



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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September 30, 2021

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy

ANNOUNCEMENT

The State of Washington Department of Commerce is in the process of developing a request for proposal to solicit private nonprofit organizations to become the new statewide office of behavioral health consumer advocacy pursuant to Revised Code of Washington 71.40. This announcement is intended for those that wish to bid on the RFP.

BACKGROUND

2021 session Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1086 titled Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy was signed into law in May 2021 and codified into Revised Code of Washington [71.40](#) Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy. The Department of Commerce shall use a competitive bidding process to select a private nonprofit to provide behavioral health consumer advocacy services statewide to patients, residents, and clients of behavioral health providers and facilities. The private nonprofit organization shall provide all program and staff support necessary to effectively protect the interests of residents, patients, and clients of behavioral health providers or facilities. The funding mechanisms for the new statewide office is unclear but Commerce forecasts the budget to be around \$2,000,000 annually.

Commerce is using this Request for Information to inform the drafting of the Request for Proposal to be used to solicit private nonprofit organizations interested in managing a program to provide behavioral health consumer advocacy ombuds services statewide.

Questions

1. **Demonstrate Financial Stability.** Please describe what document(s) and what threshold(s) are needed to demonstrate financial stability. *For example, submitting thirty years of IRS form 990's showing a positive balance sheet, sufficient income, an endowment, and a line of credit.*
2. **Minimum Qualifications.** Please describe what minimum qualifications are required for the office, the organization and its ombuds. *For example, having thirty years of experience delivering behavioral health based ombuds services throughout a state.*
3. **Desired Attributes.** Please describe what attributes the statewide office, the ombuds and all their agents demonstrate. *For example, having ten years of culturally competent communications, twenty years of lived experience with behavioral health, and thirty years of experience with behavioral health providers and services.*

4. **Barriers.** Please identify any barriers for your business to bid on this opportunity. *For example, a person with lived experience or a startup nonprofit might not have documentation to demonstrate negotiation skills or financial stability respectively.*
5. **Other feedback.** Please provide any information you believe is relevant for Commerce to consider in developing a solicitation for a private nonprofit organization to provide behavioral health consumer advocacy services statewide. *For example, mandates around using an Ombuds Management Software package, maintaining confidentiality of records, or the use of volunteer ombuds in the delivery of ombuds services statewide.*

Specifications

The duties of the office and the agents of the office are in chapter 71.40 Revised Code of Washington particularly in RCW [71.40.040](#) Duties of office and RCW [71.40.050](#) Duties of certified behavioral health consumer advocates. Additionally, WAC 182 (Health Care Authority) and WAC 246 (Department of Health) contain information about the duties of the behavioral health ombuds and consumer advocates.

RFI Process

Responses to this RFI should be submitted electronically to the RFI Coordinator listed below no later than October 31, 2021.

A response to this RFI is not a mandatory requirement for participation in any subsequent solicitations released by Commerce. The results of this RFI may be used in development of future solicitations. All contractor communications concerning this RFI must be directed to the RFI Coordinator.

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Public Records

The contractor acknowledges that state agencies are subject to [Chapter 42.56 RCW](#), the Public Disclosure Act. Contractor responses to this RFI will become public record as defined in the RCW. For the purposes of this RFI do not include any information considered confidential or proprietary.

No Obligation to Contract

Release of this RFI in no way obligates Commerce to award a contract.

To Summarize

The Department of Commerce appreciates your thoughts and input on the new statewide office of behavioral health consumer advocacy.