



SMALL BUSINESSES DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Issued: February 15, 2023

Deadline to Apply: February 22, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. PST

In Washington State, many small BIPOC businesses have been facing structural challenges that hinder their economic development and emphasize many socio-economic inequities. During the pandemic, Congress passed the CARES Act to provide economic relief to small businesses affected by the COVID-19 crisis. While many eligible businesses were able to receive funding to cover different expenses, many minority-owned small businesses were left out of this program due to structural barriers including limited digital skills and capabilities, familiarity to regulations, and access to technical knowledge, expertise, and funding.

Recognizing these challenges the Latino Community Fund of Washington State (LCF) through its Economic Empowerment Program seeks to further understand and identify gaps and contributing factors preventing small minority-based businesses located in hard-to-reach areas from succeeding.

1. PURPOSE, AND SCOPE

This RFP seeks to contract with qualified Vendors to gain a deeper understanding of the operational and management gaps that small BIPOC businesses located in hard-to-reach areas experience, and the most effective ways to support them. Having this information will help LCF develop a long-term strategy to support small business owners.

The selected Vendor(s) will be responsible for implementing a comprehensive business support program for 80 businesses over the span of three (3) months. This will include providing educational workshops, conducting business analysis reports, providing personalized business coaching, and delivering consulting services to help businesses develop and achieve their goals. The focus areas for this project are: Benton, Franklin, Grant, King, Okanogan, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston, and Yakima counties.

2. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY AND INFORMATION

A. Eligibility

This RFP is open to any community-based organizations or Vendor that satisfies the following minimum requirements:

- Currently licensed to operate a business in the United States (must provide active UEI#).
- Licensed to do business in the State of Washington, or is willing and able to become licensed, prior to Contact execution. The Vendor is responsible for fully understanding and complying with all business licensing, registration, and tax requirements of the State of Washington.

- Demonstrated experience in providing supporting services (e.g., business analysis, building operational capacity, business coaching/mentoring, trainings, workshops, etc.) to women-owned small businesses, and BIPOC entrepreneurs and small businesses located in underserved and hard-to-reach communities.

B. Preferred Skills and Qualifications

LCF is interested in Vendors who possess the following skills and qualifications, which are critical for the success of the project:

- Located in Washington State.
- Knowledge and keen understanding of barriers to success encountered by minority-owned small businesses.
- Proven record of success in working with small BIPOC businesses from underserved communities.
- Experience providing culturally responsive services to small BIPOC businesses including business analysis, coaching, training, and consulting services.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and be able to work effectively with BIPOC entrepreneurs, women-owned small businesses, and small BIPOC businesses located in underserved and hard-to-reach communities.

C. Period of Performance

The period of performance for this project is March 1 to May 31, 2023.

D. Compensation

Total funding available is up to \$875,000. The amount of funding requested will not impact scoring priority. For example, a proposal for \$100,000 is just as likely to be selected as a proposal for \$700,000. Proposals will be scored according to the criteria indicated in the Evaluation Criteria Section.

Vendor's compensation shall be based on the amounts per deliverable that are agreed to by LCF in a Statement of Work. Rates provided by the Vendor shall not exceed the rates established in the Statement of Work.

Under no circumstances shall the selected Vendor(s) perform any work until a contract has been fully executed. Any work performed before execution is at the Vendor's risk and expense. LCF is under no obligation to pay, and may be legally prohibited from paying, for any work performed prior to the start date of contract and statement of work.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

A. Scope of Work

This RFP seeks Vendors to implement a comprehensive business support program for 80 minority-owned small businesses, which includes the following:

- Conduct assessments for 80 small businesses. This includes: develop initial assessment form, conduct business initial assessments, schedule and conduct business analysis interviews, identify areas of improvement, and develop action plan for each business.
- Provide technical support to 80 small businesses. This includes: provide personalized business coaching hours to help businesses apply recommendations from action plan (e.g., business formation, licensing, insurance requirements, etc.), and deliver professional

services based on recommendations from action plan and emerging needs (e.g., accounting, bookkeeping, legal, marketing, technology and e-commerce, etc.).

- Conduct trainings and/or workshops on areas identified during business assessments sessions. This includes curriculum development, and coordinate, organize and implement training sessions.
- Gather direct feedback from business owners to identify aspects of the project that are useful or less useful, and their overall satisfaction.

B. Deliverables

The selected Vendor is expected to meet the following deliverables:

- Conduct 80 business analysis reports, identifying areas of improvement and an action plan for each business.
- Provide individual business coaching to participating businesses, including one-on-one meetings or other support as needed.
- Provide five (5) educational training and/or workshops for participating businesses. Topics will be developed based on the collective needs of participants.
- Work closely with LCF team to ensure that the project is meeting the needs of the participating businesses.
- Provide regular progress reports invoices and supporting documentation to LCF in a timely manner.

4. RESPONSE CRITERIA

Vendors interested in being considered for this RFP must respond electronically to luzmila@latinocommunityfund.org by 5:00 p.m. PST on February 22, 2023.

Vendor's response must contain the following documents. Failure to complete and submit all documents by the response deadline may result in disqualification:

- A. Completed and signed Annex A – Letter of Submittal (required, not scored)
- B. Completed and signed Annex B – Certifications and Assurances (required, not scored)
- C. Completed and signed Annex C – Subcontractor Utilization Statement (required, not scored)
- D. Understanding of Project Needs and Approach (mandatory, scored)

In five (5) pages or less, describe:

- Applicant's understanding of the overall project, needs, and the desired outcomes.
- Applicant's proposed approach (high level) to accomplish the services and deliverables required in Section 3.

E. Experience and Qualifications (mandatory, scored)

- Provide a list of proposed key staff including name, project role, and estimated number of hours committed to the project.
- In two (2) pages or less, describe the Vendor and proposed key staff's direct experience with similar projects. Briefly describe each project's goal or purpose, the outcomes achieved, and lessons learned.
- In two (2) pages or less, describe how the Applicant and proposed key staff meet the Preferred Skills and Qualifications listed in Section 2.B

F. Annex D - Cost Proposal (mandatory, scored)

In the format provided in Annex D the Vendor must provide a fixed price per deliverable to provide all services and deliverables required in Section 3. In the event a Vendor proposes a dollar amount range for any line item LCF may, at its discretion, either reject the Vendor's response or use the high end of the range for evaluation purposes.

Vendor’s proposed prices and hourly rates must include all costs, including administrative staff costs and non-labor expenses, necessary to accomplish the tasks and to produce the services and deliverables required herein. If awarded Vendor is bound to these rates and no additional charges for other expenses will be allowed after award. Examples of eligible and not eligible program expenses include:

Eligible	Not Eligible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries and wages of employees working directly on the project. • Fringe benefits of employees. • Contracted staff working directly on the project • Travel expenses for trips directly needed to deliver the project. • Other Direct Costs: allocable facilities, utilities and communications expenses that are required to execute the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies (e.g., office supplies for general use, although these may be covered under the 10 percent allowable overhead). • Equipment (e.g., laptops, cell phones). • Travel expenses not related to the project. • Lobbying and advocacy. • Reimbursement for pre-award costs.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE SCREENING

Administrative screening occurs with initial submission of the RFP response documents. The RFP coordinator will review response (including Exhibits) on a pass/fail basis for compliance with RFP administrative requirements. Non-responsive RFP responses will be eliminated from further evaluation. Evaluator will only evaluate responses meeting all administrative requirements.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

LCF will review and evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

Scored Elements	Total Point Value
Understanding of Project Needs and Approach (see Section 4 D).	40
Experience and Qualifications (see Section 4 E).	40
Cost Proposal (see Section 4 F).	20
Total	100

7. VENDOR SELECTION

LCF intends to award multiple contracts as a result of this RFP. The total number of contracts awarded will be determined based on LCF’s needs and at LCF discretion. LCF intends to award to the responsive and responsible vendor(s) that meets all the requirements listed herein, and receives one the highest scores from Section 6. LCF reserves the right to award the Contract(s) to the Vendor(s) that, in LCF’s sole opinion, best meet LCF’s needs and/or provides the best overall project value.

8. WAIVER OF MINOR IRREGULATIES

Read all instructions carefully. If vendor does not comply with any part of this RFP, LCF may, at its sole discretion, reject Vendor’s response as non-responsive. LCF reserves the right to waive irregularities contained in any response or process.

9. NO PROTEST OR DEBRIEFING

LCF reserves the right to select a Vendor that, in LCF's sole opinion, provides services and deliverables that best meet the needs of this project. No protest opportunity is available for Vendors who respond to this RFP. No Vendor debriefing conferences will be provided.

10. ANNEXES

Annex A – [Letter of Submittal](#)

Annex B – [Certifications and Assurances](#)

Annex C – [Subcontractor Utilization Statement](#)

Annex D – [Cost Proposal](#)