City of Bellingham

Request for Qualifications

Safe Encampment for the Unsheltered

RFQ INFORMATION

Issue Date:	November 6, 2020
RFQ Contact:	Kate Bartholomew
Contact Telephone:	360-778-8353
Contact Email:	kebartholomew@cob.org

CLOSING INFORMATION

Date:	December 4, 2020
Time:	5:00 PM
Location:	Planning Department
Mailing Address:	210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Safe Encampment for the Unsheltered

Section 1 – General Information

A. General Information

The City of Bellingham seeks a qualified operator to provide supervised overnight tent encampment, tiny house village or similar programs for people who are currently living unsheltered in Bellingham and Whatcom County. The City invites all interested parties to respond to this Request of Qualifications (RFQ) by submitting their qualifications according to the instructions below. Disadvantaged, minority and women-led operators are encouraged to respond.

This RFQ is a response to the emergent need for a safe, sanitary, and legal place for individuals or families to stay while they search for permanent housing. The purpose of the program is to offer year-round, temporary alternatives to sleeping in vehicles or camping outdoors while offering services that will move residents into transitional or permanent housing as quickly as possible.

B. Anticipated Timeline

Request for Qualifications released	Friday, November 6, 2020
Final day for RFQ-related questions	Sunday, November 29, 2020
Proposals due	Friday, December 4, 2020 by 5:00 pm PST
Interviews	Week of December 14 -18, by invitation
Planned notification date	Monday, December 21, 2020

C. Minimum Qualifications

The operator chosen for this project shall have demonstrated experience with the following:

- At least two years of experience operating encampments, shelters, or low-income or permanent supportive housing;
- Site planning, design, and construction of tiny house villages or other temporary encampments;
- A proven track record of moving encampment residents into stable and appropriate housing, and tracking performance in doing so;
- Familiarity with relevant ADA requirements;
- Experience permitting similar projects at the local or state level;
- Experience with public outreach and neighborhood engagement;
- Demonstrated capacity to create and execute a funding and resource development plan, and maintain high fiscal accountability standards;
- Experience coordinating work with other social service providers; and

- Willingness and ability to abide by all permit requirements for temporary building encampments found in the Bellingham Municipal Code: https://bellingham.municipal.codes/BMC/20.15.030

D. Duration of Services

Evaluations will be conducted periodically to determine whether the operation should continue. Evaluations will be based on the operator's performance, community feedback, and how many individuals are being served by the program. Continuation of the program will depend on a combination of factors including the program's performance, funding availability, and need.

The anticipated term of this project is currently up to six (6) months for tent encampments and up to two (2) calendar years for tiny house encampments. The City may consider proposing amendments to its regulations to allow for longer terms.

E. Inquiries

All respondents are requested to review this request carefully and to submit any questions concerning this RFQ, the City's requirements or its evaluation process to Kate Bartholomew at kebartholomew@cob.org. Questions should be received no later than five (5) calendar days prior to response submission deadline so that they can be addressed in a timely manner and to ensure any necessary amendments can be published and distributed. No other City official, employee, or department is empowered to speak for the City with respect to this RFQ.

Section 2 - Statement of Qualifications

A. Background Information

The most recent Whatcom County Point-in-Time Count estimated that of the 555 homeless households at one point in time in January 2020, 308 were staying at emergency shelters, 49 were sheltering in vehicles, and 112 households were sleeping outdoors. It is possible that this number is now higher due to recent economic hardships since the outbreak of novel coronavirus in our community.

The City is not establishing a minimum number of tents or tiny houses to be provided by this program. The operator should recommend how many individuals and households they can serve at their proposed project site while operating as safely and efficiently as possible.

The maximum number of people allowed at one time in a single temporary encampment will be determined by the permit review process taking into consideration site conditions and qualifications and interests of the respondent, but in no case may the number be greater than 100 people.

B. Expectations

The following is a general list of expectations and key tasks associated with this project. Final expectations will be negotiated as part of the contracting process. Operators are encouraged to

demonstrate their specific knowledge of these areas, and to include any additional issues/ideas that may be appropriate to successful completion of this project.

The Operator shall:

- provide tents and/or temporary structures which can endure year-round weather conditions;
- provide food service or food storage/preparation facilities adequate for the planned number of residents;
- provide access to sanitation, including toilets, sinks, and garbage collection*;*
- provide project management, construction management, and maintenance of site amenities as described above;
- have a plan to manage the registration and screening of residents;
- provide on-site supervision at all times that residents are present;
- coordinate the delivery of human services and housing case management to encampment residents and provide access to service providers on site;
- participate in the Coordinated Entry system, managed by the Whatcom Homeless Service Center;
- track resident status through the Homeless Management Intake System (HMIS), either directly, or in partnership with another agency, following best practices and standards set by the HMIS Administrator for Whatcom County and the WA State Department of Commerce;
- track resident income, race, and ethnicity;
- obtain a temporary encampment permit, and adhere to all permit requirements in the Bellingham Municipal Code (see https://bellingham.municipal.codes/BMC/20.15.030);
- enforce all current public health directives to control the spread of novel coronavirus in the community, among other health practices;
- purchase and maintain liability insurance;
- prepare and submit monthly, quarterly and/or annual reports, as requested by the City; and
- any other best practices determined by the expertise of the Operator.

Due to the complexity of this project, work may include all or some of the items listed above. There is no guarantee as to the amount or extent of work under this RFQ.

Section 3 - Submission Instructions

A. Submission Format

The intent of this RFQ is to obtain professional services from qualified operators who can meet all of the expectations outlined in Section 2B. Operators are asked to organize their qualification submittals in the manner specified below. Submittals must contain a cover letter as described in 3B and narrative response for 3C, 3D and 3E.

Submittals shall be limited to a maximum of ten 8.5" by 11" pages (10 single-sided or 5 double-sided pages), not including the cover page (limited to one page) and references. The minimum font size is 12 pt. Submittals over the maximum page size limit will not be considered.

Please format your narrative response in the order of the questions in Section 3C, 3D and 3E below. Responses should be clearly labeled, but you do not need to rewrite the questions. Complete and attach the required forms and additional documentation which can be found in Section 7.

B. Cover Letter (Attachment A)

Briefly describe your organization's understanding of the services to be performed and make a positive commitment to provide the services as specified.

Give the name of project manager, the name(s) of the person(s) who are authorized to make representations for your organization, their titles, address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers. The letter must be signed by an officer or other individual with authority to bind the organization.

C. Statement of Qualifications

Qualification submittals should contain a narrative that addresses all, but not necessarily be limited to, the following questions.

Experience: Describe the operator's experience regarding tiny house villages or encampments. Include descriptions of similar previous experience in developing projects of similar size and scope.

Qualifications: Describe your organization's qualifications as they relate to operating an encampment program. Do members of your project team have experience in delivering social services, construction management, and fiscal accountability systems (i.e., grant writing, budget management, record retention, bookkeeping)? Include any proposed partner organizations, team members' names, qualifications, certifications, etc. Include technical knowledge of both site set-up, operations, and human services.

Project Team: Show the organization of the proposed project team. This should include both project management during site set-up, and management of ongoing operations. Who are the individuals that will be providing oversight and management of this program, and what will their various roles be? Who will be present on the site managing operations on an on-going and continuous basis, including recruiting and supervising volunteers? Provide their background and expertise related to their role and this program. Include any roles that you intend to recruit or hire, what the roles, responsibilities, and minimum qualifications will be.

Project Approach: Describe the applicant's understanding of the project and the specific approach the applicant will use to achieve a successful outcome. Provide a statement of intent

explaining why the organization is interested in the project. The Project Approach should address all the following:

Clientele: Describe the operator's procedures for screening and admitting residents. Explain any eligibility requirements that the operator would use to select residents (for example, family composition, criminal conviction, substance use disorder).

Site Management: Describe the management philosophy associated with the operation of the site. Describe the proposed role and extent of involvement of the encampment residents in the management and daily operation of the site. Please describe the role (if any) site residents will have in the selection of new residents for the encampment.

Site Design: Include a site design example of a site design for a similar project. Site design should be to scale, with all amenities clearly labeled.

Site or Site Criteria: Describe the proposed location for this project. If the applicant intends to apply to use a City-owned site, describe the location criteria (i.e. proximity to services, transit access) and site criteria (i.e. size, topography, utilities). The location must be within the City of Bellingham's city limits.

Timeline: Provide an estimated timeline for commencement of operations of encampment, including planning, permitting, construction and hiring. A refined timeline will be negotiated as part of the scope of work.

Schedule & Management: Describe operator's availability to the City in terms of communication, conducting meetings and field work. Outline a project management schedule that shows how the project team will meet all expectations and requirements of this project, while meeting any other current commitments.

Community Engagement & Responsiveness: Explain how you would conduct outreach and notifications to the surrounding community and within the encampment. Describe your communication and outreach strategy, to both the surrounding neighborhood and community, and residents in the encampment. This should include an initial notification process as well as opportunities for ongoing communication. Describe the grievance procedure for the encampment program. The grievance procedure should outline the processes for encampment residents and community members to submit and address concerns.

References: Provide a list of references (including contact name and telephone number) of at least two (2) references who can speak to complete or current projects within the last four (4) years of similar project. At least one should be a local government representative. Briefly describe each project and the role the operator played in the delivery of the project. The City reserves the right to contact references without prior notification.

D. Site

The operator must have secured a suitable site or communicate that the operator wishes to utilize/lease a city-owned property. If the operator has secured a site, please include the address and arrangement with property owner (lease, agreement, etc.). If the operator seeks approval to

use City property, describe location criteria (proximity to certain neighborhoods, transit access, etc.) and site criteria (i.e. size, topography, utilities). The location must be within the City of Bellingham's city limits.

E. Resources and Leveraging

The City has not yet allocated funding to the project. Funding could include construction, furnishings, equipment, permitting, design, operational staffing, and any other services, fees, and costs. Before seeking budget approval, the City will select a qualified operator and begin negotiations with the selected operator. If negotiations are successful between operator and the City administration, budget approval will be sought. Contract execution is contingent upon Council approval.

Please describe the resources required from the City, and all other resources (including sources and amounts) anticipated to be requested and utilized for this project.

If construction funding is sought from the City on a non-City owned site, the City may enter into a funding agreement that includes a deed restriction and covenant to ensure the benefits paid for by the City benefit project residents for the duration of the project commitment.

F. Submission Instructions

The City of Bellingham must receive complete submissions prior to the date and time specified in this RFQ. Late or incomplete submissions will not be reviewed for consideration. All submissions must be plainly marked with the RFQ name and the name of the submitter.

Applicants must ensure that submissions are received by the City of Bellingham by the deadline, in the correct format, regardless of the submission method selected. There are two options for submitting responses to this RFQ:

US Mail:

City of Bellingham
Department of Planning & Community Development
Attn: Kate Bartholomew
221 Lottie Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225

Electronic Submittal:

Email to: kebartholomew@cob.org
Subject: RFQ Response – Safe Encampment for Unsheltered
All documents must be attached to the email as a single pdf file

Section 4 – Evaluation and Selection Process

A. Evaluation Criteria

The City intends to enter into a contract with the operator whose qualifications, in the opinion of the City, best meets all the below listed evaluation criteria (receives the highest evaluated score) as determined by a selection committee formed by the City.

Selection Criteria	Weight
Qualifications & Experience of the Agency *(operator's qualifications, experience, character, and reputation, including primary and support staff)*	**30 pts**
Project Team *(qualifications, experience, character and reputation, organizational abilities, project management techniques, innovativeness, creativity, and capacity of the supporting functions)*	**20 pts**
Project Approach *(organizational commitment, clientele served, site management, site design, and timeline)*	**20 pts**
Schedule & Management *(the number & size of other projects currently being performed by the operator, ability to begin/complete work on time)*	**10 pts**
Community engagement & responsiveness *(organization's availability to the City and the community in terms of communication, communications plan, and providing timely response to community and residents' concerns)*	**10 pts**
References *(references, past performance on projects of similar size and nature)*	**10 pts**
Total	**100 pts**

B. Evaluation Process

A selection committee of individuals representing the City and other agencies with experience in homeless services will evaluate the qualification submittals as submitted. The City reserves the right to award a contract solely on the written qualification submittal.

The City also reserves the right to request oral interviews and/or site visits with the highest ranked organizations. The purpose of the interviews and/or site visits is to allow the operator to expand upon the written responses. The same evaluation criteria will be used for the interviews. The final selection will be based on the total of all evaluators' scores. The highest ranked operator(s) after scoring may be invited to enter final negotiations with the City for purposes of contract award.

The City has final decision-making authority and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and/or to withdraw or subsequently modify or review the terms contained within this RFQ. Contracts are subject to negotiation between parties and budget authority from the City Council. By issuing this RFQ, the City does not guarantee that funding will be available or that a permit will be issued.

C. Selection Process

The organization with the highest total evaluation points may be invited to enter into contract negotiation with the City. If an agreement cannot be reached, the second highest ranked submitter may be contacted for negotiations. Upon approval by the City Council, the successful applicant and the City will begin the permitting process and contract execution. If the parties are not able to agree upon and execute an agreement within 60 calendar days, the City reserves the right to select an alternate provider or no provider at all.

Section 5 - Rules Governing Competition

A. Preparation Costs

The City of Bellingham shall not be responsible for qualification submittal preparation costs, including oral interviews (if held). By submitting a submittal of qualifications each potential operator agrees to be bound in this respect and waives all claims to such costs and fees.

B. Examination of Request for Qualifications

Operators should carefully examine the entire RFQ and any addenda thereto and all related materials and data referenced in the RFQ. Operators should become fully aware of the nature of the work and the conditions likely to be encountered in performing the work.

C. Acceptance Period

Award of this RFQ is anticipated to be announced within 30 calendar days from submission due date, although all offers must be complete and irrevocable for 90 calendar days following the submission date.

D. Signature Requirements

All qualification submittals must be signed. The operator must ensure its submittal includes a letter, or statement(s), substantially similar in content to the sample proposal cover letter provided in Attachment A, signed by a person duly authorized to legally bind the person, partnership, company or corporation submitting the response.

The name of the individual(s) signing the qualification submittal must be clearly shown immediately below the signature. Please ensure organization's name, address, telephone and facsimile numbers, main point of contact and the e-mail address for the main point of contact for the project are included.

E. Disposition of Qualification Submittals

All materials submitted in response to this RFQ will become the property of the City of Bellingham. The City, at its discretion, may make additional copies of the submittal for evaluation only. One copy shall be retained by the City for the official files and will become part of the public record after award of the contract.

F. Oral Change/Interpretation

No oral change or interpretation of any provision contained in this RFQ is valid whether issued at a pre-qualification submittal conference or otherwise. Written addenda will be issued when changes, clarifications, or amendments to qualification submittal documents are deemed necessary by the City.

G. Modification/Withdrawal of Qualification Submittals

A respondent may withdraw a qualification submittal at any time prior to the final submission date by sending written notification of its withdrawal, signed by an agent authorized to represent the agency. The respondent may thereafter submit a new qualification submittal prior to the final submission date or submit written modification or addition to a qualification submittal prior to the final submission date. Modifications offered in any other manner, oral, or written will not be considered. A final qualification submittal cannot be changed or withdrawn after the final submission date, except for modifications requested by the City after the date of receipt and following oral presentations.

H. Late Submissions

Qualification submittals not received prior to the time specified in this RFQ will not be considered.

I. Rejection of Submittals

The City reserves the right to reject any or all submittals and to waive irregularities and information in the submittal and evaluation process. This RFQ does not obligate the City to pay any costs incurred by firms in the preparation and submission of the submittals. Furthermore, this RFQ does not obligate the City to accept or contract for any express or implied services.

Section 6 – Terms and Conditions

A. Equal Opportunity Employment

The successful operator(s) must comply with the City of Bellingham equal opportunity requirements. The City of Bellingham is committed to a program of equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national origin, pregnancy, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation (including gender identity), or the presence of any sensory, physical or mental disabilities.

The City of Bellingham is also committed to complying with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that provides "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

B. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

The City of Bellingham in accordance with Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), commits to non-discrimination on the basis of disability, in all of its programs and activities.

C. Insurance Requirements

The successful operator(s) will be required to maintain insurance of a type and amount determined by the City. The successful operator can expect required insurance coverage to include, without limitation, liability (likely in the amount of $5,000,000), as well as automobile and Worker's Compensation. If the operation is sited on City property, additional coverage, such as property and pollution liability insurance will likely be required. The successful operator will be required to name the City as an additional insured and/or loss payee on such policies and provide the City with endorsements regarding the primary and non-contributory nature of the coverage as well as a waiver of subrogation endorsement.

D. Indemnification

The operator(s) will be required to provide an indemnification and defense of the City from all claims related to the operation of the facility in a form acceptable to the City.

E. Business License and SAM registration

The operator(s) awarded a contract will be required to obtain and maintain a City of Bellingham Business License. Instructions can be found at: https://www.cob.org/services/business/pages/business-registration.aspx. The operator(s) awarded a contract will also be required to register for the federal System of Award Management (SAM), and maintain active registration. Instructions can be found at: http://www.sam.gov.

F. Non-Collusion

Submittal and signature of a submittal swears that the document is genuine and not a sham or collusive, and not made in the interest of any person not named, and that the operator has not induced others to submit a sham offer, or to refrain from proposing.

G. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

At the City's discretion, funding awarded may be federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or other local, state, or federal funds. In addition to non-discrimination and affirmative action compliance requirements previously listed, the operator ultimately awarded a contract shall comply with federal, state and local laws, statutes and ordinance relative to the execution of the work. This requirement includes, but is not limited to, protection of public and employer

safety and health; environmental protection; waste reduction and recycling; the protection of natural resources; permits; fees; taxes; and similar subjects.

H. Ownership of Documents

Any reports, studies or summaries prepared by the operator shall become the property of the City.

I. Confidentiality of Information

All information and data furnished to the operator by the City, and all other documents to which the operator's employees have access during the term of the contract, shall be treated as confidential to the City. Any oral or written disclosure to unauthorized individuals is prohibited.

J. Public Records

Under Washington state law, the documents (including but not limited to written, printed, graphic, electronic, photographic or voice mail materials and/or transcriptions, recordings or reproductions thereof) submitted in response to this RFQ becomes a public record upon submission to the City, subject to mandatory disclosure upon request by any person, unless the documents are exempt from public disclosure by a specific provision of the law. If the City receives a request for inspection or copying of any such documents it will promptly notify the person submitting the documents to the City (by U.S. mail or email if person has provided an email address) and upon the written request of such person, received by the City within five (5) days of the mailing of such notice, will postpone disclosure of the documents for a reasonable period of time as permitted by law to enable such person to seek a court order prohibiting or conditioning the release of the documents. The City assumes no contractual obligations to enforce any exemption.

K. Faith Based Organizations

Operators that are religious or faith-based are eligible, on the same basis as any other operator, to respond to this RFQ, however, operators may not engage in explicitly religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as a part of the programs or services funded by the City. If the operator conducts such activities, the activities must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded by the City, and participation must be voluntary for the beneficiaries of the City-funded programs or services. An operator receiving City funding shall not, in providing the service, discriminate on the basis of religion or religious belief. A religious operator's exemption from the federal prohibition on employment discrimination on the basis of religion, set forth in section 702(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is not forfeited when the operator receives City funding. Notwithstanding the foregoing, non-discrimination requirements imposed by statute on all City grantees shall apply to religious and faith-based operators.

L. Child Safety Policy

Operators providing services that benefit or interact with children or youth (age 17 or below) are required to have an adult, youth, and child safety policy in place prior to contract execution that is in compliance with national standards.

M. Records Retention

The operator(s) awarded a contract shall maintain all records that are pertinent to the activities funded by the City, including descriptions of activities undertaken, resident eligibility, records related to property improvement, records documenting compliance with RFQ and contract components, financial records, and other general operational records.

N. Debarment and Suspension

The operator(s) awarded a contract will be required to certify that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal or state department or agency; nor will it knowingly enter into any transaction or partnership with any individuals and/or entities who are debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in the same.

Section 7 – Attachments

ATTACHMENT A

Sample
Proposal Cover Letter

Letterhead or proponent's name and address

Date

Subject: ***Request for Qualifications name***

The enclosed is submitted in response to the above-referenced Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Through submission of this proposal we agree to all the terms and conditions of the Request for Qualifications.

We have carefully read and examined the Request for Qualifications and have conducted such other investigations as were prudent and reasonable in preparing this submittal. We agree to be bound by statements and representations made in this proposal and to any agreement resulting from the proposal.

Yours truly,

_____
Signature

Name:_____
Type or print

Title:_____

Legal name of proponent:_____

Date:_____