

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County's (WDC) mission is to champion a workforce and learning system that allows our region to be a world leader in producing a vibrant economy and lifelong employment and training opportunities for every resident. On August 26, 2021, the WDC released Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 21-03, "Employment Supports for Individuals Impacted by the Criminal Legal System," with funding from King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) and guidance from the [VSHSL Implementation Plan](#). The RFP is designed to create access to employment, training and supportive services to individuals who have touched the criminal legal system. The contract awards will begin November 2021 and end December 31, 2023.

This RFP represents a key strategy and investment aligned with the WDC's Regional Strategic Plan. The overarching goal is to strengthen the region's workforce development system by:

- Expanding racial equity and community-driven goals within the region's unified workforce development system and strategy.
- Identifying specific marginalized communities currently underserved by the workforce system and explicitly targeting funding for culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services to reach those communities, including targeted outreach and services for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) young people, justice-involved, homeless, foster system-involved.
- Pooling and coordinating resources to close system gaps, eliminate redundancies and increase efficiencies.
- Expanding access to training programs and navigation services along career pathways.
- Creating a unified regional, coordinated, and efficient system for engaging industry.
- Leveraging public and private funding streams to ensure holistic, flexible services.

Proposals were required to demonstrate how services will be provided to demographic groups that are traditionally underfunded and overrepresented among individuals impacted by the criminal legal system relative to the total King County population, including but not limited to BIPOC, immigrants, refugees, individuals who lack basic skills including English Language proficiency, individuals who are homeless, and those with disabilities.

The WDC conducted an RFP question and answer (Q&A) period between release of the RFP and September 16, 2021, during which time the WDC answered 50 questions submitted by prospective bidders, posted in Q&A digests on the WDC website. A virtual bidders conference was held on September 8, 2021, attended by 54 individuals representing over 30 organizations. Proposals in response to RFP No. 21-03 were due to the WDC on October 4, 2021.

THE RFP RATING PROCESS & ANALYSIS

The WDC received a high volume of proposals and after review for compliance 25 were certified as compliant. A 13-person evaluation panel was established to review and rate the proposals, consisting of: WDC Board Members, staff from other Workforce Development Boards, community leaders, and local government staff with expertise in workforce development. The WDC used Cognito Forms, an online software platform, to release the RFP, receive the submissions of proposals from the bidders, and share proposals to the evaluators and receive scorecards. The overall response from bidders and evaluators about adopting Cognito Forms for this purpose was positive.

After an initial orientation meeting on October 11, 2021, the panelists reviewed and independently rated the proposals. A final evaluation conference was held on October 22, 2021, where panel members reviewed cumulative proposal scores, discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals, assessed budget proposals, and consulted with one another to reach a consensus recommendation. Following the panel's recommendation, the procurement process was reviewed and certified by the WDC's Chief Executive Officer.

The evaluation panel would like to highlight the following strengths of proposals.

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	SCOPE OF WORK ¹	COUNCIL DISTRICT ²	OPERATING BUDGET	AMOUNT REQUESTED	SCORE
1. Chief Seattle Club	1,2,4,5,6,7	1,2,4,5,6,7,8	\$ 5.7 Million	\$244,380	97.20
<p>Strengths – Everyone on the panel had a great respect for their work. The composition of their staff and leadership team is over 90% BIPOC. Their Board of Directors is 73% indigenous. They put together a strong program model with focus on peer mentorship, employment support and wrap around services with multiple pathways for providing stable housing. They recently received funding from King County to support record expungement and payments of Legal Financial Obligations (LFO), which strengthened their proposal as they have more supports and resources available to serve the target population.</p>					

¹ List of scope of work – Appendix (Page 5)

² [Districts and Councilmembers - King County](#)

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	SCOPE OF WORK	COUNCIL DISTRICT	OPERATING BUDGET	AMOUNT REQUESTED	SCORE
<p style="text-align: center;">2. Community Passageways</p>	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,7	\$2.4 Million	\$177,250	95.40
<p>Strengths – Everyone on the panel was positive about Community Passageways – a BIPOC led grassroots organization with a great track record. Reviewers liked their peer mentorship + credible messenger model, helping the target population to first integrate in the community and then navigate to the right resources.</p>					
<p style="text-align: center;">3. TRAC Associates</p> <p>Consortium Partners – Africa Town & Evergreen Empowerment Network</p>	1,2,3,6,7	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	\$ 4.8 Million	\$350,235	92.50
<p>Strengths – Of all the consortium models, TRAC Associates’ proposal stood out primarily because of their choice of consortium partners, cost per participant, their history of working deeply in the community and hiring staff and leadership that is reflective of the community they serve. One of the evaluators shared her experience working with TRAC and stated that they have a can-do attitude and never turns away clients – “they always find a way to serve clients that are referred to them.” A panelist mentioned that TRAC had a similar funding from King County Jobs Initiative set to end, and this funding would help continue that work.</p>					
<p style="text-align: center;">4. Organization for Prostitution Survivors</p>	1,2,6,7	1,2,4,5,7,8	\$ 0.967 Million	\$ 161,823	92.20
<p>Strengths – Evaluators were impressed with Organization for Prostitution Survivors’ proposal. Their program model is based on peer mentorship, employment support and connection to auxiliary community services. Majority of the staff including the entire leadership team are survivors. The rating panel was very happy to support this grassroots organization as the population they are serving have the highest needs and is the farthest away from opportunity.</p>					

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	SCOPE OF WORK	COUNCIL DISTRICT	OPERATING BUDGET	AMOUNT REQUESTED	SCORE
5. Weld Seattle	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	\$ 1.44 Million	\$100,100	92.0
	<p>Strengths – Evaluators were impressed with Weld Seattle’s proposal. The organization is a grassroots organization founded by and for people impacted by the criminal legal system, 100% of their staff have lived experience and 50% belong to BIPOC communities. 100% of individuals served by Weld are legal system impacted. Weld Seattle is 49% self-funded, and have a solid program model with housing assistance intertwined with peer mentorship and employment support, which helps them keep their recidivism rate below 3%. Lastly, they have a very reasonable ask.</p>				

RECOMMENDATION

The evaluation panel recommends funding the following organizations for from November 2021 through December 31, 2023.

Organization	12-month recommended funding
Chief Seattle Club	\$225,000
TRAC Associates	\$284,000
Community Passageways	\$180,000
Weld Seattle	\$100,000
Organization for Prostitution Survivors	\$161,000

The following organizations will be considered if/when additional funding becomes available.

Organization
Real Escape from the Sex Trade
Neighborhood House
FareStart

ACTION REQUESTED

The committee is asked to consider and approve the above recommendations for contract awards. If approved, new contracts will begin in November 2021, and end December 31, 2023.

APPENDIX:

SCOPE OF WORK	
1	Peer mentorship and community-based navigation
2	Employment specialist services + case management with longer service eligibility:
3	Access to paid apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and training programs for in-demand job sectors:
4	Integrated services with diversion programs
5	Pre-release services/supports for incarcerated individuals:
6	Facilitated connection to auxiliary community services
7	Allowing funded programs to access flexible financial assistance (FFA) to meet and support basic needs of participants:
8	Others - Organizations may propose additional strategies and program models.