What is a sole source contract?

"Sole source" means a contractor providing goods or services of such a unique nature or sole availability at the location required that the contractor is clearly and justifiably the only practicable source to provide the goods or services. (RCW 39.26.010)

Unique qualifications or services are those which are highly specialized or one-of-a-kind.

Other factors which may be considered include past performance, cost-effectiveness (learning curve), and/or follow-up nature of the required goods and/or services. Past performance alone does not provide adequate justification for a sole source contract. Time constraints may be considered as a contributing factor in a sole source justification however will not be on its own a sufficient justification.

Why is a sole source justification required?

The State of Washington, by policy and law, believes competition is the best strategy to obtain the best value for the goods and services it purchases, and to ensure that all interested vendors have a fair and transparent opportunity to sell goods and services to the state.

A sole source contract does not benefit from competition. Thus the state, through RCW 39.26.010, has determined it is important to evaluate whether the conditions, costs and risks related to the proposal of a sole source contract truly outweigh forgoing the benefits of a competitive contract.

Providing compelling answers to the following questions will facilitate the evaluation.

Specific Problem or Need

- What is the business need or problem that requires this contract?

  The Health Care Authority (HCA) Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) is seeking technical assistance (TA) for Family Youth System Partner Round Tables (FYSPRTs) and connected youth serving systems from a national youth driven organization with proven experience providing technical assistance for increasing youth engagement and leadership in the behavioral health field both nationally and locally with Washington State youth-serving systems. The experiences and voices of diverse young
people who have received behavioral health services or who have been historically excluded from accessing behavioral health services are critical for the behavioral health system changes that are the focus of the Child, Youth and Family Behavioral Health Governance Structure (Governance Structure) and FYSPRTs. The goal for the Governance Structure, which FYSPRTs are a part of, is to improve behavioral health outcomes for all youth and their families in Washington. The Governance Structure, adopted as part of the T.R. Settlement Agreement was developed as a key component for ensuring that behavioral health and other public youth serving systems are coordinated and informed by input from families, youth and young adults, and youth serving system partners (such as child welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, education, etc.).

Having an experienced, national, youth driven organization that has built over 60 youth led chapters nationwide is needed to provide technical assistance to the Governance Structure and connected youth serving systems to support them in youth led efforts and the engagement of youth and young adults in the conversations and work that is happening at these tables. The goal is for the ideas and experiences of youth who have received behavioral health services or who have been historically excluded from accessing services to inform system changes to improve behavioral health outcomes for youth and families in Washington. FYSPRTs, as part of the Governance Structure, by design includes family, youth, and system partner voices in an equal platform to address recurring system gaps and barriers. The lived experience of families and youth and their input drive behavioral health policy recommendations and changes to improve outcomes for all youth and families across Washington. Through a previous contract, the FYSPRTs and other connected youth serving systems have begun the work to evaluate youth engagement and create strategic plans to increase youth engagement and leadership in alignment with Washington State Children’s Behavioral Health Principles, T.R. Settlement Agreement/Wraparound with Intensive Services, and the Regional FYSPRT Manual. To fully implement this work, the FYSPRTs and connected youth serving systems will benefit from coaching, support, and technical assistance around youth engagement and leadership.

**Sole Source Criteria**

- Describe the unique features, qualifications, abilities or expertise of the contractor proposed for this sole source contract.

Youth MOVE (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) National (Youth MOVE) is a well-established, well-known, and nationally respected youth led and driven, chapter-based organization dedicated to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by unifying the voices of individuals who have lived experience as a youth in various systems, including behavioral health (mental health and substance use), juvenile justice, education and child welfare. Youth MOVE advocates for youth rights and voice in behavioral health and other systems that serve youth and young adults to empower and support them to be equal partners in the process of systems change. There are more than 60 Youth MOVE chapters across the United States and each one is focusing on the individual needs of their own community or state as decided by youth in that Chapter. With the Youth MOVE network of chapters, Youth MOVE is connected and in touch with youth needs nationwide as well as the ability to tap into local trends across the country.
Youth MOVE provides consultation and capacity building in the area of youth engagement and youth leadership to ensure the voices of youth and young adults are leading and included in behavioral health system change efforts. Expertise includes facilitating youth only spaces as well as work with youth-adult partnerships. Each Youth MOVE facilitator is a young professional with lived experience as a youth in navigating mental health, child welfare or juvenile justice systems. Facilitators are assigned to work with communities in order to match lived experiences of the Youth MOVE team to the youth being engaged in the work. This near peer lens is a unique and important factor in the delivery of Youth MOVE technical assistance, coaching and support strategies.

Youth MOVE collaborated with researchers at Portland State University Pathways to Positive Futures Research and Training Center (Pathways RTC), to create and develop the Youth/Young Adult Voice at the Agency Level (Y-VAL) and Youth/Young Adult Voice on Committees and Councils (Y-VOC) Assessments, which are data-driven tools to identify strengths and barriers to youth engagement and leadership. The Y-VAL is a validated tool intended to measure support for the meaningful participation of youth and young adults in advising and decision making at the agency level. The assessment was co-developed with youth and young adults and identifies themes required for youth-driven best practices at the agency level. Although the Y-VAL was grant funded so elements remain free to the public, due to this historical context, no one else has the subject matter expertise to formally implement, run, and analyze findings quite like Youth MOVE National as the original developers of the work. Youth MOVE is connected and in touch with youth needs nationwide as well as the ability to tap into local trends across the country that are included in the report findings for implementation. This assessment serves as the jumping off point for setting goals and implementing strategies to improve authentic youth voice in behavioral health system change. These assessments and the themes they assess are the base structure for the technical assistance that will be provided to FYSPRTs and connected youth serving systems.

Youth MOVE has expertise amassed from work in each of the 50 states in the country including some tribes and territories. Their youth engagement expertise includes national work with federal grant programs including but not limited to the Children’s Mental Health Initiative (System of Care), Healthy Transitions, Project Aware, and Clinical High Risk for Psychosis Grants and they remain the only national, youth-driven organization that provides technical assistance in each of these grant programs. This expertise includes an understanding of the grant mechanisms, requirements for youth engagement within each, and knowledge of best practices to maximize the opportunity these funding streams provide for strategic youth engagement. The capacity of the Youth MOVE team allows for lessons learned and best practices from states and communities across the country to be brought to Washington for efficient and effective implementation. Additionally, Youth MOVE is currently the only organization employing young adults with lived experience in behavioral health and other youth serving systems as facilitators of this national TA. They are uniquely positioned to understand meaningful implementation of youth engagement in agencies and on committees/councils such as the FYSPRT.

Some unique techniques that Youth MOVE will offer in their approach to technical assistance include:
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- A youth led and youth driven organization and framework
- Near peer facilitators and technical assistance providers with lived experience in youth serving systems
- Expertise from a national chapter network of youth-driven programs
- Expertise as contracted technical assistance providers to federal grantees and the children's behavioral health system (including Children's Mental Health Initiative [System of Care], Healthy Transitions, Project Aware, and Clinical High Risk for Psychosis grantees)
- Prior onsite work in Washington State with knowledge of the previous history and approach, including the Governance Structure

Having previously contracted with HCA DBHR to support this work, Youth MOVE is already familiar with the Regional and Statewide FYSPRTs as well as the broader Governance Structure making them uniquely positioned to quickly pick up the work and provide the technical assistance needed for the FYSPRTs, the Governance Structure and the youth serving systems connected to the Governance Structure.

- What kind of market research did the agency conduct to conclude that alternative sources were inappropriate or unavailable? Provide a narrative description of the agency’s due diligence in determining the basis for the sole source contract, including methods used by the agency to conduct a review of available sources such as researching trade publications, industry newsletters and the internet; contacting similar service providers; and reviewing statewide pricing trends and/or agreements. Include a list of businesses contacted (if you state that no other businesses were contacted, explain why not), date of contact, method of contact (telephone, mail, e-mail, other), and documentation demonstrating an explanation of why those businesses could not or would not, under any circumstances, perform the contract; or an explanation of why the agency has determined that no businesses other than the prospective contractor can perform the contract.

Reviewed the website for Youth MOVE National. The mission of Youth MOVE National is in alignment with the work HCA is purchasing and states “Youth MOVE National connects, supports, and develops youth leadership in advocacy to create positive change. We practice authentic youth engagement through youth driven decision making by elevating youth voices of lived experience. We ensure that young people are heard and valued as leaders in the agencies, communities, and systems that impact their lives." The website also describes the Youth/Young Adult Voice at the Agency Level (Y-VAL) and Youth/Young Adult Voice on Committees and Councils (Y-VOC) which are intended to measure authentic voice of youth with lived experience in behavioral health and other youth serving systems within an agency or on governance committees and councils, similar to the FYSPRTs.

Also conducted a Google search using the search terms "youth led organizations behavioral health" to attempt to locate all active youth led national organizations
providing technical assistance around youth engagement and leadership with facilitators with lived experience in behavioral health and other child serving systems such as juvenile justice and child welfare. Although some youth driven organizations or programs came up in the search, they were not specific to behavioral health with facilitators with lived experience in behavioral health and other youth serving systems (such as juvenile rehabilitation, or child welfare). Search results identified organizations connected to supporting families, education, services for youth, civics, workforce/job skills, climate change, general wellbeing, queer youth wellbeing, lowering the impact of social media on mental health, political movements and inclusion, or did not appear to be active or national organizations.

- What considerations were given to providing opportunities in this contract for small business, including but not limited to unbundling the goods and/or services acquired.

This is not a consideration as the services being purchased are highly specialized.

- Provide a detailed and compelling description that includes quantification of the costs and risks mitigated by contracting with this contractor (i.e. learning curve, follow-up nature).

Contracting with Youth MOVE National will allow for technical assistance work to continue without any gaps in support for the FYSPRTs/connected youth serving systems with a technical assistance provider who is already familiar with the FYSPRTs, the Governance Structure, T.R. Settlement Agreement and the assessments used previously to begin the work under a previous contract with Youth MOVE. They have already established trusted relationships with the regional FYSPRTs and understand FYSPRT’s connection to the statewide FYSPRT and Governance Structure, so are uniquely positioned to maximize their time and federal dollars providing technical assistance.

- Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of special circumstances such as confidential investigations, copyright restrictions, etc.? If so, please describe.

No, HCA is proposing this sole source contract as Youth MOVE National is the only national organization that can provide technical assistance around youth engagement through young professionals with lived experience in behavioral health and other child serving systems.

- Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of unavoidable, critical time delays or issues that prevented the agency from completing this acquisition using a competitive process? If so, please describe. For example, if time constraints are applicable, identify when the agency was on notice of the need for the goods and/or service, the entity that imposed the constraints, explain the authority of that entity to impose them, and provide the timelines within which work must be accomplished.

No
• Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of a geographic limitation? If the proposed contractor is the only source available in the geographical area, state the basis for this conclusion and the rationale for limiting the size of the geographical area selected.

  No

• What are the consequences of not having this sole source filing approved? Describe in detail the impact to the agency and to services it provides if this sole source filing is not approved.

  DBHR currently has awards for two grants through SAMHSA, a System of Care Grant and Healthy Transitions Grant. Both of these grants are based on System of Care values and principles which include family driven and youth driven services and supports and also youth voice and family voice as an equal partner in policy and decision making around behavioral health services.

  The work to evaluate and provide and support planning and implementation for increased youth engagement in FYSPRTs was started under a previous contract and would not be able to be completed without the technical assistance and coaching provided by Youth MOVE National. It was also realized that additional technical assistance to other parts of the Governance Structure and other entities closely connected to the work also would be needed to reach the goal of equal and authentic youth voice in policy decisions. If this sole source filing is not approved, it will also leave the Governance Structure without the benefit of the TA to implement youth engagement strategies and to better support the regional FYSPRTs in reaching their goals of increased youth engagement and leadership. Ultimately, not approving could impact commitments made through the T.R. Settlement agreement and System of Care Grant which identifies the FYSPRTs and the broader Governance Structure as a forum to provide equal family and youth voice alongside system partners to improve outcomes for all youth and families in Washington.

Sole Source Posting

• Provide the date in which the sole source posting, the draft contract, and a copy of the Sole Source Contract Justification Template were published in WEBS.

  - If exempt from posting in WEBS, please provide which exemption.

  - If failed to post, please explain why.

• Were responses received to the sole source posting in WEBS?

  - If one or more responses are received, list name of entities responding and explain how the agency concluded the contract is appropriate for sole source award.
Reasonableness of Cost

- Since competition was not used as the means for procurement, how did the agency conclude that the costs, fees, or rates negotiated are fair and reasonable? Please make a comparison with comparable contracts, use the results of a market survey, or employ some other appropriate means calculated to make such a determination.

As the technical assistance is highly specialized there are no other contracts to compare to other than previous contracts with Youth MOVE National. Contractor rates for this contract are comparable to previous rates for the same work.