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**RFP DODEI2020 Answers to Submitted Questions**

The Question & Answer period is closed. Proposals are due January 31, 2020 no later than 4:00 pm.

**Goals**

1. What DEI organization-wide goals, if any, does the Department of Commerce already have in place?

***One of the approaches to how we do our work in our strategic plan is by “equitably distributing agency funding.” In addition to our strategic plan, the Director established “mission aligned goals,” one of which is to embrace diversity, equity and inclusion; and building outreach and a community presence across the state.***

1. Do any individual departments within DOC have their own DEI goals?

***The Energy Division is developing environmental justice strategies as a part of the department’s clean energy work. The Community Services and Housing Division has made racial equity, inclusion, and removing implicit bias key areas to focus on as a division.***

1. Does the leadership have any specific goals that it anticipates that the project plan will accomplish? If so, can you list them?

***Yes. Through agency listening sessions conducted between May – August 2019, the agency identified five areas:***

***Communication and Outreach: there is a need for broader and consistent communication about DEI across all mediums.***

***Leadership: leadership needs to be clear that DEI is a priority, but also articulate why it’s a priority. Additionally, the agency must connect DEI to the work of Commerce.***

***Training & Resources: the agency should equip its staff that work inside and outside the agency with a DEI operating context and lens. Additionally, there are opportunities to learn how to remove biases in the recruitment and interview processes when hiring staff.***

***Culture: Awareness of socio-economic status, race, gender identity, nation origin, body type, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnicity should be part of the agency culture.***

***Infrastructure/Operations: agency capacity is needed around the administration of DEI initiatives. From the formation of committees/sub-committees, platforms and the means by which DEI is advanced needs attention.***

1. What is the rationale behind offering the coaching?

***If referring to Objective 1.2.1 Develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan in the request for proposal (RFP), there is a need to ensure leadership approaches this work together since team members come into the conversation with different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and abilities on the topic.***

1. Please describe the top 3-5 key current business challenges / "pain points" that the agency is trying to solve for as a result of this work.

***Please refer to the response to question #3.***

1. What does success look like for this work?

***Success looks like following:***

* ***The establishment of a plan that advances DEI in the agency;***
* ***Better positioned to equip staff with resources and training;***
* ***Advancement across the following areas: communication, leadership, culture, infrastructure/operations, and training/resources***
1. The aforementioned RFP states that "COMMERCE and the director of COMMERCE have made diversity, equity and inclusion one of the top priorities of the agency and seeks to align this priority to the agency mission and goals", is there a public link to these updated missions and goals?

***In addition to our strategic priorities noted in the*** [***2019 Agency Resource Book***](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020-ResourceBook-Final.pdf)***, in June 2019, and under a new director goal, “Mission Aligned Goals”, the department intends to “embrace diversity, equity and inclusion.” We look forward to making our DEI imperative more of presence in our operations, goals, policies and processes.***

**Staff**

1. Are there identified executive leadership staff that will be involved with the consultants on the development of the strategic and training plans?

***All members of the executive leadership team (ELT) will participate in the development of the DEI strategic planning process and the development of training plans. Two co-leads can assist in working with prospective contractors, but it is expected that all of the ELT will participate.***

1. Are there other employees, cross-function across the agency, identified to be involved in the development process of the plans?

***Our agency’s Organizational Agility Manager Director and Managing Director for Human Resources may assist in the development process.***

1. In addition to any identified staff who are to participate in the development of the strategic and training plans, are there any limits to whom consultants can include in the process, especially in regards to data gathering?

***To the extent workloads can be balanced, other staff can be included.***

1. With the short period of performance, have key stakeholders been identified within the Department of Commerce to participate in a strategic planning session, and how many people would you expect to attend?

***Yes. We have identified approximately 11-14 staff that will be directly involved, but we are interested in involving a cross section of employees that will vary in size. That depends on the needs set forth in developing a DEI strategic plan.***

1. Is there a current professional development group responsible for DEI professional development and training within the Department? How do you see their role in the sustainability of this DEI plan?

***Unfortunately, no. This was identified in the agency listening sessions and it is desired to build capacity in this regard at some point.***

1. Is there any internal working group tasked with addressing equity?

***There is an informal agency level work group comprised of the following staff: Managing Director for Human Resources, Training Manager (vacant), Director for Community Engagement & Outreach, Organizational Agility Managing Director, Deputy Director, Chief Financial Officer, and the Assistant Director for Community Services & Housing. Our newly hired agency Tribal Liaison has also expressed interest in participating.***

1. Will the vendor work with a steering/project committee? If so, how many will be included and is there a cross section of the organization represented?

***Please see the response to question #11.***

1. Do you have on staff a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) manager?  If not, do you have current plans to hire an individual for this position?

***Unfortunately, no. The agency is in the process of hiring a Training Manager who served as our DEI Council member.***

1. If you do not have a DEI manager, who is currently responsible for addressing DEI issues?

***This is a current issue the agency is working to resolve. At the moment, there are two ELT co-leads and an informal work group who are working with ELT and the agency to advance DEI efforts.***

1. Do you have a training manager?  If so, will this individual be available as a resource related to developing training plans?

***We are currently recruiting a training manager, and hope the position will be filled early during the period of performance.***

1. Will there be a selection process for certain people to be trained within each department or is there an expectation that everyone will be trained through this RFP process?

***There is not an expectation everyone in the agency will trained during the period of performance. Objective 1.2.2 is to develop a training plan, so as further resources become available, the agency can provision the plan. (See the response to question #19.)***

1. Is the training plan expected to train all agency employees?  If so, how many total employees are there?

***A desired future state is to make training available to each employee at some point, but that is to be determined based on resources over time. Supervisors and managers would likely be an initial cohort to receive training once a training plan is established.***

***There are a total of 385 FTE.***

1. How many people are expected to be coached?

***Approximately 11 executive leadership team members.***

1. How many staff are located in your Olympia office?

***Approximately 340 FTE.***

1. Do you have regional offices?  If so, how many staff are located in each of these offices?

***Yes. There is a Seattle office with 32 FTEs and a Spokane Office with 12 FTEs.***

1. How many total employees work for Commerce?

***Please see the response to question #19.***

1. How many training staff are currently on staff?  What kind of training do they currently provide?

***One staff position (please see the response to question #17). Some training is provided by this position, but much of the work is to coordinate our training opportunities and gaps.***

1. Please provide additional information on the number of divisions, leader/ stakeholders to be involved in prioritization.

***There are six divisions. The entire executive leadership team (11 members) will be the principle leaders involved. There may be other staff that vary in size that may be involved depending on the degree data and other input is needed in the development of a DEI strategic plan.***

1. Would it be possible to have data on how many People of Color there are within COMMERCE management and executive management teams as well as all staff?

***Yes. We will have the breakdown for all staff, to include breakdowns in the data for management and executive management.***

1. Do you have current records available on the diversity of your own staff- percentages of hires who are women and minority?  If so, how do you track the data?

***Yes. We use the state Human Resource Management System (HRMS) to track these data.***

**Past and Current States**

1. What data is already available - organizational surveys, focus group reports, individual interviews (exit and/or other), human resources recruit/hire/retain/discipline data, or other relevant sources - as it relates to DEI?  Will the consultants have full access to that data?

***Compensation data, and qualitative data from recent listening sessions (see response to question #3) will be made available to prospective consultants. The agency will also be interested in understanding data strategies as it relates to an overall DEI strategic plan.***

1. Does the agency already collect and/or track DEI data? If so, what is collected and tracked?

***Through the Engaged Employee Survey, the agency began collecting voluntary data in the Fall 2019 survey. We also analyze compensation from data in HRMS. (See responses to questions #27 and #28.)***

1. Is there a current overall strategic plan?  If so, how is this DEI plan expected to connect with that plan?

***Yes. Please see the response to question #7.***

1. Have there been any internal or external assessments conducted to gauge the agency's culture and climate around DEI?

***Two units in a division have received trainings, but no assessment has been conducted.***

1. Is there a Department of Commerce mission or vision statement for DEI work?

***Please see the response the question #7.***

1. What type of training regarding DEI has the Department had up to this point?

***Implicit bias and racial equity trainings occurred with a couple of division units in the agency.***

1. Is this your first DEI plan or training?

***As an agency, yes.***

1. What DEI training have you had?

***Please see the response to question #33. In past years, the department has received trainings at all staff events, but agency level trainings have occurred recently.***

1. Is this the Washington State Commerce Department's first cultural diversity and inclusion effort? If not, can you share some of the past projects?

***In recent years, yes. Two executive leadership DEI co-leads facilitated listening sessions between May-August 2019. The establishment of a DEI strategic plan, would be a first for the agency.***

1. Do you currently provide any DEI training classes?  If so, who provides this training? How many numbers of staff have been involved?

***The agency periodically provides Diversity in the Workplace training, which will resume when the agency fills the Training Manager vacancy.***

1. Are there any current DEI programs or strategies that are currently being used by any departments or teams within the Commerce department? If so, please describe the program, strategy and outcomes.

***There are a few streams of work that would be under the context of DEI. The first is our environmental justice initiatives as a part of our clean energy work. The second is our newly established Community Engagement & Outreach team which works towards how we can be more proactive in serving underserved and underrepresented communities. In couple of units that have received training, requirements are placed in some contracts for providers to participate in implicit bias training. Lastly, as a matter of strategy, the agency is seeking ways to do more in terms of equitably distributing resources. Outcomes are to be determined, but are meant to affect affordable housing/homelessness, infrastructure, living wage jobs, agency culture, and clean energy.***

1. We strongly recommend an organizational inclusion and belonging assessment to establish baseline data. Has there been a diversity and inclusion assessment in the past? If so, can you share those data?

***Unfortunately, there has not been an assessment. The prospective contractor will have access to the DEI related data the agency does have.***

1. Has there been cultural diversity training in the past? Please give some insights, if so?

***Yes, but only in a couple of units. Please see the responses to question #33 and #37. We are looking for a more comprehensive training plan; the approach thus far has not been an agency-wide effort thus far.***

1. Have you had any prior consultant work done related to DEI?  If so, by whom?  Will there be someone who can share information on the scope of work and numbers of staff involved in the consulting/training process?

***Please see the response to question #33. Yes, staff will be available to the prospective contractor throughout the period of performance. Leadership will also be involved to ensure success completion of the plans requested in the RFP.***

1. What DEI efforts has the agency worked on in the past? Are they completed or still in process?

***Please see the responses to questions #2, 3, and 33.***

1. Is there an incumbent contractor for this procurement and are they eligible to bid on this procurement? If yes, would you please identify the incumbent contractor(s)?***No, this is an open competitive procurement process.***
2. Were any vendors involved in past DEI initiatives? If so, which ones and are they eligible to respond to this RFP?

***Not at that agency level. Any prospective contractor that meets the requirements for this RFP is eligible for consideration.***

1. Does the agency have existing survey tools that are in use?

***Yes.***

1. Is there an available product?

***We may need clarification to this question to assist answering further, but in the context of this RFP, no available products are technically available, except for existing data that was collected.***

1. Have past trainings for COMMERCE been delivered mostly via video or in-person?

***In-person.***

**Performance**

1. Is the Strategic Plan process expected to design a 3-5 year plan or more of a one-year work plan?

***This is to be determined, but short term, medium term and long term strategies should be developed.***

1. Is there any expectation of community engagement?

***In terms of having a goal or objective in our DEI strategic plan, yes. The department has embarked on various customer focused strategies, and our Director of Community Engagement & Outreach will be involved in helping develop community engagement strategies with a DEI context. Our agency Tribal Liaison is also tasked with community engagement and outreach.***

1. Is there an expected focus on race with the ability to enlarge the idea of equity to other identities, or is the expectation that, from the beginning, it will be a "catch all" focus on all identities?

***The agency is interested in all facets of DEI. Race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, body type, disability, are areas of focus that came up through our DEI listening sessions conducted May-August 2019.***

1. Would a longer proposed timeline be acceptable?

***The Director and the agency is committed to DEI and may consider longer timelines if warranted.***

1. What type of contract will this be (e.g. firm fixed, or time and materials)?

***The type of contract will be negotiated.***

1. Would DOC be able to participate in a 1- or 2-day strategic planning session, and at which location would DOC like to have it?

***To be determined and explored with the Director, but we are generally open to hearing proposals.***

1. In our experience, at least three collaborative meetings between our consultants and the project supervisors/committee will be needed to make certain that the project is successful in meeting the organization's needs. Will Washington State be agreeable to about three meetings in addition to the Kickoff to keep them informed and receive feedback?

***Yes.***

1. The three-month timeline is fairly aggressive unless the benchmark assessment is not expected. If it is, that can take 5 - 6 weeks in our experience for an agency of the Commerce's size. That can be sped up with considerable support within the agency. The drafts of the final report will likely go through several iterations when effectively collaborating with the supervisors and committee. It can be done in the time frame, however it will require considerable commitment to assisting in onboarding the organization, making the assessment accessible, and turning around drafts in a timely manner. Can the vendor expect this to a priority to that level of collaboration during the three month period?

***We understand the current published timelines are aggressive, however, the Director and the leadership team is committed to DEI and may consider longer timelines if warranted.***

1. Will this project be expected to meet any union contract expectations?

***We may need further clarification with this question, but it is expected to follow guidelines in collective bargaining agreements.***

1. We have a proprietary organizational inclusion, diversity, and belonging assessment toolkit. It is invaluable for strategic planning benchmark data collection. Are you open to vendors using their well-tested products? That will certainly decrease the time needed to tailor one to meet the Commerce Department's needs.

***The agency is certainly interested in vendors’ well tested products and tools.***

1. Are there any similar efforts by competitors, other Washington State agencies, etc. that serve as a model for what you envision that the results will look like?

***One of our executive leadership team DEI co-leads was involved in the Governor’s Generational Poverty Workgroup and participated in important DEI work with that team. It served as one of many inspirations for the agency to take a more deliberate approach in advancing the DEI imperative.***

1. The coaching request is laudable and enhances the project. Will the management or leaders be expected to receive coaching services?

***The executive leadership team are very committed to launching a DEI effort, but the team comes into the topic from different places. It will be important leaders are coached, so as to provide effective leadership for the agency.***

1. If you currently have a DEI manager, what role will this individual have in being a resource for the strategic plan and training plan development?

***Unfortunately, we do not have a DEI manager. Please see the responses to questions #15 and #16.***

1. Please provide more detail about what you mean by "Integrate DEI into our externally facing work".

***Externally facing work, is the work the agency does in communities. The mission statement for our agency is, “we strengthen communities” and we found that it was critical we do this within a DEI context. Our core lines of business in communities are the following: reducing homelessness, increasing living wage jobs, improving housing affordability, funding reliable infrastructure, and building a clean energy future.***

1. Please share some examples of ‘externally facing work’ for the department as stated in 1.2.1.

***Please see the response to question #61.***

1. Is there a vision, common language est. within DOC or at State level or other depts that need to align with?

***With the help of staff across the agency, it was determined that the agency can do more with diversity, equity and inclusion on several fronts (see response to question #3). We’d like to incorporate what we heard through our listening sessions.***

1. Please provide a description of the agency's expectations for what is included in a Strategic Plan (as opposed to a strategy document or a strategic road map).

***The agency expects various strategies around the five areas learned from the DEI listening sessions conducted in 2019 (see response to question #3) and how DEI can be integrated in our agency goals and strategies.***

1. Is there an expectation that successful contractor will be implementing the training plan or are only developing the process?

***It is not expected under the current request for proposal for the prospective contractor to implement the training plan during the period of performance, only to develop one based on an assessment of training gaps.***

1. Are there other planned cultural or other workplace experience initiatives at State or Department level in progress or planned for 2020?

***At this time, no, however the department annually holds one-to-two all agency staff events that may have DEI as a part of those efforts.***

1. What are the agency’s greatest concern about this work?

***That the agency is not doing enough on the DEI imperative.***

1. Is the state requesting a training outline for three requested topics, i.e. what subjects should be covered under each topic, or is the state requesting a fully developed curriculum for each of the three topics?

***We are initially seeking a training plan based on an assessment of training gaps. This will inform the agency on how best to proceed in addressing training needs.***

**Process**

1. Do we email our proposals in by the due date to Sarah Champion's email address, submitted through a portal, or does it need to be postmarked and sent by mail?

***Section 2.5* Submission of Proposals*: “Proposals must be submitted electronically as an attachment to an e-mail to the RFP Coordinator, at the e-mail address listed in Section 2.1.”***

1. What percent of the total points is allocated to the cost proposal?

***Section 4.2* Evaluation Breakdown*: “Cost Proposal is computed in accordance with section 3.4(b) and the result is then added to the combined score for the Technical and Management Proposals.”***

1. I am curious if you would be open to a short call or in-person meeting (I am based in Seattle, WA) to talk about the outcomes of the strategic plan and steps that will be taken to integrate diversity equity and inclusion in the work of the agency?

***Commerce staff are not able to meet with individual vendors during this process. We may hold oral interviews with finalists if warranted.***

1. Would you be open to a short call to help me understand if there may be an avenue for our team to help empower the WA State Department of Commerce to embrace diversity and inclusion while investing in undiscovered neurodiverse talent?

***Please see the response to question #71.***

1. Might out-of-state certified M/WBE/Veteran firms be considered and applied to COMMERCE agency goals and be included in the diverse business inclusion plan – Exhibit B?

***We would like to have this information if vendors choose to include it. Please note that disclosing OWMBE status is voluntary and not scored.***