

Questions asked and answered at the Pre-Bid Conference held on Friday, August 30, 2024

Question: So, the existing 20+ year contractor has handled what tasks versus the new logistics contractor, or are they combined.

Answer: Yes. The Contractor has the responsibility of handling logistics. If they desire, they can subcontract with a 3rd party.

Question: Can you clarify – the logistics sub is new, but the management sub is historic?

Answer: Yes, the managing contractor may choose a subcontractor to assist if they desire.

Question: What is the process of speaker selection?

Answer: The planning committee is made up of representatives from the Commission, Department of Commerce and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA). Members of the committee recommend speakers, and we also solicit nominations from past attendees.

Question How will success of the event be measured?

Answer: Survey of attendees is sought, and the contractor provides a written report of responses.

Question: What is the demographic of the attendees and planning committee?

Answer: The demographic is a representation of the state’s population. Effort is made to notify past attendees, community-based organizations, tribal organizations, state non-profit housing providers and advocates

The planning committee is made up of staff from the Commission, Department of Commerce, and Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. Staff includes management and subject matter experts at all levels.

Question: How is the committee bringing additional voices that historically weren’t included?

Answer: We reach out to existing partners and solicit requests of them to help bring new voices. We also solicit requests for conference session content to bring new presentations to the housing community.

Question: Does the cultural and ethnic diversity of the planning company have any weight in the decision?

Answer: The planning committee at the Commission has made the decision for this hire.

Question: Who is responsible for securing sponsorships?

Answer: The planning contractor handles solicitation of sponsors. An effort is made to retain existing sponsors and solicit new sponsors.

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**Questions submitted prior to Pre-Bid Conference with answers.**

1. What is the format for the pre-conference meeting?

Answer: This is an optional attendance Pre-Bid Conference. We will walk through the components of the RFP, including the timeline and scope of work. We will also present answers to

the questions we have already received and provide the opportunity for attendees to ask additional questions. The recording of the Pre-Bid Conference & written answers will be posted on WEBS.

2. Is there a current conference management firm assisting in the planning of the 2024 conference? If so, how long have they been the conference management firm for this conference? What works well with this partnership and what would you like to see improved if selecting a new firm to partner with.

Answer: Yes, we have a long-time contractor who has managed the overall planning of the conference for 20+ years. The subcontractor responsible for the logistics of the conference is new in 2024. We are conducting this RFP in accordance with the state's procurement requirements, as well as in good faith and in the spirit of fair competition.

3. What is the overall conference budget?

Answer: 2024 Budget vs Actuals

|                   | Budget         | Actual       |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Revenue           | \$489,600.00   | \$520,823.61 |
| Expenses          | \$517,690.88   | \$471,735.22 |
| Under/Over Budget | \$ (28,090.88) | \$ 49,088.39 |

1. What is the total budget for the event – meaning what has been historically spent on:

Answer:

|                                          | Budget       | 2024 Actual  |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Event Planning & Mgmt Svcs (Annual)      | \$153,818.16 | \$153,818.16 |
| Food & Beverage                          | \$170,500.00 | \$159,198.44 |
| AV                                       | \$ 59,000.00 | \$ 54,799.06 |
| Facilities                               | \$ 28,100.00 | \$ 28,900.00 |
| Décor                                    | \$ 13,340.88 | \$ 5,732.48  |
| Signage & Branding                       | \$ 22,000.00 | \$ 19,400.65 |
| Electrical Services                      | \$ 1,500.00  | \$ 770.00    |
| Registration/Merchant Services/Internet  | \$ 24,500.00 | \$ 23,755.89 |
| Sponsor/Exhibitor Fulfillment            | \$ 32,450.00 | \$ 33,090.50 |
| Speaker Honoria & Travel                 | \$ 75,800.00 | \$ 62,800.00 |
| Hotel & Lodging                          | \$ 72,000.00 | \$ 68,860.00 |
| Any Other Costs (Security & Contingency) | \$ 7,000.00  | \$ 8,428.20  |

2. How often does the planning team meet during the planning cycle?

Answer: Between roughly January and when the program is finalized around April, Meetings with the program steering committee are bimonthly, and transition to weekly prior to the Conference. Commission staff in charge of the conference are in more frequent contact with the planning contractors and may meet weekly as the conference approaches.

3. How many people serve on the planning committee (outside of the conference management firm)?

Answer: The steering committee includes 8-10 members – mostly Housing Finance Commission staff, plus two each from the Department of Commerce and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. Additional subject matter experts may participate on an ad hoc basis. The Washington State Housing Finance Commission has 4 staff members, plus Subject Matter Experts who participate in regular meetings.

The Department of Commerce has 2 staff members, plus Subject Matter Experts who participate in regular meetings.

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance has 2 staff members who participate in regular meetings.

4. I see that your website currently uses Whova. Is that the required technology provider for the 2025 conference?

Answer: Whova has an annual contract with Housing Washington, subject to renewals. We expect to continue using Whova unless there is a compelling reason to change to a different technology.

5. How much money or how many scholarships are in the scholarship program?

Answer: Housing Washington generally awards approximately 35-40 scholarships that cover registration costs for those who cannot afford to pay.

6. Will we be able to connect the online registration platform to your payment processor, so funds get directly deposited into the Commissions' bank account?

Answer: Yes.

7. For the potential Virtual Conference component would it be a hybrid offering or would it change from an in-person conference to a fully online conference?

Answer: We plan to keep The Conference primarily in person, with some virtual offerings.

ability to have some sessions virtually presented.

8. Do you anticipate the 2025 conference to have a similar agenda, receptions, special events as the 2024 conference?

Answer: Yes, The format has been consistent over the years but is we are open to changes to maintain relevancy.

9. Please provide further explanation of what you are expecting with the tax filing process mentioned on page 8, number 19.

Answer: Our vendor uses the Stripe system in conjunction with registration via Whova. Funds are transferred to checking periodically.

Contractors obtain W8 & W9 from vendors to facilitate payments where necessary.

10. Where is the 2025 Conference going to be held?

Answer: The 2025 conference will take place at the Hyatt Inn Bellevue, WA. The contract is signed.

Is the contract already signed?

Answer: Yes.

11. How many people will attend the conference?

Answer: Westside/Odd Years - Approximately 800  
Eastside/Even Years - Approximately 700

12. Do you anticipate the conference growing in the next 2-3 years?

Answer: Yes, we expect there may be a small growth.