

RFQQ FOR WORKFORCE EQUITY ASSESSMENT

Amendment 1

November 12, 2024

A. Past Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Work

1. Have there been previous DEIB assessments? If so, what were the main challenges and lessons learned?
 - a. No previous DEIB assessment has been conducted.
2. Have there been any past assessments or findings regarding implicit bias within the WSIB that Offerors should review?
 - a. No previous implicit bias assessment has been conducted.
3. Are there any existing benchmarks or past comparisons the WSIB would like the awarded Contractor to build upon?
 - a. The WSIB has no existing benchmarks or past comparisons. One of the main purposes of these services is to establish a baseline by which the WSIB can measure future progress.
4. Does the WSIB have its own unique definitions for Diversity, Equity, and/or Inclusion?
 - a. WSIB definitions for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are included in our DEI policy and are as follows:
 - i. Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes, both visible and invisible, within a group or organization. The principle of diversity encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived as well as their differences of thought and life experiences.
 - ii. Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment that recognizes and acknowledges differing needs and expectations.
 - iii. Inclusion: Practices to promote and sustain an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and can participate and contribute to their full potential. An inclusive environment is one where people encourage and embrace different perspectives, ideas, and experiences to create meaningful opportunity, interaction, involvement, communication, information, and decision-making.

B. Additional Information About the WSIB

1. Is there something specific prompting the WSIB to conduct this work at this time? Is this RFQQ in response to a particular event or directive, or part of a broader organizational strategy?
 - a. This is part of a broader organizational strategy. The WSIB has done a lot of work over the past couple of years to foster diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and feel it is time to see if those efforts are working, and to get recommendations on what more the WSIB should consider doing.
2. Is there an existing team or committee that will be responsible for implementing the recommended changes?

- a. Recommended changes will be implemented by the WSIB's DEI Committee once such changes are approved by the Executive Management Team.
3. Can the WSIB provide an organizational chart?
 - a. The WSIB consists of a 15 member Board and a number of staff. The staff are divided into the following divisions (approximate number of positions): Institutional Relations (5); Operations (40), including Investment and Financial Services, IT, Travel, and Legal, Risk, and Compliance; Investments (70), including Real Estate, Risk Management and Asset Allocation, Tangible Assets, Private Equity, Public Equity, and Fixed Income asset classes; Human Resources (5); and Audit (5). (Please note that the above are approximations only and include a number of vacancies, so the numbers will not add up to the total number of current employees.)
4. Could you share the number of stakeholders and employees that will be involved in this project?
 - a. All 117 employees of the WSIB will be invited to participate.
5. Does WSIB have any employee resource/working groups internally?
 - a. The organization has a DEI Committee supported by an executive sponsor from the Executive Management Team.
6. What DEI-related training or activities have WSIB staff engaged in up until this point?
 - a. In 2022, the organization began to plan and execute light-touch, cultural competence events such as potlucks and acquiring DEIB resources. In 2023, the DEI Committee instituted a work plan which included a goal to identify early learning DEIB resources for new and existing staff. This work was completed in 2024 when two items were selected and achieved Executive Management support. Other efforts include a variety of events such as training sessions (labelled "Learning Labs" internally), promotion of other state government DEI conferences, and short (1-hour) weekly staff presentations.
7. Is there any additional context around the WSIB's organizational culture or recent DEIB initiatives that would help Offerors better understand the WSIB's environment?
 - a. Generally, the executive management team is new. Nearly half of our current staff are new to the organization in the last 5 years. The organization documented language around values for the first time in 2023, and the executive management team has been making iterative steps to incorporate these values in the leadership and performance management culture of the organization. While the organization is part of the state government, the culture of the organization operates similar to a private organization with a comprehensive audit environment.
8. Are there any recent shifts in workforce structure (e.g., hybrid work changes) that Offerors should be aware of when conducting workforce climate assessments? How many employees are engaged in hybrid roles?
 - a. In 2021, the WSIB instituted hybrid work as its standard workplace model, with most staff working at least 60% in office across two sites (Olympia and Seattle), and the majority of staff working out of the Olympia headquarters office.
9. What data is available on the Diversity Metrics Dashboard? Are there any limitations or specific metrics that you prioritize?
 - a. The WSIB's Diversity Metrics Dashboard contains mostly voluntarily provided data. For categories that

includes fewer than 5 employees, the data is either noted at <5% or is combined with another category. The Dashboard includes staff breakdowns by the following:

- i. Race and/or Ethnicity
- ii. Identify as LGBTQ
- iii. Disability
- iv. Gender
- v. Veteran Status
- vi. Agency Tenure

10. How frequently is workforce data updated, and how far back does it go?

- a. The data on WSIB's Diversity Metric's Dashboard is updated annually in December and was first populated on December 8, 2023.

11. Will you please share the total number of individuals divided by race and gender in the below categories of stakeholders?

- a. Total number of board members divided by gender and race: We have 15 total Board members, but they are out of the scope of this effort.
- b. Total number of executives divided by gender and race:
 - i. 4 White women
 - ii. 4 White men
 - iii. 1 Black man
- c. Total number of non-executive managers of people divided by gender and race:
 - i. 7 White women
 - ii. 6 White men
 - iii. 3 Asian women
 - iv. 1 Asian man
 - v. 1 Latina Woman
 - vi. 1 Black Woman
 - vii. 1 Man of more than one race
- d. Total number of non-managing employees divided by gender and race:
 - i. The WSIB is challenged to assess and provide for non-managerial employees as this data is anonymous and optional.
- e. Total number of all staff members divided by race and gender:

The WSIB is able to provide the following numbers of staff identifications in response to this question -

- i. 6 of two or more races
- ii. 84 White
- iii. 6 Hispanic or Latino
- iv. 4 Black or African American
- v. 16 Asian
- vi. 4 American Indian/Alaska Native
- vii. 58 Female
- viii. 48 Male
- ix. 7 Non-binary and Unspecified

12. What is the WSIB's current survey engagement rate?

- a. It is around 55% if not excluding the statewide annual Employee Engagement survey. If that survey is included, the average rises to around 59% but that's driven by an approximate 90% response rate for the annual Employee Engagement survey.

13. Are there any known data gaps that Offerors should be aware of?

- a. This assessment is intended to help discovery of potential gaps which might create, or have created, barriers to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

C. Additional Details About the Services Sought

1. Is there a budget range for this engagement?

- a. The WSIB is declining to provide a budget for these services. The WSIB is looking for Offerors to use their experience and expertise to determine a reasonable level of effort and associated costs with the services and project scope defined in this RFQQ.

2. Are there any particular DEIB areas the WSIB would like Offerors to focus on or where implicit bias is a concern (e.g., hiring practices, pay equity, promotion opportunities)?

- a. No specifics per se; we are looking for an evaluation of our current strategic focus in the area. The WSIB instituted a DEI Blueprint which acts as a strategic guide for creating an equitable and inclusive culture. Elements considered in that blueprint should primarily be considered in the focus of this work.

The central tenet of the WSIB's DEI Blueprint is its commitment to providing an inclusive workplace that recognizes, values, and respects all individuals. DEI policies, programs and organizational strategy developed according to the DEI Blueprint is meant to create and sustain an inclusive and diverse work environment, build WSIB as an employer of choice with a focus on career growth and advancement opportunities, provide resources and training opportunities across the organization, identify, and elevate emerging issues, and support efforts to attract and retain the best talent. Externally, the WSIB works to advocate within the investment industry on issues related to DEI. The DEI blueprint is meant to align our internal DEI values

with external sustainability efforts. External efforts encompass engagement with public companies and our partners, incorporation of DEI considerations into investment decision making, and public advocacy efforts.

The WSIB currently has a DEI Committee with two co-chairs, executive leadership sponsorship, an established DEI policy, and an ESG investment framework that includes DEI considerations. In 2024, the WSIB has made significant progress on both internal and external DEI-related initiatives:

3. Created an internal diversity metrics dashboard
 4. Joined the Institutional Limited Partners Association (ILPA) Diversity in Action Initiative
 5. Updated our internal DEI resource library
Continued to mature our WSIB internship program
6. Would the WSIB be open to exploring alternatives to the implicit bias assessment? How about examining the organizational cultural competence and identifying systemic barriers in protocols instead?
 - a. The WSIB is open to alternatives, but Offerors should explain how any proposed alternative will achieve better results for the WSIB and its staff than the services described in the RFQQ.
 7. Which policies or processes are high-priority for review (e.g., recruitment, performance reviews, or compensation policies)?
 - a. All relevant personnel policies that are considered in the DEI Blueprint and others identified by Offerors as DEIB best-practice would be considered “high-priority” by the WSIB.
 8. Are there specific outcomes the WSIB expects from the review, such as a gap analysis or a set of recommendations?
 - a. The WSIB would like a gap analysis, staff inclusion survey, and a set of recommendations which allow it to understand barriers to moving the DEI Blueprint forward.
 9. What format or structure would be most useful for delivering Offeror recommendations (e.g., a roadmap, action plans, or quarterly milestones)?
 - a. From among those options, the WSIB would prefer action plans, but Offerors are free to recommend alternatives.
 10. What resources, internal teams, or tools will be available to assist the awarded Contractor with the project?
 - a. The Contractor will have support for WSIB’s Senior Project Manager and the DEI Committee. The WSIB uses Microsoft 365 tools and those can be leveraged for this effort.
 11. Is there an expectation that the Contractor provide its own tools for conducting surveys? Or can Offerors expect to leverage WSIB’s systems?
 - a. The WSIB uses Microsoft Forms for surveys. While this can be used this engagement, the survey would need to be built by a WSIB employee and results would then be extracted and provided to the Contractor.
 12. Does the WSIB have any preference for whether the Contractor conduct the work on-site, remote, or hybrid?

- a. The WSIB would prefer the work be conducted remotely unless there is a compelling reason for specific work to be done on-site or in a hybrid fashion. The WSIB cannot offer on-site workstations. On-site meetings could be possible; however, those would need to be offered as a hybrid meeting to accommodate staff working in another office or remotely.
13. Are there any confidentiality or privacy protocols the Contractor would need to be aware of when handling DEIB-related data?
 - a. DEIB-related data for individual staff is confidential and cannot be released except when authorized in writing by the employee; therefore, data for this project will be either aggregated or deidentified so that no information can be traced back to an individual employee.
14. Does the WSIB have a preferred communication method or format for progress reports and feedback sessions?
 - a. Progress reports should be in writing. Feedback sessions should be done in a meeting, preferably through Teams.
15. Is payment-by-milestone the only intended method of compensation? Or is there flexibility to negotiate other methods?
 - a. Payment-by-milestone is the only intended method of compensation; however, what those milestones are is flexible and will be negotiated as part of the contract. Offerors must include a payment schedule in their Response that they are willing and able to abide by in performing these services.
16. Some Offerors are project-based firms and do not typically charge hourly rates. How does the WSIB want such Offerors to fill out the hourly rate section of the Exhibit paperwork?
 - a. The WSIB expects to pay for these services on a project milestone or deliverable basis. However, the WSIB is also aware that projects shift and the exact outlines of a scope of work may change and related, non-project work may need to be discussed. Offerors are asked to commit to an hourly rate or rates for such ad hoc work at this time, rather than when the need arises.
17. How will the success of this engagement be measured? Are there specific metrics or outcomes that are critical to evaluating the project's impact?
 - a. Success will be determined by judging the contextual relevance of the Contractor-developed action plans, which will be based on the assessment outcomes, in relation to best practices, relevant industry benchmarks, and the stated goals of the DEI Blueprint.
18. Are there any quantitative or qualitative goals tied to this assessment?
 - a. The WSIB would like to be able to measure inclusion every other year as a means of assessing the success of the DEI Blueprint.
19. Are there specific organizations, industry standards, or peer groups that you'd like to benchmark against?
 - a. Examples potential benchmarks might include Institutional Limited Partners Association's (ILPA) Diversity Metrics Template and the Thirty Percent Coalition. However, the WSIB is open to suggestions for appropriate benchmarks from Offerors, and expects a more in-depth conversation and agreement around this issues will be needed as part of contract discussions.

D. RFQQ Documents and Process

1. The RFQQ states a minimum of 5, and the Exhibit A document states a minimum of 3. Please confirm how many references is needed?
 - a. Please provide a minimum of 3 references.
2. The mandatory and desirable qualifications are not listed in section 5.5.3, Information and Format Requirements. Based on the evaluation process outlined in section 5.9.1, the evaluation team will be scoring mandatory qualifications to determine responsiveness. Can WIBS confirm whether bidders can respond to mandatory and desirable qualifications in a separate section, or if they should address these requirements within sections 5.5.3, 4 Questionnaire, and 5 References.
 - a. The items in Part II, Section 1 and Section 2 of Exhibit “A” were specifically designed around the mandatory and desirable qualifications. Bidders should respond to those in order to demonstrate meeting the mandatory and desirable qualifications.
3. Would the WSIB consider a one-week extension?
 - a. The WSIB is extending the date to respond until Tuesday, November 19, 2025, at 2:00 pm Pacific Time.
4. Would the WSIB like us to include resumes of our proposed team members?
 - a. Not at this time, but those may be requested by the WSIB as a part of subsequent stages of the evaluation process.
5. Can providing proof of a Small Business certification application process be favorably considered as part of a proposal?
 - a. No, but the applicable definition of “small business” for this RFQQ includes an in-state business, including a sole proprietorship, corporation, partnership, or other legal entity, that:
 - i. Certifies, under penalty of perjury, that it is owned and operated independently from all other businesses and has either 50 or fewer employees; or a gross revenue of less than \$7,000,000 over the previous three consecutive years;
 - ii. Is certified with the Washington State Office of Women and Minority Business Enterprises.
6. Are there limits (character, word, etc.) on how much text can be used to respond to the prompts in Exhibit A?
 - a. No, but Offerors are encouraged to use their judgement and to provide only information relevant to answering the question posed.
7. Can tables, charts and graphics be uploaded and used in addressing sections in Exhibit A?
 - a. Yes, but any tables, charts, or graphics should (1) be relevant to the question posed, (2) not repeat information provided in the text, and (3) communicate the information contained therein better than text alone.
8. Is there a preference for in-state bidders over those from out-of-state?
 - a. Not exactly, but the additional points for “small businesses” are only available for in-state businesses.
9. Would you prefer we excise questions and answers and include it only in the appendix worksheet, keep it strictly



in the proposal text, or would it be best to include the information in both sections?

- a. Offerors should use the Exhibits to the RFQQ when preparing a Response. Additional reference materials should not be provided. If the WSIB believes that additional information is needed in order to fully understand and evaluate an Offeror's experience or expertise, the WSIB will request it.

Any capitalized terms used in this Amendment and not defined herein shall have the meaning given to them in the RFQQ.

All other terms and conditions of the RFQQ remain in full force and effect.