

[Redacted], Attorney

April 27, 2023

Holly Jones
HCA RFP Coordinator

RE: HCA RFP 2023HCA4 complaint

Dear Holly,

[Redacted] hereby files a complaint regarding the above-noted RFP pursuant to section 2.6.2.1 The RFP unnecessarily restricts competition.

Complaint:

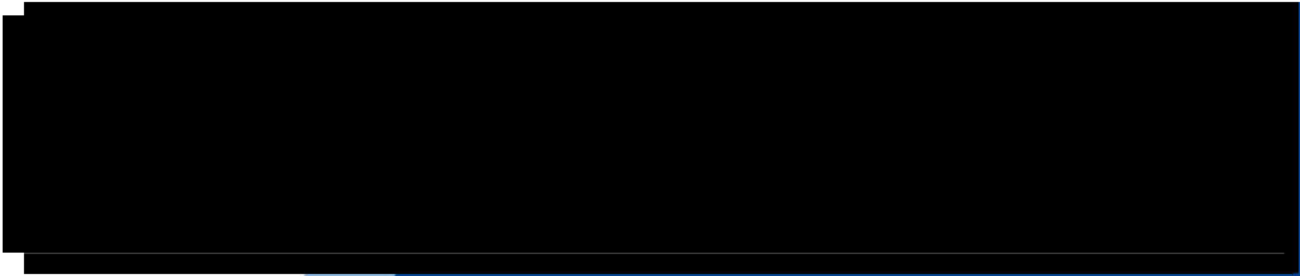
Section 1.6.2 Bidder minimum qualifications includes section 1.6.2.2 “three(3) to five(5) years of experience providing peer or family run peer programs and/or services for people who have live experience with behavioral health services “ and section 1.6.2.5 “Experience providing Peer/Recovery Supports to a diverse population E.g., individuals who represent communities who may experience health disparities (including based on ethnic/racial identity, tribal, gender identity, sexual orientation, rural, urban, immigrant, and those living below the poverty line).” These sections restrict competition from qualified candidates.

Basis for the complaint:

This RFP is for training and training event coordination. It does not solicit delivery of direct care services. As is outlined in section 1.3 Purpose and Objectives, the state initiated this RFP “to solicit Proposals from individuals or organizations interested in services to provide Certified Peer Counselor (CPC) Trainings...” The purpose and objective are training, not Peer Support Services Delivery.

Delivery of direct services as described in the minimum requirements stated in sections 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.5 are not identified in section 1.5 Scope of Work. The State clearly outlines the training work requested, none of which involves delivery of direct services.






Description of experience or expertise of the minimum requirements stated in sections 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.5 are not requested or required in any section of Exhibit C – written proposal. This demonstrates that the State recognizes those skills are not required for the successful completion of the work outlined in this RFP.


Experience or expertise of the minimum requirements stated in sections 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.5 are not listed in section 4.2.2 “written evaluation table” or in 4.2.4 “the scoring rubric:”; again, reflecting the state’s recognition that evaluation of skills for delivering peer support services are not relevant when determining a successful bidder to deliver the training and training event coordination being purchased.

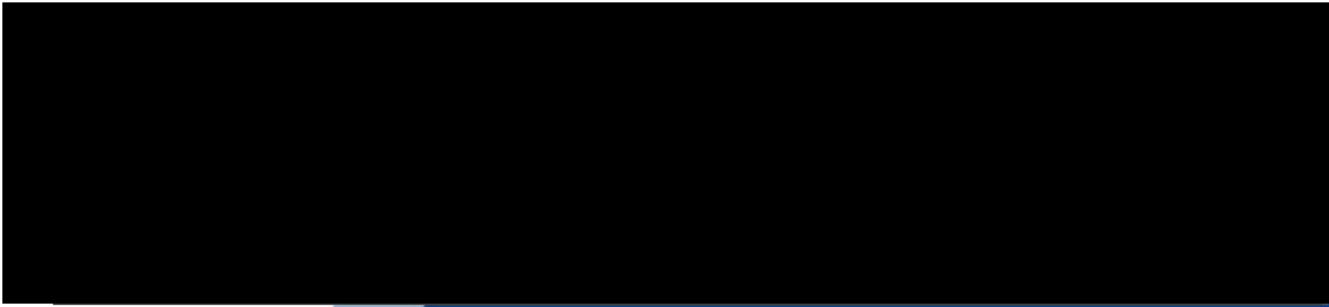
Likewise, section 4.2.3 does not allow for any cost allocation to the items listed in section 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.5. The state has not identified paying for anything other than training and coordination of training events.

Direct services are not mentioned anywhere else in the RPF text other than in the minimum qualifications section 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.5

The state’s rationale for including the minimum requirements 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.5 as stated in their document CERTIFIED PEER COUNSELING TRAINING RFP No. 2023HCA4 Amendment No. 2, HCA Response to Bidder Questions is: “Washington State requires organizations who have the experience and knowledge based in peer support services required to provide these trainings.” This rationale is insufficient and incorrect. Having direct service provision experience, especially peer support services, does not guarantee expertise in Peer Support. Given the prevalence of misunderstanding around what true peer support services are and how they should be provided one cannot simply assume the mere act of doing it means they are doing it right, or even well. Additionally, providing peer support and teaching people how to provide peer support are two separate skill sets which do not automatically transfer. This RFP is soliciting training.

The state's rationale for including the minimum requirements in question is incorrect. The State of Washington has been contracting with  a training company that does not provide direct service, for provision of CPC training since 2016. Washington State does not require direct services experience to provide training.





Including experience in delivery of direct services as a minimum qualification to bid on an RFP soliciting training and training event management unnecessarily restricts competition.

Proposed Remedy

1. Remove sections 1.6.2.2 and 1.6.2.5 from this RFP minimum qualifications.
2. Replace the minimum qualification listed with
 - a. a request for a demonstration of expertise in the subject matter
 - b. a request for demonstration of ability and experience training people of diverse backgrounds, underserved needs and multiple learning needs.
3. Leave the rest of the RFP text as it currently reads.

Thank you,

