



Subcontractor Inclusion Plans (Policy §C-7b) Lunch & Learn Q&A – October 10th 2023

Q&A for October 10, 2023, Lunch ‘n Learn Meeting

1. Question: Did HCA mention why they only allowed one day for a Subcontractor (SUB) to reply to their Interested Subcontractor List request in their solicitation instructions?

DES Response: HCA’s timeline allows for more than one day. All forms, exhibits, etc., are included with the RFP. In the HCA example shown, there are about 2 weeks for subcontractors to respond and then about 2 weeks for potential bidders to review the interested subcontractors list to include in their subcontractor inclusion plan.

2. Question: How do you plan on hosting that list to be available to the bidders?

DES Response: The Interested Subcontractor List is posted the same way as an Amendment to the Solicitation, in WEBS.

3. Question: Could we also do this step before we publish the solicitation, as apart of outreach? Has anyone tried that, too?

DES Response: Great idea! You could do this. However, when it’s released with the RFP, it has more teeth – the purchase is actually happening. If it’s done as a part of outreach, vendors may take it less seriously because there is no money at stake yet.

4. Question: Is the Interested Subcontractor List shared only by email? or on a public facing website?

DES Response: The interested subcontractors list is posted in WEBS as an amendment to the solicitation.

5. Question: Does this then offer prime contractors an opportunity to raid that list and recruit a subcontractor?

DES Response: Yes. Primes can review the Interested Subcontractors List and select Subs to include in the subcontractor inclusion plan submitted with their bid.



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6. Question: Have they [HCA] received any responses from subcontractors since implementing?

DES Response: Yes, HCA has received responses to the Interested Subcontractor List inquiry on their solicitations. The information that was shared in the presentation slides during the meeting is now a part of HCA boilerplate for all of their solicitations going forward. Why? Because it's been working.

7. Question: Maybe a few moments of a pre-bid conference could have time set aside to allow potential subs to introduce themselves or post their info in the chat?

DES Response: That could certainly be an approach. However, we would caution that attendance to pre-bids should be optional and that all interested subcontractor information should still be provided as an amendment to the solicitation.

8. Question: Can you provide a copy of this document for us to use as an example?

DES Response: Yes, the document is attached [here](#).

9. Question: Will this example be added to the Handbook?

DES Response: This is a great question. HCA is using it and it works for them. As soon as it appears to be working for DES, we will add it to the Virtual Handbook.

10. Question: Could it be added as OPTIONAL maybe?

DES Response: Yes. The resources in the Virtual Handbook, unless otherwise specified, are OPTIONAL resources developed to assist with each agency's unique business needs. There will be no mandatory requirement to use the Interested Subcontractor List.

11. Question: Has HCA had any SUBs respond? And have they been selected to work with the ASV officially? curious.

DES Response: Yes, for them it has been working.



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12. Question: Do we need to be including SIP with exempt contracts, for example, direct buy contracts?

DES Response: This is a great question. You do not have to, but what's the harm in doing so? Even if you are doing a direct buy contract, you can still ask if subs will be used – and HOW they will be used.

Direct buys can be included when calculating whether an agency is meeting its spending goals. Additionally, utilizing an Interested Subcontractor List in conjunction with a SIP can make both tools more effective and accountable.

13. Question: Is some kind of Technical Assistance (expectation setting) available in this process for training inexperienced subs?

DES Response: Yes. APEX Accelerators (Washingtonapex.org) is an excellent resource for training vendors that lack experience working as a sub, or working with the state in general. APEX has substantial experience in assisting small businesses that are new to state procurement.

14. Question: Do you have the subs include their OMWBE cert status?

DES Response: Yes. However, a word of caution: agencies should be careful not to let certification status be a barrier or requirement to a business' participation in state procurement, interested subcontractor lists, or subcontractor inclusion plans.

15. Question: I have been entering contracts into Access Equity for the past few days and have come across as issue with determining the amount of money or percentage of funding that is going to subcontractors when a deliverable-based SOW is used rather than a budget-based. Do I need to backtrack to get a SIP for those contracts?

DES Response: No. The requirements for data entry into Access Equity do not include historical information.



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16. Question: Should we include SIP even if the subcontractor isn't OMWBE, small business, veteran owned?

DES Response: Yes. At DES we require an SIP regardless of the Sub's type of business (e.g., large, medium, or small businesses).

17. Question: I know that you mentioned that HCA was very successful - did HCA mention if most of the SUBs were already registered in WEBS as a Vendor so they get the auto notices from WEBS or what?

DES Response: This is a great question. Any Sub that is registered in WEBS at the time of the solicitation would receive automatic notification from the WEBS system about it. Using the Interested Subcontractor List provides an additional benefit to the vendor community – the opportunity to notify the soliciting agency and all interested Primes – that the vendor is available to work as a Sub. This improves the likelihood that Primes will include a subcontractor inclusion plan with their bid package, and hire Subs.

Of course, there will still be the barrier that the message will only be sent to vendors that are registered in WEBS. Outreach will help solve this problem.

18. Question: Is the intention to only use subcontractor inclusion plans with solicitations? I could see how it would be helpful for some contracts.

DES Response: The Policy and Virtual Handbook are geared towards using SIPs in competitive solicitations (see the requirement to use subcontractor inclusion plans as part of a bid package if the vendor intends to use subs). But you could also use SIPs in noncompetitive purchases. Considering the message of EO 22-01, we are being strongly encouraged to use Subs regardless of the type of procurement vehicle an agency uses.

19. Question: Based on the many questions being asked, would it be useful to have a Q&A in the handbook?



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DES Response: Yes. The Virtual Handbook will be updated to add some FAQs that have come from every Lunch ‘n Learn Session.