



City of Tacoma

Questions and Answers

BENCH CONTRACT FOR CONSULTING SERVICES RFP Specification No. **PM25-0003F**

All interested parties had the opportunity to submit questions in writing by email to Sara Bird, Senior Buyer by date questions were due. The answers to the questions received are provided below and posted to the City's website at www.TacomaPurchasing.org. Navigate to [Current Contracting Opportunities / Services Solicitations](#), and then click *Questions and Answers* for this Specification. This information IS NOT considered an addendum. Respondents should consider this information when submitting their proposals.

- 1. Question: We're interested in serving as a sub for Category 2: Organizational Development and Organizational Change Management. What's the best way to connect with potential entities that may be submitting as a prime to discuss teaming opportunities?**

Answer: If not selected for a contract award, we suggest reaching out to an entity that did receive an award to see if your organization can provide Category 2 services. Also, please see the answers to questions 35 and 43 below.

- 2. Question: The RFP currently states under section 2. Minimum Requirements "For all categories, the vendor must have the following qualifications." Could the client confirm in writing that the minimum requirements, as outlined in the RFP, are not required for Category 2?**

Answer: The City will issue an addendum clarifying that the minimum requirement that the respondent have "ability to provide staff augmentation in support of utility operations (including but not limited to NERC Certified System Operators) and related programs and projects" will only apply to Category 3 work and deliverables, and will not apply to Category 1, 2, and 4 deliverables. All other minimum requirements will apply to all categories of work.

- 3. Question: We noted you may hire a contractor or contractors. As such, we are wondering if Tacoma would be willing to entertain a proposal that meets three of the four minimum requirements. Is Tacoma open to this?**

Answer: As described in answer 2 above, the City will issue an addendum clarifying that the minimum requirement that the respondent have "ability to provide staff augmentation in support of utility operations (including but not limited to NERC Certified System Operators) and related programs and projects" will only apply to Category 3 work and deliverables, and will not apply to Category 1, 2, and 4 deliverables. All other minimum requirements will apply to all categories of work.

- 4. Question: May the proposer respond ONLY to one category of the RFP?**

Answer: Yes. An awarded proposal may apply to less than all four categories of the Scope of Services and Deliverables section.



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- 5. Question: Should the responder provide cost proposal information for all 3 years or just one year, assuming some escalation may occur in subsequent years should their services continue to be used?**

Answer: Cost proposals will only be viewed as indicative for the purpose of proposal evaluation. Binding cost schedules will be set out in an agreement and may even be revised later pursuant to an amendment and work order.

- 6. Question: We will most likely be submitting on all 4 categories for this contract (1. project and program delivery, 2. organizational, 3. utility operations support, 4. regulatory compliance). Do we need to submit a separate proposal for each category? Or do you want 1 (one) proposal with our qualifications for each service category?**

Answer: One proposal will suffice, but it would be helpful to identify the circumstances under which services may be viewed as severable.

- 7. Question: Examples of projects and client references: how many projects and/or references would you like for each category? Is there a minimum and maximum for each category?**

Answer: References can be general and do not need to be specific to any category of scope and deliverable. However, references that are more relevant to the work being proposed may be viewed as more favorable under the evaluation criteria.

- 8. Question: Program Management & Organizational Change Management (OCM) for Categories 1 & 2 - Could you clarify the types of projects and the departments responsible under Category 1 and Category 2? What departments, such as control center, customer service, engineering, information technology, and market departments align with this RFP? In other words, can you provide examples of the types of projects and departments responsible?**

Answer: Most of the work contemplated by this RFP will occur within the wholesale energy marketing and transmission operations functions of the utility. However, certain activities may occur with respect to other parts of the organization as well, most likely where those other areas interface with wholesale marketing and transmission operations.

- 9. Question: Pricing Template & On-Site Expectations - Could Tacoma provide a pricing template for our proposal submission? It would be wonderful if we could get the staff roles anticipated to be needed for this contract. Additionally, what are the expectations for on-site work versus remote work?**

Answer: We are not able to provide a pricing template. Cost proposals are part of the evaluation criteria, but we anticipate that they can take different forms. As described in the answer to question 5 above, cost proposals will only be viewed as indicative for the purpose of proposal evaluation. Binding cost schedules will be set out in an agreement and may even be revised later pursuant to an amendment and work order.



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10. Question: Budget Allocation - Regarding the \$3M aggregate over three years, is this budget structured as \$1M per year, or is there flexibility in the distribution of funds across the contract term?

Answer: Yes. There is flexibility in terms of the allocation of expenditures across time.

11. Question: Resource Allocation Per Category - How many staff resources per category does Tacoma anticipate needing?

Answer: We cannot say in advance. Resources will be allocated as needs and conditions become known.

12. Question: Estimated Workload & Hours per Month - Can you provide guidance on the expected base workload, such as estimated hours per month, to help us with planning and resource allocation?

Answer: We cannot say in advance. Resources will be allocated as needs and conditions become known.

13. Question: Award Structure - Will all four categories be awarded to a single bidder, or is there a possibility that each category could be awarded separately to different vendors?

Answer: We anticipate making multiple awards to different respondents, perhaps as many four awards, but cannot exclude the possibility of making only a single or even no award.

14. Question: Does the minimum requirement of "Knowledge of centralized wholesale electrical markets, balancing, and transmission operations" apply if we are only bidding on Category 1 (Project and Program Delivery) and/or Category 2 (OD/OCM)? If so, by "knowledge" do you mean the broad working knowledge that would be gained from satisfying the first minimum requirement (5 years experience with local electric utilities), or explicit domain expertise in this field?

Answer: Respondent knowledge of centralized wholesale electrical markets, balancing, and transmission operations will be essential, regardless of which category of deliverables are provided. We expect that a successful respondent would be able to succinctly identify previous work that would demonstrate knowledge in these arenas.

15. Question: Does the minimum requirement of "Ability to provide staff augmentation in support of utility operations (including but not limited to NERC Certified System Operators)" apply if we are only bidding on Category 1 (Project and Program Delivery) and/or Category 2 (OD/OCM)? Placing staff aug System Operators is not included in the scope for these categories provided on pg. 8/ pg. 9.

Answer: As described in answer 2 above, the City will issue an addendum clarifying that the minimum requirement that the respondent have "ability to provide staff augmentation in support of utility operations (including but not limited to NERC Certified System Operators)



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and related programs and projects” will only apply to Category 3 work and deliverables, and will not apply to Category 1, 2, and 4 deliverables. All other minimum requirements will apply to all categories of work.

16. Question: The RFP anticipates awarding "one or more consulting contracts with an aggregate value of not to exceed \$3,000,000" (pg. 6). Can you please provide more clarity so we can better understand the revenue potential for this opportunity, for example the maximum number of contracts you expect to award, or perhaps the target number of awards for each of the four categories? For a small firm, understanding the likely revenue is an important factor in analyzing the cost/benefit of pursuing the opportunity.

Answer: We cannot say in advance. Resources will be allocated as needs and conditions become known.

17. Question: Section 10.4: Are there any guidelines on assumptions for travel and other direct costs that are to be incorporated into hourly rates?

Answer: We anticipate that most work can be performed remotely; however, certain staff augmentation work under Scope of Work and Deliverable Category 3 will necessitate performance of in-person activities. The understanding around travel and direct reimbursable costs will be specifically identified in the agreement and associated work orders.

18. Question: Section 10.4: Do you envision different hourly rates for on-site, staff augmentation roles versus consulting services provided by our staff from our offices?

Answer: We don't envision developing different rates for on-site and off-site. As described in answer 17 above, we recognize a potential need to establish an understanding around reimbursable travel and other direct costs.

19. Question: Section 10.4: Will travel and other direct costs be defined and negotiated with individual task assignments?

Answer: Generally, yes. As described in question 17 above, an understanding for reimbursement of travel and direct other costs will be negotiated and defined in the final agreement.

20. Question: Section 10.2 (a) in the RFP, *Name, title, email address, and telephone number of the person authorized to execute a contract on behalf of the Respondent* doesn't appear to align with the title of "Example Projects", should this item belong in Section 10.1?

Answer: This is a valid critique of our request document; however, we believe that revising the document to move the criteria from one section to another would not meaningfully enhance its usefulness.



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21. Question: As mentioned by several vendors in the Pre-Proposal conference, these first two minimum requirements are severely limiting competition for small businesses to actively bid this. Only the incumbent(s) would have this experience. Would The City consider removing the first two (2) bullet points from the Minimum Requirements to allow for adequate competition?

Answer: We believe the requirements of experience and knowledge in the applicable arenas are essential to the performance of this work; accordingly, they will not be modified.

22. Question: Can the City please clarify the positions that are key personnel?

Answer: Key personnel are individuals that the respondent contemplates making available to perform work under a service agreement.

23. Question: Can the City please provide descriptions for the key personnel?

Answer: Please see answer 22 above, key personnel are individuals that the respondent contemplates making available to perform work under a service agreement.

24. Question: Can the City please clarify if the Solicitation Number is PM25-0003F or IT25-0021F? Reference: Page 5 of 37; Submittal Checklist.

Answer: IT25-0021F is a completely separate project and has no connection to this solicitation.

25. Question: Can the City please clarify if the “Electronic copy of submittal package” is a separate item required, or just the combination of the Signature Page and the Information in Section 10? Reference: Page 5 of 37; Submittal Checklist

Answer: Please see answer 24 above. Completion of the signature page appearing in Appendix A is a requirement of a response submittal but may be incorporated into the electronic copy submittal package in the manner best determined by the respondent.

26. Question: Where should offerors include the Signature Page requested?

Answer: Please see answer 25 above, completion of the signature page appearing in Appendix A is a requirement of a response submittal but may be incorporated into the electronic copy submittal package in the manner best determined by the respondent.

27. Question: Reference: Page 14 of 37; “Is your firm, or the firm you are partnering with, certified with Washington State for any of the below categories. Confirmation of any of the below certifications will result in all points for this category.”

- a. **Question: Will the City please remove “with Washington State” in the above reference to allow all small business offerors the opportunity to receive these points?**



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Answer: This RFP will continue to follow the City's prevailing practices for Equity in contracting.

28. Question: Reference: IT25-0021F_PriceProposalForm(Excel Format)

- a. **Question: Can The City please confirm that we populate pricing in this spreadsheet? It has a different solicitation number referenced.**

Answer: Please see answer 24 above, IT25-0021F is a completely separate project and has no connection to this solicitation.

29. Question: Reference: IT25-0021F_PriceProposalForm(Excel Format)

- a. **Question: Can The City please define "On Shore Remote" and "Offshore Remote"?**

Answer: Please see answer 24 above, IT25-0021F is a completely separate project and has no connection to this solicitation.

30. Question: Reference: IT25-0021F_PriceProposalForm(Excel Format)

- a. **Question: "Onsite w/ Travel" and "Hybrid w/Travel" are listed within the price sheet, is travel anticipated to be reimbursable? If so, can there be a separate line item for travel so that travel does not have to be incorporated into the Fully Burdened Rate? The Pre-Proposal conference mentioned there's no way for The City to predict travel.**

Answer: Please see answer 24 above, IT25-0021F is a completely separate project and has no connection to this solicitation.

31. Question: The provided Question and Answer document and Price Proposal Form references eight (8) distinct service categories, but only four (4) are listed in the Request for Proposal (RFP). Please clarify.

Answer: Please see answer 24 above, IT25-0021F is a completely separate project and has no connection to this solicitation.

32. Question: Will an updated Excel sheet be provided for Pricing that focuses on the four (4) categories listed in the RFP?

Answer: Please see answer 24 above, IT25-0021F is a completely separate project and has no connection to this solicitation.

33. Question: Is the provided Question and Answer document for this specific opportunity or from a separate procurement period?

Answer: Please see answer 24 above, IT25-0021F is a completely separate project and has no connection to this solicitation.



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34. Question: Can the City please clarify how many projected awards The City will make?

Answer: As described above in answer 13, we anticipate making multiple awards to different respondents, perhaps as many four awards, but cannot exclude the possibility of making only a single or even no award.

35. Question: Is there an incumbent currently performing this work? If so, please provide the name of the contractor and the contract number.

Answer: The City has contracted with a variety of different entities in recent years, so it is difficult to identify a set of incumbent providers for purposes of this solicitation; however, the included "Supplier List" represents a list of entities in which we have worked with previously and believe would be interested in potentially submitting responses to this RFP.

36. Question: What is the estimated period of performance start date?

Answer: We have not contemplated a specific start date and have some flexibility as to the timing in which work is accomplished; however, starting by July or August of this year would be consistent with general expectations for this project.

37. Question: Can the City please provide historical workload data for all positions?

Answer: Historical workload is not a relevant consideration for this project.

38. Question: Will the City be providing all equipment necessary, to include computers, workstations, etc. for contractor personnel to accomplish these tasks?

Answer: For certain long-term engagements, the City will issue contractors laptop computers with network access credentials.

39. Question: Can the City please provide all updates in red or a highlighted font within the amended solicitation to clearly demonstrate the exact changes made?

Answer: No redline RFP document will be provided. All respondents are expected to read and incorporate any addendums in their responses.

40. Question: Can the City please ensure that all questions provided to the City are responded to? We understand that some may appear to be duplicates between vendors, however this help ensures all questions are accounted for.

Answer: The City has provided this list of questions and answers. In some instances, we have consolidated questions in the interest of brevity and clarity.

41. Question: Can the proposal volumes be submitted in PDF format?

Answer: PDF is an excellent format for a response submittal.



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42. Question: In order to effectively respond to the solicitation, can the City please provide a one-week extension once the Q/As are posted?

Answer: The City will issue an addendum delaying the due date for responses to this solicitation by one week to April 29, 2025.

43. Question: Can the City publish a list of attendees from the pre-proposal meeting on March 26, 2025?

Answer: A list of self-identified attendees that participated on-line and in-person has been included.

44. Question: Can the City clarify its insurance requirements as it relates to the individually identified elements? In particular, would a single aggregate protection of \$10 million be acceptable as opposed to the specific amounts identified for general business, automotive, employers' liability, and umbrella coverage?

Answer: The insurance requirements described in the RFP document represent our estimate of the coverage necessary to mitigate risks to acceptable levels. Actual insurance requirements can be negotiated in the final agreement as different scopes of work may entail different levels of associated risk.

45. Question: Can the work called for under this RFP be performed remotely, or are there requirements for in-person activities?

Answer: As described in answer 17 above, we anticipate that most work can be performed remotely; however, the evaluation criteria does recognize the ability of the contractor to appear in-person, and some staff augmentation needs (Scope of Work and Deliverable Category 3) may necessitate performance of in-person activities but would be specifically identified in an agreement amendment and associated work orders.

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