



Workforce Southwest Washington Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Alliance for Economic Prosperity

I. INTRODUCTION

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW), a Washington State 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation, is a public-private partnership that invests approximately \$8-\$10 million annually in programs that provide training and education, job search, career exploration and job placement services for businesses, job seekers and youth in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties in Washington State.

These programs and services are delivered through contracts WSW has with nonprofit organizations and private companies. WSW is responsible for the administration and finances of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs operating within three counties in Southwest Washington. WSW provides oversight of the region's public workforce development system, including the WorkSource one-stop American Job Centers in Vancouver and Kelso and the Next youth center in Vancouver, to ensure the highest quality employment and training services for businesses and job seekers.

II. PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

WSW is seeking proposals from qualified entities to facilitate the development of a network comprised of community-based organizations and social service agencies in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties, with the common goal of connecting individuals to living-wage employment. This network will unlock and coordinate expertise and resources across each participating partner to provide their common customers a coordinated progression of services that leads to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity.

This project will encompass three phases: **I. Investigation, II. Recommendations, III. Implementation.** It is highly recommended that multiple partners apply together to complete the three phases. Further, WSW will give preference in award via a scoring system (extra 10 points out of 100) to partners that represent local and diverse community voices, as well as partners that have research and data collection expertise.

The foundational principle of this project is that no one organization can build, provide programs and services, and sustain economic opportunity alone. Creating greater alignment, collaboration, and strategy amongst partners, focused on economic opportunity, will enable them to jointly develop solutions that individually they could not provide and to work together for the health of the whole system rather than pursuing symptomatic fixes to individual pieces.

With a group focus on upward economic opportunity, WSW believes we will get closer to the vision that Southwest Washington is a region where economic prosperity and growth exists for every person.

Phase I: Investigation

Serving businesses, job seekers and youth in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.



Partners, Community-Based Organizations and Nonprofits

Gather feedback on current investment strategies, partnership development, and overarching initiatives from partner organizations, community-based organizations, non-profits, and individuals representing historically underserved communities. Document the need for workforce services, training, job search, etc. Who needs it? Who is getting it or not? WSW believes that this will allow for a deep and shared reflection to enable WSW and partner organizations and individuals to appreciate how our current mental models may limit us, and ultimately foster collective creativity. Further, the feedback will provide qualitative information to continuously improve and change as economic recovery continues post COVID-19. It is expected that the Bidder includes specific and clear direction on how this feedback will be collected, and from whom.

Some example questions for Partners are as follows: *Who is served by your program? How do you currently partner with the programs that WSW invests in and facilitates, (WorkSource, Next, SummerWorks, Business Services, etc.)? What programs do you offer in the community? What do you see as your strengths as an organization, your challenges?*

Customers

It is important to incorporate feedback directly from individuals receiving services in the workforce development system and those that are not in the system to ensure a community-led approach to the work. This will help define and prioritize systemic solutions that are relevant and impactful. Honoring the voices and lived experiences of community members strengthens the evaluation of contract outcomes and creates opportunities for service providers and other community organizations to better understand their impact to enact change and innovation more effectively. It is expected that the Bidder includes specific and clear direction on how this will feedback will be collected, placing emphasis on feedback from BIPOC individuals.

Some example questions for Customers are as follows: *What programs and/or organizations have you worked with in your quest for employment/training/etc.? What has been your experience working with multiple organizations in the community? What opportunities exist for improvement? What does job quality mean to you (what's important? Wages? Benefits? Predictable schedule? An inclusive culture where your voice matters? etc.) What challenges are keeping you from working, working full-time, if that's your goal, and/or getting training?*

Phase II: Recommendations

Provide high-level recommendations derived from feedback gained in Phase I. Recommendations should center on solutions to more effectively braid programs and services together to increase efficiency, access, and quality. Further, recommendations should include a chosen method to hold organizations and leadership to a shared understanding and commitment of alignment, collaboration, and strategy into the future.

Phase III: Implementation

Execute the recommendations proposed in Phase II. Implementation will be done in partnership with WSW leadership to ensure consistency of approach, and sustainability of oversight into the future. It is expected that the Bidder includes a specific and clear timeline for implementation, as well as associated deliverables. For example, if a recommendation is to create a shared Memorandum of Understanding



(MOU) that clarifies roles and responsibilities across agencies and community-based organizations providing workforce development services, then this will be included in the timeline for implementation.

III. BUDGET

The budget shall not exceed \$150,000.00 and includes the cost to plan, develop, and implement the project as well as provide monthly reports to WSW.

If additional funding becomes available, any contract awarded may be renegotiated to provide for additional related services. Any contract(s) awarded because of this procurement is contingent upon the availability of funding.

IV. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All proposals must be received by WSW by 5 p.m. Pacific Time on **Friday, April 16th, 2021**. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted.

Submissions should be emailed to mhalliday@workforcesw.org with "Economic Prosperity Partnership" in the subject line and read receipt requested.

Proposals should include:

- Your proposal (10 points)
- Budget – line item and narrative (10 points)
- Information about the multiple partners roles and responsibilities for doing this work (20 points)
 - Specifically, diverse and BIPOC partner commitment
- Information about your company's qualifications for doing this work (20 points)
 - Specifically, financial, and administrative capability
 - Specifically, connection to and representation from BIPOC communities
- Hourly rates and number of hours you expect to spend on the project (5 points)
- A "not to exceed" price for the entire project (5 points)
- Metrics documenting success for the entire project (10 points)
- A detailed strategy and timeline (20 points)

Submissions including multiple organizations committed and participating in the specific project will receive an extra 10 points.

Selected proposals may be invited to present their proposal. No costs for these presentations will be covered.

Project Timeframe

This project is anticipated to begin June 1st, 2021 and end by June 31st, 2022.

Notification

Respondents will be notified via email of the results by May 7th, 2021.

Questions and Answers

Serving businesses, job seekers and youth in Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.



Respondents can send questions to mhalliday@workforcesw.org. Answers will be posted each Wednesday and Friday by 5 p.m. PST [here](#).

V. PROVISIONS AND DISCLAIMERS

1. All solicitations are contingent upon availability of funds.
2. WSW reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received.
3. WSW reserves the right to waive informalities and minor irregularities in offers received.
4. This RFP does not commit WSW to award a contract.
5. WSW may select a provider based on initial offers received, without discussion of such offers. Accordingly, each offer should be submitted on the most favorable terms from a price and technical standpoint.
6. WSW reserves the right to request additional data or oral discussion or documentation in support of written offers.
7. No costs will be paid to cover the expense of preparing a proposal or procuring a contract for services or supplies.
8. All data, material, and documentation originated and prepared by the proposer pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to WSW and be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.
9. Formal notification to award a contract and the actual execution of a contract are subject to receipt of funds anticipated, results of negotiations between selected bidder(s) and WSW staff, and continued availability of funds.
10. The contents of the proposal are truthful and accurate, and the named proposer agrees to comply with the policies stated in this RFP.
11. WSW may decide not to fund part or all of a proposal even though it is found to be in the competitive range if, in the opinion of WSW, the services proposed are not needed, or the costs are higher than WSW finds reasonable in relation to overall funds available, or if past management concerns lead WSW to believe the proposer has undertaken more services than it can successfully provide.
12. WSW reserves the right to modify or alter the requirements and standards set forth in this RFP based on program requirements mandated by funding agencies.
13. WSW encourages the use of informal resolution to address complaints or disputes related to RFP process issues. Written appeals and disputes should be addressed to Workforce Southwest Washington, 805 Broadway, Suite 412, Vancouver, WA 98660. Any bidder who wishes to contest the award(s) of funding under this RFP must write to WSW within 30 calendar days from the date the funds are awarded. WSW will issue a decision on appeals within 30 days of receipt.
14. The contract award will not be final until WSW and the proposer have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement. WSW reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. No program activity may begin prior to final WSW approval of the award and execution of a contractual agreement between the successful proposer and WSW.
15. WSW reserves the right to cancel an award immediately if new regulations or policy makes it necessary to change the program purpose or content substantially, or to prohibit such a program.
16. WSW reserves the right to accept proposals with minor clerical errors such as misspellings, incorrect page order or similar non-consequential errors.

Workforce Southwest Washington is an equal opportunity employer/program.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay Service 711.