codes: 952-43, 952-62, 952-77, 918-67 and 958-56

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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SECTION A CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

1. Purpose

This Competitive Solicitation is issued in order to assist the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration's (AL TSA) Division of Residential Care Services (RCS) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). AL TSA/RCS and DDA are seeking qualified firms with staff, or individuals to serve as residential community setting evaluators, with respect to standards and requirements imposed by statutes, administrative rules, DSHS policies and procedures and established residential service guidelines. Due to need, AL TSA/RCS and DDA are especially interested in receiving Responses from those able to service the eastside of Washington State. There is no set number of contracts that will be awarded as a result of this Solicitation.

2. Background

The Department of Social and Health Services, Washington's largest state agency, 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*. DSHS is comprised of two support Administrations and six direct service Administrations. Each service Administration provides specialized services to Washington state citizens in need.

Aging and Long-Term Support Administration's (AL TSA) mission is to transform lives by promoting choice, independence, and safety through innovative services. AL TSA's vision is where vulnerable adults live with good health, independence, dignity and control over the decisions that affect their lives. Residential Care Services (RCS) is one of five divisions within AL TSA. RCS leads routine surveys and inspections to ensure providers follow state and federal regulations. RCS' objectives include advocacy partnerships with vulnerable individuals, their representatives, family members, providers, and others working for their benefit. RCS employs more than 300 staff who are tasked with the licensing, certification, and regulatory oversight to ensure quality of care in over 3,600 licensed and certified residential long-term care settings statewide.

Developmental Disabilities Administration's (DDA) mission is to transform lives by providing support and fostering partnerships that empower people to live the lives they want. People with developmental disabilities and their families are valued in our state and DDA's programs are aimed to help those individuals get services and supports based on need and choice. DDA's values include respect, person-centered service planning, partnerships and community participation. DDA employs more than 3,700 staff. DDA manages the certification and oversight of quality of care in over 110 certified community settings statewide.

Please view additional information on AL TSA, DDA and other Administrations through the DSHS' *Our Future Transformed* booklet at [this link](#).

As mentioned above, AL TSA's Residential Care Services Division (RCS) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) certifies and evaluates service providers' operations. Typically, evaluations and follow-ups are conducted by contracted Residential Evaluators, as assigned by AL TSA/RCS and DDA.

Specifically, ALTSA/RCS' evaluations are for Supported Living (SL), Group Homes (GH), and Group Training Homes (GTH). ALTSA/RCS' evaluations for these providers are conducted at least once every two years, or approximately 80 statewide annually, or 160 every two years.

DDA's evaluations are for Alternative Living (AL), Companion Home (CH), Intensive Habilitation Services (IHS), Overnight Planned Respite Services (OPRS), Children's State Operated Living Alternatives (SOLA), and Stabilization, Assessment and Interventions Facility (SAIF) providers. Evaluations for DDA are conducted at least once a year, or approximately 110 statewide annually.

For better coverage throughout the state, ALTSA/RCS and DDA are recruiting additional Residential Evaluators. The newly awarded contracts will also end on June 30, 2024.

3. Project Scope

The successful Bidder(s) will evaluate providers of community residential services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are supported through any of the following types of Service Providers:

Under ALTSA/RCS:

- Group Home (GH)
- Group Training Home (GTH)
- Supported Living (SL)

Under DDA:

- Alternative Living (AL)
- Children's State Operated Living Alternatives (Children's SOLA)
- Companion Home (CH)
- Intensive Habilitation Services for Children (HIS)
- Overnight Planned Respite Services (OPRS)
- Stabilization, Assessment and Intervention Facility (SAIF)

As assigned, Residential Evaluators shall inspect Provider facility(ies) and client homes to conduct an on-site evaluation of the Provider's administrative stability and compliance with requirements. In addition, Evaluations are to ensure that the quality of services delivered to DSHS clients' meets the requirements described in Exhibit B (Related Policies and Resources) to Sample Contract Attachment A.

Each evaluation will be followed by an Exit Conference where the Residential Evaluator, the DSHS Program and the Provider will discuss findings. The Contractor shall submit an Evaluation Report following each Evaluation and Exit Conference.

Due to the complexity of Residential Evaluator training, no subcontracting shall be allowed under the awarded contracts. In addition, Residential Evaluators must not currently hold a contract with DSHS for the provision of employment, residential or other direct support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Bidder shall identify the key personnel it shall utilize in performing this Contract, and their experience and qualifications, as part of its Response.

NOTE: If awarded a Contract, Bidder shall not make changes to such Key Personnel during the term of the Contract except as requested or approved in advance by DSHS.

Bidders should also be aware that ALTSA/RCS and DDA Program Coordinators, at their sole discretion, shall determine which and the number of evaluation service requests each Residential Evaluation Contractor receives. DSHS makes no guarantee on the number of service requests each awarded Contractor shall receive.

Prior to submitting their Response, Bidders should carefully review Attachment A: Sample Contract Statement of Work to clearly understand DSHS's requirements and expectations of the work to be completed.

4. Bidder Qualifications

a. Minimum Qualifications: In order for a Bidder's Response to be considered, the Bidder's proposed Residential Evaluator(s) must meet the following required, minimum qualifications:

- A master's degree in any of the following fields (state the degree that was earned):
 - Social Services,
 - Human Services,
 - Behavioral Sciences,
 - Criminal Law/Justice,
 - Public Administration, or
 - Specify an allied field in which the Proposed Residential Evaluator has earned a master's degree;

OR

- A bachelor's degree **and** two years of social service experience in any of the following fields (state the degree that was earned and the experience being claimed):
 - Social Services,
 - Human Services,
 - Behavioral Sciences,
 - Criminal Law/Justice,
 - Public Administration, or
 - Specify an allied field in which the Proposed Residential Evaluator has earned a bachelor's degree;

OR

- **Five years** of Social Services work experience, which includes a combination of the following professional experience (state the professional experience being claimed):
 - working in the community with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities; evaluating and/or auditing community settings serving individuals with developmental disabilities and interviewing clients in those settings; and/or
 - conducting assessments, planning and monitoring services for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

NOTE: Any Proposed Residential Evaluator that does not meet one of the three criteria listed above will not be considered further.

b. Preferred background, skills, and knowledge. While not required, DSHS prefers that the resumes of Bidders' Proposed Residential Evaluator(s) also include evidence of the following professional knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Assess and develop workable solutions on a variety of critical issues or problems;
- Proficiency in computer system: Microsoft Office, virtual meeting platforms such as Teams and Skype;
- Present information to others in both written and verbal form utilizing various resources while working remotely;
- Written and verbal communication skills, so to compose accurate, clear, and concise Reports;
- Knowledge of applicable programs rules and WACs;
- Strong critical thinking skills;
- Able to work autonomously or as a team making decisions, sometimes in immediate safety situations; and
- Able to assess risk and safety to vulnerable adults or children

c. Pre-Contract Execution requirements. Prior to contract execution, the following requirements must be met:

- Designated Residential Evaluators must undergo and pass a background check. (Note: The background check must be repeated every two years.);
- Bidder and, if applicable, the proposed Residential Evaluator(s) must disclose any potential conflicts of interest that their business or personal relationships with providers of residential services in the State of Washington may pose, as well as their current contract(s) with DSHS for the provision of employment, residential or other direct support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If DSHS determines that an incurable conflict of interest exists, the Bidder or the Residential Evaluator will be disqualified from providing Evaluator Services, which may require that DSHS withdraw its offer of a contract to Bidder.

5. Period of Contract Performance

ALTSA/RCS and DDA intend to award multiple Contracts for the services described in this Solicitation. The period of performance under the Contract(s) shall be from approximately July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028. Additional services that are within the scope of this Solicitation, as determined by ALTSA/RCS and DDA may be added to the Contract in a mutually agreeable amendment.

6. Funding

Awarded Bidder(s) who enter in to ALTSA/RCS and/or DDA Contracts to provide services set forth in this Solicitation shall be paid according to the set fees and terms listed in Attachment A: Sample Contract, Special Terms and Conditions (either Sample Contract Attachment A-1 for ALTSA/RCS or Sample Contract Attachment A-2 for DDA).

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.

Aging and Long Term Support Administration or ALTSA – The DSHS Administration whose mission is to promote choice, independence and safety through innovative services. RCS is a Division of ALTSA.

Alternative Living Services or AL – Community-based, individualized client training, assistance and support services provided to enable a client to live as independently as possible.

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

Apparent Successful Bidder (ASB) – A Bidder submitting a Response to this Solicitation that is evaluated, 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 outlined 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.

CCLS Chief – The manager, or successor, of Central Contracts and Legal Services or successor section or office.

Central Contracts and Legal Services – The DSHS central headquarters contracting office, or successor section or office.

Certified Community Residential Services and Supports or CCRSS – Provider services for DDA clients that are served by ALTSA/RCS living in their own homes in the community - vulnerable adults receiving Supported Living services or are living in a Group Home or a Group Training Home.

Children’s State-Operated Living Alternatives or Children’s SOLA program – A state- operated program intended to provide residential habilitation to children.

Companion Home or CH – The services offered in a typical family residence to no more than one adult DDA client. The home is owned or leased by a Companion Home Provider.

Competitive Solicitation or 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 bids, quotations, or proposals for the consideration of DSHS in contracting to meet its needs. This RFP/RFQ/RFQQ is a Solicitation.

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

Confidential Information or Data – Information that is exempt from disclosure to the public or other unauthorized persons under RCW 42.56 or other federal or state laws. Confidential Information includes, but is not limited to, Personal Information.

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

Contractor – The individual or entity performing services pursuant to this Contract and includes the Contractor’s owners, members, officers, directors, partners, employees, and/or agents, unless otherwise stated in this Contract. For purposes of any permitted Subcontract, “Contractor” includes any Subcontractor and its owners, members, officers, directors, partners, employees, and/or agents.

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.

Debarment – An action taken by a Federal agency or official to exclude a person or business entity from participating in transactions involving certain federal funds.

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.

Developmental Disabilities Administration or DDA – The DSHS Administration whose mission is to provide support and foster partnerships that empower people to live the lives they want. DDA certifies and contracts with Community Residential and Companion Home service providers.

DSHS or "the Department" – The state of Washington Department of Social and Health Services and its employees and authorized agents.

Enhanced Respite Services or ERS – Intended to provide children and youth enrolled with DDA access to short term respite in a DDA contracted, and Division of Licensed Resources (DLR), staffed residential setting.

Evaluation Services – To the on-site, outcome-based inspection and evaluation performed by the Contractor’s designated Evaluator as assigned by the DSHS Contact of Providers according to established.

Evaluator – The individual who conducts the inspection and evaluation of Providers.

Exit Conference – A discussion at the conclusion of a certification evaluation between ALTA/RCS or DDA and the Provider’s Administrator, or designee, and any individuals the Provider chooses, to review the findings of the certification evaluation and potential WAC citations. The Exit Conference allows for opportunity to discuss findings before citations are written and finalized.

Field Manager or FM – The Program Contact.

Group Home or GH – A community-based licensed and certified residential program” residence that is licensed as either an assisted living facility or an adult family home by DSHS under Chapter 388-78A or 388-76 WAC. Group homes provide community residential instruction, supports, and services to two (2) or more clients who are unrelated to the Provider.

Group Training Homes or GTH – A certified non-profit residential facility that provides 24-hour supervision, full-time care, treatment, training, and maintenance for clients as defined under RCW 71A.22.020 and certified under Chapter 388-101 WAC and contract provisions. Group Training Homes offer residential services to clients who are age 18 and older.

Inclusion Plan – A detailed plan showing a Bidder’s actions toward meeting Washington Small and Diverse Business goals on a specific competitive procurement.

Intensive Habilitation Services for Children or IHS Program – A state-operated or contracted program intended to provide short-term habilitative services and supports to children.

Non-compliance – The failure of a Provider to substantially meet regulatory and/or contractual requirements.

Out-of-Home Services or OHS – A residential habilitation service for children and youth outside of the child’s family home. Services are provided in licensed or certified community-based settings.

Overnight Planned Respite Services or OPRS – Services intended to provide short-term intermittent relief for individuals who live with a DDA client as the primary care provider and to provide the opportunity for the client to receive support, care, and community engagement. Services are provided by certified and contracted community residential service providers.

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.

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.

Provider or Service Provider – An individual or entity certified by DSHS who delivers services and support to meet a client’s identified needs.

RCW – The Revised Code of Washington. All references in this Contract to RCW chapters or sections shall include any successor, amended, or replacement statute. Pertinent RCW chapters can be accessed at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/>.

Regulation – Any federal, state, or local regulation, rule, or ordinance.

Residential Care Services or RCS – The Division of AL TSA that certifies Supported Living, Group Home and Group Training Home Service Providers.

Residential Evaluator – The individual who conducts the inspection and evaluation of providers.

Residential Services – Provider services for Supported Living and Group Homes.

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

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 Bid that fully conforms in all material respects to the Solicitation and all its requirements, in both form and substance.

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.

Service Provider or Provider – An individual or entity certified by DSHS who delivers services and supports to meet a client's identified needs.

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

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).

SOLA or Children's State Operated Living Alternatives – A state-operated program intended to provide the services of respite, stabilization or residential habilitation to children.

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

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 bids, quotations, or proposals for the consideration of DSHS in contracting to meet its needs. This RFP/RFQ/RFQQ is a Solicitation.

Stabilization, Assessment, and Intervention Facility or SAIF – A short-term habilitative service for adults focused on reducing a client's target behaviors as identified by their individualized team.

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

Subcontract – Any separate agreement or contract between the Contractor and an individual or entity ("Subcontractor") to perform all or a portion of the duties and obligations that the Contractor is obligated to perform pursuant to this 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 advance approval of DSHS.

Supported Living or SL – Instruction, support and services provided to individuals who live in their own homes in the community. Supports may vary from a few hours per month up to twenty-four (24) hours per day of one-to-one support. Clients pay for their rent, food, and other personal expenses. Support Living providers are certified under Chapter 388-101. WAC.

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)

WAC – The Washington Administrative Code. All references in this Contract to WAC chapters or sections shall include any successor, amended, or replacement regulation. Pertinent WAC chapters or sections can be accessed at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/>.

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 Response Submission date 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's disqualification.

Item	Action	Date
1.	DSHS posts Competitive Solicitation.	04/04/2024
2.	Prospective Bidders should register as a Vendor on WEBS using one of the commodities codes on the cover page of this Solicitation as soon as possible to receive notifications.	As soon as possible
3.	Pre-Bid Conference	04/10/2024 At 11 AM PDT
4.	Bidders may submit Written Questions or Requests for Change in Solicitation Requirements until 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time.	04/11/2024 5:00 PM PDT
5.	DSHS posts responses to written questions.	04/23/2024 By 5:00 PM PDT
6.	Bidders may submit written Complaints by 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time.	04/29/2024 5:00 PM PDT
7.	Bidders must submit a Response by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time.	05/06/2024 5:00 PM PDT
8.	DSHS evaluates Written Responses.	05/07/2024 – 05/14/2024
9.	DSHS Notifies Bidders (via email) who are selected to give Virtual Oral Presentations and schedules dates and times for the Presentations	05/16/2024
10.	Oral presentations, if requested by DSHS.	05/21/2024 – 05/23/2024
11.	DSHS announces the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) on WEBS and via email and begins contract negotiations.	05/30/2024 By 5:00 PM PDT
12.	DSHS notifies unsuccessful Bidder(s) via email.	05/30/2024 By 5:00 PM PDT
13.	Bidders may request a Debriefing conference until 5 p.m. Pacific Time.	06/4/2024
14.	DSHS holds Debriefing conferences, if requested.	06/05/2024 – 06/06/2024
15.	Deadline for submission of Protests by Bidders who participated in a debriefing conference. (5 business days after Bidder's debriefing conference)	06/12/2024 or 06/13/2024
16.	DSHS issues decision on protests, if any protests are filed	06/28/2024

Item	Action	Date
17.	Planned Contract Execution/Start Date.	06/28/2024 and 07/01/2024

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 in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule for Announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s).

3. Amendment, Cancellation/Rejection of Bids, 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 bids 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. Pre-Bid Conference

Bidders are invited to attend a Pre-Bid Conference, which shall be held virtually on the date and time set forth below. The Pre-Bid Conference is an opportunity for Bidders to learn more about the conditions under which a Contract will be performed and to discuss the inclusion plan, especially when subcontracting opportunity may be a part of the Contract. At the Pre-Bid Conference, Bidders will have an opportunity to ask questions and to hear presentations from knowledgeable DSHS personnel. DSHS shall summarize the information shared at the Pre-Bid Conference and post that summary on the DSHS procurement web page and on WEBS as an Amendment to this Solicitation. Bidders may only rely upon information that is included in this

Amendment in preparing their Responses.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 220 457 660 448

Passcode: dwFLtt

OR

Dial-in by phone

+1 564-999-2000,,324125424# United States, Olympia

(833) 322-1218,,324125424# United States (Toll-free)

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 324 125 424#

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 outlined 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 (5) 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, Minority-Owned, and Women-Owned businesses 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 gender or race-based preferential treatment, it does seek equitable representation from Washington Small Businesses as well as the veteran, minority, and women-owned business communities.

According to Chapter 39.26.010 RCW, to qualify as a Washington Small Business, Bidder must meet three (3) requirements:

- a. Location: Bidder's principal office/place of business must be located in and identified as being in the State of Washington. A principal office or principal place of business is a firm's headquarters where business decisions are made and the location for the firm's books and records as well as the firm's senior management personnel.
- b. Size: Bidder must be owned and operated independently from all other businesses and have either: (a) fifty (50) or fewer employees or (b) gross revenue or less than seven million dollars (\$7,000,000) annually as reported on Bidder's federal income tax return or its return filed with the Washington State Department of Revenue over the previous three consecutive years.
- c. WEBS Certification: Bidder must have certified its Washington Small Business status in Washington's Electronic Business Solution ([WEBS](#)).

According to Chapter 43.60A.190 RCW, to qualify as a Certified Washington Veteran-Owned Business, Bidder must meet four (4) requirements:

- a. 51% Ownership. Bidder must be at least fifty-one percent (51%) owned and controlled by:
 - (1) A veteran is defined as every person who at the time he or she seeks certification has received a discharge with an honorable characterization or received a discharge for medical reasons with an honorable record, where applicable, and who has served in at least one of the capacities listed in RCW 41.04.007;
 - (2) A person who is in receipt of disability compensation or pension from the Department of Veteran's Affairs; or
 - (3) An active or reserve member in any branch of the armed forces of the United

States, including the national guard, coast guard, and armed forces reserves.

- b. Washington Incorporation/Location. Bidder must be either an entity that is incorporated in the State of Washington as a Washington domestic corporation or, if not incorporated, an entity whose principal place of business is located within the State of Washington.
- c. WEBS Certification. Bidder must have certified its Veteran-Owned Business status in Washington's Electronic Business Solution ([WEBS](#)).
- d. WDVA Certification. Bidder must have certification documentation to the Washington Department of Veteran's Affairs (WDVA) and be certified by WSVA and listed as such on WDVA's website ([WDVA – Veteran-Owned Businesses](#)).

DSHS encourages Washington Small, Veteran-owned, and MWBE Bidder participation both directly in Response to this Solicitation and as subcontractors to a Prime Bidder.

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> in order 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 based on 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. 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.

12. Acceptance of Solicitation Terms

In submitting a Response, Bidder must include a signed Bid 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.

13. Joint Proposals

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's sole point of contact through the Procurement process. If selected as the 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. DSHS Award Options; Improvement of Bid 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.

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

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.

17. Oral Interviews or Presentations

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

18. Announcement of Successful Bidder(s)

DSHS shall announce the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) on WEBS on the date indicated in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. All announcements of Apparent Successful Bidders 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 bid 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.

19. 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.

1. Attachment B: Bid Submission Letter (Required and Scored)

All Bidders must submit a completed bid 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. This Bid Submission Letter will be crucial to the DSHS response review process and, therefore, must be complete. DSHS will be considering this Bid Submission Letter as an example of the Bidder's ability to write clearly and concisely while following the given guidelines. Because the submission of written reports is an important part of the duties to be performed under the Contracts being procured, up to 300 points may be awarded (out of 1000 possible points that can be awarded for all responsive written materials). The Bid 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 number of points allocated to each answer is indicated next to the question.

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 the spaces immediately below those questions and helps to avoid confusion among evaluators about the question that is being responded to. In this case, attachment documents will be required in order for the Bidder to answer some of the questions in Attachment D. 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, or in the attached documents that are clearly designated as being responsive to a particular question posed in Attachment D. 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.

In Attachment D, Bidder is asked to submit the resumes of each proposed Evaluator that Bidder wants DSHS to consider. While each resume will be reviewed and scored separately, it is the average score of all submitted resumes that will be recorded as bidder's final score for that question

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: Bidder 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 proposal. 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 Washington Small, Minority, Women, and Veteran-owned subcontractors or vendors who may provide services on the project. Responses should reflect the Bidder's sincere efforts to include diverse, Washington Small, and Veteran businesses. Businesses listed in the plan must be certified by OMWBE or DVA, or registered in WEBS as Washington Small businesses. 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 bids. 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 (10) days' notice to seek relief in superior court per RCW 42.56.540.

DSHS is required to publicly post the awarded Bidder(s)'s bid(s) and bid evaluation documents, upon completion of the Solicitation. DSHS shall redact these materials for information identified as proprietary and post them on the DSHS website subsequent to the award of a contract.

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

Bid Responses must be stored in an acceptable electronic format and, if applicable, hard copy format, as set forth in Section 7, below. Bid Responses must be emailed directly to the Coordinator at the email address provided on the cover sheet of this Solicitation Document. Bid 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 Solicitation that also requires 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 ten (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. Bid 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 management, technical and cost proposal components of the Response, as applicable, based upon Bidder’s responses to the questions set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Response Form. Additional evaluation points may be awarded for specific criteria not included on Attachment D, Bidder Response Form only if set forth in this Section.

The maximum number of points available for each Bidder is 2000 points, with 15 bonus points possible as set forth below. The maximum number of points that may be assigned with respect to specific questions is set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Response form. The overall breakdown for assignment of points in evaluating Responses to this Solicitation is as follows:

Bid Submission Letter	300 maximum points
Resumes (all will be scored, then averaged)	700 maximum points
Oral Interview/Presentation.....	700 maximum points
References demonstrating superior reliability and quality.....	300 maximum points (100 points each)

Total 1	

EO 18-03 Response.....	5 maximum points
Certified Washington Veteran-owned Business.....	5 maximum points
Washington Small Business.....	5 maximum points

Total 2	

Total Possible Points	2015 maximum points

4. Written Bid 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.

5. 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 Certified Washington Veteran-owned and/or Washington Small Businesses.

DSHS will evaluate bids for best value and provide a bid preference point in the amount set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Response Form, to any Bidder who certifies that they are a

Washington Small Business (as defined in [\(RCW 39.26.010\(22\)\)](#)) or Certified Washington Veteran-owned Business (according to [\(RCW 43.60A.190\)](#)).

6. 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 bids for best value and provide a bid preference in the amount set forth on 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.

7. Bidder’s References

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 are generally evaluated on a pass/fail basis. DSHS may reject a bid 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.

8. Oral Interview/Evaluation

In addition to evaluating the written Response, DSHS may invite one or more of the highest scoring Bidders to make an oral presentation which shall be separately evaluated.

9. Award to Washington Small and Veteran-owned Businesses

Pursuant to [DES Policy 090-060](#) Supplier Diversity, DDA intends to award Contracts resulting from this competitive Solicitation, estimated at less than \$150,000, to the highest-ranked responsive and responsible Washington Small Business (as defined in RCW 39.26.010(22)) or Certified Washington Veteran-owned Business (as defined in RCW 43.60A.190), unless there is no responsive and responsible bid from a Washington Small or Veteran-owned Business.

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. In the event multiple Contracts will be awarded, the applicable number of top-scoring Bidders will be considered.

The selection process shall determine which Bidder provides the best value in meeting the needs of DSHS. Selection of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) 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 Bid 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(s), 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(s) 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 proposal 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 Bids 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 (30) 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 Bids 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 (10) 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(s) on the basis that there are insufficient facts to establish the alleged error; or
- Upholding DSHS' determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) 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:
 - i. Correction of errors and reevaluation of all bids,
 - ii. Cancellation and reissuance of the Solicitation (in which case all the Bidders will be notified), or
 - iii. 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(s) 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 Bid 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 (10) 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 on 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.