



WASHINGTON STATE  
Department of  
Children, Youth, and Families

## SOLE SOURCE FILING JUSTIFICATION

TO: Tom Hicks
CONTRACT # 2532-66087
TODAY'S DATE: 10/1/2025
CONTRACT SUB OBJECT CODE: CZ - Other Pro Serv

CONTRACTOR'S LEGAL NAME	TIN/UBI NUMBER
Within Reach	601-108-918

ADDRESS 155 NE 100 Street #410, Seattle, WA 98125

### CONTRACT PURPOSE

The purpose of the contract is to fund Within Reach, the Help Me Grow Statewide Affiliate, to make specific enhancements to the statewide community-based Plan of Safe Care pathways.

### FUNDING

FEDERAL FUNDING \$

STATE FUNDING \$

CONTRACT TOTAL \$90,000 (PRIVATE)

### CONTRACT DATES

START DATE: 10/21/2025

END DATE: 12/31/2025

### SOLE SOURCE CRITERIA

#### What is a sole source contract?

*"Sole source" means a contractor providing goods or services of such a unique nature or sole availability at the location required that the contractor is clearly and justifiably the only practicable source to provide the goods or services. (RCW 39.26.010)*

*Unique qualifications or services are those which are highly specialized or one-of-a-kind.*

*Other factors which may be considered include past performance, cost-effectiveness (learning curve), and/or follow-up nature of the required goods and/or services. Past performance alone does not provide adequate justification however will not be on its own a sufficient justification.*

#### Why is a sole source justification required?

*The State of Washington, by policy and law, believes competition is the best strategy to obtain the best value for the goods and services it purchases, and to ensure that all interested vendors have a fair and transparent opportunity to sell goods and services to the state.*

*A sole source contract does not benefit from competition. Thus the state, through RCW 39.26.010, has determined it is important to evaluate whether the conditions, costs and risks related to the proposal of a sole source contract truly outweigh for going the benefits of a competitive contract.*

## **SPECIFIC PROBLEM OR NEED**

### **1. What is the business need or problem that requires this contract?**

In response to the 2016 Comprehensive Abuse and Recovery Act (CARA) and impacts to the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA), DCYF opted to develop a community-based pathway for infants requiring a Plan of Safe Care. The legislation requires DCYF to develop a system to oversee the Plan of Safe Care, which includes a collaborative relationship since 2021 with the selected statewide community partner Help Me Grow Washington.

**PROVIDING COMPELLING ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL FACILITATE THE EVALUATION**

**2. Describe the unique features, qualifications, abilities or expertise of the contractor proposed for this sole source contract.**

Help Me Grow Washington's statewide navigational infrastructure and expertise in building referral pathways for families experiencing substance use disorder directly aligns with the desired elements of the Plan of Safe Care. As detailed below, this capacity and infrastructure paired with deep expertise in developing specialized referral pathways in the perinatal and early childhood system is unique to Help Me Grow Washington.

**Expertise in Perinatal Substance Use Disorder Support**

Help Me Grow Washington has served as the statewide community partner in the [Plan of Safe Care](#) (POSC) initiative since 2021. In this role, Help Me Grow Washington operates the community-based pathway for substance-exposed infants requiring a POSC, provides technical assistance to birthing hospitals in adopting the updated POSC policy and procedures, supports a Community of Practice for hospital social workers and other community providers, and develops both provider- and family-facing marketing and messaging POSC materials.

**Navigational Infrastructure for Specialized Referral Pathways**

The Help Me Grow Washington system has been invested in over many years by several state agencies, including DCYF, DOH, HCA and DSHS. This has allowed Washington State to develop a statewide perinatal and early childhood resource and referral linkage system with robust navigational infrastructure, including a statewide contact center and ever-growing network of coordinated access points, a comprehensive resource directory specializing in perinatal and early childhood services and supports, robust referral relationships and technology, and state affiliate capacity that works to weave systems together while offering technical assistance to providers and partnering organizations. As such, Help Me Grow Washington is skilled at leveraging its existing expertise and infrastructure to create and sustain statewide referral pathways with partnering organizations, such as those required for the POSC.

Within Reach is the statewide affiliate of the National Help Me Grow system and have been since 2010. As such, they are the only Washington organization that is contracted with the national offices that certify and ensure fidelity to the Help Me Grow model and the only entity in Washington State that can lead this work to help Washington grow an interconnected statewide and local system of early childhood resource and referral.

**3. What kind of market research did the agency conduct to conclude that alternative sources were inappropriate or unavailable? Provide a narrative description of the agency's due diligence in determining the basis for the sole source contract, including methods used by the agency to conduct a review of available sources. Use DES' Market Research Template if assistance is needed.**

DCYF leadership conducted extensive research and stakeholdering with state-level agencies, statewide organizations, Washington State Hospital Association, and a multitude of community

partners and providers from 2018-2021 to select Help Me Grow Washington as the statewide community partner for the Plan of Safe Care community-based pathway.

In our market research (described in response to Question 4), Help Me Grow Washington is the only statewide entity with the unique pairing of: 1) existing statewide capacity and service delivery in perinatal substance use and 2) expertise in developing statewide referral pathways in the perinatal and early childhood system.

- 4. As part of the market research requirements, include a list of statewide contracts reviewed and/or businesses contacted, date of contact, method of contact (telephone, mail, e-mail, other), and documentation demonstrating an explanation of why those businesses could not or would not, under any circumstances, perform the contract; or an explanation of why the agency has determined that no businesses other than the prospective contractor can perform the contract.**

No other contractor can perform this contract. Within Reach is the statewide affiliate of the National Help Me Grow system and has been since 2010. As such, they are the only Washington organization that is contracted with the national offices that certify and ensure fidelity to the Help Me Grow model and the only entity in Washington State that can lead this work to help Washington grow an interconnected statewide and local system of early childhood resource and referral.

As described in detail in response to Question 2, Help Me Grow Washington's statewide navigational infrastructure and expertise in building referral pathways for families with young children paired with their unique experience in perinatal substance use directly aligns with the work outlined in this contract. As detailed below, this capacity and infrastructure to develop specialized referral pathways tailored for families with young children paired with deep expertise in perinatal substance use support is unique to Help Me Grow Washington.

Several statewide contracts were analyzed but none ultimately possessed the combination of Help Me Grow knowledge, perinatal substance use expertise and statewide navigational infrastructure required to fulfill contract needs. For example:

- Athena Group has done several consultant projects in the early childhood space but this group does not have perinatal substance use knowledge or the navigational infrastructure required for the systems-building effort DCYF wishes to progress through this contract. This vendor is also not authorized to hold the Help Me Grow state affiliate role.
- Kauffmann and Associates has strong tribal connections but does not have early childhood expertise, perinatal substance use knowledge nor the statewide navigational infrastructure required for this contract. This vendor is also not authorized to hold the Help Me Grow state affiliate role.

In internet search, these potential vendors came up but ultimately did not possess the combination of knowledge, expertise or statewide infrastructure required. For example:

- Child Care Aware of WA has early childhood expertise but does not have perinatal substance use expertise and it does not include social determinants of health within its service delivery model, which is required for the systems-building effort DCYF wishes to progress through this contract. This vendor is also not authorized to hold the Help Me Grow state affiliate role.
- Washington Communities for Children has early childhood expertise but does not have perinatal substance use expertise and does not own or operate the statewide navigational

infrastructure required to do the activities outlined in this contract. This vendor is also not authorized to hold the Help Me Grow state affiliate role.

- Although Washington 211 has navigational infrastructure, it does not have perinatal substance use expertise or a state-to-local systems-building component to their work which is required to do the activities outlined in this contract. This vendor is also not authorized to hold the Help Me Grow state affiliate role.

**5. Per the Supplier Diversity Policy, DES-090-06: was this purchase included in the agency's forecasted needs report?**

Reducing the number of out-of-home placements is an agency strategic priority. Yes, this was forecasted.

**6. Provide a detailed and compelling description of the costs and risks mitigated by contracting with this contractor (i.e. learning curve, follow-up nature).**

DCYF has partnered with Within Reach over the past four years to develop the Plan of Safe Care community-based pathways statewide. Significant financial investment has been invested into Within Reach to build the appropriate technology for the POSC specialized referral pathway and to develop capacity to engage providers across the state to further expand statewide implementation. Cross-agency financial support through the Department of Health funds continuous improvement. Losing the ability to contract with Within Reach for this body of work would significantly delay statewide implementation and potentially cause parallel initiatives to be developed in silos.

**7. Describe what targeted industry outreach was completed to locate small and/or veteran-owned businesses to meet the agency's need?**

No other contractor can perform this contract. Within Reach is the statewide affiliate of the National Help Me Grow system and has been since 2010. As such, they are the only Washington organization that is contracted with the national offices that certify and ensure fidelity to the Help Me Grow model and the only entity in Washington State that can lead this work to help Washington grow an interconnected statewide and local system of early childhood resource and referral.

**8. What considerations were given to unbundling the goods and/or services in this contract, which would provide opportunities for Washington small, diverse, and/or veteran-owned businesses. Provide a summary of your agency's unbundling analysis for this contract.**

The analysis indicated that unbundling was not recommended. The work is centralized in a non-specific area (virtual); the size of the contract is small/simple; the one service is early childhood resource and referral navigation; and work is driven by a timeline outlined in a grant.

**9. Provide a detailed and compelling description that includes quantification of the costs and risks mitigated by contracting with this contractor (i.e. learning curve, follow-up nature).**

It is estimated \$7M to rebuild the Help Me Grow system with a new contractor.

**10. Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of special circumstances such as confidential investigations, copyright restrictions, etc.? If so, please describe.**

☒ NOT APPLICABLE

**11. Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of unavoidable, critical time delays or issues that prevented the agency from completing this acquisition using a competitive process? If so, please describe. For example, if time constraints are applicable, identify when the agency was on notice of the need for the goods and/or service, the entity that imposed the constraints, explain the authority of that entity to impose them, and provide the timelines which work must be accomplished.**

☒ **NOT APPLICABLE**

**12. What are the consequences of not having this sole source filing approved? Describe in detail the impact to the agency and to services it provides if this sole source filing is not approved.**

Losing the ability to contract with Within Reach for the Plan of Safe Care would significantly delay statewide implementation and risk DCYF falling out of compliance with federal legislation. Infants experiencing prenatal substance exposure (who do not require child welfare intervention) or pregnant families experiencing substance use would either be erroneously routed to Child Welfare or offered no services at all, increasing the possibility of infant out-of-home placement.

#### **REASONABLENESS OF COST**

**13. Since competition was not used as the means for procurement, how did the agency conclude that the costs, fees, or rates negotiated are fair and reasonable. Please make comparison with comparable contracts, use the results or a market survey, or employ other appropriate means calculated to make such a determination.**

DCYF negotiated with Within Reach to agree to a budget that matched the direct costs that would be incurred and associated with the Help Me Grow services.