



SOLE SOURCE FILING JUSTIFICATION

TO: Lucia Barbu
CONTRACT # 24-1283
TODAY'S DATE: 2/26/2024
CONTRACT SUB OBJECT CODE: CZ - Other Pro Serv

CONTRACTOR'S LEGAL NAME	TIN/UBI NUMBER
Cedar River Group	

ADDRESS	93 Pike Street, Suite 315, Seattle, WA 98101
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CONTRACT PURPOSE
To continue to provide consultation services to DCYF to assist in the development of a statewide Needs Assessment and a Strategic Plan as part of the federal grant application titled, Advancing an Integrated, Equitable and Responsive Early Learning System in Washington. - The Contractor's responsibilities include coordinating with DCYF to develop a statewide Steering Committee and then facilitating meetings throughout the term of this contract to inform and guide the development of a state-wide Needs Assessment and a Strategic Plan. - The Contractor will prepare draft and final Needs Assessment and a Strategic Plan incorporating data analysis and results from community engagement.

FUNDING	
FEDERAL FUNDING \$ 74,931.00	STATE FUNDING \$0

CONTRACT TOTAL \$74,931.00

CONTRACT DATES	
START DATE: 3/11/2024	END DATE: 6/30/2024

SOLE SOURCE CRITERIA
<p><u>What is a sole source contract?</u></p> <p><i>"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)</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><u>Why is a sole source justification required?</u></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>

SPECIFIC PROBLEM OR NEED

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

Over the last four years, through the funding of the federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG), the PDG project team has worked alongside community partners, providers, parents, multiple state agencies and tribal partnerships to develop an Early Learning Strategic Plan for the state of Washington. It has required the unique historical knowledge, project management and oversight of Cedar River Group through the development of Washington's first statewide early learning needs assessment, and the updated Early Learning Strategic Plan. This contractor has been integral in the strategic creation and implementation of this plan over the last four years with the relationships they have built with the community members and the diverse steering committees throughout the process. The original Preschool Development Grant funding has entered its final year of funding from the federal partners and was also awarded additional grant dollars for new work in 2023. This new work was built upon existing work and the completion of all work is contingent upon the continued partnership with Cedar River Group. As we continue into the implementation phase of the Early Learning Strategic Plan in 2024 and begin the new work in 2024, it is necessary and critical to keep the work moving forward. It would be catastrophic to lose the momentum, the institutional knowledge of the plan, and expertise in strategic planning. If we were to lose the Contractor's partnership in this work, we would go into default with HHS.

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.

Cedar River Group was instrumental in the development of the original Early Learning Strategic Plan in 2010. Their knowledge and expertise were crucial when we wrote the initial Preschool Development Grant in 2018 to create a new plan. Their knowledge in equity-focused, strategic planning with collective impact approach and network impact/liberatory designs, were vital to the development of our work of the Preschool Development Grant with a community-centered approach.

3. What kind of market research did the agency conduct to conclude that alternative sources were inappropriate or unavailable?

Cedar River Group had experience with our system and communities from the creation of the first Early Learning Plan which uniquely qualified them to accomplish the tasks in the timeline of the grant. The deliverables can only be completed by a contractor with regional networks that include families, childcare providers, and professionals that serve children and families in all parts of Washington state. We performed an internet search and were not able to find new organizations with the needed skill set. Cedar River Group is the only entity that has this capability and will guarantee that DCYF can meet its obligation to HHS.

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

Due to the temporary nature of the grant, it is important that we can obtain a contractor with experience and eliminate a substantial learning curve. Cedar River has the historical knowledge of the previous early learning plan which they used to build our current Early Learning Coordination Plan. As we head into the final implementation phase, it is crucial we maintain the same direction with the current contractor.

5. 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

6. 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

- 7. Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of a geographic limitation? If the proposed contractor is the only source available in the geographical area, state the basis for this conclusion and the rationale for limiting the size of the geographical area selected.**

NOT APPLICABLE

- 8. 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.**

Not only would this derail our current work and timeline for the implementation of the Early Learning Coordination plan, but we don't have the capacity to finish the work without them. It is critical we keep this work moving forward at its current pace or we will go into default with HHS. For the last four years, Cedar River Group has been working with DCYF and the steering committee to develop the Statewide Early Learning Needs Assessment and the Early Learning Coordination Plan. As we enter a critical and necessary final implementation phase of our plan and begin work on the new grant award it is crucial Cedar River Group stays on this project. Our timelines are short due to the limited time of our federal funded grant.

- 9. What considerations were given to providing opportunities in this contract for small business, including but not limited to unbundling the goods and/or services acquired.**

Cedar River Group is a self-certified small business, further classified as a "Micro" business.

REASONABLENESS OF COST

10. 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 comparisons with comparable contracts, use the results of a market survey, or employ other appropriate means calculated to make such a determination.

While there is no vendor DCYF is aware of in WA state with the same qualifications as Cedar River Group, if we were to estimate any typical consulting firm at a rate of \$297/hr. like Athena (Master Contract No. 01620) reviewing all four years of grant work done by Cedar River would require at least a month of this four-month contract. Just one month of work reviewing at their hourly rate based on 30 days and 8 hours a day would run an estimated cost of \$71,280. This amount is close to the total budget of this contract and would not result in implementation findings, the final product of this work.