



BIDDER Q&A *updated 07/30/24*

*This Q&A is updated regularly at the WSFHC website at www.wshfc.org/admin/rfpCreativeServices2024.htm. To submit a question regarding the Creative Services RFP, email anna.porkalob@wshfc.org. **Questions will be accepted through 5 p.m. Monday July 29, and the last Q&A will be posted on July 30.***

1. Is quarterly reporting acceptable?
Generally, yes. Details would be worked out in contracting.
2. How must labor be expressed on reports? Hourly rates? Something else?
Labor should be expressed hourly in invoices. Details would be worked out in contracting.
3. What level of documentation is required for direct expenses?
Receipts should be submitted for most direct expenses.
4. Is any level of documentation required for labor expenses beyond hours by deliverable?
No, we don't expect this to be submitted with invoices. However we expect that if asked, you would be able to document labor expenses through some kind of standard time-tracking system.
5. Is there an incumbent and if so, what is the award number and value?
[See question 70.](#)
6. Can you provide more insight into the budget allocation for each of the service areas outlined in the RFP?
[We don't have set budget allocations for the service areas. We would negotiate a contract with the winning bidder\(s\) based on their expertise and our estimated deliverables.](#)
7. Are there any specific tools or technologies the Commission prefers or currently uses for communication, project management, or creative services?
[Commission staff mostly use Teams for virtual meetings and are increasingly using Smartsheet for project management, but contractors can use other platforms that work for them. Generally, they should be skilled in industry-standard technology and software that enable them to produce high-quality, professional work.](#)

8. How does the Commission define success for the various projects under this contract?

See question 40.

9. Are there specific metrics or KPIs that will be used to evaluate the contractor's performance?

KPIs will be developed for individual projects/initiatives.

10. How will collaboration between the contractor and Commission staff be managed, especially in terms of regular meetings and communication channels?

Collaboration might look different depending on the project or initiative. At a minimum, we would expect to meet regularly and communicate often via email. We could also share the use of a project management tool.

11. Can you provide more details on the level of community involvement and engagement expected in the communication strategies?

This would depend on the goal of each project or initiative. We are also interested in how your firm's expertise and experience with community engagement might support the efforts of our internal community engagement staff.

12. Are there specific community groups or stakeholders the Commission has identified as key partners for these initiatives?

During the coming year we are seeking to expand our engagement with marginalized communities across the state and form new relationships. We do have partnerships that can be built on. For example, one of our goals is to engage with residents of affordable apartment properties in our portfolios, so we would build on our existing relationships with the property managers.

13. Can you provide more information on the Commission's expectations regarding cultural competency and how it should be integrated into the communication and creative services?

We would expect communications strategies and materials to reflect a high degree of cultural competency to be effective with their intended audiences. This would include understanding cultural sensitivities when, for example, choosing graphics, imagery and language. Contractors should be able to ensure cultural competence in some way or another.

14. What are the different types of marketing mediums WSHFC is planning to have (for example social media, print, etc.)?

Please see questions 60-64. These tactics would depend on the goals and strategies identified for the work.

15. We are assuming that WSHFC is planning for social media marketing. What are the various platforms that need to be targeted (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.)?

We would look to our contractor to help determine effective platforms based on the goals and strategies.

- 16.** Does WSHFC require the work to be performed on-site or can it be performed from offshore (India or Canada), or in a hybrid model, or remotely from the US?

See question 29. We will consider work performed offshore, however please be upfront about this in your proposal.

- 17.** If a proposed resource becomes unavailable or allocated to any other project at the time of award/project start date, can we deploy another resource with the same/similar experience and skillset?

If you are selected to contract with us based on your proposal and there is a substantial change in your staffing, subcontracting or another resource, it might affect our ability to move forward with the contract. This would be discussed during the contracting process. You should let us know as soon as possible if something like this occurs.

- 18.** The WEBS listing for this work has a budget of \$150K. Is that budget firm or flexible? Is that for one year or multiple years?

See question 68.

- 19.** On page limits for this section (page 11) - assuming that that is for each response for service category?

Yes, one to two pages per service area.

- 20.** On the topic of multiple awards, will there be a single vendor award per category of work? Or could there be multiple awards per category of work? (For Example, Graphic design and layout)

More likely to be one full-service contract plus smaller contracts for ad hoc projects.

- 21.** I was curious if I am providing graphic design or services related to video like motion design or animation if would I still be required to get liability insurance? I'm not sure how it would apply to my studio if I'm not putting anyone at any, I'm not putting anyone at any sort of physical risk or danger. I don't know if this is a state requirement or not.

For personal studio work as mentioned above, we require, at minimum, basic coverage. We would work with a successful bidder to ensure they have the right coverage.

- 22.** Could you provide some idea about the nature of potential crisis communications needs that you may anticipate?

The Commission has a couple of high-profile programs that could generate national attention. We may need assistance handling public inquiries, media appearances, etc.

- 23.** Are you looking for just videography and documentary-style video work, or would video formats like animation also apply to the creative services you're looking for?

We may well need short informational videos that would lend themselves to animation, so are very open to these kinds of services. Other kinds of videos might include interviews with people who have used our programs to buy a home, staff discussing our programs, etc.

- 24.** Do applicants need to be in a specific category in the Communications & Marketing Services or is this an open RFP outside the DES Cooperative Purchasing Agreement?

This is an open RFP and is not related to the DES Cooperative Purchasing Agreement.

- 25.** Can you briefly describe the marketing goals of the Homeownership Program?

The Homeownership program would like to increase outreach and marketing to low- and moderate-income homebuyers, to let them know downpayment assistance and other programs are available to help them. We also want to reach out to homeowners who may be struggling with their mortgage or other home expenses, to encourage them to reach out to the state Homeownership Hotline for foreclosure prevention help. Finally, we seek to encourage lenders and real-estate professionals to join our network and teach our homebuyer education classes.

- 26.** Will extra consideration be given to firms offering services from more than one category or are applicants in each category going to be assessed independently?

There is no rating advantage to offering services in multiple categories; however, we will likely consider at least one firm that provides multiple services, as well as others whose services are limited to specific specialties.

- 27.** Should we keep our "Approach" for each category in Section B and the associated "Work Examples" in Section C when preparing the RFP?

Yes please, but you can refer to examples that illustrate this.

- 28.** If we're submitting to work in more than one area, would it be possible to create and submit separate proposals for each service? For example, could I submit different proposals for photography and graphic design to focus on separate pitches for each?

You could submit separate proposals, but it is not necessary. Our intention is that you describe your firm and your work more generally in the Experience section, and then go into detail on your proposed service areas in response to the questions in the second section.

- 29.** Do you require firms and/or contractors to be on site, remote or hybrid?

Almost all of the work will be remote; obviously on-site work may be required for some services such as photography.

- 30. Key Stakeholders and Team Involvement:** Could you please specify the departments and key stakeholders from your side that the chosen vendor will be collaborating with? For example, will the project involve members from project management, marketing, design, and communications teams?

The work will mostly involve collaborating with staff of the communications team, and likely to a degree with staff from Homeownership and those involved in community engagement.

- 31. Team Capacity and Partnership Structure:** What is the current capacity of your team for this project? How do you envision the partnership with the chosen vendor in terms of roles, responsibilities, and collaboration throughout the project?

The communications team includes a director, specialist, and web manager, with additional communications and community engagement roles scattered among other divisions for specific purposes. We seek a partnership in which the level of collaboration will vary. For some projects we would only be seeking some support for certain parts of the work, but in other cases we might delegate an entire project including project management. We would like the contractors to help us extend our capacity in multiple ways including project management, guidance, support, and hands-on creative work.

- 32.** Our agency has found on the site Q&A from a previous Q&A session. Are the answers from the previously posted Q&A session in 2018 still valid?

No, please do not rely on previous answers.

- 33.** What is the media delivery platform for video and photos?

We would expect a cloud platform, but do not prefer or commit to a specific cloud service provider. However, it must be accessible to us and secure.

- 34.** Do we specify what location we should use for the example budget or say something like assuming X miles from Seattle?

You can include assumptions and/or use a range of miles.

- 35.** Should we budget pretty basic shoots and then just include variables that could impact budget?

Yes.

- 36.** Using the video produced in 2019, would that be a good example when estimating?

Not sure which video you're referring to, but feel free to use examples seen on our website or YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/@wshfccommunications35/videos>.

- 37.** What are the specific goals of this marketing and communications effort? Is it an educational campaign for new clients or is it informative for current and new clients?

This RFP covers many different goals and needs. Please refer to the RFP.

- 38.** I appreciate the use of specific examples in D in requesting budget samples. How will this section be weighed towards the overall review of the response? Do you want sample work included in this section as well to help determine quality?

The budget section is worth 20 points. This section may give us an idea of your approach to a work project, but we don't expect to see details that would allow us to determine quality -- just cost estimates based on the assumptions provided. We will rely on answers in the other parts of the RFP in evaluating your experience and creative work.

- 39.** Will you consider firms from out of state (e.g. Oregon)?

Yes.

- 40.** How do you judge success currently? How would you like to judge it in the future?

Our definition of success will vary by project as each is likely to have specific goals – but generally success in a contractor relationship means that we can rely on your firm to extend our capacity and solve problems, in an atmosphere of positive collaboration, trust and mutual respect.

- 41.** Are there deliverables regarding the creative services you expect?

Please revisit the RFP. Specific deliverable examples are provided.

- 42.** Regarding video production services, how much support is available for identifying and recruiting on-camera participants? Would your team be doing any direct outreach or providing a list of potential participants for the video team to contact directly?

Our staff and partners would be very involved in identifying participants, and may then hand off contact information to the video team. Staff have also taken an active role in photo and video shoots.

- 43.** Should we include travel costs for capturing interviews and video stories in other areas of the state?

Travel cost estimates are not necessary. Contractors would be required to use state reimbursement rates: [Click here](#) to visit the WA State Office of Financial Management website.

- 44.** Would we be allowed to use the copywritten work for advertising purposes for our company after the fact?

It depends on the use. For instance, it is acceptable to use it as an example of your work, but not to use it for another client.

45. Will there be a chance to renegotiate labor rates over the 1-3 years?

It is probable. We would discuss this in the contracting phase.

46. Would the Commission elect to hire a contractor for only some of the service areas they bid on? Or is it all or nothing?

Yes – we may request that you contract with us for some but not all of the services you bid on.

47. The RFP says, "creating brand standards." Does that mean develop rules and a brand usage guideline, or will there be a whole rebranding effort? Thanks.

Brand standards may need to be developed for a current brand or rebranding may be necessary for a program or element of our work; for either case we would need rules/usage, etc. But we do not currently plan on a rebranding of our entire agency.

48. Can you share examples of photography and video production you've created in the past so we can get an idea of the level of effort?

Please see our [YouTube channel](#) for some examples. Here are two that might be of interest: [WA HAF Hotline](#) and [Our 80,000 Homebuyers](#)

49. Why are we looking for a marketing and communications partner now? You haven't had one in a while.

We have had difficulty finding the capacity to conduct an RFP process.

50. Has the agency been through a brand strategy session and is there a brand guide available? Is the mention of the brand work relevant to sub-brand or program brands and would they reflect the umbrella brand?

We don't have a current agency-wide brand, but many programs are branded independently. We are not sure of our branding needs at this time; branding is included as an example.

51. What, if any, existing research would be made available for this engagement?

If you're referring to market research, we have very little.

52. Has the Commission conducted advertising campaigns in the past? If yes:

- a. What was the advertising campaign program(s)/topic(s)?
- b. Who were the audience(s)?
- c. What were the budget(s)?

d. Type of media?

As part of our Homeowner Assistance Fund program, we conducted an extensive advertising campaign with the help of The Vida Agency. The audience was lower-income homeowners who could benefit from assistance to avoid foreclosure. The campaign was across a wide range of channels and media, especially digital. The budget is not particularly relevant because the budget for this federally funded program was anomalous to our general budget for services.

- 53.** Do you have resources in-house for transcreation or will this need to be part of the budget? Do you have a list of languages you'd like to include?

We do not have an in-house resource. We would likely need this service; the languages would depend on the goals and strategy.

- 54.** Who manages/updates the website? Do you have web development in house?

Our staff web manager is responsible for the website. We are not seeking web development through this RFP.

- 55.** It appears that your site is not on the current Google Analytics 4. Do you have plans to migrate to GA4? Do you have people internally who can update analytics and install tracking code on landing pages/websites to report on digital advertising efforts, or would you need help with that?

We may need assistance with analytics adding tracking code.

- 56.** For this RFP, is your vision for us to list capabilities in a la carte format with a range of hours, and then after finalizing our strategy we can curate our recommendation based on the menu of items provided within the \$150k per year budget (3 yrs. total)?

We would like you to describe your capabilities for the services you propose to provide in the Proposed Services section. If your firm is selected, the contracting process would more specifically detail the services you would provide and the associated budget.

- 57.** Survey/Focus Group: Will your team help coordinate with the residents? Will you offer incentives? If so, is there an additional budget?

Yes, we would help coordinate with residents and could offer incentives. But this is just included as an example for the purpose of estimating costs. Just clarify your assumptions and use a range of costs if appropriate.

- 58.** Do you have any examples of successful marketing campaigns?

The Washington HAF program marketing campaign, conceived and executed by The Vida Agency, reached thousands of struggling homeowners statewide from late 2022 through early 2024.

59. Is it just one shoot for example or multiple video shoots? How many actual videos or photo shoots/ photos are you expecting?

For purposes of cost estimating, just use an example of one. During the actual work, we may need from one to 10 videos per year.

60. Confirming this includes media for the marketing/branding piece?

Yes, it is likely but would depend on the objectives.

61. Can you provide further details about what services you will need for Graphic Design (website, print, email, media) or does this all depend on the strategy?

It depends on the strategy. We are looking for all-around expertise in graphic design.

62. How much of the communications piece of the work will be focused on content development and paid campaigns vs. press outreach and earned media?

We can't answer this specifically—it would depend on the desired outcome for the outreach effort.

63. For this crisis management part - are they expecting to have someone on call 24/7?

No, not 24/7, but we may need help outside normal office hours in some circumstances.

64. Are you open to a flat monthly fee arrangement rather than an hourly budget?

No, we must reimburse personnel costs on an hourly basis.

65. Do all samples need to be from the past two years?

We have updated the RFP to clarify. We would like at least one sample for each proposed service area to be from the past two years, but you can add others from prior to that if relevant.

66. In examples, it sounds like one example of work for each service? Could there be multiple examples? Would a separate link to a general online portfolio be okay as long as it is described as such and is merely in addition to the specific examples?

We have updated the RFP to clarify. Yes, multiple examples are acceptable if relevant but at least one per service area should be from the past two years. A general online portfolio link is also welcome if in addition to specific examples.

67. On the cover page, you state that proposals should be delivered in person or by mail to the 2nd Avenue address, but on page 8, it says that the proposal can be submitted via email to your address. Can you please clarify?

Our mistake – please email your proposal instead of mailing or delivering a hard copy.

68. In reviewing the RFP, it states that the “estimated initial contract value” is \$150,000. Is that for the initial year of services or for the full 3-year term of the contract? Is there a yearly do not exceed or expected spend range for the contract?

We expect to contract for roughly \$150,000 a year, likely across more than one firm.

69. Are you anticipating this be more on an on call/task order support contract as work comes up or are there specific projects in mind already? Can you elaborate on any known work?

We expect to need assistance for both larger, ongoing projects and smaller on-call projects (such as creating a logo or brochure for an independent program). Examples of known ongoing work include marketing and outreach for our homeownership programs; supporting community engagement work across the agency; and developing the agency’s annual report.

70. Is there an incumbent firm or firms bidding on this project as well?

We do not have an incumbent firm currently under contract for all the work described in the RFP. Some creative services are being provided on an ad hoc basis.

71. Is there any flexibility regarding ownership of copyrights?

Sorry, the Commission must retain the rights for any material developed with our funding.

72. How many vendors do you expect to award contracts to per the deliverable areas?

We have no expectations regarding the number of vendors. We will consider full-service firms as well as those which specialize in specific communications areas. In the past we have contracted with one to four vendors.

73. Can you confirm that it is not mandatory to attend the bidders conference?

It is not mandatory to attend. The bidders conference will be recorded and posted online for later viewing.

74. Can we respond to the requested information in Appendix II using our own branded template (adhering to noted page limits)?

Yes, bidders can use their own branding if they prefer.

75. Can we include a cover page for our proposal?

Yes, a cover page is acceptable.

76. Are hyperlinks to previous samples of similar deliverables (e.g., strategy, marketing, videos, graphics, written deliverables, etc.) acceptable?

Yes, hyperlinks are fine if the context and purpose of the link is clear so the reviewer can understand how the example relates to your proposal.

77. Does this RFP have an identification number?

Yes, the customer reference number is 202407COM.

78. Can a weighted evaluation criteria be provided?

Please see below for the scoring criteria.

Scoring Criteria	Points
General quality/clarity of proposal	20
Experience	20
General qualifications	
Experience with public entities	
DEI experience	
Approach to project management	
Experience/expertise in proposed services	20
Ensuring a range of voices	
Methodology/approach – adaptability to Commission needs	
Demonstrated ability in the creative area	
Examples	20
Quality and creativity	
Style and fit with Commission needs/goals	
Experience with similar organizations or projects	
Cost	20
Clarity and detail of cost structure, including subcontractors	
Examples are clear and thoughtful	
Costs are reasonable and competitive with other proposals	

79. Can you clarify how scoring will be conducted if we apply to more than one service area?

Proposals in more than one area will be scored separately for each area. Firms that are proposing in multiple areas should explain how personnel or subcontractors work together for cost and/or other kinds of efficiency.

80. Is there an overall page limit to responses (as each response indicates overall limits)?

Considering the page limits indicated in the RFP, we expect proposals to be around 10 pages, not counting work samples and links. Firms that respond to many of the seven service areas may require more pages.