



Business Services and Operator Bidder's Conference
Clark/Cowlitz County
July 18, 2016, 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

WSW Staff: Chelsea Chunn, Jeanne Bennet, Susan Pagel, Alyssa Joyner

Prospective Bidders: Dave Cole (ResCare); Darcy Hoffman (ResCare); Matt Sneed (ResCare); Eka Frimpong (ESD); Michael Benko (ESD); Bob Dingethal (ResCare); Jeanette Santiago, (Greater Vancouver Chamber); Lindsey Summerhill (ESD); Bill Marcum (Kelso Longview Chamber); John McDonagh (Greater Vancouver Chamber)

Chelsea Chunn, WSW Director of Workforce Services, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. She then gave a PowerPoint presentation and provided an overview of Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) WIOA and highlighted some items:

- **RFP Timeline Change:** Proposals are now due **August 8, 2016 by 4 p.m.** instead of August 4, 2016. Applicants will be notified of a request for presentations by **August 16, 2016** but should be prepared to present on August 18, 2016 to the review committee. RFPs are due by 4 p.m. on August 8, 2016 and must be sent electronically to: info@swwdc.org. Absolutely no late proposals accepted. After the Evaluation/Review Committee reads your proposal, they may have questions and ask you to do a short presentation (10-15 minutes) on August 18, 2016. Be prepared for that. Applicants are encouraged to come to our Board Meeting on September 14 from 4-6 p.m. to find out if they have been awarded the contract.
- **WSW/SWWDC** – Overview of our organization and our Strategic Plan and Mission (found on our website at www.swwdc.org). Be sure to align your goals with what is outlined in [WSW's Local Plan](#), [WSW's Strategic Plan 2014-2017](#) and Industry Plans ([Manufacturing](#) and [Health Care](#)) as you think about writing your proposal(s).
- **Business Solutions Services**—WSW is looking for proposals that demonstrate experience working with employers, are flexible and adaptive in their program design and utilize sector strategies. We are looking for a minimum of three partners in any application but encourage more comprehensive partnerships with many partners. There will be scoring on the depth and applicability of partnerships. Location of services can occur at current WorkSource Centers, at partner organizations or at newly established locations in the community. We do not require that services be provided in the WorkSource Centers.
- **Operator**—The Operator RFP could be a consortium proposal or a single agency proposal. It is up to the bidder to determine the most appropriate course of action for providing the services laid out in the RFP on page 9.



- **Creativity** – WIOA legislation has changed the way services are to be delivered. There is an emphasis on creativity and innovation in reaching employers. Be especially thoughtful about creating a menu of services available to all business in the area. Metrics are also a new concept surrounding business services. Bidders are encouraged to explore and suggest partner metrics in addition to the metrics outlined in the Business Solutions RFP. In addition, bidders are also encouraged to see how they can increase access for employers by breaking out of traditional brick and mortar One-Stop models.
- **Job Market Data** – Know the employer market. What positions are expected to grow, decline, etc. Keep current on which industries are in demand. Be sure to communicate with businesses in order to keep up with that ever-changing data.
- **Data Sharing**— This is an important component of the Business Solutions RFP. It is important for the bidding consortium to be clear on how data will be obtained, controlled, shared and monitored. What is the bidding consortiums strategy for ensuring all partners are on the same page and that they provide a coordinated request to regional businesses being served.
- **Continuous Improvement** – Constantly assess your services. Look at where you started, where you want to go, and figure out how to get there. This needs to be explained in detail in the Business Solutions proposal.
- **Services Offered** – The bidding Business Solutions Consortium will need to determine together the menu of services that your group will offer to regional employers. This items listed in the RFP on page 11 are not exhaustive and are meant to provide a framework for thought.
- **Partnerships** – When creating your proposal, WSW would encourage partnership wherever possible particularly as it relates to maximizing the use of all resources. Focus on what you do well; engage partners to help you do the rest. Include letters of partnership commitment in the RFP, not simply letters of support from partners. More impressive than partnering with one agency is a consortium of agencies. This is required in the Business Solutions RFP.
- **Outcomes** – Although performance numbers are important, the goal is to deliver services that provide significant impact to employers and job seekers. Don't allow targets to drive your programming. Ask yourselves, "How do we design a great consortium?" Let that be your driving force and the performance numbers will come.
- **Letters of Commitment** – Do not submit letters of support or recommendation for the Business Solutions Proposal. Bidders who submit these types of letters will have their application automatically rejected. Letters should detail what the actual commitment from partners is— including partner roles, space, staff, access to a customer management system, resources, materials/supplies, funding, etc. A maximum of five letters is allowed for the Business Solutions proposal. Focus on those partners with the largest resources.



- **Support** – The Power Point Presentation, updated RFP's, a list of bidder conference questions, and a list of FAQ's will be posted on our website by Friday, July, 22, 2016. If you have any additional questions, please submit to info@swwdc.org. The FAQ sheet will be updated each Thursday (only if additional questions are asked during the current week). All questions for the week must be submitted before 3 p.m. on Wednesday of that week to be posted with the FAQ's for the week. For the sake of fairness, no questions can be answered over the phone or by emailing Chelsea directly.

Question: What is the main goal of the Business Solutions Request for Proposals?

Answer: The main goal is to coordinate and streamline multiple partner engagement and ask of local employers in Southwest Washington. In addition, the goal is to create a better tracking and measurement system for services catered towards employers in the region.

Question: Based on explanation of expectations, is there a level of disappointment in received RFP's for Business Solutions in the past?

Answer: Not disappointed but looking to capture the opportunities in WIOA to expand and connect all partners to a robust and comprehensive business services solutions processes and protocols.

Question: How much is available for Business Solutions Services per year?

Answer: Funds will be available annually at approximately \$200,000 per year based on federal and state allocations to WSW. Procurement will occur for these funds every three years.

Question: What kinds of businesses are eligible for services?

Answer: Any employer is eligible for services if they have employees (this includes small, midsized, and large employers). If a company is a startup or does not yet have employees, it may be more appropriate to have Economic Development partners or Chambers working with them until they are ready to hire employees. However, there is an important role for preparing workers prior to hiring. It should be considered an iterative process of information sharing.

Question: Is WSW looking to contract with one lead agency or multiple separate organizations?

Answer: Could be either way—A lead organization could apply and then could issue subcontracts to other participating partners once awarded funds, OR A lead organization could apply with the intent that WSW would issue individual separate contracts directly with all consortium partners. Whichever way a bidding consortium chooses to proceed this should be documented and described in your proposal under Relationships and Collaboration.

Question: Is WorkSourceWA able to report on all of the metrics listed in the Business Solution Consortium Proposal?

Answer: Monster Solution Inc., who is responsible for developing the new WorkSourceWA data reporting and tracking platform for both the job seeker side and the employer side, is still working on reporting functions. With this said, WSW is not sure if all metrics will be able to be pulled out of that system. We will not know this until later this fall. If the system is unable to accommodate these metrics, they will either be adjusted or an alternative method of tracking will be established with selected providers.



Question: What is the difference between the Business Solutions Proposal and the Operator Proposal?

Answer: The Business Solutions RFP is external facing, meaning that it is focused on providing services to local employers that are coordinated. The Operator RFP is internal facing directly for daily oversight of the regions WorkSource center including facilities management, professional development for staff, and workshop calendar coordination amongst other activities described in the [Operator RFP](#).

Question: What is WSW's expectation on branding related to Business Services and WorkSource?

Answer: WSW recognizes the importance of branding Business Services, especially since this RFP is a consortium application. WSW recommends bidders suggest in their proposal under the "Business Solution Consortium Program Design" section how they would approach branding or marketing Business Solutions Services. WSW is working with partners at both other Workforce Development Councils and state authorities to gain additional guidance on this issue. All recommendations will be considered by WSW and additional guidance and approach will be provided to sub-recipients upon contract award.

Question: Are the terms Workforce and WorkSource interchangeable?

Answer: No. Workforce describes the system of providing workforce services. This includes local Workforce Development Councils, Economic Development, Community-Based Organizations, WorkSource and many more. Workforce is all the players who help connect job seekers to work and employers to job seekers. WorkSource, however, is one entity. Also known as [American Job Centers](#), designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers 18+ under one roof. These services can include career pathway coaching, resume/cover letter support, training service connection and referrals and job placement amongst other services.

Question: When it comes to the Chamber and Chamber business members partnering with WorkSource, do you see any conflict of interest or competition between other agencies, such as staffing agencies whose goal is to work with businesses to obtain employees as well?

Answer: No. Staffing agencies and other employment agencies should be considered a partner and a resource for our work together. WorkSource can bring services to their potential job seekers such as training dollars or on-the-job training support after hire. The biggest barrier to this occurring more frequently now is making sure that all partners including WorkSource and staffing agencies understand each other's roles and how to work together. The Business Solutions RFP offers an opportunity to do this better or differently moving forward. In order to do this successfully the consortium will need to utilize each entities strong partnerships to coordinate all employer and job seeker work.

Question: Is funding in the Operator RFP only for salary?

Answer: No. Funding in the Operator RFP can include staff salary, benefits, taxes as well as general operating costs and space costs. For additional guidance please reference the budget pages in the RFP. If there is an item you would like to request but it is not in there, please include it for consideration with your application. There is \$82K available for Clark and \$18K available for Cowlitz/Wahkiakum.