

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STUDY
April 6, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) is soliciting proposals for consulting services to conduct a system-wide Classification and Compensation Study as described herein.

Whatcom County Library System is a junior taxing district established in 1944. WCLS is a rural library district serving Whatcom County, Washington. WCLS is governed by a five-person Board of Trustees; the position of Executive Director is selected by the Board. Whatcom County Library System served an estimated population of 127,690 in 2016.

The WCLS service area includes all unincorporated areas of Whatcom County, Washington, and six annexed cities and towns, with the exception of the City of Bellingham. Whatcom County's economy is made up of government, education, industrial, agricultural and health care sectors, with jobs in private service comprising approximately 62% of local jobs.

Whatcom County Library System provides services through ten branch libraries, a bookmobile, homebound services, outreach and its website. WCLS has 162 employees (95.5 FTE), made up of full and part-time employees, at managerial and non-managerial levels (see Attachment A, Organizational Chart). 63 staff members are represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union. Positions are professional, paraprofessional, technical, clerical and service in nature. The existing salary structure is the result of a classification and compensation study conducted during 2003. Updates to this study were conducted in 2008 and 2013.

Currently, salaries are adjusted annually with a negotiated COLA, based on local employment and inflation statistics and within budgetary limitations. The existing salary structure is made up of 15 levels (see Attachment B). Apart from the Executive Director, all WCLS positions are placed within this structure based on internal equity and market pricing. Since 2003, WCLS has reviewed and updated job descriptions as needed and in conjunction with ongoing business operations, reorganizations and additional job assignments. WCLS seeks to update the existing classification and compensation system to support and align WCLS's staffing resources with its future business needs. WCLS also seeks guidance on implementing Initiative 1433 per R.C.W. 49.46.020 Minimum hourly wage—Paid sick leave in a manner that meets the requirements of the measure and is consistent with the WCLS compensation philosophy (Attachment D).

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Whatcom County Library System is commencing a Classification and Compensation Study Project in 2017. WCLS intends to engage an outside consultant to review its current classification and compensation structure for internal equity and market competitiveness, to present recommendations based on analysis (including a cost impact analysis), and to assist in the implementation of recommendations. The purpose of the Classification and Compensation Study is to review and revise compensation ranges for all positions to align organizational resources to meet today's and tomorrow's needs.

The objective of this work is to have a credible Classification and Compensation structure that ensures positions performing similar work with essentially the same level of complexity, responsibility, knowledge, skills and abilities are classified together; provides total compensation commensurate with assigned duties; provides recognizable compensation growth; provides justifiable pay differential between individual classes; and maintains currency with relevant labor markets. In addition, WCLS seeks recommendations on staff alignments, reporting relationships and organizational structure. All data, raw and summarized, will be provided to WCLS.

SCOPE OF WORK

The project shall include, but is not limited to the following activities:

A. Data Gathering

WCLS and The Consultant will work together to identify and gather relevant data to be collected. All job descriptions will be reviewed in conjunction with the functional business area with a focus on core position details. Select employees will be interviewed to clarify roles and responsibilities.

B. Classification and Compensation Structure Evaluation

1. **Job Evaluation and Market Pricing:** The Consultant will conduct a custom, comprehensive job classification and compensation survey of external regional labor market for an estimated 55 positions (Attachment B) which assures internal equity and external competitiveness. With the approval of WCLS, the Consultant will select a minimum of twelve (12) total external agencies within the State of Washington for comparison from the following:

- Libraries, including those of similar-size, budget limitations and culture
- Other libraries in Whatcom County
- Other local governments, school districts and not-for-profit agencies
- Private organizations

The Consultant will evaluate total compensation against the selected comparable agencies as well as National Compensation Survey data for State and Local Government compiled by the U.S Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. Association of Washington Cities annual survey data may also be available. The total compensation factors to be evaluated shall include the following:

a. Salaries and Wages

b. Benefits:

- Access to and level of Health Care including Employer Share of Medical Premiums
- Access to and level of Retirement Benefits
- Access to and level of Paid Vacations
- Access to and level of Paid Holidays
- Access to and level of Paid Sick Leave
- Access to Wellness Programs

- Access to Employee Assistance Programs
- Access to and level of short and long-term disability and life insurance
- Other employer paid benefits such as tuition reimbursement, cell phone allowances, etc.

2. Compensation Structure: The Consultant will evaluate the existing compensation structure with regard to equity and other pertinent factors and recommend amendment or adjustment, or alternative salary structures.
3. Classification Structure: The Consultant will evaluate the existing position classification structure with regard to tasks and responsibilities, reporting relationships, process of moving through the structure and other pertinent factors and recommend amendment or adjustment, or alternative classification structures.

C. Classification and Compensation Structure Recommendations

1. Job Evaluation and Market Pricing: The Consultant will complete market pricing of job descriptions and recommend adjustments to placement in the salary structure.
2. Compensation Structure: The Consultant will recommend amendment and/or adjustment to the existing salary structure.
3. R.C.W. 49.46.020 (Initiative 1433 Implementation): Initiative 1433, approved by voters in 2016, increases statewide minimum wage to \$13.50 per hour by 2020. By 2020, given no other adjustments, pay levels 2, 3 and 4 will all have the same starting salary of \$13.50. Consultant will provide recommendations on responding to the requirements of this initiative in a manner that is consistent with the WCLS compensation philosophy.
4. Classification Structure: The Consultant will recommend amendment and/or adjustment to the existing position classification structure.
5. Develop Implementation Strategy, Options and Cost Impact Analysis of Recommendations: The Consultant will design an implementation strategy and options for the updated classification and compensation system with the lowest financial impact on WCLS's operating process and greatest gains to positions that fall outside of a designated range. The implementation of such a plan may be over a 12 to 24-month period beginning in 2018.
6. Implementation Plan: The Consultant will present Classification and Compensation Study results and implementation plan to the WCLS Leadership Team and Board of Trustees as needed for approval, and will develop a communication plan for project implementation.
7. Classification and Compensation Structure Maintenance: Upon implementation, the Consultant will provide proper training and guidance to designated WCLS representatives as to appropriate methods for indexing overall Classification and Compensation Structure, including recommending index and/or source data, to ensure future integrity of the structures.

D. Classification and Compensation Structure Implementation

1. Consultant to attend meetings, if requested, throughout the process with employees, the Executive Director and/or the Board of Trustees to explain methodology, survey results and recommendations. The Consultant should budget for one Board of Trustee's meeting and at least four meetings with the Classification & Compensation Study Committee.

2. Consultant to provide instructional information and a process that will allow WCLS staff to conduct individual salary audits and adjustments consistent with study methods until the next formal study is conducted.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Each proposal should be organized to clearly address the following requirements, at a minimum:

- A. Agents and Address
List the full name, address and telephone numbers of your firm, and, if applicable, of the office from which the services are to be provided. Designate the person to serve as project manager and list the name or names of the persons in your firm authorized to negotiate the proposed contract associated with this RFP. Provide resumes summarizing the qualifications and experience of the individuals who will be participating in the study.
- B. Statement of Methods and Procedures
Provide a statement describing the Scope of Work as you understand it, and describe the approach, means, methods and procedures to be employed to gather the data, analyze findings develop recommendations and coordinate implementation as requested
- C. Structure and Content of Work Product
Describe the way in which the work product will be structured and presented upon completion. Include computer and software compatibility information.
- D. Project Time Table
Provide the anticipated start and completion date for the project and estimated dates for the fulfillment of each work task. This proposed project timetable will be used as the basis for the project timetable to be included in the project contract. WCLS anticipates that the successful consultant will be able to begin this project on or before June 1, 2017 and submit final recommendations and implementation guidelines on or before September 1, 2017.
- E. References
All proposals should include a list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least five (5) local government references of the same or larger size and complexity as WCLS who will attest to the successful completion and implementation of a classification and compensation study by your firm during the past five (5) years.
- F. Additional Information
The Consultant may include any additional information that is believed to be pertinent and helpful but not specifically requested elsewhere in this RFP.
- G. Fee Proposal
The fee proposal and project budget shall be sealed in a separate envelope labeled 'FEE PROPOSAL' and included with the proposal document. The fee proposal will not be opened until after other factors have been considered. The fee should include:
 1. A total cost estimate and not to exceed amount for the work described under Scope of Work. The price must contain all executive, professional, technical and clerical fees

(whether for employees of the firm or for associated independent contractors), all travel and related costs, all production costs (including charges for office equipment usage and consumable supplies), all communications costs (including telephone charges), all other direct and indirect costs, all overhead and all profit;

2. A rate schedule for computing any extra work not specified in the contracted Scope of Work, including hourly rates for all positions plus unit costs for incidental expenses; and
3. Amount to be deducted from total cost estimate because Consultant is conducting (or has conducted in the past six months) salary surveys of comparable jurisdictions/positions, the data from which can be shared rather than independently gathered.

It shall be the Consultant's responsibility to determine the costs of any state and local taxes and business license fees associated with conducting this study and to include the cost of such items in the project budget and fee proposal.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Five (5) identical copies of the proposal shall be addressed to WCLS as follows:

Whatcom County Library System
Attn: Christina Read, HR Manager
5205 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226

and received at the above address by 5:00 pm on Friday, May 5, 2017. Although proposals may be opened and reviewed prior to the closing date, they will not be disclosed to competing firms or the public until after contract award. Such award will not necessarily be based on the lowest maximum fee proposed.

Proposals must be signed by representatives of the consulting firm who have the authority to bind the consulting firm to its provisions. The proposal or a letter accompanying the proposal must state that the proposal remains valid for a period of at least sixty (60) days.

WCLS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any informality as may occur in the proposal process.

RFP SCHEDULE

WCLS will follow a schedule, which should result in the selection of a consulting firm to begin work on the Classification and Compensation study June 1, 2017.

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|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Issue RFP | April 6, 2017 |
| 2. RFP Inquiries Due | April 21, 2017 |
| 3. Proposals Due | May 5, 2017 |
| 4. Review of Proposals | May 8-9, 2017 |

5. Notify Selected Finalist
6. Award and Sign Contract
7. Contract Start Date

May 10, 2017
May 31, 2017
June 1, 2017

AWARD CRITERIA

All responsive proposals will be evaluated, ranked and rated according to the criteria stated below. WCLS may select a short list of highest ranked offerors with which to hold additional discussions and evaluation within the award criteria. The discussions may include, but are not limited to, presentations, qualifications, proposals, cost estimates or other pertinent information. The proposal review committee may permit revisions to the proposals so long as all offerors who are selected for additional discussion are given equal opportunity to revise their proposals.

- A. Experience and Capability: Respondents will be evaluated on past performance as reflected by evaluation of WCLS and other previous clients of the respondent with respect to such factors as quality of work and success in meeting deadlines. Additional factors to be strongly considered include experience working with libraries or other public sector organizations and knowledge of Washington State labor and minimum wage laws. (40%)
- B. Project Cost: Total project cost will be an important consideration in the selection, although it will not be the sole determining factor. (25%)
- C. Project Approach: Respondents will be evaluated as to their understanding of the scope of work, how well the proposal addresses the project requirements, and the completeness and innovation evident in the approach to the project and the proposed work. Availability for onsite consultation will be considered. (25%)
- D. Other Value-Added Tools and Services: Responses will be evaluated on the inclusion of other related information that will produce a better project outcome. (10%)

CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE RFP

All questions or requests for information should be submitted in writing to Jackie Saul at jackie.saul@wcls.org. WCLS reserves the right to share answers with other proposers if it is determined that the answers would give unfair advantage to one proposer.

All correspondence regarding this RFP must be in writing. It is an explicit provision of this Request for Proposal that any oral communication is not binding on WCLS's proposal process or award of the contract.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- A. WCLS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, as well as to waive minor irregularities in any proposal.
- B. WCLS reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and request additional information from the service provider.
- C. WCLS reserves the right to modify the frequency and/or scope of services for each item within the RFP up until April 21, 2017

- D. WCLS reserves the right to award any contract to the next most qualified contractor, if the selected contractor does not execute the contract within thirty (30) days after the contract was awarded.
- E. The proposal shall include those prices necessary to cover the cost of all items required to perform the work as set forth in the RFP documents. No allowance of any kind whatsoever will be made to any proposal because of lack of such examination or knowledge. The submission of a proposal shall be conclusive evidence that the proposer has made such an examination.
- F. Any proposal may be withdrawn up until the date and time set forth above for the RFP proposals due date and time. Any RFP not so timely withdrawn shall constitute an irrevocable offer, for a period of ninety (90) days to sell to WCLS the services described in the attached specifications, or until one or more of the proposals have been approved by WCLS administration, whichever occurs first.
- G. WCLS shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the firm in preparing, submitting or presenting its response to this RFP.
- H. WCLS reserves the right to make, at any time during the Contract, such changes in the Work as WCLS deems necessary for budgetary, operational, or other reasons. Such changes shall be made by reducing or eliminating portions of the Scope of Services as submitted by the Contractor with its Proposal and by reducing the Contractor's compensation commensurately. WCLS shall give the Contractor thirty (30) days' notice of any such changes in Work.

ATTACHMENTS

The following attachments are provided for use by responders in preparing their proposals and estimating performance costs:

- Attachment A Copy of existing organizational chart
- Attachment B Copy of an existing salary structure
- Attachment C Copy of an existing staff list by departments
- Attachment D Copy of Current Compensation Philosophy