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# NOTICE OF COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION

**HCA Solicitation #2021HCA29**

**SOLICITATION TITLE: Cascade Care Public Option Plans (to be offered on *Washington Healthplanfinder*)**

**SOLICITATION BUDGET: N/A**

**SOLICITATION POSTING DATE:** 2/28/2022

**RESPONSE DUE DATE:** 5/26/2022

**Find the full solicitation on** [Washington’s Electronic Business Solution (WEBS)](https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/). Vendors not registered in WEBS will not receive updates or amendments to the solicitation, which may put them at a disadvantage.

**Estimated Schedule of Procurement Activities**

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| HCA to Issue Request for Proposals | February 28, 2022 |
| Pre-Solicitation Conference Confirmation for Attendance Due | March 8, 2022 |
| Pre-Solicitation Conference | March 9, 2022, 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time |
| Bidders’ Round 1 Questions Due to HCA | March 11, 2022, 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time |
| HCA Responses to Round 1 Questions Posted\* | March 18, 2022 |
| Bidders’ Round 2 Questions Due to HCA | March 23, 2022, 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time |
| HCA Responses to Round 2 Questions Posted\* | April 6, 2022 |
| Letter of Intent with Exhibit A Due to HCA | April 7, 2022 |
| Bidders’ OIC Filing Deadline for Rates and Network Access | May 19, 2022 |
| Complaints Due (if applicable) | May 19, 2022 |
| Bidders’ Responses Due to HCA | May 26, 2022, 2:00 p.m. Pacific Time |
| Evaluation by HCA\* | June 1 – 22, 2022 |
| HCA to Announce Apparent Successful Bidder(s) (ASB) and send notification via email to unsuccessful Bidders\* | By June 30, 2022 |
| Bidders’ Debrief Request Deadline | July 6, 2022 |
| Contract Negotiations | July – September 2022 |
| OIC Filing Approval | September 2022 |
| HBE Board Certification | September 2022 |
| HCA’s Verification of ASB’s OIC Rates | September 2022 |
| HCA to Execute Contract\* | By October 7, 2022 |
| HBE Open Enrollment | November 1-December 15, 2022 |
| Coverage Start Date | January 1, 2023 |

*\*Dates are anticipated and subject to change without an official amendment.*

HCA reserves the right in its sole discretion to revise the above schedule at any time.

**Purpose and Objectives**

The Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA), in partnership with the Washington State Health Benefit Exchange (HBE) and in consultation with the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC), is initiating this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit Proposals from licensed Carriers interested in providing Public Option health plans, also known as Cascade Select Plans on the individual market provided through *Washington Healthplanfinder*, for coverage effective January 1, 2023.

Public Option Plans first became available in Washington State in 2021 through legislation enacted in 2019, known as Cascade Care. The initial procurement established the program and created a foundation on which to pursue its objectives of statewide availability, affordability, quality, and value. To further promote statewide availability, the Legislature enacted legislation in 2021 to require hospital participation in counties that do not currently offer Cascade Select. HCA is developing enforcement rules, in consultation with the OIC and the HBE. HCA anticipates that these rules which are aligned with this RFP, will take effect in mid-2022.

Washington State is increasing its focus on affordability strategies and health care costs across all state-financed programs and health insurance exchanges as premiums and consumer cost sharing continue to rise. In 2019 the Washington State Legislature enacted House Bill 1224, which requires greater transparency to the drivers and impacts of prescription drug costs with an aim toward cost containment. In 2020, the Washington State Legislature enacted House Bill 2457, establishing the Health Cost Transparency Board for the evaluation and containment of health care expenditures. The board is responsible for the analysis of total health care expenditures in Washington, identifying trends in health care cost growth, and establishing a health care cost growth benchmark.

Affordability and the cost of health care remain key issues for Americans. The United States spends more money on health care than any other country. In 2019, health care costs represented seventeen point seven percent (17.7%) of gross domestic product (GDP), more than twice the average amount of other high income countries. The health care cost growth rate was four point six percent (4.6%), while the cost-of-living rose by only one point six percent (1.6%) in 2019.

While having the highest overall health care spending and the highest hospital prices, the U.S. spends less on preventive and primary care than other high-income nations. One study showed primary care spending in the U.S. accounts for about five percent (5%) to eight percent (8%) of all health care spending, with an even lower percentage in Medicare – compared to approximately fourteen percent (14%) of all health spending in most high-income nations.[[1]](#footnote-1) Washington State spends even less, with primary care accounting for four percent (4%) to six percent (6%) of all health care spending, according to 2018 data.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The goals of Cascade Select Plans are to make health care coverage more affordable for Washington residents, to incentivize high-quality care with an emphasis on primary care, and to achieve statewide coverage by ensuring coverage availability and expansion in each county through Washington’s individual health insurance market. HCA intends to continue to build meaningful mutually beneficial partnerships with carriers across all populations for which it is responsible—including public and school employees, Medicaid-eligible, and *Washington Healthplanfinder* enrollees—with long-term goals of improved population health (medical and social) and sustainable health care spending.

HCA intends to award one or more Contracts for Public Option Plans to provide the services described in this RFP for coverage beginning Plan Year 2023.

Any Contract awarded as a result of this RFP is contingent on approval of the health plans by the OIC and certification from the HBE Board before execution.

This RFP does not prohibit an Apparent Successful Bidder (ASB) from also offering other health plans on the individual market.

**Minimum Qualifications**

This RFP is open to Bidders that satisfy the following minimum qualifications:

### Must be a disability insurer regulated under chapter 48.20 or 48.21 RCW, a health care service contractor as defined in RCW 48.44.010, or a health maintenance organization as defined in RCW 48.46.020. See generally RCW 48.43.005(27). A Bidder can provide documented proof of being in the process of becoming a Carrier.

### Must propose a Public Option Plan that meets all current requirements and agree to meet all future HBE certification requirements as outlined in QHP Guidance documents, including, but not limited to, all OIC requirements for participation in the individual market in Washington.

Bidders who do not meet and demonstrate these minimum requirements will be rejected as non-responsive and will not receive further consideration. Any Bidder that is rejected as non-responsive will not be evaluated or scored.

**Solicitation Coordinator**

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| Name | **Alyssa McClure** |
| E-Mail Address | [HCAProcurements@hca.wa.gov](mailto:HCAProcurements@hca.wa.gov) |

**WEBS Commodity Codes**:

948074 – Professional Medica Services (Including Physicians, Pharmacists, and All Specialties)

953-48 – Health/Hospitalization (Including Dental and Vision Insurance)

953-52 - Insurance and Insurance Services (Not otherwise classified)

948-07 – Administration Services, Health,

948-45 – Home Health Care Services

948-47 – Home Care Center Services

948-55 – Medical and Laboratory Services (Non-Physician)

952-95 – Youth Care Services

958-56 – Health Care Management Services (Including Managed Care Services)

948-12 – Ambulance Services, Non-emergency

948-48 – Health Care Service (Not Otherwise Classified)

948-46 – Hospital Services, Inpatient and Outpatient

Submit any questions or concerns regarding this solicitation to the Solicitation Coordinator shown above.

1. American Academy of Family Physicians. Primary Care Spend. <https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/advocacy/payment/apms/BKG-PrimaryCareSpend.pdf>. Accessed January 10, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Washington State Office of Financial Management. Primary Care Expenditures: Summary of current primary care expenditures and investment in Washington, a Report to the Legislature. Nov 22, 2019. <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/pubs-reports/primary-care-expenditures-report-legislature>. Accessed January 10, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)