

Consulting 101

Tips for Becoming a Consultant with the Port



Types of Services Procured

- Financial
- Auditing
- Training/Coaching
- Graphic Design/Marketing
- Computer/Info Technology
- Architectural Design
- Engineering Design
- Planning
- Copywriting/Editing
- Construction Management
- Airport Dining and Retail Consulting
- Legal Services
- Maritime/Seaport Environmental Support
- **And much more!**

Where to Find Solicitations

All procurements from Service Agreements, Goods and Services, Major Construction and Small Works can be found on **VendorConnect**:

<https://hosting.portseattle.org/sops/#/Dashboard>

VendorConnect



Welcome to the Port of Seattle VendorConnect

Due to the everchanging COVID-19 situation and the healthcare professional and state guidance provided, all public gatherings, such as pre-bid meetings and bid openings will be held virtually. This information will be provided in more detail as it applies to the particular requirement and interested vendors should monitor VendorConnect closely for changes.

Port of Seattle VendorConnect provides procurement and contract information for construction, consulting, and goods and services. This is also the one stop location for registering to be on the following rosters: small works (construction less than \$300,000), consulting services, and goods and services.

To begin, you must register yourself and then find or add your business. If you were in our old system, and this is your first time logging in you must recreate your login account. To do this, click the "REGISTER/LOGIN" button below, then the "Sign up now" link on the login screen.

[REGISTER/LOGIN](#)

You may search our solicitations, vendors, and view the event calendar as a guest.

[CURRENT AND PAST SOLICITATIONS](#)

[FUTURE SOLICITATIONS](#)

[SEARCH PUBLICLY VIEWABLE VENDORS](#)

[VIEW EVENT CALENDAR](#)

*You must use modern browser like Chrome, Firefox, or Safari.

VendorConnect

- View **current** and **future** procurement opportunities.
- Download Solicitation documents.
- Register for opportunity notifications.
 - Upload capability statements and qualifications during registration.
- NAICS codes
- Rosters (Small Works, Goods and Services, Consultants)

VendorConnect

- Join a Plan Holder list on a Solicitation.
 - Automatic notifications of changes.
 - Register for events.
- Ask questions.
 - Give the Port an opportunity to address items that may need clarification.

Pre-Proposal Conference

- For most procurements above \$200k, a Pre-Proposal Conference is held.
- Find date and location information in Solicitation.
- Whether you're interested in an opportunity as a prime or sub-consultant, Pre-Proposal Conferences provide a setting to network and learn more of the Port's processes.
- Meet other local small businesses and build connections to bid on future work together.

Personal vs. Professional Services

Within Service Agreements, all procurements are either defined as **personal** or **professional** in nature and that difference plays a role in how the Port procures.

Professional Services

- Contracts for Architectural and Engineering Services.
- RCW 39.80: Services rendered by a consultant or any person, other than an employee of the agency, contracting to perform activities within the scope of the general definition of professional practice:
 - Architecture (RCW 18.08)
 - Engineering (RCW 18.43)
 - Landscape Architecture (RCW 18.96)
 - Land Surveying (RCW 18.43)

Professional Services

- Qualifications-Based Selection.
- Competitive process in which consultants are selected based on demonstrated competence and qualifications for the type of professional services required.
- Price cannot be a selection criterion.
- Negotiate contract with highest rated (most qualified) consultant (rates must be fair and reasonable).

Personal Services

- Contracts for services outside the architectural and engineering disciplines.
- RCW 53.19: Expertise provided by a consultant to accomplish a specific study, project, task, or other work statement which may not reasonably be required in connection with a public works project.

Personal Services

- Cost information is requested as part of consultant proposal.
- Port utilizes “best value” criteria to determine selection (more on this later).
- After qualification rating is complete, pricing is analyzed.

Contract Types

- Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ)
 - General Scope of Work (SOW)
 - Hourly Rates
 - Service Directives: specific SOW and Level of Effort (LOE)
- Project Specific
 - Specific SOW and LOE
 - SOW and LOE negotiated upfront

Terms and Conditions Requirements

- Typical Insurance Coverages Required:
 - Auto
 - General liability
 - Errors and omissions
- Required Documentation
 - Certificates of insurance
 - Policy endorsements
- Limits of Coverage Required (in Dollars)

Terms and Conditions Requirements

- Washington UBI Number
- Washington State Workers Compensation (if applicable)
- Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (e.g. SSN, EIN)
- No Debarment

Tips for Successful Proposals

- Structure proposal in the same order as the Evaluation Criteria.
- Identify how project examples are relevant to the Solicitation's project.
- For Project-Specific, select project experience that covers most or all elements of the scope.
- For IDIQs, select projects that are a representation of the range of projects that might come up in the IDIQ, with the majority showcasing the core competencies addressed in the scope.
- Be succinct where appropriate. In some cases, less is more.

Tips for Successful Proposals

- Proofread for spelling mistakes, grammar, and overall flow.
- Stay within the page count, otherwise sections over the page limit may be removed.
- Research RFPs and proposals from other local, state, or federal agencies.
- Do a Public Disclosure Request to view submittals of successful consultants from the previous solicitation (if there was one).

Interview Process

- Plan ahead to ensure availability for the interview date listed in the Solicitation.
- Interviews are often conducted at Sea-Tac Airport or Pier 69 Headquarters when doing in-person interviews. Currently interviews are conducted via MS Teams or Zoom.
- Panel consists of 3 to 5 subject matter experts and the Contract Administrator.
- Presentations are generally not allowed.
- Often one hour, with 8 to 10 questions. Expect at least one scenario question.
- Questions may not be given ahead of time and may be provided in writing during the interview.

Interview Preparation

- Respond to each question with an example and use examples other than Port of Seattle experience.
- Use STAR Technique
 - Situation encountered
 - Task that needed to be accomplished
 - Action you took
 - Result
- Develop mock interview questions with your team using the Solicitation and Scope of Work.

Interview Preparation

- Interview team should consist of key personnel on the project and generally a mix of management and technical experts. Try to keep the participants to 6-8.
- The person who will do the work should respond to the question.
- Include subconsultants as part of the interviewing team if they will be a key team member.

Discussions and Revised Proposals

- Following interviews, the Port may conduct “Discussions” regarding the technical proposal and/or Diversity in Contracting Inclusion Plan.
- During Discussions, the Port will identify any material weaknesses and have an opportunity to ask questions about the proposal. This will be an informal conversation and will not be rated.
- Based on the information acquired during the Discussion, the Port may issue an addendum requesting a revised proposal and/or Diversity in Contracting Inclusion Plan. This is a rare opportunity to improve on proposal.

Selection Criteria Rating

- The selection criteria rating reflects the degree to which the written proposal meets or does not meet the minimum performance or capability requirements through an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, and risks of a proposal.
- Assessment of technical risk, which is manifested by the identification of weakness(es), considers potential for disruption of schedule, increased costs, degradation of performance, the need for increased oversight, or the likelihood of unsuccessful contract performance.

Selection Criteria Rating

Rating	Description
Outstanding	Indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements and contains multiple strengths that far outweigh any weaknesses. Risk of unsuccessful performance is low.
Good	Indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements and contains at least one strength, and risk of unsuccessful performance is low.
Acceptable	Meets requirements and indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements, and risk of unsuccessful performance is no worse than moderate.
Marginal	Has not demonstrated an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements, and/or risk of unsuccessful performance is high.
Unacceptable	Does not meet requirements and therefore contains one or more significant weaknesses or deficiencies, and/or risk of unsuccessful performance is unacceptable.

Consensus Process

- Evaluation Team rates each proposal and interview response based on the evaluation criteria.
- Deliberations may take hours as team discusses strengths and weaknesses.
- Entire process is confidential – only the procurement team has access to meetings and materials.
- Selection is made during this meeting and then Notice of Selection is issued.

Negotiations – Personal Services

- The Port will make a qualitative assessment of proposal differences and determine whether one proposal's superiority under the non-cost factors is worth the potential difference in cost.
- As proposals become more technically equivalent, cost may become more important in making the award decision.
- Price is an important factor; however, it is not the sole determining factor.

Negotiations – Personal Services

- Port may engage in Discussions with shortlisted firms prior to selection to clarify pricing or encourage consultants to submit more competitive pricing.
- Port may continue negotiations after award to lower price.

Negotiations – Professional Services

- After award, consultant will be asked to submit rates via Firm Input Form.
- Port will use a variety of market data sources to analyze proposed rates and negotiate.
- The Port reserves the right to conduct negotiations after the selection decision to lower cost and price.
- If the Port does not receive the Firm Input Form within the specified time frame or is unable to finalize negotiations with the top ranked firm, the Port may either begin negotiations and contract with the next ranked firm or cancel the procurement.

Negotiations

- An overview of the rate negotiation process is provided for reference at:

<https://www.portseattle.org/page/procurement-documents>

- Firm Input Form Sample:

Firm Input		Notes																																															
		SOC Titles and Codes will autopopulate, but you can override the SOC code if necessary Please select an appropriate common title. If one does not exist, please use "NOTITLE". Enter comments to explain what title you want or why you want a different Common Title - SOC pair.																																															
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Company Name</th> <th>Last Name</th> <th>First Name</th> <th>Highest Relevant Degree</th> <th>Major/Primary Field of Study</th> <th>Years of Relevant Experience</th> <th>State License/ Other Certifications</th> <th>Proposed Job Title</th> <th>Common Title (select from dropdown)</th> <th>Level Classification (1-8)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>										Company Name	Last Name	First Name	Highest Relevant Degree	Major/Primary Field of Study	Years of Relevant Experience	State License/ Other Certifications	Proposed Job Title	Common Title (select from dropdown)	Level Classification (1-8)																												
Company Name	Last Name	First Name	Highest Relevant Degree	Major/Primary Field of Study	Years of Relevant Experience	State License/ Other Certifications	Proposed Job Title	Common Title (select from dropdown)	Level Classification (1-8)																																								

Post-Award

- Report Monthly Amounts Paid (MAPs) to each subconsultant for the prior invoicing period. MAPs are submitted electronically utilizing the Port's Contractor Database System (CDS). Refer to Section III of the Service Agreement for more information.
- Check with Port PM on requirements and expectations for invoices.
- If Port PM is unresponsive, reach out to Contract Administrator for help.

Questions?

Tamara Hamel, Contract Administrator

Hamel.t@portseattle.org

