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*Transforming lives*

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**COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION  
#2234-818  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**Project Title:** **SNAP-Ed Social Marketing Campaign**

**Estimated Contract Performance Period:** February 15, 2023 through September 30, 2026

**Proposal Due Date:** All Proposals **must be received in their entirety by 1:00 p.m.** Pacific Time on **January 3, 2023** unless an Amendment is issued modifying the Solicitation Schedule set forth in Section C.1 of this Solicitation Document.

**Submit Proposal To:** Proposals must be submitted to:  
**Linda J. Hodgson, Coordinator**  
Department of Social and Health Services  
Facilities, Finance and Analytics Admin.  
Central Contracts and Legal Services  
Email: linda.hodgson@dshs.wa.gov

**Solicitation and Amendments Will Be Posted on:**  
DSHS Procurement Website: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ffa/procurements-and-contracting>

and  
WEBS Website: <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/>  
Applicable WEBS Commodity Codes: 915-22 Communications – Marketing Services; 918-67 Human Services Consulting; 961-53 Marketing Services; and/or 952-43: Human Services - Family and Social Services

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Section A. Contract Requirements ..... Page 3

Section B. Definitions ..... Page 7

Section C. Explanation of Solicitation Process ..... Page 10

Section D. Instructions Regarding Content, Format and  
Submission of Proposals ..... Page 16

Section E. Bidder Evaluations ..... Page 19

Section F. Debriefing and Protest Procedure..... Page 23

Section G. Contracting Procedures ..... Page 25

Attachments (the following are attached separately from this document):

- Attachment A: Sample Contract
- Attachment B: Sample Submission Letter
- Attachment C: Bidder Certifications and Assurances
- Attachment D: Bidder Proposal Form
- Attachment E: Bidder Budget Proposal Form

## SECTION A CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Purpose

This competitive solicitation is issued to assist the Economic Services Administration, Community Services Division, of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in seeking a qualified contractor to develop and implement a social marketing campaign that promotes healthy eating and active living behaviors to individuals eligible for Basic Food and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Washington State.

### 2. Background

The Department of Social & Health Services, Washington's largest state agency, provides some type of shelter, care, protection and/or support to 2.4 million of our state's 7.2 million citizens. A single mission ties DSHS' Administrations together: *To Transform Lives*. DSHS is comprised of three support Administrations and seven direct service Administrations. Each service Administration provides specialized services to Washington state citizens in need. Please review the DSHS [Our Future Transformed](#) booklet to learn more.

The Economic Services Administration (ESA) works to build a Washington without poverty and injustice by helping children, adults, and families weather the storms of life so they can reach their full potential through various programs. A national leader in providing poverty reduction services to nearly 1.8 million people in our state. ESA provides tools and resources to build well-being including cash grants, food and medical assistance, employment-focused services, refugee assistance, disability determinations and child support collection. ESA's values include diversity, inclusion, honesty, integrity pursuit of excellence, open communication and a commitment to service. Additional information on ESA's strategic plans, priorities and programs are found through [this link](#).

ESA's Community Services Division (CSD) manages various state and federal programs that provide food, cash, medical and other services designed to help Washington state residents build strong foundations that enable them to live their best lives.

CSD's SNAP-Ed program aims to increase the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP eat a healthy diet and are physically active. The goals of Washington's program are to:

- Increase consumption of healthy food and beverages and decrease consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages.
- Improve food resource management among SNAP-Ed participants.
- Increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior.
- Improve policy, systems, and environments to support healthy eating and active living.

SNAP-Ed uses three approaches to address behavior change:

1. *Nutrition education* — Class series that build on each other to increase individual knowledge about healthy eating and active living and promote healthy behavior change;
2. *Policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes* — Initiatives that improve a community's health by making healthy food and physical activity choices more accessible, easier, and the default option; and
3. *Social marketing* — Campaigns using commercial marketing approaches to encourage behavior changes.

SNAP-Ed uses CDC's definition of social marketing as, "the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of society."

DSHS contracts with Implementing Agencies to conduct the activities using the approaches above. While some local and regional social marketing campaigns have been included in Implementing Agency plans, the majority of existing plans do not include comprehensive social marketing strategies. DSHS recognized that a comprehensive statewide social marketing campaign focused on healthy behavior changes would reinforce nutrition education and policy, systems, and environmental changes and extend the reach of SNAP-Ed.

### **3. Project Scope**

DSHS is seeking a contractor who will collaborate with the SNAP-Ed Program to develop a brand, conduct market research, and write key messages and content consistent with federal SNAP-Ed Program Guidance and corresponding regulations. The contractor be responsible for generating and sharing content across key media platforms (to be determined based on market research) using audience segmentation. The contractor will also provide professional consultation and technical support to DSHS and its other SNAP-Ed stakeholders. The contractor will be expected to conduct purposeful interviews and surveys with SNAP eligible individuals to inform the development and implementation of the social marketing campaign throughout its entirety.

The campaign should reach SNAP-eligible audiences using a comprehensive approach that will include multiple media channels such as:

- Mass media (e.g., television, radio, newspapers, billboards, and other outdoor advertising)
- Social media (e.g., social networks, blogs, and user-generated content)
- Earned media (e.g., public service announcements, letters to the editor, opinion editorials, and press conferences)
- Peer-to-peer popular opinion leaders (e.g., youth or parent ambassadors), local champions, celebrity spokespersons, and faith leaders)

- Promotional media (e.g., point-of-purchase prompts, videos, Web sites, newsletters, posters, kiosks, brochures, and educational incentive items)

As part of their Proposal, Bidders shall identify their proposed Key Personnel assigned to perform the work under the awarded Contract, their experience and qualifications. If awarded the Contract, Bidder shall not make changes to such Key Personnel during the term of the Contract, except as requested or approved by DSHS.

#### **4. Bidder Minimum Qualifications**

All Bidders must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- a. Bidder's proposed Key Personnel for this project shall have 5 years, or more, general and social marketing experience;
- b. Bidder's firm has established media contacts;
- c. Bidder has a current Washington state Business License, or intends to secure one promptly, should the Bidder be awarded the Contract;
- d. Bidders' proposed Key Personnel are available for the project and possess the following skills and qualifications:
  - (1) Advanced education in marketing, health education, health communication, or related field;
  - (2) Excellent written and verbal communication skills;
  - (3) Participated in and was an integral member of a marketing team that successfully developed and executed at least one social marketing campaigns; and
  - (4) Knowledge of social marketing outcome measures and metrics.

Bidders failing to demonstrate in their Proposals that they meet these minimum qualifications will be considered nonresponsive and will therefore be disqualified from further consideration.

#### **5. Period of Contract Performance**

DSHS intends to award one Contracts for the Services described in this Competitive Solicitation. The period of performance under the Contract shall be February 15, 2023 through October 31, 2026. Additional services that are appropriate to the scope of this Solicitation, as determined by DSHS, may be added to the Contract in a mutually agreeable amendment.

#### **6. Funding**

DSHS has budgeted an amount not to exceed \$4 million for this Project. DSHS may reject any Proposal in excess of that amount. Any Contract awarded is contingent upon the availability of funding.

**Note:** Yearly expenditures for this project are continuation upon an annual budget appropriation, subject to federal approval. As outlined in Attachment A: Sample Contract, the successful Bidder will be required to submit an annual budget for each ensuing fiscal year in accordance with the terms of the Contract.

## SECTION B DEFINITIONS

Additional definitions for Contract-specific terms are found in the Sample Contract set forth as Attachment A to this Solicitation and shall apply to those terms as they are used in this Solicitation. The following terms have the meanings set forth below:

Agency or DSHS – The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.

Amendment – A unilateral change to the Solicitation that is issued by DSHS at its sole discretion and posted on WEBS.

Apparent Successful Bidder (ASB) – A Bidder submitting a Proposal to this Solicitation that is evaluated and is identified and announced by DSHS as providing the best value to the Agency. Upon execution of a Contract, the ASB is referred to as the successful bidder or the Contractor.

Authorized Representative – An individual designated by the Bidder to act on its behalf who has the authority to legally bind the Bidder concerning the terms and conditions set forth in this Solicitation and related documents.

Bid – An offer, proposal or quote for goods or services and all related materials prepared and submitted by a Bidder in response to this Solicitation. The terms Bid, Quotation, Response and Proposal are all intended to mean the same thing.

Bidder – An individual, organization, public or private agency or other entity submitting a bid, quotation, response or proposal in response to this Solicitation.

CDC or Center for Disease Control and Prevention – A US federal agency tasked with protecting public health by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability.

Contract – A written agreement entered into between a successful Bidder and DSHS as a result of this Solicitation.

Complaint – A process that may be followed by a Bidder prior to the deadline for Proposal submission to alert DSHS of certain types of asserted deficiencies in the Solicitation.

Community Services Division or CSD – A Division of DSHS' Economic Services Administration who manages various state and federal programs that provide food, cash, medical and other services

Coordinator or Solicitation Coordinator – An individual or designee who is employed by DSHS within the DSHS Central Contracts and Legal Services Office and who is responsible for conducting this Solicitation.

Debriefing – A short meeting an unsuccessful Bidder may request with the Coordinator following the announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder for the purpose of receiving information regarding the review and evaluation of that Bidder's Proposal.

Economic Services Administration or ESA – The DSHS Administration issuing this Solicitation.

Marketing or General Marketing – The action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising. *Note: the award for this solicitation is to complete a Social Marketing campaign, not a general marketing campaign. See Social Marketing definition below.*

Procurement – The broad process of identifying goods and services for purchase or acquisition, of effecting the purchase or acquisition, and of managing the purchase or acquisition. This Solicitation is a part of an overall Procurement process. Despite the broader meaning attributed to “procurement”, for purposes of this Solicitation, the terms Solicitation, RFP/RFQ/RFQQ and Procurement are interchangeable.

Project - The undertaking or work for which contracted Services are being requested pursuant to this Solicitation.

Protest – A process that may be followed by a Bidder after the announcement of the apparent Successful Bidder to alert DSHS to certain types of alleged errors in the evaluation of the Solicitation.

RCW – The Revised Code of Washington. All references to RCW chapters or sections shall include any successor, amended, or replacement statute.

Responsible Bidder – An individual, organization, public or private agency, or other entity that has demonstrated the capability to meet all the requirements of the Solicitation and to meet the elements of responsibility. (See [RCW 39.26.160 \(2\)](#))

Responsive Bidder – An individual, organization, public or private agency, or other entity who has submitted a Proposal that fully conforms in all material respects to the Solicitation and all its requirements, in both form and substance.

RFP – The request for proposals set forth in this Solicitation document.

Social Marketing – Social marketing is an approach used to develop activities aimed at changing or maintaining people’s behavior for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Scope of Work – The Project or work scope set forth in this Solicitation Document that identifies DSHS’ contractual needs and requirements.

Services – Labor, work, analysis, or similar activities provided by a contractor to accomplish a specific scope of work.

Solicitation or Competitive Solicitation – A formal process providing and equal and open opportunity for bidders culminating in a selection based upon predetermined criteria. A Competitive Solicitation requests the submission of bids, quotations or proposals for the consideration of DSHS in contracting to meet its needs. This RFP is a Solicitation.

Solicitation Document – This RFP/RFQ/RFQQ document, including all attachments and all amendments that are issued by the Coordinator.



Statement of Work – The detailed description services to be performed by the Contractor and set forth in the Contract.

Subcontractor – An individual or other entity contracted by Bidder to perform part of the services or to provide goods under the Contract resulting from this Solicitation. Subcontractors, if allowed, are subject to the advance approval of DSHS.

WEBS – Washington’s Electronic Business Solution, the Bidder notification system found at <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/> and maintained by the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services.

**SECTION C  
EXPLANATION OF SOLICITATION PROCESS**

**1. Solicitation Schedule**

The Solicitation Schedule set forth below outlines the tentative schedule for important events relating to this Solicitation. Except as modified in an Amendment issued by the Coordinator, the dates and times listed through the date of Proposal Submission are mandatory deadlines. The remaining dates are estimates and may change without the posting of an Amendment. Failure to meet the Proposal deadline will result in Bidder disqualification.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
Prospective Bidders should register as a Vendor on WEBS using one of the commodities code on the cover page of this Solicitation as soon as possible to receive notifications	Immediately
Bidders must RSVP (via email to the RFP Coordinator) for the virtual Bidders Conference <b>by noon</b> p.m. Pacific Time	November 2, 2022
Bidders Conference <b>at 1:00 p.m.</b> Pacific Time (attendance optional)	<b>November 3, 2022</b>
Bidders may submit written questions or requests for change in Solicitation Requirements <b>until 1:00 p.m.</b> Pacific Time	<b>November 7, 2022</b>
DSHS posts responses to Bidder questions.	November 10, 2022
Bidders may submit written Complaints by 5 p.m. Pacific Time	December 23, 2022
Bidders must submit their Proposal <b>by 1:00 p.m.</b> Pacific Time	<b>January 3, 2023</b>
DSHS evaluates Written Proposals	January 3 through 13, 2023
(Optional) DSHS checks the top-ranked Bidders' reference checks	January 16 through 18, 2023
(Optional) Oral Evaluations, if requested by DSHS	<b>January 25, 2023</b>
DSHS announces the Apparent Successful Bidder on WEBS and begins contract negotiations.	<b>January 31, 2023</b>
DSHS notifies unsuccessful Bidder(s)	January 31, 2023
Unsuccessful Bidders may request a Debriefing conference until 5 p.m. Pacific Time	February 3, 2023
DSHS holds Debriefing conferences, if requested	February 6, 2023
Deadline for submission of Protests by unsuccessful Bidders who participated in a debriefing conference	Five business days after date of Debriefing
DSHS considers Protests, if any, and issues determination	Ten business days after receipt of Protest
Contract Execution/Start Date.	<b>February 15, 2023</b>

## **2. Posting of Solicitation Documents**

DSHS shall post this Solicitation, and all amendments and announcements relating to this Solicitation, on WEBS. WEBS can be accessed at: <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/>. In order to inform the largest number of potential bidders about this opportunity, DSHS shall also post documents relating to this Solicitation on the Procurements page of the DSHS website, found at: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ffa/procurements-and-contracting>

All Bidders must register as a vendor on WEBS, using an appropriate commodities code listed on the front page of this Solicitation, and download this Solicitation from WEBS. This should be done as soon as possible in order for Bidder to receive notifications automatically generated on WEBS, but no later than the date set forth on Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule for Announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder.

## **3. Amendment, Cancellation/Rejection of Proposals, Reissuance of Solicitation**

DSHS may amend or add to, retract from or cancel this Solicitation at any time, in whole or in part, and without penalty. DSHS may reject all Proposals and cancel or reissue this Solicitation. All amendments and notifications of cancellation shall be posted on WEBS. In the event of a conflict between amendments or between an amendment and this Solicitation Document, the document issued latest shall control.

## **4. Communications Regarding Solicitation**

Upon the posting of this Solicitation, all communications concerning this Solicitation must be directed to the Coordinator listed on the cover page of this Solicitation document. With the exception of the Proposal, which shall be submitted as provided in Section D, Instructions Regarding Content, Format and Submission of Written Proposals, communications with the Coordinator should be sent via email. DSHS may disqualify any Bidder who communicates with anyone in DSHS other than the Coordinator regarding this Solicitation.

DSHS considers all oral communications unofficial and non-binding on DSHS. Bidders should rely only on written statements issued by the Coordinator. Email shall be considered an official method of communication unless otherwise specified in this document.

## **5. Bidder Conference (attendance optional)**

Bidders are invited to attend a Bidder Conference which shall be held for approximately 1 hour on the date and time set forth on the Solicitation Schedule in Section C.1. While attendance is not required, the Bidder Conference is an opportunity for Bidders to learn more about the Proposal and services requirements. At the Bidder Conference, Bidders will have an opportunity to ask questions and to hear presentations from knowledgeable DSHS personnel. DSHS shall collect and answer all questions asked at the Bidder Conference, along with the PowerPoint presentation, and post on the DSHS procurement website and on WEBS as an Amendment to this Solicitation. Bidders may only rely upon information that is included in this Amendment in preparing their Proposals.

Prior to the RSVP deadline date and time set forth on the Solicitation Schedule, Section C.1, Bidders must contact the RFP Coordinator via email to express their interest to attend the virtual Bidder Conference. Bidders may have up to two staff in attendance. Bidder RSVP emails to the Coordinator must provide the Bidder's attendee's names, titles, and proposed roles and responsibilities (should Bidder be awarded the Contract).

## **6. Questions and Answers**

Bidders may send written questions concerning this Solicitation to the Coordinator by the date and time set forth on the Solicitation Schedule in Section C.1. for submission of Questions. Questions should be sent via email and should include the number and title of this Solicitation in the subject line.

DSHS may consolidate Bidder questions and shall respond by posting one or more Amendments on WEBS and on the DSHS Procurement website on or around the date specified in the Solicitation Schedule. Only Bidders who have properly registered and downloaded the original Solicitation directly via the WEBS system: <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/> will receive notification of Amendments and other correspondence pertaining to this Solicitation.

## **7. Request for Change in Solicitation Requirements**

If Bidder believes that this Solicitation contains requirements which would unreasonably prohibit or restrict Bidder's participation or believes that different requirements would provide better value to the State, Bidder shall submit a written explanation of the issue together with proposed alternative requirements to the Coordinator no later than the deadline for Bidder Questions as stated in the Solicitation Schedule set forth in Section C.1. The Coordinator shall not be required to consider requests for changes after this date. If any changes are made to the Solicitation requirements, an Amendment setting forth those changes will be posted on WEBS.

## **8. Complaints**

In the event a Bidder believes that this Solicitation either: a) unnecessarily restricts competition; b) contains an unfair or flawed evaluation or scoring process; or c) contains inadequate or insufficient information to permit preparation of a Proposal, the Bidder shall submit a written complaint to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will forward the complaint to the DSHS Chief of Central Contracts and Legal Services for review. The complaint shall include a proposed remedy and shall be submitted no later than 5 business days prior to the date when Proposals are due. DSHS shall post its response to the Complaint on WEBS and on the DSHS procurement web page.

Should a Bidder's complaint identify a change that would be in the best interest of DSHS to make, DSHS may issue an Amendment modifying this Solicitation. The DSHS decision regarding a complaint is final and no further administrative appeal is available. If no complaint is filed, a Bidder cannot later file a protest based on any of the above complaint criteria.

## **9. Minority & Women's Business Enterprises (MWBE) and Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises**

In accordance with the legislative findings and policies set forth in RCW 39.19, 43.60A.200, 39.26.240 and 39.26.245, the State of Washington encourages participation by veteran-owned business enterprises and Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), either self-identified or certified by, respectively, the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). While the State does not give preferential treatment, it does seek equitable representation from the veterans, minority and women's business communities.

Participation by veteran-owned and MWBE contractors may be either on a direct basis in response to this Solicitation or as a subcontractor to a contractor. However, no preference will be given in the evaluation of Proposals, no minimum level of MWBE or veteran-owned business participation shall be required, and Proposals will not be evaluated, rejected, or considered non-responsive on that basis.

Bidders may contact the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) at <http://omwbe.wa.gov/> and/or the Department of Veterans Affairs at <http://www.dva.wa.gov/program/veteran-owned-business-certification> to obtain information on certified firms for potential subcontracting arrangements or for information on how to become certified. Nothing in this section is intended to prevent or discourage participation from non-MWBE firms or non-veteran-owned businesses.

## **10. Auxiliary Aids and Limited English Proficient (LEP) Services**

DSHS will provide access to this Solicitation document to individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficient individuals. Please contact the Coordinator to request auxiliary aids and services.

If an individual believes that the Department has discriminated against them on the basis of a protected status, please contact the DSHS Investigations Unit for the Nondiscrimination Policy Brochure and complaint process. The brochure can be found at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Non-discrim%2022-171.pdf>

## **11. Accessibility**

The Apparent Successful Bidder under this solicitation will be required to represent and warrant that they will exercise commercially reasonable efforts to comply with the Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Standard 188.10 – Minimum Accessibility Standard located at <https://ocio.wa.gov/policy/minimum-accessibility-standard>. The ASB will additionally be required to regularly review its systems and at the commencement of the Contract, and annually thereafter, certify to DSHS that their Services meet OCIO Standard 188.10.

## **12. Cost to Prepare Proposal**

DSHS will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Bidder in preparing, conducting a site assessment, or submitting a Proposal to this Solicitation.

### **13. Acceptance of Solicitation Terms**

In submitting a Proposal, Bidder must include a signed Proposal Submission Letter in the form set forth on Attachment B, as well as signed Bidder Certifications in the form set forth on Attachment C. Bidder must acknowledge that in submitting a Proposal, it accepts all terms of this Solicitation Document, including all of its Attachments, and that Bidder's Proposal constitutes a binding offer. Bidders may not alter or redline the solicitation terms or requirements in their Proposal. Submitting altered or redlined solicitation terms or requirements in the Bidder Proposal may result in bidder disqualification.

### **14. Joint Proposals**

If Bidders submit a joint Proposal with one or more other persons or entities, these persons or entities must designate a prime Bidder. The prime Bidder will be DSHS sole point of contact through the Procurement process. If selected as the Apparent Successful Bidder, the prime Bidder shall sign the contract and any amendments and will be liable and responsible to DSHS for all performance under the contract.

### **15. Withdrawal of Proposals**

After a Proposal has been submitted, Bidders may withdraw their Proposal at any time up to the Proposal due date and time as specified in Section C.1, Solicitation Schedule. A written request to withdraw the Proposal must be submitted to the Coordinator. After withdrawing a Proposal, the Bidder may submit another Proposal at any time up to the Proposal submission date and time.

### **16. Ownership of Proposals**

All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation become the property of DSHS, unless received after the deadline in which case the Proposal shall be returned to the sender. DSHS shall have the right to use any of the ideas presented as part of the process in any manner as it deems appropriate or beneficial, regardless of whether it is contained in a Proposal that results in selection for a Contract.

### **17. DSHS Award Options; Improvement of Offers**

After Proposals are received and written evaluations are completed, DSHS may (but shall not be required to) request best and final offers from one or more Responsible and Responsive Bidders. The written Proposals of Bidders invited to provide a best and final offer may be re-evaluated and the point values may be adjusted based upon changes to pricing or proposed services, deliverables or methodologies that are included in a best and final offer, prior to DSHS' determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder.

Alternatively, after reviewing all Proposals, DSHS may enter into negotiations with the highest ranked Responsive and Responsible Bidder in order to determine if the Proposal may be improved before identification of the Apparent Successful Bidder.

DSHS shall not be required to request best and final offers or to enter into negotiations and reserves the right to make a Contract award without further discussion of the Proposal. Therefore the Proposal should be submitted on the most favorable terms that

Bidder intends to offer.

**18. Oral Evaluations/Interviews (Optional)**

After Proposals are received and written evaluations are completed, DSHS may request that one or more responsible and responsive bidders participate in an interview. If this option is elected, additional points shall be awarded as set forth in Section E.3, Evaluation Criteria and Scoring of Proposals.

**19. Announcement of Successful Bidder**

DSHS shall announce the Apparent Successful Bidder on WEBS on the date indicated in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. All announcements of Apparent Successful Bidder are subject to the negotiation of a Contract satisfactory to DSHS.

Bidders who are not announced as an Apparent Successful Bidder may request a debriefing conference with the Coordinator concerning the evaluation of their Proposal and may, under certain circumstances, file a formal protest requesting that DSHS provide an identified remedy if Bidder believes certain types of errors occurred. A more detailed description of these processes is set forth in Section F, Debriefing and Protest Procedure.

**20. Ethics, Policies and Law**

This Solicitation, the evaluation of Proposals, and any resulting contract will be made in conformance with applicable Washington State laws and Policies.

Specific restrictions apply to contracting with current or former state employees pursuant to RCW 42.52. Bidders should familiarize themselves with the requirements prior to submitting a Proposal. Bidders must include, in their Submission Letter, information regarding any current or former state employees who are employed by, or subcontracted with, Bidder.

**SECTION D**  
**INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING CONTENT, FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF**  
**WRITTEN PROPOSALS**

Bidders shall submit their Proposals utilizing the forms set forth on Attachments B, C, D, and E to this Competitive Solicitation. Each Attachment represents a separate section of the Proposal. Failure to complete and submit all required Attachments, and to sign them, if applicable, may result in Bidder disqualification. Proposals should be typed in 12 point font and should be submitted in the following order with each section of the Proposal clearly labeled. Please note that Section 4 of Attachment D should be submitted separately.

**1. Attachment B: Proposal Submission Letter** (Required, not scored)

All Bidders must submit a completed Proposal submission letter in the form and with the minimum contents set forth on Attachment B, which must include all of the required acknowledgments and information. The Proposal Submission Letter must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually. Bidder's completed and signed Attachments B and C, together with any documents that are required to be attached, and Bidder's answers to administrative questions set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Proposal Form, comprise the Administrative component of the Proposal.

**2. Attachment C: Bidder Certifications and Assurances** (Required, not scored)

All Bidders must submit the Bidder certifications and assurances form set forth on Attachment C, signed by an individual authorized to bind the Bidder contractually. Bidders may not alter or redline the Bidder Certifications and Assurances form in their response. Submitting altered or redlined solicitation terms or requirements in the Bidder Proposal may result in Bidder disqualification.

**3. Attachment D: Bidder Proposal Form** (Required, Portions Scored)

Using Attachment D, Bidders must provide answers to the questions set forth on the Bidder Proposal Form to demonstrate satisfaction of administrative requirements and, as applicable to this Solicitation, their qualifications, approach and proposed pricing to provide the services as outlined in this Competitive Solicitation, including the Sample Contract set forth on Attachment A. The number of points allocated to each answer is indicated next to the question.

The Bidder Proposal Form is posted separately from this Solicitation document in Microsoft Word format. Except for limits that are noted on the Bidder Proposal Form, Bidders may utilize as much space as is reasonably required to respond to each question, provided all questions are repeated and remain numbered and ordered as set forth in Attachment D. If additional pages are needed, they should be attached to the page containing the initial portion of the response to a question and should be marked clearly to indicate that they provide a continuation of Bidder's answer to a specific numbered question. Bidders should not submit product brochures, white papers, customer testimonials, cut sheets, or other pre-prepared materials in response to any of the questions unless specifically requested.



Bidders must submit complete, well-organized explanatory answers that address all of the specific questions asked in the Bidder Proposal Form. Bidders should not assume that evaluators will be familiar with their businesses before conducting the evaluation.

Use of Attachment D assures that Bidder responds to specific questions in space immediately below those questions and helps to avoid confusion among evaluators about the question that is being responded to. In awarding points, evaluators shall not be obligated to search through the Bidder's answers to questions other than the one being reviewed in order to locate text that is responsive to the question being reviewed. Failure to use the form set forth on Attachment D (with the applicable questions set forth immediately above Bidder's answers), failure to respond to all questions and/or failure to submit any documents requested in the Bidder Proposal Form may result in Bidder disqualification.

If Bidder is awarded a Contract, DSHS may require that Bidder's Proposal to the Bidder Proposal Form be incorporated, in whole or in part, into the Contract.

#### **4. Proprietary Information/Public Disclosure**

Materials submitted in response to this Solicitation shall be deemed public records as defined by RCW 42.56. All Proposals and accompanying documentation shall become the property of DSHS upon receipt, and will not be returned.

The Bidder's Proposal must include, on Attachment D, a statement identifying the pages of its Proposal, if any, which contain information the Bidder considers proprietary (for the purposes of public disclosure). Each page claimed to be proprietary must be clearly marked by stating the word "Proprietary" on the lower right hand corner. Bidders must be reasonable in designating information as proprietary or confidential. **Bidders may not mark their entire Proposal proprietary. Doing so will not be honored and will disqualify your Proposal from further consideration.**

If DSHS receives a request to view or copy a Bidder's Proposal, DSHS will respond according to applicable law and DSHS's policy governing public disclosure. DSHS will not disclose any information marked "Proprietary" in a Proposal without giving the Bidder ten (10) days' notice to seek relief in superior court per RCW 42.56.540.

**Bidders may not include any DSHS client information in their Proposals. Doing so will result in disqualification of the Proposal from further consideration.** If you wish to include examples of any forms or processes, use a blank form or ensure that all client information is completely redacted.

#### **5. Submission of Proposals**

Proposals must be stored in an acceptable electronic format as set forth in Section 7, below. Proposals must be emailed directly to the Coordinator at the email address provided on the cover sheet of this Solicitation Document. Proposals must be received by the Coordinator in their entirety on or before the due date and time set forth in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule, unless a posted Amendment to this Competitive Solicitation changes this due date and time. Bidder's completed version of each of the Attachments

B, C, D, and E to this Competitive Solicitation shall be included as a separate attachment to the Bidder's email(s).

Bidders assume all risks for the timely submission of their Proposal. Bidders are responsible for allowing sufficient time to ensure timely electronic receipt of their Proposal by the Coordinator. DSHS does not assume responsibility for problems with the Bidder's email, network or problems. However, if DSHS email is not working properly, appropriate allowances will be made.

DSHS will not accept late Proposals, nor grant time extensions for individual Bidders. DSHS will disqualify any Proposal and withdraw it from consideration if it is received after the Proposal submission due date and time.

## **6. Acceptable Electronic Formats for Submission of Proposals**

Attachment D, Bidder Proposal Form, should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Other Proposal documents must be formatted in Portable Document Format (Adobe Acrobat PDF) or Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint. Spreadsheet documents must be submitted in Microsoft Excel and in a live, unprotected file that includes all formulas, macros, and computations that are relied on or used to calculate any rates or values presented therein. When scanning documents to be submitted in PDF format, scanner resolution should be set to at least 200 dots per inch.

**NOTE: DSHS cannot receive emails that are larger than 30MB.** To keep file sizes to a minimum, Bidders are cautioned not to use unnecessary graphics in their Proposals. If your Proposal approaches or exceeds 30MB, you must break it up and send it by more than one email so that no single email exceeds 30MB. If Bidder submits their Proposal through multiple emails, please be sure to identify how many total emails are submitted, for example, 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3.

## **7. Alternative Submission Methods**

Bidders wishing to request an alternative method for submitting their Proposal must contact the Coordinator at least 10 days before the Proposal Submission Date. No alternative submission method will be accepted unless agreed to by the Coordinator in writing prior to the Proposal deadline.

## SECTION E BIDDER EVALUATIONS

### 1. Proposal Responsiveness; Administrative Review

All Proposals will be reviewed by the Coordinator to determine compliance with administrative and minimum qualification requirements and instructions specified in this Solicitation. DSHS may reject a Proposal as nonresponsive at any time for any of the following reasons:

- Incomplete Proposal
- Submission of a Proposal that proposes services that deviate from the scope and technical requirements set forth in this document and Attachment A, Sample Contract, except as permitted in an Amendment to this Solicitation
- Failure to meet the minimum Bidder qualifications or to comply with any requirement set forth in this Solicitation Document, including Attachments
- Submission of incorrect, misleading, or false information
- History of prior unsatisfactory contractual performance

The Coordinator may contact any Bidder for clarification of the Proposal. If a Proposal is deemed non-responsive, it shall be removed from further consideration. DSHS shall notify non-responsive Bidder(s) of this determination and the supporting reasons. Bidders whose Proposals are found to be non-responsive shall be disqualified from further evaluation and shall be notified in writing.

If a Proposal meets all administrative and Bidder qualification requirements and submittal instructions, DSHS shall continue with the Written Evaluation and, if applicable, the Oral Evaluation.

### 2. Errors in Bidder Proposal

Bidders are responsible for all errors or omissions contained in their Proposals. Bidders will not be allowed to alter Proposal documents after the deadline for Proposal submissions.

DSHS reserves the right to contact any Bidder for clarification of Proposal contents. In those cases where it is unclear to what extent a requirement has been addressed, the evaluation panel may, in their discretion and acting through the Coordinator, contact a Bidder to clarify specific matters in the submitted Proposal.

DSHS reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities contained in any Bidder Proposal.

### 3. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring

Following the administrative review, Proposals shall be evaluated and points shall be awarded for the written proposal components of the Proposal, as applicable, based upon

Bidder's responses to the questions set forth in Attachment D, Bidder Proposal Form. Additional evaluation points may be awarded for specific criteria not included in Attachment D, Bidder Proposal Form only if set forth in this Section.

The maximum number of points available for each Bidder is 1,125. The maximum number of points that may be assigned with respect to specific questions is set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Proposal form. The overall breakdown for assignment of points in evaluating Proposals to this Solicitation is as follows:

Written Proposal.....	900 possible points
(Optional) Oral Evaluation.....	200 possible points
<b>Possible Points</b> .....	<u>1,100 possible points</u>
EO 18-03 Response.....	25 possible points
<b>Maximum Possible Points</b> .....	<b>1,125 total possible points</b>

#### 4. Budget Proposal

While the Budget Proposal is required by all Bidders, it shall not be scored. Bidders are still encouraged to submit costs that are consistent with state government's efforts to conserve state resources and should propose their most favorable terms and those costs allowable under the [SNAP-Ed Program guidelines](#), found in Section 3: Financial and Cost Policy, under Social Marketing Programs.

In addition, DSHS has budgeted an estimated amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 for the full term of the contract, through September 30, 2026. DSHS, therefore, may reject any Proposal in excess of that amount, and any contract awarded is contingent upon the availability of funding. DSHS reserves the right to negotiate Budget Quotations with the top scoring Bidder(s).

Bidders are required to answer all budget questions as set forth in Section 2 of Attachment D: Bidder Proposal Form and complete and submit RFP Attachment E.

#### 5. Written Proposal Evaluation Process

DSHS shall designate an evaluation team of at least 3 evaluators to review, evaluate, and score the written question responses. These evaluators will be selected based on their qualifications, experience, capability and background. If Oral Evaluations are conducted, additional evaluators may supplement or replace some or all of the individuals performing the written evaluation.

Evaluators shall assign scores up to 900 points, the maximum points available for all Written Questions listed in Section 4 of Attachment D. Individual evaluator points will be totaled and the average points for each Bidder will be calculated. The Bidder's average points earned for each question will be added together to determine the Bidder's total written evaluation points.

In addition to presiding over the Written Evaluation team, the RFP Coordinator may provide input, assemble evaluation aids, or perform other functions helpful to the team. Evaluators may engage in a free flow discussion among themselves and the RFP Coordinator prior to, during, and after the evaluation.

**6. Evaluation for Executive Order 18-03 (Firms without Mandatory Individual Arbitration for Employees)**

Pursuant to RCW 39.26.160(3) (best value criteria) and consistent with [Executive Order 18-03 – Supporting Workers’ Rights to Effectively Address Workplace Violations](#) (dated June 12, 2018), DSHS will evaluate Proposals for best value and provide a preference in the amount set forth in Attachment D, Bidder Proposal Form, to any bidder who certifies that their firm does NOT require its employees, as a condition of employment, to sign or agree to mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers.

Successful bidders who certify that their employees are NOT required to sign these clauses and waivers as a condition of employment will have an EO 18-03 section added to their contract incorporating this response and requiring notification to DSHS if they later require their employees to agree to these clauses or waivers during the term of the contract.

**7. Bidder’s References (Optional)**

Once the Written Evaluations are completed, DSHS may contact the references provided by the top-ranked Bidder(s) in order to investigate past performance and validate information in Bidder Proposals. In submitting a Proposal, Bidder agrees that it shall hold harmless DSHS and any individuals identified as references from and against liability resulting from the provision of information or the receipt and use of that information in evaluating Bidder’s Proposal.

If this part of the process is elected, references shall be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. DSHS may reject a Proposal if a reference provides negative information about a Bidder’s past performance.

DSHS may, at any time, require additional or substitute references to determine the Bidder’s experience and level of responsibility. If the reference check process reveals information that should properly be considered in evaluating Bidder’s responses, DSHS may, in its sole discretion, reconvene the evaluation panel to reconsider the evaluation scoring in light of the information obtained.

**8. Oral Evaluations/Interviews (Optional)**

In addition to evaluating the Written Proposal, DSHS may invite one or more of the highest scoring Bidders’ proposed Project Manager, plus up to two more staff, to an interview. If conducted, Oral Evaluations shall be evaluated and scored separately from the Written Evaluation process. This process is to validate the top-scoring Bidder(s)’s experience with and understanding of the services to be provided. If elected, Oral Evaluations will last approximately 1 hour and be conducted through a virtual platform, such as Zoom or Teams. Bidders may earn up to an additional 200 points for responses given during the interview.

If DSHS chooses to conduct Oral Evaluations, the Solicitation Coordinator, or designee, will schedule the finalist Bidder(s) interviews by notifying Bidder(s) of the date, time and virtual location of their interviews (see the RFP Solicitation Schedule, Section C.1., for the approximate dates of the Oral Evaluations).

In addition to presiding over the Oral Evaluation team, the RFP Coordinator may provide input, assemble evaluation aids, or perform other functions helpful to the team. Evaluators may engage in a free flow discussion among themselves and the RFP Coordinator prior to, during, and after the evaluation.

## **9. Selection of Apparent Successful Bidder**

The Bidder that receives the highest total number of possible points will be presented to DSHS management for consideration as a finalist for the Apparent Successful Bidder.

The selection process shall determine which Bidder provides the best value in meeting the needs of DSHS. Selection of the Apparent Successful Bidder depends upon DSHS' assessment of multiple factors, including Bidders' qualifications, capabilities, efficiency, experience, reliability, responsibility, integrity, quality of proposed services and deliverables, timeliness, cost and potential impact on DSHS' needs. DSHS may consider whether the Proposal encourages diverse contractor participation; whether the Proposal provides competitive pricing, economies and efficiencies; whether the Bidder considers human health and environmental impacts; whether the Proposal appropriately weighs cost and non-cost considerations; and life cycle cost, as applicable. DSHS may also consider a Bidder's performance on prior State or other contracts and may reject Proposals of any Bidder who has failed to perform satisfactorily under any previous contract with the state or another party. DSHS reserves the right to select a Bidder whose Proposal is deemed to offer the best overall value and that is in the best interests of DSHS and the State of Washington.

DSHS management shall make the final determination as to which Bidder shall be officially selected and announced on WEBS as the Apparent Successful Bidder on or about the date and time set forth in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. DSHS may also notify the Apparent Successful Bidder and the unsuccessful Bidder(s) of its determination via email on or about the date and time specified in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule.

DSHS' decision will be subject to the finalization of a Contract satisfactory to DSHS within 10 business days following the announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder on WEBS. In the event the parties are unable to reach agreement on the final details of a Contract, consistent with Attachment A, Sample Contract, DSHS shall have the option of negotiating with the next highest ranked Bidder and of revising the announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder.

**SECTION F  
BIDDER DEBRIEFING  
AND PROTEST PROCEDURE**

**1. Debriefing Conferences**

No later than 5:00 p.m. on the third business day following the posted announcement of Successful Bidder on WEBS, Bidders who are not selected as a Successful Bidder may send an email to the Coordinator requesting a Debriefing Conference. Since debriefing conferences pertain to the formal evaluation process, Bidders who were disqualified as nonresponsive and therefore did not go through the formal evaluation process are not entitled to request a Debriefing Conference. Unless a different date is agreed upon by the Coordinator, the Debriefing Conference will be held on a date designated in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. Discussion at the debriefing conference will be limited to the following:

- Evaluation and scoring of the Bidder's Proposal
- Critique of the Proposal based on the evaluation
- Review of Bidder's final score in comparison with the other final scores

No comparisons between Proposals will be allowed during the Debriefing Conference, which shall be conducted virtually, unless the Coordinator agrees to an in-person meeting, and shall last for a maximum period of 30 minutes.

**2. Grounds and Filing of Protests**

A Bidder who has participated in a Debriefing Conference may file a formal Protest if the Bidder asserts that there are facts that indicate error in the evaluation of Proposals on one or more of the following grounds:

- Bias, discrimination or conflict of interest on the part of the evaluator or in the process
- Mathematical errors in computing the score
- Non-compliance with procedures described in the Solicitation document or in DES policy

Protests must be emailed to the Solicitation Coordinator and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) on the 5th business day following the day of the Bidder's Debriefing Conference. The Protest must adhere to the requirements set forth in this Section or it will not be considered. This Protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to Bidders from DSHS under this Solicitation.

Protests must include the protestor's mailing address and phone number and the name of the individual responsible for filing the Protest. The Protest must state the Solicitation number and title, the grounds for the Protest, specific facts to support these grounds, and a description of the relief or corrective action being requested.

Protests not based on one of the grounds set forth in this Section will be rejected. It is not grounds for a protest to question an evaluator's professional judgment on the quality

of a Proposal or DSHS' assessment of its own needs or requirements.

### **3. DSHS Protest Review Process**

The Coordinator will immediately forward any Protest to the Chief of Central Contracts and Legal Services to assign to a Protest Coordinator for review. The Protest Coordinator, an individual who was not involved in the Solicitation, will consider the record and all available facts and will endeavor to issue a decision within 10 business days following receipt of the Protest. If additional time is required, the protesting party will be notified of the delay.

In the event a Protest may involve the conduct of or information submitted by another Bidder that also submitted a Proposal, such Bidder will be given an opportunity to submit its views and any relevant information on the issue(s) raised by the protest to the Solicitation Coordinator.

### **4. Determination of Protests**

The Protest Coordinator shall issue a written determination regarding the Protest. This written determination shall include one or more of the following determinations:

- Upholding DSHS determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder on the basis that there are insufficient facts to establish the alleged error; or
- Upholding DSHS' determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder on the basis that there are only technical or harmless errors in DSHS' evaluation process; or
- Finding errors and identifying actions which may be taken by DSHS, such as:
  - Correction of errors and reevaluation of all Proposals;
  - Cancellation and reissuance of the Solicitation (in which case all the Bidders will be notified); or
  - Other corrective actions as may be appropriate

There is no further administrative process or remedy available within DSHS to appeal the determination that resulted in a Protest. If the protesting party does not accept DSHS' determination, the protesting party can seek relief from Superior Court in Thurston County, WA.



**SECTION G  
CONTRACTING PROCEDURES**

**1. Contract Execution**

The Apparent Successful Bidder is expected to sign a contract with DSHS that is substantially the same as Attachment A, Sample Contract, included with this Solicitation, and to enter into any subsequent Contract amendments that may be required to address specific work or services.

DSHS reserves the right to require that some or all of Bidder's Proposal be incorporated into the Contract, and to negotiate the specific wording of the Statement of Work, based on the requirements of this Solicitation and the terms of the Proposal submitted by the Apparent Successful Bidder. If changes are requested as part of the Proposal, DSHS may consider, but shall be under no obligation to agree to, modifications to the General Terms and Conditions of Attachment A, Sample Contract.

If the Apparent Successful Bidder fails or refuses to sign a Contract within 10 business days of delivery by DSHS, DSHS may elect to designate the next highest-ranked finalist as the Apparent Successful Bidder.

**2. Insurance**

The Apparent Successful Bidder shall provide evidence of its compliance with the insurance requirements included in Attachment A, Sample Contract.

**3. Non-Endorsement**

The award of a Contract is not an endorsement by the State or DSHS of the Bidder or Bidder's Services and shall not be represented as such by Bidder in any advertising or other publicity materials.

By submitting a Response to this Solicitation, the Bidder agrees to make no reference to DSHS in any literature, promotional materials, brochures, sales presentations or the like without the prior written consent of DSHS.

**4. Electronic Payment**

The State prefers to utilize electronic payment in its transactions. The successful Bidder will be required to register in the Statewide Vendor Payment system, <https://ofm.wa.gov/it-systems/statewide-vendorpayee-services>, prior to submitting a request for payment under their Contract. No payment shall be made until the registration is completed.