**Questions and Answers**

**RFP: MICRO2020**

Q. I would like to understand what constitutes a “network of microenterprise organizations with statewide reach.” I am not aware that any such organization exists other than, perhaps, the Washington State Microenterprise Association. Is this RFP specifically targeting the Washington State Microenterprise Association?

A. The language within the Legislative bill did not call out any specific entity to do this work. Therefore, this RFP isn’t targeted specifically to anyone. See Legislation Below.

ESHB 1109

Chapter 415, Laws of 2019

Section 129

(69) … a grant to assist people with limited incomes in nonmetro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses. The grant recipient must be a nonprofit organization involving a network of microenterprise organizations and professionals to support micro entrepreneurship and access to economic development resources.

Agency Detail

Department of Commerce

**Microenterprise Grants**

Funding is provided for a grant to assist people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses. (General Fund-State)

Q. Could we be eligible if it proposed a project that would move it towards becoming a network with statewide reach by replicating its new branch office in Port Angeles in additional rural communities (e.g., in Mt. Vernon and/or in Yakima) in partnership with WSU’s Washington Small Business Development Center (especially given that WSBDC is clearly a network with statewide reach – which by virtue of our partnership would be assisting people of limited resources in non-metro areas)?

A. Eligibility for this RFP is based specifically on the minimum qualifications. If an entity meets the minimum qualifications it will pass through to evaluators for scoring.

Q. Section 1.5 says the period of any contract arising out of this RFP “is tentatively scheduled to start on or about September 18, 2019 and to end on June 30, 2021.” If awarded a contract, must the work start and end on these dates, or could the start and end periods be other dates as long as the start date is not before September 18, 2019 and the end date is not after June 30, 2021 (e.g., an 18 month project starting January 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021)?

A. You are correct. The start date is a tentative date for the contract to start; however, this could be different. The end date is a firm date.

Q. Section 1.5 says that “Commerce reserves the right to extend the contract for two one-year periods.” Would these extensions be no-cost extensions (simply allowing for additional time), or would they be more like option periods with an opportunity to request additional funding if granted?

A. This is standard language within our RFP document. It is unknown if there will be future funding. The funding for this RFP ends June 30, 2021, no extension will be granted for time to complete the work proposed. As far as additional funding, we would not know anything about extending this contract for the same work, until a budget passed in 2021.

Q. Section 2.9 of the RFP says that vendors may submit a complaint to Commerce prior to 5 days before the bid response deadline if (a) the solicitation unnecessarily restricts competition . . . or (c) the solicitation requirements are inadequate or insufficient to prepare a response.” If we were to submit a complaint on the basis that this appears to be a sole source contract for the Washington State Microenterprise rather than a competitive process, and/or that 16 days is not a sufficient amount of time to develop a competitive proposal and requesting an extension of the deadline, would this in any way negatively impact the evaluation of our proposal?

A. The RFP process is competitive, fair and transparent. The RFP Coordinator who receives the complaint does not evaluate the proposals. If a complaint is submitted, this in no way would negatively impact the evaluation of a proposal, by the evaluators.

Q. What is the measure of success for this projects from the standpoint of the non-profit small businesses training/coaching/consultation organization that will be selected to develop and implement the statewide plan to provide assistance to people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses?

A. It is our expectation that the proposer will determine what success looks like from a measurement perspective since they would be the subject matter expert.

Q. Will the government allow for virtual training and small businesses training/coaching/consultation as part of achieving the development and implementation the statewide plan to provide assistance to people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses?

A. If the technology is available and can reach the intended audience it would be allowable. It is up to the proposer to explain how they would implement the requirements of the RCW.

Q. Is the government expecting, requiring, or giving preference to a local entity that will provide assistance to people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses?

A. No, the proposals will be evaluated based on the evaluation procedures outlined in Section 4, of the RFP.

Q. How often does the government expect that the non-profit small businesses training/coaching/consultation organization provide face to face hands-on tactical engagement with assisting people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses?

A. The RFP identifies the bidder to “develop and implement a statewide PLAN” Commerce expects bidders to give us their proposal to best meet the Purpose and Objectives of the RFP.

Q. Would the non-profit small businesses training/coaching/consultation organization be responsible for marketing the program or designing and delivering the service with the state of Washington responsible for marketing?

A. The selected organization will be responsible for marketing the program. However; the Department of Commerce would collaborate and assist where possible.

Q. Based on expectations and objectives of State Of Washington Department Of Commerce, what is the quantity of events and activities required to assisting people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses?

A. Commerce expects bidders to give us their proposals to best meet the Purpose and Objectives of the RFP.

Q. Who is responsible for the onboarding of the client's selected participants who qualify as people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses.

A. The bidder.

Q. Will the State Of Washington Department Of Commerce be providing the venues and materials, meals/refreshments to stakeholders receiving benefit for the service when they register as participants who qualify as people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses.

A. No

Q. What does sustainability mean to The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce, and how is it formally defined in terms of assisting people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses?

A. There is no formal definition on the part of Commerce.

Q. What does small business look like when assisting people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses? Is it based on product or service and is there a $$$ US Dollar value of income/revenue expected for applicants who receive services or training/coaching/consultation.

A. There is no set threshold as every small business is unique in terms of their business model and individual needs/goals. The SBA considers a small business as one that employs fewer than 500 employees. Commerce’s Office of Economic Development & Competitiveness typically deals with businesses with 1 to 20.

Q. Does The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce expect services to be provided over Weekends or during the weekday M-F from 9 to 5 PM?

A. Commerce expects bidders to give us their proposals to best meet the Purpose and Objectives of the RFP.

Q. Does The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce already/currently have the client/stakeholders who will benefit from assistance in non-metro areas of the state seeking to start and sustain small businesses or is it expected that the small businesses training/coaching/consultation entity would identify, validate, and secure the clients (is there a client/stakeholder applicant pool or portal to identify them?

A. It is expected that the proposer would perform this role. Commerce does not have an accurate database of small businesses or individuals seeking to start a small business.

Q. What resources will The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce provide to the small businesses training/coaching/consultation entity and what type of market analysis has the The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce performed to determine the viability of various types of business activities in the regions and locals covered participants who qualify as people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state start and sustain small businesses.

A. The state has not performed any market analysis of this nature. The Washington State Department of Commerce offers various programs and resources. Those tools are available to all businesses. See [www.startup.choosewashingtonstate.com](http://www.startup.choosewashingtonstate.com).

Q. Is The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce OK with public/private partnerships (Non Profit partnering with Consulting – Private For-Profit) to fulfill the requirements of the contract with the Private For-Profit entity being the entity with a physical location (office) in Washington State, specifically Hanford, Washington?

A. As outlined in the RFP, the non-profit would be considered the lead contractor. There are no provisions that eliminate a for-profit private firm as a subcontractor on the project.

Q. Regarding schedule, resources, and concentration does The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce expect contiguous/simultaneous delivery of services across the state footprint to deliver services for assistance in non-metro areas of the state seeking to start and sustain small businesses?

A. There is no stated requirement and Commerce would rely on the proposer to determine the schedule, scope and delivery of the stated services.

Q. Regarding the location(s) of the services to be provided, can The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce provide an indication of the location/venues stipulated/expected for provision of the physical small businesses training/coaching/consultation to fulfill contract requirements?

A. This would be up to the proposer to determine.

Q. Can this requirement be facilitated as an SBA 8 (A) Set-Aside?

A. Commerce does not have a position on this matter. It would be up to the proposer to determine this.

Q. Can this requirement be facilitated as a HUBZone Small Business Set Aside?

A. The proposer would need to determine this possibility.

Q. Can this requirement be facilitated on the GSA PSS (00CORP PSS) 874-1 SIN Schedule as a Small Business 8(a) Set-Aside? If so, will The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce add this contract vehicle to allow small businesses an adequate opportunity to compete and support this requirement?

A. The proposer would need to determine this. Commerce does not have plans to add this to the contract.

Q. Can you guide the level of effort expected (Total Labor Hours, Labor Hours by Key Team Members, etc.) to complete the Performance Work Statement (PWS)?

A. This is up to the proposer to determine, based on their own service model.

Q. Does the WS - DOC anticipate that required personnel (Key & Non-Key) supporting RFP MICRO2020 work remotely or on client site at WS - DOC offices in Olympia WA.

A. The proposer would be expected to provide the necessary space to work remotely with periodic meetings at Commerce offices.

Q. In trying to calculate annual work hours for this project (RFP MICRO2020), does WS - DOC use 2,080 (i.e., 40 hours/week \* 52 weeks) for employees/contractors according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Standard? If NO, Please advise on how many hours per year are established for a full time under this contract? Does the WS - DOC calculate annual work hours based on 2,080, 1920, 1860, or “other” please state?

A. Commerce uses the 2,080 calculation.

Q. Is this the first issue of this solicitation (is this a re-compete of an existing WS - DOC requirement or a new requirement?

A. This is a new solicitation based on recent legislation that changed the way the program was managed.

Q. Can you advise on if there were/are an incumbent provider(s) for these services? If Yes – Who is/are the incumbent(s) and can you provide a previous contract number?

A. This is new Legislation; however, for biennium 17-19, Legislation was similar and Commerce was required by the legislation to contract with Washington State Microenterprise Association to, “assist people with limited incomes in non-metro areas of the state to start and sustain small businesses and embrace the effects of globalization.” The Contract number was S19-75105-597

Q. If there is an incumbent, is there a reason the known incumbent may be precluded from bidding on this new or existing requirement?

A. The incumbent is not precluded from bidding on this project.

Q. Is this requirement part of a Multiple Award Schedule/Contract or a Single Award Schedule/Contract?

A. The goal is to award a single contract for this RFP.

Q. Has The Washington State Dept. of Commerce held preliminary meetings with specific contractors interested in responding to this solicitation?

A. No.

Q. Is it estimated that full funding exists for this solicitation? If so, is there an intended Maximum/Minimum funding threshold?

A. This is covered in sections 1.4 and 1.5 of the solicitation.

Q. Is the McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act (SCA) Wage Determination in force with this RFQ? If so, can you advise a) What SCA/Wage numbers are applicable? And b) What City and State SCA Wage Determination takes precedence?

A. The funding is not Federal funding. Also, this is not a construction project where there is a prime contractor.

Q. Does this requirement stipulate that the proposed bidder must hold an active Form DD254 Facility Clearance "Before BEING AWARDED” this contract?

A. No.

Q. If an active Form DD254 Facility Clearance is required will arrangements be made to assist and provide adequate time to process the required paperwork or are bidders without DD254 Facility Clearance not advised to participate?

A. This is not a requirement of this project.

Q. For areas where strict requirements exist for an active Secret/Top-Secret Facility Clearance would government accept a Contractor Teaming Agreements (CTA) under the GSA Construct that fulfills Facility Clearance requirement?

A. There are no such requirements related to this for this project.

Q. For areas where strict requirements exist for the number and types of past performance as a PRIME Vendor; would The State Of Washington Department Of Commerce accept a Contractor Teaming Agreements (CTA) under the GSA Construct that fulfills Past Performance requirements?

A. There are no such requirements related to this.