

Professional Services for Evaluation of Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Background

On April 19, 2024, a news article was published regarding a settlement paid to a County employee regarding complaints against a former department director. On April 30, 2024, the Whatcom County Council discussed establishing an investigative committee to review recent employment law decisions ([AB2024-294](#)) related to these and other events. On May 7, 2024, Council selected Councilmembers Ben Elenbaas, Todd Donovan, and Barry Buchanan ([AB2024-310](#)) to form an investigative committee. The Council's investigative committee first met May 14, 2024, and conducted a series of approximately 14 interviews with current and former county employees. Interviews included staff from various County departments, including Human Resources and multiple department heads, the Executive, and Executive office staff.

On September 24, 2024, the investigative committee presented the final draft report to the Council's Committee of the Whole ([AB2024-336](#)). The Whatcom County Council discussed the next step to hire a consultant to examine the County's human resources policies and procedures related to harassment and provide recommendations for improvements.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to secure professional services to evaluate the policies and procedures in place in the County to ensure a safe working environment free from harassment.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The information contained in this section describes the tasks needed to evaluate and make recommendations for improvement to the County's policies, procedures, and processes.

1. Evaluate all county policies and procedures related to
 - a. Preventing workplace harassment
 - b. Processing harassment complaints
 - c. Separation of employees facing harassment complaints
2. Review procedures for recent employment law decision
3. Review employee relations policies and procedures including
 - a. Identifying and mitigating personnel issues
 - b. Conflict management policies
 - c. Disciplinary processes
 - d. Complaint disputes and resolutions
 - e. Termination, resignation, and exit interviews
4. Review county training offerings related to preventing harassment and timelines for requiring training for supervisory and all staff positions.
5. Interview county staff as needed to thoroughly review the policies and procedures in place
6. Evaluate structure and staffing in Human Resources department related to processing harassment complaints
7. Identify areas of improvement in the aforementioned policies, procedures, and structures
8. Summarize methodology, findings, and recommendations in a final report.
9. Present to the County Council on progress and final report findings.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The selection of a consultant for this project will be made from the qualified consultants responding to this RFP. All consultants/firms responding will be evaluated, scored, and ranked. The top evaluated proposers may be invited for an interview with Whatcom County to select the most qualified.

Consultants will be evaluated and ranked based on the following criteria:

1. Background and experience (25%)
2. Qualifications of persons doing the work (25%)
3. Project approach (25%)
4. Responsiveness and completeness of proposal (15%)
5. Price and fee structure (10%)

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