



Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Consultant to Assist with Small Businesses Solutions to Rural Small, Women, and Black, Indigenous, People of Color-owned Businesses (S/W/BIPOC) in Washington State

Introduction

[Pacific NorthWest Economic Region \(PNWER\)](#) was awarded a Small Business Innovation Funding (SBIF) grant through the Washington State Department of Commerce to focus on assisting rural Small, Women, and Black, Indigenous, People of Color-owned businesses (S/W/BIPOC) in Washington State. Through this project, PNWER will facilitate new business relationships between technical assistance solution providers and small under-resourced businesses to provide direct financial support, mentorship and industry expertise. The purpose is to accelerate post-pandemic recovery in these under-resourced businesses and communities and provide needed guidance and services to help them expand and grow their businesses. Connecting S/W/BIPOC businesses with expert consultants and solutions providers will help participating small businesses with their challenges.

This RFQ is seeking consultants, solution providers, and subject matter experts who are knowledgeable in business operations, technical assistance, and expertise related to, but not limited to the following areas: Finance Planning and Management, Supply Chain Management and Logistics Planning, Human Resources and Workforce Management, Healthcare, Point of Sale Solutions, Inventory Systems Management, Marketing Planning and Assistance, Legal and Regulatory Assistance, General Business Operations, etc.

Project Overview

The project will include the following tasks:

- Work with PNWER to assess the needs and challenges of the S/W/BIPOC businesses and develop solutions plan
- Provide services to and work directly with the S/W/BIPOC businesses in the cohort to develop solutions and technical assistance to cohort challenges
- Participate in accelerator activities with the S/W/BIPOC businesses.
- Develop a report of outreach sessions and assistance to S/W/BIPOC businesses in the Accelerator.
- Report on the delivery of the solutions and technical assistance to S/W/BIPOC businesses in the Accelerator.

Solution Provider Assistance

PNWER is looking for qualified solution providers to assist with direct support to S/W/BIPOC-owned businesses through the RISE-WA Accelerator. The Solution Providers will work with PNWER staff and other consultants to connect with S/W/BIPOC-owned businesses and provide assistance to businesses which are selected in the cohort. The Solution Provider should have well-established examples of small business support that can be delivered to rural counties that fall under the scope of this project. The solution providers will work with PNWER to facilitate direct business support, develop assessment of the small business' challenges, and report progress of each business selected to support in the cohort.

The Solution Provider must be licensed to do business in the State of Washington.

PNWER is assembling a roster of qualified providers who might work on this project or future work. Selection does not guarantee a contract. Projected timeline is to begin work in April with an end date of May 30, 2023.

PNWER and the RISE-WA is in the process of actively recruiting and selecting qualified businesses to the RISE-WA cohort. If chosen, consultants will work directly with the RISE-WA team and cohort businesses to provide business solutions to identified businesses' challenges through weekly workshops and one-on-one meetings and trainings.

Qualifications Submission Information:

- 1. Introductory letter describing your relevant experience and overview of qualifications interfacing with the groups listed above and your business service consulting areas of expertise. Provide past related project examples, and outcomes that could be leveraged. (3 pages max, standard format 8.5x11 with 1 inch margins)**
- 2. Resumes or extended Curriculum Vitae (no page limit)**
- 3. Hourly rate**
- 4. A minimum of 3 references from past projects (1 page max)**

Deadline

Submissions will be accepted until **April 10 at 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time**. Submissions will only be accepted by email. Late submissions will not be accepted. Please send proposals by email to Steve Myers, Senior Program Manager at Steve.Myers@pnwer.org.

Questions should be submitted by **April 5** in writing to Steve Myers, Senior Program Manager at Steve.Myers@pnwer.org. All interested consultants may obtain a copy of the questions and responses by submitting a written request by email.

PNWER is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any classification protected by federal, state, or local law.