



Transforming lives

**COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION
#2223-814
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Project Title: Washington HHS Coalition Product #1: E&E Status Tracker

Estimated Contract Performance Period: November 15, 2022 through June 30, 2024.

Response Due Date: All Responses **must be received in their entirety by 2:00 p.m.** Pacific Time on September 19th, 2022 unless an Amendment is issued modifying the Solicitation Schedule set forth in Section C.1 of this Solicitation Document.

Submit Response To: Responses must be submitted to:
William Taplin, Coordinator
Department of Social and Health Services
Facilities, Finance and Analytics Admin.
Central Contracts and Legal Services
Email: tapliwh@dshs.wa.gov

Solicitation and Amendments Will Be Posted on:

DSHS Procurement Website: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ffa/procurements-and-contracting>

WEBS Website: <https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/>

Applicable WEBS Commodity Codes: 952-43, 920-64, 920-03, 920-40, 920-45, 920-66

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SECTION A CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

1. Purpose

This competitive solicitation is issued in order to assist the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in finding a qualified Contractor to provide services that will support the development of a new Eligibility and Enrollment Status Tracker (IE&E Product #1).

2. Background

The Health and Human Services Enterprise Coalition (HHS Coalition) is a collaborative that provides IT strategic direction, cross-organizational IT project support, and IT federal funding guidance across five HHS organizations in Washington. The HHS Coalition includes the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); the Department of Health (DOH); the Health Care Authority (HCA); the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF); and the Health Benefit Exchange (HBE). IT project collaboration results in better service coordination and public stewardship that improves the health and well-being of the people, families, and communities of Washington. As the steward organization, DSHS is issuing this RFP on behalf of the HHS Coalition, to obtain vendor services and provide leadership in the development and implementation of the Eligibility and Enrollment Status Tracker.

The HHS Coalition operates over 75 health and human service programs serving over 2.9 million Washingtonians. These programs are supported by a patchwork of IT systems. To apply for and maintain benefits, clients must navigate multiple online systems with lengthy applications, many of which are not accessible on smartphones, which are the primary form of internet access for low-income individuals. The core system supporting these programs – DSHS Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) – is a 30-year-old mainframe-based system with over 12 million lines of legacy code. With ACES at the end of life, the risk of failure is catastrophic to individuals that rely on the system to issue their safety-net benefits needed to pay rent, feed their families or seek medical assistance.

The HHS Coalition proposes to address these client and technology challenges through a set of enabling technologies known as Integrated Eligibility & Enrollment or IE&E. This will allow us to jointly deliver new and improved services to our clients, customer partners, and staff. The first product for IE&E is the development of an Eligibility and Enrollment Status Tracker that can be used by our clients to check the status of their application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) related Medicaid, Cash, and Food eligibility with read-only integration to the legacy ACES system. Initially the Eligibility and Enrollment Status Tracker will be used for these programs and may be expanded to include other programs in the future. This will provide us the opportunity to fully assess legacy system remediation priorities and help plan future IE&E activities.

We have included a copy of the HHS Coalition's January 15, 2022, *Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment Modernization Roadmap Report* for your reference, which includes a description of each of the products and the scheduled date of implementation. Over the course of several years, the HHS Coalition will incrementally deliver these products on a new modern Platform (See Exhibit 1: DSHS RFP 2223-807, IE&E Platform Solicitation). Each product will be built as a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), as "an MVP is the most

straightforward way to restrict scope when an existing system looms in the background”. The MVP is a version of the product that includes enough features to be usable and support a feedback process for additional product features. This feedback will support extending the MVP through continued development and maintenance activities. Each product will be built with consideration for programmatic readiness and sequencing.

Washingtonians facing adversity often rely on benefits provided by the state to meet basic and essential needs. Once a Washingtonian applies for benefits, though, it can be hard to keep track of what is supposed to happen next and what additional steps they need to complete, especially if they have multiple applications and enrollments. As a result, it can take Washingtonians longer to receive their benefits, and they risk having their application denied if they take too long to respond.

Problem that this solicitation is addressing

Washingtonians currently receive letters by mail that explain program and benefit information such as approvals and denials, appointment dates, interviews requirements and when additional verification or action is required. However, it can be hard to keep track of all the papers, and mail can be an unreliable way to reach Washingtonians who don't have stable addresses or access to mail.

Washingtonians can call the call center to get the status of their application and additional information. However, it can be confusing to know who to call, they sometimes need to speak with multiple people to resolve their questions and hold times can be very long.

The state of Washington has been working for several years to develop an approach for a health and human services integrated eligibility and enrollment (IE&E) solution that would provide Washingtonians a single, familiar experience to manage the eligibility and enrollment process. Status tracking is intended to be a component of that solution.

3. Product Vision

We want Washingtonians to have clarity about their application for benefits so that they can more quickly and easily navigate the process and receive the benefits they need. The Eligibility and Enrollment Status Tracker will provide Washingtonians with a self-service, single point of access to understand eligibility and enrollment status across multiple HHS Coalition programs.

Goals:

We hope that building this Eligibility and Enrollment Status Tracker will help us have the following impact:

Faster time to benefits

- Decrease in time to benefits. Instead of being stuck in a step of the process without realizing it, Washingtonians will better understand what is required of them to proceed through the application process. Metrics we will track:
 - Decrease in time to benefits

- Decrease in abandoned and duplicate applications
- Decrease in system denials or terminations for failure to complete an action required in the application process

Fewer calls

- Reduction in call volume for inquiries about the status of an application. Washingtonians will be able to get this information online, so they will not need to call DSHS for support unless they prefer to.

Progress towards the IE&E vision

- Foundation for a singular, predictable experience for Washingtonians that is intuitive, provides a mobile-friendly interface, is optimized for accessibility, and reduces dependency on ACES.

Validation of the new IE&E Platform

- Validation that the IE&E Platform enables agile development via provisioning of cloud environments; continuous integration/continuous deployment (CI/CD) services; an API integration layer; and an authentication and authorization layer.

4. Scope and Description of Work to be performed

Incremental Design and Development

The E&E Status Tracker should include the creation of a new front end design to be responsive, accessible, inclusive, and intuitive. We are seeking to implement a human centered design process into the development and implementation of the IE&E Status Tracker and are looking for a vendor with experience in the integration of human centered design techniques into their digital service design process. The state is currently conducting human centered design research.

We will also build the Status Tracker in a way that helps DSHS iteratively reduce its dependency on ACES. This includes creating a middle integration layer using MuleSoft Anypoint, in collaboration with the Platform and Legacy vendors, for accessing data from the database rather than connecting directly to it. This approach makes it easier for DSHS to modernize its database without impacting the software that runs on top.

We will simultaneously consider what staff-facing functionality needs to coexist so that staff can best serve Washingtonians. Staff need to be able to have access to the same information as customers, and they need to be able to troubleshoot if a customer has a question about the status tracker.

To accomplish this goal, DSHS seeks a team that will provide modern agile software development services which include coaching and facilitation of Agile best practices (ceremonies, tracking and measuring metrics, frequent demos, and reviews), and assist the DSHS Product team as they transition to an iterative, user-centered approach to

developing software. Note that the DSHS Product team is standing up the agile process for the first time, so the Contractor will need to be responsible and accountable in support of our transition from waterfall to agile methodologies. As the HHS Coalition continues its work to build its agile maturity the Contractor may be asked to support in that transition.

The services to be provided will include all aspects of the software development process, including initial planning, design to include user research conducted by the HHS Coalition, software development and coding, prototyping, documentation, testing, and configuration, as well as ongoing refinement and maintenance.

This software development project will use agile principles, with robust documentation, human-centered design, and an extensible infrastructure. DSHS expects that the development process will be collaborative and iterative, with open, regular, and frequent communication between DSHS and the Contractor. To do so, the Contractor will work with the DSHS Product Owner and technical leads. The DSHS Product Owner holds deep expertise in current workflows and expects to partner closely with the Contractor throughout the development process.

DSHS has performed some initial research, along with product and technical strategizing, in order to validate this concept. However, it is expected that the Product team will continue to iterate on that work as the project moves forward.

Potential strategies that have been prototyped but not tested can be found in Exhibit 5 of this RFP.

Potential Functionality

The set of preliminary user stories and features set forth below will be the starting point for the development of software to be provided under this RFP. These preliminary user stories and features are provided only for illustrative purposes, and do not comprise the full scope or detail of the project. They have been grouped by topic but have not been prioritized.

DSHS expects that the Contractor will work closely with the Product Owner to ensure application of user research, prepare user personas, and to develop and prioritize a full gamut of user stories and features as the project progresses. DSHS also expects that the Contractor will work closely with the Product Owner and state-provided end-users to perform usability testing at regular intervals throughout the development process.

Individual user stories and features may be modified, added, retracted, or reprioritized by DSHS at any time, and DSHS expects that the user stories will be continuously refined during the development process.

User Stories

Using the site

- As an applicant who relies on a mobile device for internet access, I need to be able to access the tracker from my cell phone, not just a desktop or tablet, so that I can use the site

- As an applicant who is aged, blind, or disabled, I need the site to be accessible so that I can use the site
- As an applicant whose first language is not English, I need the site to support multiple languages so that I can use the site

Viewing application status

- As an applicant, I need to view the status / result of an individual application so that I understand where I am in the process and what to expect
- As an applicant, I need to view what documents I need to provide and the status of documents I have already provided so that I can tell if I need to do anything to process my application
- As an applicant, I need to view any additional actions I need to take and my progress so that I can tell if I need to do anything to process my application
- As an applicant, I want a centralized view of what's happening across all my applications so that I can easily understand where I stand overall, and I can manage them collectively
- As a client who needs to recertify or submit a change of circumstance, I need to see what information I need to provide, when, the status, and the results so I can continue to receive needed benefits without interruption

Viewing benefit information

- As a client who is receiving benefits, I need to see what benefits I am receiving and how to access them, as well as how much time and/or funds I have left so that I can plan my budget
- As a client, I need to see a history of previous benefit issuances, Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities premiums, and cost of care for long-term services and support cases so that I can understand any changes that are made

Getting help

- As an applicant, I need to be able to authorize a representative to assist me using the site so that I can get help managing my application
- As an applicant viewing my status, I need to know what options I have for troubleshooting so that I can follow up in case I have questions
- As an applicant viewing my status, I need to know where to go to complete application- and account-related tasks that are not supported by the tracker so that the experience feels less confusing and fragmented

Staff-facing functionality

- As a staff member who is helping a customer, I need to have access to the same

data we're providing them so that I can give consistent information and am not less informed than they are

- As a staff member who is helping a customer, I need to be able to see what they see so that I can help troubleshoot when they have questions about the site or the information they're seeing

Features

(1) User Account Creation

Allow different types of users to create an account based on how/why they are accessing the tracker to view the status of client eligibility and ongoing benefit information.

(2) User Login

Ability for users to log in to the tracker in a secure and easy way.

(3) Roles Based Account Management

The tracker will be able to filter information and customize the functionality based on user role and permission level.

(4) Display Pending Application Information

Display pending application status from the time it is received or submitted, including additional information about what is needed to determine eligibility and next steps in the application process.

(5) Display Current Eligibility Information and Status

Allows users to see a list of active programs and additional information such as certification start and end dates, benefit amount and benefit issuance date.

(6) Display historical eligibility and benefit information

Allows users to see a list of closed programs and additional information such as closed or termination dates, reason for closure, and historical benefit amount and issuance date.

(7) Display Bills and Medical Expenses

The tracker will display the type, amount and provider of the medical bills/expenses used to determine eligibility for spenddown.

(8) Display Eligibility renewal information

Display eligibility renewal information including the status of the review, additional information about what is needed to determine eligibility and

next steps in the review process.

(9) Status Notifications / Push Notifications

Inform clients when there is a change in their eligibility status and benefit information.

(10) Display relevant contact information for questions about status

Display appropriate contact information (such as agency, office, or specific worker) based on the combination of program(s) the client is applying for or receiving.

(11) Content Management (agency ability to update announcements & messages on the site)

Allow agencies and non-IT staff the ability to update announcements and messages on the site in real time with a simple user interface.

(12) Non-English languages

Users will be able to view the tracker in their preferred language.

Architectural and Technical Decisions

DSHS is currently procuring an IE&E Platform (Platform) in Microsoft Azure, to host and provide services to this and future IE&E products. While the implementation details of the Platform are not yet known, some of the high-level services that will be provided by the Platform and likely used by this product include:

- Code repository
- Application and web hosting in a containerized environment with managed orchestration, possibly exposed as a Platform as a Service (PaaS)
- Continuous Integration/Continuous Deployment (CI/CD) services
- Managed relational database
- Unstructured block storage
- Network routing
- Best practices guidance to guide all IE&E products

It is expected that the Contractor shall use the Microsoft Azure platform and other cloud-native services in Azure, for hosting, data storage, and all other applicable application development needs.

DSHS expects that connectivity to legacy APIs and systems outside the new Platform boundary will be managed by the Platform rather than by each individual Product. However, the Product team will be responsible for building the actual code, including API endpoints and payloads, that retrieves data from the legacy systems using the API Gateway established by the Platform vendor; only the network connectivity would be managed by the Platform. The Platform vendor will select and configure using MuleSoft Anypoint as the API Gateway tool unless there is a compelling reason not to. The Product vendor should expect API development to be done within this environment.

DSHS expects that the Product team will build the prioritized features using agile and DevSecOps methodologies. Modularity, containerization, and the use of micro services will be critical to the long-term success of this initiative.

Potential Source Data Elements

Data Elements	Data Security Statue/Standards
full name	PII, HIPAA (if there's Medical), CJIS
ACES client ID #	PII, HIPAA (if there's Medical)
Assistant Unit ID #	HIPAA (if Medical)
Names of other household member. Depending on user story about viewing eligibility of other clients	PII, HIPAA (if there's Medical), CJIS
program code (Cash, Food, MA, etc.)	HIPAA (if Medical)
Status (Active, Closed, Denied, Spenddown)	HIPAA (if Medical)
benefit month (MM/YY)	HIPAA (if Medical)
Benefit type (EBT or EFT)	
benefit status (pending, active, closed, denied, spenddown)	HIPAA (if Medical)
benefit amount (\$)	
maximum cost of care (\$)	HIPAA (if Medical)
Premium amount (\$)	HIPAA (if Medical)
certification period (dates)	HIPAA (if Medical)
appointment date/time (Date and time)	
appointment type (In office, telephone, desk)	
spenddown amount (\$)	HIPAA (if Medical)
spenddown expense type (\$)	HIPAA (if Medical)
Reason code (for closed, denied status)	HIPAA (if Medical), CJIS
Application date	

5. Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan

DSHS wishes to use a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) to track and monitor the quality of Contractor performance and deliverables throughout the life of the Contract. This QASP is intended to provide DSHS a proactive way to avoid unacceptable or deficient performance by the Contractor and provides the basis for regular performance reviews.

The QASP included in this solicitation provides high-level performance expectations of the Contractor. As part of the onboarding process, the Contractor will work with the state's Program Management Office to create a detailed set of performance standards

and methods of assessment. The QASP attached as Exhibit 3 shall serve as the starting point for discussion and revision.

The state's Program Management Office will perform the assessments detailed in the QASP, though they may choose to delegate tasks to another DSHS staff member where that other staff member has relevant subject matter expertise.

The QASP will serve as a living document which may be updated in coordination with the Contractor at the discretion of the state.

6. Key Personnel and Project Staffing

DSHS believes a team of no more than twelve (12) is optimal to build a working product using an agile methodology. It is the intent of DSHS to provide a Product Owner, a UI/UX designer, an automation tester and a developer and we expect the vendor to propose complementary key resources necessary to operate a fully functioning scrum team. However, if DSHS is unable to provide these resources, we will look to the vendor to support us until such time as we can secure needed state resources. As a result, please consider these staffing needs in your response.

Proposed resources must include a Scrum Master, Technical Lead, Design Lead, Developers, and may include an Automation Tester, Functional Analyst, etc. We also expect Bidders to propose 2-4 additional non scrum team staff which will act as shared services to support the Product team and its integration into the broader ecosystem. Such resources may include those required to support collaboration and integration with the Platform team and ACES team, like an Application Architect and an Integration Lead and other relevant project teams and vendors.

The relevant skills for these resources must include:

- Agile Methodology
- Product management
- Facilitation
- Full Stack web development
- Development, security, and operations (DevSecOps methodology) engineering
- Continuous integration/continuous delivery (CI/CD)
- Content design based on user research
- Visual design
- User support, training, and onboarding

Bidder shall identify the Key Personnel it shall utilize in performing this Contract, and their experience and qualifications, as part of its Response. If awarded a Contract, Bidder shall not make changes to such Key Personnel during the term of the Contract except as requested or approved by DSHS.

Bidders must designate Key Personnel who will fill the following key roles:

1. The **Scrum Master** will be a direct liaison to the DSHS product team. They will be responsible for ensuring a healthy and effective team, including both DSHS

and Contractor personnel. This person will ensure that all Contractor personnel are aligned around a set of shared team goals and have clear, actionable tasks that support those goals. This person should have a background as a scrum master, product manager, agile coach, or a similar role with relevant training or industry standard certifications. This person is expected to work with the DSHS team to support the writing of user stories and acceptance criteria and to stand up, implement, and improve agile processes as the work is done by the vendor's team.

2. The **Technical Lead** must have a full understanding of the technical approach, including security and compliance, to be used by the Contractor's team and will be responsible for ensuring that the Contractor's team follows that approach, including modular micro services architecture, DevSecOps and Agile. This person will ensure that the technical approach is robust, scalable, and maintainable. They will also manage technical debt and provide strategic input to their DSHS partners. This person should have a background as a software engineer, software architect, or a similar role.
3. The **Design Lead** must have a full understanding of the design and research approach to be used by the Contractor's team and will be responsible for ensuring that the Contractor's team follows that approach. This person will ensure that the Washington user research informs product development. This person should have a background as a user researcher, product designer, or a similar role.

Key Personnel substitutions must be submitted to the DSHS Project Manager in writing and will only be justified in the event of sudden illness, death, change of employment, or termination of employment for cause. Requests for a substitution of Key Personnel must include a detailed explanation of the justifying circumstances, a transition plan, and a complete résumé for the proposed substitute or addition, including skills, experience, training, and security clearance level (if applicable). Contractor must provide an acceptable replacement to DSHS within ten (10) Business Days after the originally assigned Key Personnel has left.

Bidder shall also identify the other proposed resources required to fully staff the requirements of this project, and their experience and qualifications, as part of its Response.

7. Place of Performance

Normal working hours are from 8:00am to 5:00pm Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. The Contractor' Key Personnel will be expected to be readily available during core working hours from 8:00am to 5:00pm Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. They are not expected to work federal or state holidays.

The Contractor may choose the location(s) from which to perform the required services however work may not be performed outside of the United States or its territories. The Contractor will not be required to work at a DSHS facility; however, occasional travel to DSHS facilities may be required. Travel Expenses shall be consistent with the travel

management provisions for lodging, transportation, and meals and shall be reimbursed at Office of Financial Management (OFM) rates established by State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM) policy, <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/legacy/policy/10.90.htm>. Airline fees shall be reimbursed at either coach or economy rates; car rental at either economy or mid-size car rental rates; lodging and meals at current State Per Diem Rates which are located at <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/accounting/administrative-accounting-resources/travel>. All travel costs must be approved by DSHS prior to making any travel arrangements.

Confidential Information and production Data, including Federal Tax Information (FTI), may not be accessed by agency employees, agents, representatives, or contractors located outside of the United States or its territories. Further, Confidential Information and production Data, including FTI, may not be received, stored, processed or disposed via information technology systems located off-shore.

8. CMS Certification

All State Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) and E&E-related implementations must adhere to federal guidance for the State to receive enhanced federal funding for the operation of the E&E and other modular replacement projects. DSHS and the Coalition will seek enhanced funding to the maximum extent possible and therefore the E&E solution, including the design, development, and implementation of the IE&E Platform, will undergo required certification as specified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The Vendor will need to fully support this process through all activities and artifacts requested by DSHS and the program's Quality Assurance (QA) and Independent Verification & Validation (IV&V) vendor(s), if used by the project. Refer to [Conditions for Enhanced Funding per 42 CFR § 433.112](#) for a full list from CMS.

CMS has begun transitioning its system certification process to one that evaluates how well Medicaid technology systems support desired business outcomes while reducing burdens on states. Additional information regarding Outcomes-Based Certification (OBC) can be found here: <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/data-systems/outcomes-based-certification/index.html>. The Vendor will need to support all aspects of OBC, including the metrics that are used to measure each outcome, as applicable.

Product #1 is mapped to the following references OBC references where metrics are currently being defined that will be used to support these references. The Vendor will need to support all aspects of OBC, including the metrics used to measure each outcome, as applicable.

Reference #	Outcome	Source(s)
EE9 Notices	Individuals receive system-generated timely automated (versus manual) eligibility notices and request for additional information for eligibility determination, as necessary.	42 C.F.R. 431.210-214 42 C.F.R. 435.917-918 42 C.F.R. 436.901
EE22 Integration with Other Programs	The state maintains a coordinated eligibility and enrollment process with all insurance affordability programs by supporting bi-directional data-sharing for application-related	42 C.F.R. 435.1200

Reference #	Outcome	Source(s)
	data and adjudication status with all relevant insurance affordability programs (FFE, CHIP, SBE if applicable, BHP if applicable).	

9. Bidder Minimum Qualifications

All Bidders must meet the following minimum qualifications. Bidders must have provided design, DevSecOps, and implementation services for Agile development frameworks and services on a similar size and complexity project within the last three years.

- Expertise programming in scripting languages -- creating and consuming web services using REST and AJAX; and applying unit and system level testing methodologies to test web applications similar to the scope and size of this project, over the past 3 years.
- Expertise designing relational database systems to reduce application downtime during database migrations; and writing queries, procedures, functions, and triggers to extract, manipulate, and save data.
- Expertise developing software applications along the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) according to DevSecOps and scrum-based Agile methodologies, including requirements gathering, functional design, architecture design, implementation, and testing.
- Experience with containerization, modular and microservices architecture.

Bidders failing to demonstrate in their Bids that they meet these minimum qualifications will be considered non-responsive and will therefore be disqualified from further consideration.

10. Contracts and Period of Contract Performance

DSHS intends to award one Contract for the Services described in this Competitive Solicitation. The period of performance under the Contract is expected to begin November 15, 2022 and extend through June 30, 2024. The term of the contract may be extended by amendment up to three (3) times for up to two (2) years per amendment, at the sole discretion of DSHS. 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.

11. Funding

DSHS will set a maximum budget for the initial term of this Project in line with the Apparently Successful Bidder’s staff cost estimates. DSHS may add additional funding to the awarded contract in alignment with the optional amendments identified above. Any Contract awarded is contingent upon the availability of funding.

DSHS intends to award a time and material (T&M) type contract. All rates shall be fully burdened, and T&M rates are fixed at the time of award. The Contractor must specify whether the fixed hourly rate for each labor category applies to labor performed by (1) the Contractor; (2) subcontractors; and/or (3) divisions, subsidiaries, or affiliates or the Contractor under a common control.

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 Response 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.

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 bid submission to alert DSHS of certain types of asserted deficiencies in the Solicitation.

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 Response.

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 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 Bid that fully conforms in all material respects to the Solicitation and all its requirements, in both form and substance.

RFP – The request for proposals, qualifications, quotations, or qualifications and quotations set forth in this Solicitation document.

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 an 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 document, including all attachments and all amendments that are issued by the Coordinator.

Statement of Work – The detailed description of 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.

Glossary of Additional Terms used in Section A.

Acronym/Term	Description
ACES	Automated Client Eligibility System (DSHS legacy eligibility system)
AJAX	Asynchronous JavaScript And XML
API	Application Programming Interface
API Gateway	API management tool that sits between a client and a collection of backend services

Acronym/Term	Description
ASB	Apparent Successful Bidder
BHP	Basic Health Program
Ceremonies	Meetings held as part of the agile development process to ensure that projects are on time and meeting quality goals
CHIP	Children's Health Insurance Program
CI/CD	Continuous Integration, Continuous Development/Deployment
CJIS	Criminal Justice Information Services
CMS	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Container	Standard unit of software that packages up code and all its dependencies
DCYF	Department of Children, Youth, and Families
DES	Department of Enterprise Services
DevSecOps	Development, Security, and Operations
DOH	Department of Health
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
EO	Executive Order
FFE	Federally Facilitated Exchange
HBE	Health Benefit Exchange
HCA	Health Care Authority
HHS	Health and Human Services
HHS Coalition	Washington's five HHS organizations; DSHS, HBE, HCA, DOH, and DCYF
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IE&E	Integrated Eligibility and Enrollment
IRS 1075	Tax information security guidelines
IT	Information Technology
IV&V	Independent Verification & Validation
LEP	Limited English Proficient
MWBE	Minority & Women's Business Enterprises
OBC	Outcomes-based Certification
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OFM	Office of Financial Management
OMWBE	Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises
PaaS	Platform as a Service
PII	Personal Identifiable Information
Platform	The cloud environment used by the HHS Coalition to facilitate development and deployment
Product #1	Eligibility and Enrollment Status Tracker
QA	Quality Assurance
QASP	Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
REST	Representational State Transfer
RFP	Request for Proposal
SAAM	State Administrative & Accounting Manual
SBE	State-based Exchanges

Acronym/Term	Description
SDLC	Software Development Life Cycle
Tenant	Specific instance of Azure Active Directory
T&M	Time and Material
UI/UX	User Interface, User Experience
WEBS	Washington Electronic Business Solutions

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 Response Submission are mandatory deadlines. The remaining dates are estimates and may change without the posting of an Amendment. Failure to meet the Response deadline will result in Bidder disqualification.

Item	Action	Date
1.	DSHS posts Competitive Solicitation.	7/15/22
2.	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.	As soon as possible
3.	Bidders should RSVP for the Pre-Bid Conference by 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time.	8/29/22
4.	Optional Pre-Bid Conference at 1:00 p.m. Pacific Time.	8/1/22
5.	Bidders may submit written questions or requests for change in Solicitation Requirements until 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time.	8/8/22
6.	DSHS posts responses to written questions.	8/12/22
7.	Bidders may submit written Complaints by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.	9/12/22
8.	Bidders must submit Response by 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time.	9/19/22
9.	DSHS with HHS Coalition participation evaluates Written Responses.	9/22-9/28
10.	Oral presentations, if requested by DSHS with HHS Coalition participation.	10/10-10/14
11.	DSHS announces the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) on WEBS and begins contract negotiations.	10/24/22
12.	DSHS notifies unsuccessful Bidder(s).	10/24/22
13.	Unsuccessful Bidders may request a Debriefing conference until 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.	Three business days after date of ASB notice
14.	DSHS holds Debriefing conferences, if requested.	10/28-10/31
15.	Deadline for submission of Protests by unsuccessful Bidders who participated in a debriefing conference.	Five business days after date of Debriefing
16.	DSHS considers Protests, if any, and issues determination.	Within two weeks after receipt of protests
17.	Contract Execution/Start Date.	As soon as possible upon

Item	Action	Date
		CMS and OCIO approval

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(s).

3. Amendment, Cancellation/Rejection of Bids, 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 bids 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 Response, which shall be submitted as provided in Section D, Instructions Regarding Content, Format and Submission of Written Responses, 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

Bidders are invited to attend a Bidder Conference which shall be held via a Zoom Meeting on the date and at the time set forth below. The Bidder Conference is an opportunity for Bidders to learn more about the conditions under which a Contract will be performed. At the Bidder Conference, Bidders will have an opportunity to ask questions and to hear presentations from knowledgeable DSHS personnel. DSHS shall summarize the

information shared at the Bidder Conference and post that summary on the DSHS procurement web page and on WEBS as an Amendment to this Solicitation. Bidders may only rely upon information that is included in this Amendment in preparing their Responses.

Bidder Conference Date and Time: Monday August 1, 2022, 1:00-3:00pm Pacific Time

Zoom Meeting Log-in information:

<https://dshs-wa.zoom.us/j/84010953972?pwd=aFh0ZFJxSTQwL1VQUmJZZnpFdXZ4dz09>

Meeting ID: 840 1095 3972

Passcode: 676314

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,84010953972#,,,,*676314# US (Tacoma)

+13462487799,,84010953972#,,,,*676314# US (Houston)

Dial by your location

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 840 1095 3972

Passcode: 676314

Find your local number: <https://dshs-wa.zoom.us/j/84010953972?pwd=aFh0ZFJxSTQwL1VQUmJZZnpFdXZ4dz09>

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 Response, 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 five (5) business days prior to the date when Responses 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 Bids, no minimum level of MWBE or veteran-owned business participation shall be required, and Bids 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.

The Apparently Successful Bidder will also be required to comply with [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 \(29 USC § 794d\)](#) including completion of a Voluntary Product Assessment Template version 2.0 or higher. For more information about the Voluntary Product Assessment Template (VPAT), please refer to [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov). The VPAT provides internal CMS Section 508 stakeholders with key insights on a vendor's reported 508 compliance level for a solution targeted for procurement and/or formal testing.

12. Cost to Prepare Response

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

13. Acceptance of Solicitation Terms

In submitting a Response, Bidder must include a signed Bid 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 Response, it accepts all terms of this Solicitation Document, including all of its Attachments, and that Bidder's Response constitutes a binding offer. Bidders may not alter or redline the solicitation terms or requirements in their response. Submitting altered or redlined solicitation terms or requirements in the Bidder Response may result in bidder disqualification.

14. Joint Proposals

If Bidders submit a joint Response 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 Responses

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

withdrawing a Response, the Bidder may submit another Response at any time up to the Response submission date and time.

16. Ownership of Responses

All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation become the property of DSHS, unless received after the deadline in which case the Response 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 Response that results in selection for a Contract.

17. DSHS Award Options; Improvement of Bid Offers

After Responses 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 Responses 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 Responses, DSHS may enter into negotiations with the highest ranked Responsive and Responsible Bidder in order to determine if the Bid 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 Response. Therefore, the Response should be submitted on the most favorable terms that Bidder intends to offer.

18. Oral Interviews or Presentations

After bids are received and written evaluations are completed, DSHS may request that one or more Responsible and Responsive bidders participate in an oral interview and/or presentation or demonstration. If this option is elected, additional points shall be awarded as set forth in Section E.3, Evaluation Criteria and Scoring of Responses.

19. Announcement of Successful Bidder(s)

DSHS shall announce the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) on WEBS on the date indicated in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. All announcements of Apparent Successful Bidders 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 bid 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 Responses, 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 Response. Bidders must include, in their Letter of Submittal, 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 RESPONSES

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

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

All Bidders must submit a completed bid 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 Bid 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 Response Form, comprise the Administrative component of the Response.

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 Response may result in Bidder disqualification.

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

Using Attachment D, Bidders must provide answers to the questions set forth on the Bidder Response 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 Response Form is posted separately from this Solicitation document in Microsoft Word format. Except for limits that are noted on the Bidder Response 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 Response 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 Response Form may result in Bidder disqualification.

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

4. Attachment E: Resource Reference Form (Required, not scored)

Using Attachment E, Bidders must provide a completed Resource Reference for each proposed Key Personnel and Product Team Personnel identified in Attachment D Section 5, Bidders' Proposed Pricing. Resource Reference Forms must be attached to Bidders' responses as separate, clearly labeled documents. In providing these references, Bidder represents that it shall hold both DSHS and the organizations and individuals providing a reference harmless from and against any and all liability for seeking and providing such reference.

5. Proprietary Information/Public Disclosure

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

The Bidder's Response must include, on Attachment D, a statement identifying the pages of its Response, 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 Response proprietary. Doing so will not be honored and will disqualify your Response from further consideration.**

If DSHS receives a request to view or copy a Bidder's Response, DSHS will respond according to applicable law and DSHS's policy governing public disclosure. DSHS will not disclose any information marked "Proprietary" in a Response 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 Responses. Doing so will result in disqualification of the Response 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.

6. Submission of Responses

Bid Responses must be stored in an acceptable electronic format and, if applicable, hard copy format, as set forth in Section 7, below. Bid Responses must be emailed directly to the Coordinator at the email address provided on the cover sheet of this Solicitation Document. Bid Responses 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 the Response. Bidders are responsible for allowing sufficient time to ensure timely electronic receipt of their Response by the Coordinator and, in Solicitations that also require that hard copies of the Response be submitted, to ensure timely receipt via other delivery methods. DSHS does not assume responsibility for problems with the Bidder's email, network or problems with the mail, parking, traffic or the services of any third party courier. However, if DSHS email is not working properly, appropriate allowances will be made.

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

7. Acceptable Electronic Formats for Submission of Responses

Attachment D, Bidder Response Form, should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Other Response 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 Responses. If your Response approaches or exceeds 30MB, you must break it up and send it by more than one email so that no single email exceeds 30MB.

8. Alternative Submission Methods

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

SECTION E EVALUATION OF RESPONSES

1. Bid Responsiveness; Administrative Review

All Responses 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 Response as nonresponsive at any time for any of the following reasons:

- Incomplete Response
- Submission of a Response 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 Response. If a Response 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 Responses are found to be non-responsive shall be disqualified from further evaluation and shall be notified in writing.

If a Response 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 Response

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

DSHS reserves the right to contact any Bidder for clarification of Response 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 Response.

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

3. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring of Responses

Following the administrative review, Responses shall be evaluated and points shall be awarded for the management, technical and cost proposal components of the Response, as applicable, based upon Bidder’s responses to the questions set forth in Attachment D, Bidder Response Form. Additional evaluation points may be awarded for specific criteria not included in Attachment D, Bidder Response Form only if set forth in this Section.

The maximum number of points available for each Bidder is three hundred and five (305). The maximum number of points that may be assigned with respect to specific questions is set forth on Attachment D, Bidder Response form. The overall breakdown for assignment of points in evaluating Responses to this Solicitation is as follows:

Technical Response.....	80 maximum points
Case Study Responses.....	40 maximum points
Sample User Research Plan.....	30 maximum points
Cost Proposal (Quotations).....	50 maximum points
EO 18-03 Response.....	5 maximum points
(*Optional) Oral Interview/Presentation.....	100 maximum points
Total Possible Points	305 maximum points

4. Evaluation of Cost Proposal/Quotations

The Bidder who offers the lowest Total Estimated Monthly Cost in the Cost Proposal shall receive the maximum number of available Cost Proposal points. Bidder’s Total Estimated Monthly Cost shall be calculated as follows:

Sum of (Key Personnel Rate * Est. Hours/Month usage) + Sum of (Product Team Personnel Rate * Est. Hours/Month usage) = Total Estimated Monthly Cost

Estimated Total Monthly Cost Calculation Example				
Position Title	Name	Hourly Rate	Est. Hours/Month	Estimated Monthly Cost
<i>Project Manager</i>	<i>John Doe</i>	<i>\$75.00 per hour</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>\$3000/Month</i>
<i>Cloud Architect</i>	<i>Jane Doe</i>	<i>\$80.00 per hour</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>\$6400/Month</i>
<i>Total Estimated Monthly Cost:</i>				<i>\$9400/Month</i>

Bidders offering higher costs will receive proportionately fewer Cost Proposal points based on the lowest cost as follows:

(lowest bid / higher bid) * Cost Proposal points available = Cost Proposal points awarded

Bidder	Low-Cost Calculation <i>EXAMPLE</i>			Calculated Quotation Score
	Total Est. Monthly Cost	Low Cost %	Points Available	Points Awarded (Max 20 Points)

Bidder A	\$4000.00	1.00	20	20
Bidder B	\$5000.00	0.80	20	16
Bidder C	\$8000.00	0.50	20	10

5. Written Bid Evaluation Process

DSHS shall designate an evaluation team of at least three (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 interviews or presentations are conducted, additional evaluators may supplement or replace some or all of the individuals performing the written evaluation.

Evaluators shall assign scores up to the maximum points available. 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.

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 bids for best value and provide a bid preference in the amount set forth in Attachment D, Bidder Response 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

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 Responses. In submitting a Response, 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 Response.

While additional points may be awarded for superior performance and reliability as demonstrated through references (see Section E.3. above), references are generally evaluated on a pass/fail basis. DSHS may reject a bid 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 Interview/Evaluation

In addition to evaluating the written response, DSHS may invite one or more of the highest scoring Bidders to make an oral presentation which shall be separately evaluated.

9. Selection of Apparent Successful Bidder

The Bidder that receives the highest total number of possible points and is determined to be the most responsive and responsible bidder will be determined as a finalist for the Apparent Successful Bidder. In the event multiple Contracts will be awarded, the applicable number of top-scoring Bidders will be considered.

The selection process shall determine which Bidder provides the best value in meeting the needs of DSHS. Selection of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) 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 Response encourages diverse contractor participation; whether the Bid provides competitive pricing, economies and efficiencies; whether the Bidder considers human health and environmental impacts; whether the Response 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 Responses 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 Response is deemed to offer the best overall value and that is in the best interests of DSHS and the State of Washington.

The highest scoring responsive and responsible bidder shall be officially selected and announced on WEBS as the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) on or about the date and time set forth in Section C.1., Solicitation Schedule. DSHS may also notify the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) 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 execution of a Contract satisfactory to DSHS within a reasonable period of time 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(s) 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 Response
- Critique of the Response based on the evaluation
- Review of Bidder's final score in comparison with the other final scores

No comparisons between Bids will be allowed during the Debriefing Conference, which shall be conducted by telephone, unless the Coordinator agrees to an in-person meeting, and shall last for a maximum period of thirty (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 Bids 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 fifth (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 Response 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 ten (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 Response, 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(s) on the basis that there are insufficient facts to establish the alleged error; or
- Upholding DSHS' determination of the Apparent Successful Bidder(s) 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:
 - i. Correction of errors and reevaluation of all bids,
 - ii. Cancellation and reissuance of the Solicitation (in which case all the Bidders will be notified), or
 - iii. 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(s) 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 Response 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 Response submitted by the Apparent Successful Bidder. If changes are requested as part of the Bid Response, 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 ten (10) business days of delivery by DSHS, DSHS may elect to designate the next highest-ranked finalist as the Apparent Successful Bidder.

2. Security Design Review

The Apparent Successful Bidder (ASB) will be required to pass a DSHS Security Design review prior to full Product implementation. The ASB will need to demonstrate how their system meets all of the security requirements included in the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) [Standard 141.10](#).

3. Insurance

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

4. 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.

5. Background Checks

Individuals who will be performing the Contract on behalf of the Apparent Successful Bidder may be required to undergo background checks. Individuals who have disqualifying results (showing crimes and/or negative actions) may not be permitted to provide Services under the Contract.

6. 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.

7. COVID-19 Vaccination: Applicability and Declaration Requirements

Governor Jay Inslee issued Proclamation 21-14 and its amendments in August and September 2021, to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Proclamation 21-14 prohibits any State Agency from permitting workers, including Contractor staff who will be On-Site at any State Agency facility or premises, to provide services without full vaccination against COVID-19. DSHS has elected, with some exceptions, to require Contractors with staff who are subject to this Proclamation to assume responsibility for the vaccination verification and accommodations requirements in the Proclamation.

The Apparent Successful Bidder(s) will be required to submit an Employer Declaration that conforms to all of the requirements of the Proclamation prior to signing a contract with DSHS. Bidders can request a sample Employer declaration form from the Solicitation Coordinator. The Apparent Successful Bidder(s) will also be required to agree to the COVID-19 Vaccination requirements included in Attachment A: Sample Contract, General Terms and Conditions, Section 5.a.