

February 11, 2022

Representative Timm Ormsby
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Senator Christine Rolfes
Chair, Senate Ways & Means
Committee
PO Box 40423
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Representative Drew Stokesbary
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Committee
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Senator Lynda Wilson
Ranking Member, Senate Ways &
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PO Box 40417
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Operating Budget Writers,

As you develop your 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget, we respectfully request that you include \$1.4 million to the Department of Commerce to contract with the Municipal Research Services Center (MRSC) and Washington Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) to provide training and technical assistance to local governments and contractors on public works contracting.

Recent investments made by the Legislature and the federal government have provided considerable resources to local governments for public infrastructure improvements. As these funds are put to work, local jurisdictions will be tasked with using the state's public bidding laws to identify contractors. Contractors will need to understand the public bidding requirements to compete successfully. Despite many efforts to streamline and improve public contracting, it remains complex.

Local jurisdictions need technical assistance to ensure that they are appropriately applying current laws and guidelines to ensure a fair, predictable public works bidding process that results in quality and cost-effective projects. In many cases, local jurisdictions will be constructing once-in-a-50-year projects, such as city halls, fire departments, parks, that may not be the typical project that they administer. These unique projects may bring about even greater complexity in the bidding process.

Small businesses also need assistance to successfully compete for and earn local government public works contracts. These businesses are often under-represented in the public contracts bid out in their communities. To be more competitive, they need technical assistance with bid preparation, cost-estimating, performance bonds, and pursuing sub-contracting opportunities.

We ask that \$1.4 million is provided in the 2022 Operating Budget for this important training and technical assistance, benefitting communities statewide.

Thank you for your consideration,