



TO: Lucia Barbu
CONTRACT # 24-1288
TODAY'S DATE: 4/11/2024
CONTRACT SUB OBJECT CODE: CZ - Other Pro Serv

SOLE SOURCE FILING JUSTIFICATION

CONTRACTOR'S LEGAL NAME		TIN/UBI NUMBER
National Equity Project (NEP)		
ADDRESS	1720 Broadway Ave, 4 th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612	
CONTRACT PURPOSE		
Is to provide racial equity and consultation services to DCYF to guide the integration of Liberatory Design principles within the practices of the agency. As key partners with DCYF and its sub-divisions, NEP will provide equity-centered leadership coaching, strategy support and build community engagement strategy to positively impact the system and processes with the potential to interrupt inequities and interrupt the continual perpetuation of injustices experienced by historically marginalized communities.		
FUNDING		
FEDERAL FUNDING \$ 50,000.000	STATE FUNDING \$0	
CONTRACT TOTAL \$50,000.00		
CONTRACT DATES		
START DATE: 4/25/2024	END DATE: 12/30/2024	
SOLE SOURCE CRITERIA		
<u>What is a sole source contract?</u>		
<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>		
<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>		
<u>Why is a sole source justification required?</u>		
<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>		
<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>		

SPECIFIC PROBLEM OR NEED

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

Over the last five 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. The equity-based, responsive Early Learning Strategic Plan was developed with National Equity Project leading our partners with their proprietary Liberatory Design approach. Partnering with National Equity Project because of their facilitation and executive coaching expertise in system design, while dismantling the inequities that are produced by our system, was essential for grant implementation. Additionally, their executive coaching is also instrumental in navigating the constant change and landscape of DCYF.

Losing their expertise and equity-focused partnership would be catastrophic as we are in the middle of the last year of grant funding. We need their established expertise and facilitation as we continue to implement the strategic plan to satisfy our federal deliverable. If we lose their support, it will guarantee we would lose momentum to implemental knowledge of the work, access to Liberatory Design, and it would cause default with HHS by being out of compliance with our approved workplan and funding.

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.

National Equity Project's knowledge and expertise were crucial when we wrote the initial Preschool Development Grant in 2018 to create a new plan. Their equity-focused, strategic planning with collective impact approach and network impact/liberatory designs were vital to the development of our work on the Preschool Development Grant with a community-centered approach. Liberatory Design was created by the National Equity Project and employing the founding expertise of NEP has been an essential part of this grant process. Their experience in equity-focused system designs was influential in our decisions and makes them uniquely qualified for the work. The National Equity Project (NEP) is an education reform organization that specializes in leadership development and changing culture and conditions to further equity objectives. The National Equity Project has over twenty (20) years of experience partnering with education system leaders and has developed proprietary training to grow understanding and skills around their Liberatory Design approach. They will continue building upon the Liberatory Design approach with agency leaders and the employees of DCYF.

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

DCYF completed an internet search paired with extensive knowledge of the field and determined there were no appropriate vendors which meet the need for this unique training. ICF Washington State is a vendor who does similar work but works only with individuals and from their own framework and principles, which don't all align with DCYF. Alignment with DCYF principles is crucial since our culture was built around Liberatory Design. All our staff as well as many DCYF providers have been trained in Liberatory Design.

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).

As we enter our fifth year of work under the grant, it is important that we can obtain a contractor with experience and eliminate a substantial learning curve. National Equity Project has the historical knowledge of the previous early learning plan which can be utilized to continue building our current Early Learning Coordination Plan.

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

The National Equity Project holds proprietary rights over the Liberatory Design training.

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 by not being in compliance with our approved grant set to end 12/30/24.

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.

As a business practice, National Equity Project subcontracts with multiple small business which include an equity focus and female-owned contractors based within Washington State. This has allowed us to accomplish our goals in a tight timeline while also supporting small business in Washington.

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

To begin partnering with another vendor, for example ICF Washington State, we would be looking at a \$5,000 per person training just to gain access to their materials. With 300+ employees this would cost approximately 1.5 million just to start. We would then have to customize the learning materials to fit our principles including obtaining training materials not yet created. A ground-up approach on a consulting statewide contract for someone like Athena to start designing materials for our training would be approximately \$297/hour. It would take countless months to design the curriculum NEP has tailored to our needs for the past 5 years.