

ITPS Vendor Information Session
December 15, 2022
Chat Questions

- 1. Question:** Is the "Business Analysis" service category being folded into something else?

 - **Answer:** No, Business Analysis category will not be one of the categories re-solicited in the near future. Once the team completes the first set of solicitations as listed [on our page here](#), we will assess the state demand and determine any IT services gaps and plan accordingly. Also, the Business Analysis services were already competitively solicited last year under the new Business Consulting Services [contract 01620](#).

- 2. Question:** When will you release this RFP in January?

 - **Answer:** Yes, although we cannot provide an exact release date at this time, our hope is to release the solicitation in January. We do plan on posting by end of December a Request for Information (RFI) survey to collect any last comments on our draft solicitation requirements.

- 3. Question:** How many solicitations do you anticipate coming out on each vehicle?

 - **Answer:** We are currently working on four (4) separate competitive solicitations, each has a different number of categories, please see additional details on [our ITPS site](#).

- 4. Question:** Are these particular divisions/organizations under DES/WEBS? - In regard to the upcoming staffing roles. More so are these for enterprise or particular service lines i.e., healthcare, government, etc.?

 - **Answer:** We are focused on general enterprise services that can meet most of the state demand for IT services. The solicitation requirements are not drafted to reflect certain specific area (i.e., healthcare, law enforcement, etc.). The resulting statewide contracts intend to have multiple awards so it is possible that for a particular engagement, a customer will seek out a narrower focused qualifications that some of the awarded vendors might have. But if the resulting DES statewide contract cannot meet a certain specialized need, a customer can utilize their own procurement authority and/or conduct a separate solicitation for their organization.

- 5. Question:** What does this mean for current ITPS vendors? Must we re-compete for each business area?

 - **Answer:** That is correct. The legacy ITPS program will be going away. Any vendor still interested in doing business with the state in this area will need to submit a bid for every solicitation/category that they qualified to provide.

6. **Question:** Will these IT service contracts include Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges and local government agencies around the state?
- **Answer:** State agencies have to use the DES statewide contracts unless they can justify that the contract doesn't meet their needs based on certain parameters. Besides state agencies, our customers include local governments, publicly funded non-profits, school districts, etc. Please see the full list of our customers here: [list of organizations with current contract usage agreements](#).
7. **Question:** What percentage of awards will go to in-state businesses versus out of state vendors?
- **Answer:** We intend to have reserved awards for the highest scored WA Small and Veteran-owned businesses. The percentage of reserved awards for these firms is still being finalized.
8. **Question:** What percent admin fee will be charged?
- **Answer:** Our standard vendor management fee for all new statewide contracts is 1.25%.
9. **Question:** Will these contracts cover research and advisory services?
- **Answer:** There are research and advisory responsibilities within the first four (4) competitive solicitations to be released, please review the role descriptions within each solicitation as they are posted. However, if a customer's primary need is focused solely on IT research and advisory services, the customers will likely look to use our [statewide contract 08321](#).
10. **Question:** There are 500+ vendors on the existing vehicle. Approximately how many vendors (quantity) are you expecting to cut to in each area? What is the target participation after all is said and done? Do you have expected spends in each area?
- **Answer:** Due to the solicitations still being in review, we cannot provide the exact number of vendors to be awarded per category. However, our plan for the number of awards was based on the historical usage of ITPS program. There are currently over 600 vendors on the ITPS roster, for all 12 categories, though only 180 vendors have reported any sales on this program since 2016. Our goal for the new contracts is to award an adequate number of vendors to meet the needs of our customers. If the original number of awards is determined to provide insufficient capacity for the state during the term of the contract, DES will have an option to make additional awards to the next highest scored responsive responsible bidders that submitted the bid under the original solicitation.

11. Question: Follow-up to the small/large business question. How do small businesses become visible to WA agencies besides just being on a list?

- **Answer:** The new ITPS contracts will look very different from the legacy ITPS program (please see resources posted on [our ITPS site](#) for additional details), making it easier for agencies to access WA small/certified vendors awarded on the statewide contracts. Agencies are also now increasingly looking for opportunities to engage with WA small/certified firms awarded on our statewide contracts. Once the contracts are awarded, we will hold vendor onboarding meetings which will cover different ways to engage with our customers.

12. Question: Will bids that are a combined a small business and a mid-sized company be valued higher than individual bids of the mid-sized companies?

- **Answer:** We are not sure what is meant here by 'combined'. Each solicitation will include a specified number of reserved awards for the highest scored WA small and veteran owned companies. We also intend to have a Subcontractor Diverse Business Inclusion Plan, where a medium or large size company can provide details about the type of subcontractors they will use. The strategy on how this plan will be included and assessed in accordance with the state policies, is still being finalized. Something to keep in mind is that it is very important that each bidder prepares their bid independently. A bidder might be disqualified if they engage in any collusion, bid rigging, or any other similar activity, for the purpose of restricting competition.

13. Question: When will state agencies be able to purchase from these new contracts? Will they be in place in time for agencies to run 2nd tier and award prior to start of FY24?

- **Answer:** We anticipate that the first two contracts, (IT Project Management and IT Development) will be executed before the end of this fiscal year. Following their completion, the next two are projected to be completed by the end of 2023, though please continue to monitor the [Planned Procurement \(wa.gov\)](#) page for updated schedule information. Please note, the new ITPS contracts will not require agencies to conduct the formal 2nd-tier competitions.

14. Question: How often will the vendor list refresh be?

- **Answer:** The refresh (opening a solicitation to add new vendors) timing will be based on the state and purchaser needs, but if everything goes well, we don't anticipate doing a refresh for at least the first 2 years of the contract term. For awarded vendors successfully meeting performance requirements the contract term will likely be 4 years. As mentioned above, DES will also be able to utilize additional awards to bidders that bid under original solicitation but were not awarded initially.

15. Question: When will the last two planned procurements, Information and Cybersecurity Services and IT Consulting, be rolled out?

- **Answer:** They are projected to be completed in 2023, but we don't have an exact timeline yet. Please continue to monitor the [Planned Procurement \(wa.gov\)](#) page for updated information.

16. Question: As a new participant to this program, what is the advantage of participating here vs. responding to tenders on WEBS?

- **Answer:** DES is the central procurement agency for the state, part of our mission is to conduct procurements on behalf of multiple agencies, so they don't have to do it themselves. Per state procurement policies, state agencies are required to use DES statewide contracts unless they can justify that they do not meet their needs. The current ITPS program will be going away, so there won't be customers posting solicitations under ITPS in WEBS for much longer. If these new competitive solicitations and resulting DES statewide contracts are established successfully, the agencies' own WEBS postings for IT services will significantly decrease in the future as they will be utilizing these contracts.

17. Question: For those efforts involving obtaining 3 quotes, are there dollar limits involved? (e.g., This process can be followed for any solicitation up to \$50,000, but those exceeding 50k will still need to follow a more competitive process)?

- **Answer:** No, there won't be a spend limit set by DES for state agencies under these statewide contracts. In certain situations, for very complex and/or large projects, an agency might determine that they do want to conduct their own competitive solicitation if the statewide contract doesn't fully meet their needs. Some other customers, such as local governments, might also have their own unique procurement procedures limiting their spend under certain contracts.

18. Question: I've seen solicitations under ITPS still appear on WEBS among other solicitations, but the documents can only be accessed by companies active in the ITPS program

- **Answer:** The new solicitations will be posted as open solicitations and documents will be visible and accessible to all, as compared to the current ITPS program 2nd tier solicitations that are limited to only those registered in ITPS.

19. Question: Is this primarily used for staff augmentation or for larger IT projects? What is the average dollar value (or range) of solicitations that come out on this?

- **Answer:** The first three solicitations were 'unbundled' to support participation of all bidders, including small and specialized companies that might only be able to provide services in one area. The final solicitation 'IT Consulting' is intended to accommodate customer needs for a really large project (over than 1 million in spend

for example) when a customer needs to contract with one vendor that has employees across multiple specialties and can coordinate and support such a project.

20. Question: Will you release the list of participants and socioeconomic status to facilitate teaming?

- **Answer:** We will not be able to share socioeconomic business status for attendees, but you can [search WEBS](#) to find the businesses by commodity codes and see business types/certifications.

21. Question: Can you provide the current state of affairs with respect to the Governor's COVID Proclamation and on-site work?

Answer: DES will no longer be including in our contracts the COVID19 vaccination verification plans requirements, but contractors must comply with specific on-site requirements applicable to each purchaser, which in some cases might still include masking or vaccination requirements.

22. Question: As a brand-new participant, what is the advantage of ITPS over vendors participating in open bids via WEBS?

- **Answer:** This allows purchases to focus on their agency goals and missions. By DES developing statewide contracts it leverages the state's collective buying power to help save customers money, reduce risk, and streamline purchasing. DES is seeking to create a method that is easy and efficient for purchasers and that improves real opportunity for more businesses, including small and Certified Veteran-Owned businesses. Under the new method, purchasers will no longer be required to perform a competitive solicitation. Instead, purchasers will be able to hire a vendor after requesting a minimum of three quotes.

23. Question: Is there any way to get a copy of the previous terms and conditions to review in advance?

- **Answer:** The current contract is listed on the contract summary page here (listed as "contract agreement"):
<https://apps.des.wa.gov/DESContracts/Home/ContractSummary/08215>.

24. Question: Some of States we work with only prefer local candidates. How about State of Washington?

- **Answer:** DES will accept both and award vendors based on their response/qualifications, but customers can choose to only use WA state and/or get quotes from businesses in WA if they'd like.

25. Question: Who is responsible to conduct a background check, the State, or the vendor?

- **Answer:** DES will vet, conduct reference checks and due diligence in vendor award section. If a formal background check is needed, the customers will request that in their scope of work based on their need.