



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
RFP NO. 24-46300-01**

Office of Homeless Youth Competitive Funding 2023-2025

Includes the following programs:

Street Outreach Services (SOS)
Young Adult Shelter (YAS)
HOPE Centers
Crisis Residential Centers (CRC)
Transitional Living Programs (TLP)
Young Adult Housing Program (YAHP)
Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP)
System of Care (SOC)
Ancillary Therapeutic Services (ATS)
Centralized Diversion Fund (CDF/HPDF)

**PROPOSALS DUE: Wednesday, May 3rd, 2023 at 5:00pm,
Pacific Standard Time, Olympia, WA**

ESTIMATED TIME PERIOD FOR CONTRACT: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025

RFP COORDINATOR: Christopher Hanson at youthhomeless@commerce.wa.gov

All current documents related to this RFP, including the application, a schedule of activities, FAQs, and any amendments, are available online at <https://deptofcommerce.box.com/s/9vd686ctou67bv4xqlq2yku1cm9aejl>

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Washington State Department of Commerce hereafter called "COMMERCE," is initiating this Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purpose of allocating resources to entities that provide safety and stability to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in Washington State.

COMMERCE intends to award *multiple* contracts to provide the services described in this RFP.

Created in [2015](#), the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs hereafter called "OHY" leads statewide efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults by ensuring access to the following five priority service areas:

- Stable housing
- Family reconciliation
- Permanent connections
- Education and employment
- Social and emotional well-being

OHY has a vision that, "every family and youth in Washington State has the individualized support they need so that no young person has to spend a single night without a safe and stable home. Every community has services that are equitable, accessible, effective, responsive, and coordinated".

OHY is dedicated to ending youth homelessness, centering and professionalizing youth lived experience, and diversity, inclusion, and equity across race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, geography, creed, and migrant status.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

OHY provides oversight and management of programs that make up a continuum of services to address the needs of runaway and homeless youth. OHY programs support youth and young adults ages 12 through 24 who are experiencing housing instability while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, also referred to as “unaccompanied homelessness”. Grant programs available through this funding opportunity include:

1.2.1 Street Outreach Services (SOS)

Street Outreach Services provide services and resources either directly or through referral to unaccompanied youth and young adults ages 12 through 24 who are living on the streets and/or experiencing homelessness. Services include crisis intervention, emergency supplies, case management, referrals, and may be provided through street or community based outreach or drop in centers.

1.2.2 Young Adult Shelter (YAS)

Young Adult Shelters provide emergency shelter, assessment, referral, and permanency planning services for young adults ages 18 through 24 who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in state statute ([RCW 43.330.702](#)). Shelter can be provided on a night-by-night or continuous basis.

See [OHY Outreach Program Guidelines](#) for more details on SOS and YAS programs.

1.2.3 HOPE and Crisis Residential Centers (CRC)

HOPE and CRC’s are licensed facilities that provide temporary shelter, assessment, referrals, family reconciliation, and permanency-planning services for youth ages 12-17.

HOPE and CRC (semi-secure) programs may be co-located in the same licensed facility. Eligibility for either program is determined based on the youth’s individual circumstances. In many instances, youth may be eligible for placement in either a HOPE Center or CRC, in which case providers determine which program can best meet the needs of the youth.

HOPE: Youth are eligible for a HOPE Center if they are unaccompanied, living on the streets or another unsafe location not intended for occupancy of a minor. A youth may stay in a HOPE Center for up to 30 days, with an additional 30 days in 15-day increments if there is no safe placement option. Commerce can approve stays beyond 60 days if a long-term housing solution continues to be unavailable. Youth may self-refer to a HOPE Center on a voluntary basis.

Crisis Residential Center (Semi-Secure): Youth are eligible for a CRC if they are experiencing family conflict, have run away from home, and/or whose health and safety is at risk. CRC’s are operated in a manner to ensure youth do not runaway. A youth may stay in a CRC for up to 15 days. Youth may be admitted to a CRC as a self-referral, be placed there by law enforcement, or at the request of DCYF or the court when an out-home placement has been approved.

See [OHY Group Care Program Guidelines](#) for more information about HOPE/CRC programs.

***Additional Eligibility:** HOPE and CRC must be licensed to provide group care by the Licensing Division at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

1.2.4 Secure Crisis Residential Centers (SCRC)

SCRC's provide the same services that a semi-secure CRC provides except the facility has locking doors/windows that prevent a youth from running away, and lengths of stay in an SCRC can be no longer than 5 days.¹ SCRC may be community based or co-located with county operated juvenile detention centers. Youth may be admitted to an SCRC by either law enforcement or transferred from another CRC facility if certain conditions are met.

See [OHY Group Care Program Guidelines](#) for more information about SCRC programs.

***Additional Eligibility:** SCRC must be licensed to provide group care by the Licensing Division at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

1.2.5 Transitional Living Program (TLP)

Provides long-term housing to non-state dependent youth ages 16-17 who lack fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Programs provide housing transition planning within 6 months of turning 18. A TLP can be located within a licensed facility or in a host home.

See [OHY Group Care Program Guidelines](#) for more information about TLP programs.

***Additional Eligibility:** TLP must be licensed to provide group care by the Licensing Division at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) unless operated solely in unlicensed host homes.

1.2.6 Young Adult Housing Program (YAHP)

The Young Adult Housing Program provides transitional housing, rental assistance, and case management in order to support independent living. Eligible young adults must meet low-income limits, be age 18 but not yet 25, and be currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness (may use HUD or McKinney-Vento definitions).

1.2.7 Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP)

The Independent Youth Housing Program provides transitional housing, rental assistance, and case management to support independent living. Eligible young adults must meet low-income limits, be age 18 but not yet 25, and have been dependents in the state of Washington or federally recognized Indian tribe prior to age 18 (including youth currently enrolled in Extended Foster Care).

See [OHY Housing Programs Guidelines](#) for more information about YAHP and IYHP.

¹ While RCW 43.185C allows youth to stay in a secure-CRC for up to 5 days, federal laws require youth in these facilities to receive a review hearing within 24hrs, whereupon they are to be released unless a judge orders them to detention.

1.2.8 System of Care (SOC)

System of Care grants support interventions that prevent youth and young adults, ages 12-24, from exiting publicly funded systems of care into homelessness. Publicly funded systems of care include child welfare, juvenile justice, inpatient behavioral health, and programs administered by OHY. Grants can support a variety of approaches and activities aimed toward the goal of preventing youth from exiting public systems into homelessness, which may include: (a) Behavioral health services (b) Civil legal aid (c) Peer navigators and support (d) Family reconciliation or engagement services (e) Employment support (f) Education support (g) Case management (h) Housing and financial support or (i) Other navigation support to secure safe and stable housing.

See [OHY SOC Program Guidelines](#) for more information about SOC programs.

1.2.9 Ancillary Therapeutic Services (ATS)

Ancillary Therapeutic Services provide a variety of behavioral health supports to youth and/or young adults, ages 12-24, who are engaged in OHY programs. Services may include screening and referral, diagnosis by a licensed mental health provider, brief behavioral health treatment, individual or group counseling, substance misuse prevention, harm reduction, care coordination, and other similar services. Services can be provided through a staff clinician, behavioral health professional providing case consultation and/or staff training, connection to online counselors, peer counselors, or other methods.

See [OHY ATS Program Guidelines](#) for more information.

***Additional Eligibility:** ATS must be for youth and young adults engaged in an OHY funded program, either existing or a project you are applying for through this RFP.

1.2.10 Centralized Diversion Fund (CDF) also known as HPDF

This program is an opportunity to apply to be the CDF/HPDF fiscal administrator to serve all youth and young adults in community. The CDF/HPDF is a partnership with A Way Home Washington to provide diversion and flexible financial assistance to help youth and young adults meet basic needs, secure housing, and avoid homelessness in communities that are part of the Anchor Community Initiative.

See AHWHA [Scope of Work](#) and [HPDF Guidelines](#) and [OHY Appendix](#) for more information about CDF/HPDF.

***Additional Eligibility:** CDF projects must be located in and/or provide services in an Anchor Community: Pierce, Spokane, Walla Walla, Yakima, Thurston, Clark, Whatcom, Skagit, Jefferson, or Clallam counties.

1.3 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum qualifications include:

- All applicants must be licensed to do business in the State of Washington or submit a statement of commitment that it will become licensed in Washington within thirty (30) calendar days of being selected as the Apparent Successful Bidder.
- Applicants for HOPE, CRC, and SCRC programs must also be licensed for group care by DCYF or describe your plan to obtain a license including expected timeline, in the Eligibility Requirement section in Program Specific Question for this project on the RFP application.
- Applicants for TLP programs that will operate out of a residential facility must also be licensed for group care by DCYF describe your plan to obtain a license including expected timeline, in the Eligibility Requirement section in Program Specific Question for this project on the RFP application.
- Applicants for ATS programs must indicate in which OHY funded program(s) the services will be provided through. This may be either an existing program or a project proposed in this RFP.
- Applicants for the CDF/HPDF fiscal administrator must intend to operate in a designated Anchor Community and serve youth and young adults throughout that community.

Proposals that do not clearly meet or exceed all minimum qualifications listed above are non-responsive and will not be evaluated.

1.4 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance of any contract resulting from this RFP is tentatively scheduled to begin on or about **July 1, 2023** and to end on **June 30, 2025**. Amendments extending the period of performance, if any, shall be at the sole discretion of COMMERCE.

COMMERCE reserves the right to extend the contract for two, two-year periods, for up to six years total, at Commerce's sole discretion.

1.5 FUNDING

Funding is being made available for the following:

- Approximately \$25 million that can support the following programs: HOPE, CRC, SCRC, SOS, YAS, IYHP, YAHP, SOC, and ATS.
- At least \$1.9 million for the Transitional Living Program.
- \$950,000, with possible funding up to \$5,000,000, for the Centralized Diversion Fund/Homeless Prevention Diversion Fund in designated Anchor Communities (Pierce, Spokane, Walla Walla, Yakima, Thurston, Clark, Whatcom, Skagit, Jefferson, and Clallam Counties).

NOTE: All funding levels are subject to change and contingent upon final 2023-25 budget appropriations. Any contract awarded as a result of this procurement is contingent upon the availability of funding.

While each program has its own purpose and unique set of objectives, there are several high-level goals and priorities we hope to achieve with this funding opportunity.

Geographic Distribution

OHY seeks to address geographic disparities by prioritizing funding so that communities have a robust continuum of care for adequately addressing the needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. We want to ensure youth and families who request help receive the services they need such that no youth is turned away due to a community's inability or lack of capacity to respond with appropriate resources. Youth in crisis should not have to leave their existing community or support system in order to find safe and stable housing.

Equity in Services

The risks of homelessness and housing instability are not equally shared among young people. Youth of color and LGBTQIA2+ youth are overrepresented among homeless youth, compared to their white and heteronormative peers– and underrepresented in who gets served. Centuries of biased laws, policies, and practices have resulted in inequitable treatment and perpetuated on going trauma, abuse, family rejection and poverty for many youth of color and LGBTQIA2+ youth.

OHY will prioritize funding requests from organizations that demonstrate they can adequately address the unique needs of these overrepresented populations, remove barriers, and provide services that are affirming, accessible, and responsive to youth who are marginalized because of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Grantees will be required to utilize emerging research and best practices for addressing the needs of these communities.

Youth Engagement and Voice

It is important that young people have a genuine voice in the services that are being delivered. When young people are included as decision makers, the organizations that serve them are better informed and equipped to meet their complex and unique needs. Furthermore, young people who feel valued are more likely to be invested in and increasingly take on leadership roles. Leadership opportunities empower young people and propel them towards successful outcomes. OHY is interested in supporting services that return power to young people, actively cultivate ways for youth to be involved, provide feedback, and take on leadership opportunities at every level of an organization.

1.6 DEFINITIONS

Definitions for the purposes of this RFP include:

Apparent Successful Contractor/Bidder/Vendor/Grantee/Awardee: The proposer selected as the entity to perform the anticipated services, subject to completion of contract negotiations and execution of a written contract.

Contractor: Proposer(s) whose proposal has been accepted by COMMERCE and is awarded a fully executed, written contract. Also called Grantee, Awardee, Recipient, or Vendor.

COMMERCE or AGENCY: The Department of Commerce is the agency of the state of Washington that is issuing this RFP.

Exhibit: Document attached to this RFP, also referred to as Attachment.

Proposal: A formal offer submitted in response to this solicitation.

Proposer: Individual, firm, organization, company, or other entity or group of entities that submits a proposal in order to attain a contract with COMMERCE.

Request for Proposals (RFP): Formal procurement document in which a service or need is identified but no specific method to achieve it has been chosen. The purpose of an RFP is to permit the proposer community to suggest various approaches to meet the need at or below a given funding level.

Also see [Exhibit H: Glossary](#) for additional terms used in this RFP.

1.7 ADA

COMMERCE complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Proposers may contact the RFP Coordinator to receive this Request for Proposals in Braille or on tape.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROPOSERS

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2.1 RFP COORDINATOR

The RFP Coordinator is the sole point of contact in COMMERCE for this procurement. All communication between the Proposer and COMMERCE upon release of this RFP shall be with the RFP Coordinator, as follows:

Name	Christopher Hanson
E-Mail Address	youthhomeless@commerce.wa.gov

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on COMMERCE. Proposers are to rely on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFP Coordinator may result in disqualification of the Proposer.

2.2 ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

Issue Request for Proposals	Monday, April 3, 2023
Question & answer period	April 3 – April 24, 2023 at 5:00pm PST
Answers to Q&A posted HERE no later than	Wednesday, April 26, 2023
Bidders' Webinar	Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 1pm
Applications due	Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 5:00pm PST
Evaluate proposals	May 4 – May 31, 2023
Conduct oral interviews with finalists, if required	TBD
Announce “Apparent Successful Bidder” and send notification via e-mail to unsuccessful Proposers	Friday, June 2, 2023
Hold debriefing conferences (if requested)	June 5 – June 16, 2023
Negotiate contract	June 16 – June 30, 2023
Begin contract work	July 1, 2023

COMMERCE reserves the right to revise the above schedule, which can be found [HERE](#).

2.3 BIDDERS WEBINAR

A bidders’ webinar is scheduled to be held on *Tuesday, April 11, 2023*. The webinar will be virtual only. Time and link to attend will be posted on the [Estimated Schedule of Procurement Activities](#). All prospective Proposers are encouraged to attend; however, attendance is not mandatory. A recording of the webinar will be posted online.

COMMERCE will be bound only to COMMERCE written answers to questions. Questions arising at the bidders’ webinar or in subsequent communication with the RFP Coordinator will be documented and answered in written form and posted online on the [Q&A HERE](#).

2.4 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The proposal must be received by the RFP Coordinator no later than 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time, in Olympia, Washington, on *Wednesday, May 3, 2023*.

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. Attachments to e-mail shall be in Microsoft Word format, or PDF. Budget Exhibit attachments should be submitted as Excel spreadsheets. Zipped files cannot be received by COMMERCE and cannot be used for submission of proposals. The Certifications and Assurances form must have a signature of the individual within the organization authorized to bind the Proposer to the offer. COMMERCE does not assume responsibility for problems with Proposer's e-mail. If COMMERCE email is not working, appropriate allowances will be made.

Proposals may not be transmitted using facsimile transmission.

Proposers should allow sufficient time to ensure timely receipt of the proposal by the RFP Coordinator. Late proposals will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration, unless COMMERCE e-mail is found to be at fault at COMMERCE'S sole determination. Proposals should be sent in one email, however if more than one email is needed all must be received by the due date and time. Exceptions will not be made for partial submissions. Requests for deadline extensions will not be granted. All proposals and any accompanying documentation become the property of COMMERCE and will not be returned.

2.5 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Proposals submitted in response to this competitive procurement shall become the property of COMMERCE. All proposals received shall remain confidential until the Apparent Successful Bidder is announced; thereafter, the proposals shall be deemed public records as defined in Chapter 42.56 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Any information in the proposal that the Proposer desires to claim as proprietary and exempt from disclosure under the provisions of Chapter 42.56 RCW, or other state or federal law that provides for the nondisclosure of your document, must be clearly designated. The information must be clearly identified and the particular exemption from disclosure upon which the Proposer is making the claim must be cited. Each page containing the information claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the words "Proprietary Information" printed on the lower right hand corner of the page. Marking the entire proposal exempt from disclosure or as Proprietary Information will not be honored.

If a public records request is made for the information that the Proposer has marked as "Proprietary Information," COMMERCE will notify the Proposer of the request and of the date that the records will be released to the requester unless the Proposer obtains a court order enjoining that disclosure. If the Proposer fails to obtain the court order enjoining disclosure, COMMERCE will release the requested information on the date specified. If a Proposer obtains a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction enjoining disclosure pursuant to Chapter 42.56 RCW, or other state or federal law that provides for nondisclosure, COMMERCE shall maintain the confidentiality of the Proposer's information per the court order.

A charge will be made for copying and shipping, as outlined in RCW 42.56. No fee shall be charged for inspection of contract files, but twenty-four (24) hours' notice to the RFP Coordinator is required. All requests for information should be directed to the RFP Coordinator.

2.6 REVISIONS TO THE RFP

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, addenda will be provided via e-mail to all individuals who have made the RFP Coordinator aware of their interest. Addenda will also be published on Washington's Electronic Bid System (WEBS). The website can be located at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/webs/>. For this purpose, the published questions and answers and any other pertinent information shall be provided as an addendum to the RFP and will be placed on the website. Such addenda will also be published on an Agency page, located at <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/current-opportunities/>.

If you downloaded this RFP from the Agency website located at www.commerce.wa.gov, you are responsible for sending your name, e-mail address, and telephone number to the RFP Coordinator in order for your organization to receive any RFP addenda.

COMMERCE also reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the RFP in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

2.7 COMPLAINT PROCESS

Vendors may submit a complaint to COMMERCE based on any of following:

- a) The solicitation unnecessarily restricts competition;**
- b) The solicitation evaluation or scoring process is unfair; or**
- c) The solicitation requirements are inadequate or insufficient to prepare a response.**

A complaint may be submitted to COMMERCE at any time prior to 5 days before the bid response deadline. The complaint must meet the following requirements:

- a) The complaint must be in writing;**
- b) The complaint must be sent to the RFP coordinator in a timely manner;**
- c) The complaint should clearly articulate the basis for the complaint; and**
- d) The complaint should include a proposed remedy.**

The RFP coordinator will respond to the complaint in writing. The response to the complaint and any changes to the solicitation will be posted on WEBS. The Director of COMMERCE will be notified of all complaints and will be provided a copy of COMMERCE'S response. The complaint may not be raised again during the protest period. COMMERCE'S action or inaction in response to the complaint will be final. There will be no appeal process.

2.8 RESPONSIVENESS

All proposals will be reviewed by the RFP Coordinator to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in this RFP. The Proposer is specifically notified that failure to comply with any part of the RFP may result in disqualification of the proposal as incomplete and/or non-responsive.

Proposers will be notified of disqualification after the announcement of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s).

Disqualified Proposers will be afforded a Debriefing consistent with Section 4.5.

COMMERCE reserves the right at its sole discretion to waive minor administrative irregularities.

2.9 MOST FAVORABLE TERMS

COMMERCE reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms which the Proposer can propose. There will be no best and final offer procedure. COMMERCE reserves the right to contact a Proposer for clarification of its proposal.

The Apparent Successful Bidder should be prepared to accept this RFP for incorporation into a contract resulting from this RFP. Contract negotiations may incorporate some, or all, of the Proposer's proposal. It is understood that the proposal will become a part of the official procurement file on this matter without obligation to COMMERCE.

2.10 CONTRACT GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

The apparent successful bidder will be expected to enter into a contract which is substantially the same as the sample contract and its general terms and conditions attached as Exhibit F. This sample contract is for information and review only and should not be returned with your proposal. In no event is a Proposer to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions in response to this solicitation. The Proposer may submit proposed edits as allowed in the Certifications and Assurances form, Exhibit A to this solicitation. All proposed edits to the contract terms and conditions must be submitted as an attachment to Exhibit A, Certifications and Assurances form. COMMERCE will review requested exceptions and accept or reject the same at its sole discretion.

2.11 COSTS TO PROPOSE

COMMERCE will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Proposer in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, travel to or conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

2.12 NO OBLIGATION TO CONTRACT

This RFP does not obligate the state of Washington or COMMERCE to contract for services specified herein.

2.13 REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

COMMERCE reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all proposals received without penalty and not to issue a contract as a result of this RFP.

2.14 COMMITMENT OF FUNDS

The Director of COMMERCE or delegate is the only individual who may legally commit COMMERCE to the expenditures of funds for a contract resulting from this RFP. No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of a fully executed contract.

2.15 ELECTRONIC PAYMENT

The state of Washington prefers to utilize electronic payment in its transactions. The successful contractor will be provided a form to complete with the contract to authorize such payment method.

2.16 INSURANCE COVERAGE

The Contractor is to furnish COMMERCE with a certificate(s) of insurance executed by a duly authorized representative of each insurer, showing compliance with the insurance requirements set forth within the contract.

The Contractor shall, at its own expense, obtain and keep in force insurance coverage which shall be maintained in full force and effect during the term of the contract. The Contractor shall furnish evidence in the form of a Certificate of Insurance that insurance shall be provided, and a copy shall be forwarded to COMMERCE within fifteen (15) days of the contract effective date. Standard insurance requirements are included within the sample contract and its special terms and conditions attached as Exhibit F.

3. EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD

3.1 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Responsive proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the requirements stated in this solicitation and any addenda issued. The evaluation of proposals shall be accomplished by an evaluation team(s), to be designated by COMMERCE, which will determine the ranking of the proposals.

COMMERCE, at its sole discretion, may elect to invite the top-scoring Proposers as finalists for an oral presentation.

The RFP Coordinator may contact the Proposer for clarification of any portion of the Proposer’s proposal. Proposers are not permitted to submit, or resubmit, any materials of any kind after the date and time stated in section 2.5 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS.

3.2 EVALUATION BREAKDOWN

The following weighting will be assigned to the proposal for evaluation purposes:

Eligibility – Pass/Fail

Universal Questions.....	60 points
Project Questions.....	40 points
Total.....	100 points

Workers’ Rights Certification – Those Proposers that certify they do not require their employees to sign an individual arbitration clause as a condition of employment will receive an extra 5% of their awarded points added to their final score (see Exhibit C).

Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the requirements stated in this application and any revisions issued. Awards will be determined by threshold eligibility review, application score, and evaluating the proposal’s alignment with funding goals and priorities described in section 1.4 (Geographic Distribution, Equity in Services, and Youth Engagement and Voice) and relevant Program Guidelines (Exhibit G).

COMMERCE reserves the right to award the contract to the Proposer whose proposal is deemed to be in the best interest of COMMERCE and the state of Washington.

3.3 ORAL PRESENTATIONS MAY BE REQUIRED

After evaluating the written proposals COMMERCE may elect to schedule oral presentations of the finalists. Should oral presentations become necessary, COMMERCE will contact the top-scoring applicants from the written evaluation to schedule a date, time, and location. Commitments made by the Proposer at the oral interview, if any, will be considered binding.

The scores from the written evaluation and the oral presentation combined together will determine the Apparent Successful Bidder.

3.4 NOTIFICATION TO PROPOSERS

COMMERCE will notify the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) of their selection in writing upon completion of the evaluation process. Proposers who were not selected for further negotiation or award will be notified separately by e-mail.

3.5 DEBRIEFING OF UNSUCCESSFUL PROPOSERS

Any Proposer who has submitted a proposal and received notice that they were not selected for contract award may request a debriefing. The request for a debriefing conference must be received by the RFP Coordinator within three (3) business days after the Unsuccessful Proposer Notification is e-mailed or faxed to the Proposer. Debriefing requests must be received by the RFP Coordinator no later than 5:00 PM, local time, in Olympia, Washington, on the third business day following the transmittal of the Unsuccessful Proposer Notification. The debriefing must be scheduled within three (3) business days of the request.

Discussion at the debriefing conference is strictly limited to the following:

- **Evaluation and scoring of that Proposer's proposal;**
- **Any written comments from evaluators;**
- **Review of proposer's final score in comparison with the other final scores *without* identifying the other Proposers or reviewing their proposals.**

Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals is not allowed. Debriefing conferences may be conducted on the telephone or by other electronic means and will be scheduled for a maximum of thirty (30) minutes.

3.6 PROTEST PROCEDURE

Protests may be made only by Proposers who submitted a response to this solicitation document and who have participated in a debriefing conference. Upon completing the debriefing conference, the Proposer is allowed five (5) business days to file a protest with the RFP Coordinator. Protests must be received by the RFP Coordinator no later than 5:00 PM, local time, in Olympia, Washington on the fifth business day following the debriefing. Protests must be submitted by email.

Proposers protesting this procurement shall follow the procedures described below. Protests that do not follow these procedures shall not be considered. This protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to Proposers under this procurement.

All protests must be in writing, addressed to the RFP Coordinator, and signed by the protesting party or an authorized Agent. The protest must state the RFP number, the grounds for the protest from the list below with specific facts and complete statements of the action(s) being protested. A description of the relief or corrective action being requested should also be included.

Only protests stipulating an issue of fact concerning the following subjects shall be considered:

- A matter of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest on the part of an evaluator;
- Errors in computing the score;
- Non-compliance with procedures described in this procurement document or COMMERCE policy.

Protests not based on procedural matters will not be considered. Protests will be rejected as without merit if they address issues such as: 1) an evaluator's professional judgment on the quality of a proposal, or 2) COMMERCE'S assessment of its own and/or other agencies' needs or requirements.

Upon receipt of a protest, a protest review will be held by COMMERCE. The COMMERCE Director or an employee delegated by the Director who was not involved in the procurement will consider the record and all available facts and issue a decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the protest. If additional time is required, the protesting party will be notified of the delay.

In the event a protest may affect the interest of another Proposer that also submitted a proposal, such Proposer will be given an opportunity to submit its views and any relevant information on the protest to the RFP Coordinator.

The final determination of the protest shall:

- Find the protest lacking in merit and uphold COMMERCE'S action; or
- Find only technical or harmless errors in COMMERCE'S process and determine COMMERCE to be in substantial compliance and reject the protest; or
- Find merit in the protest and provide COMMERCE options which may include:
 - Correct the errors and re-evaluate all proposals, or
 - Reissue the solicitation document and begin a new process, or
 - Make other findings and determine other courses of action as appropriate.

If COMMERCE determines that the protest is without merit, COMMERCE will enter into a contract with the Apparent Successful Bidder(s). If the protest is determined to have merit, one of the options above will be taken.

4. RFP EXHIBITS

- A. Certifications and Assurances (*included in [application](#)*)
- B. Diverse Business Inclusion Plan (*included in [application](#)*)
- C. Workers' Rights Certification (*included in [application](#)*)
- D. Prior Business/Employees with Washington State (*included in [application](#)*)
- E. [Budget](#)
- F. [Service Grant Format with General Terms and Conditions](#)
- G. [Program Guidelines](#)
- H. [Glossary](#)

All current documents related to this RFP, including the application, a schedule of activities, FAQs, and any amendments, are available online at

<https://deptofcommerce.box.com/s/9vd686ctou67bv4xqlq2yku1cm9aejl>