

**Request for Proposals (RFP) -
Local Healthcare System Needs Assessment and Recommendations**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT RFP

Amended January 20, 2023

The questions below were received via email by January 4, 2023, from parties interested in the Healthcare System Assessment RFP in accordance with Section 11.0 of the RFP. Answers to the questions are posted herein and being provided to all proposers.

1. Is there a listing of what organizations or inventory of constituents who are involved in the process?

Answer: Given the broad scope of this assessment, a comprehensive list of constituents has not been developed at this time. The selected proposer should expect to work closely with a local advisory panel established by the Health District to guide efforts and assist with making connections to local stakeholders, including those in healthcare systems, private clinics, long-term care facilities, local advocacy groups, elected officials, behavioral and substance treatment organizations, fire and emergency management services, and local safety net organizations. Data previously collected (or in the collection process) from concurrent community and health needs assessments will be made available to the selected proposer, as will copies of media coverage of Kitsap healthcare issues, health board and other relevant meeting minutes, and other resources and data sources that have been identified to assist in this effort. The selected proposer should expect to work closely with the Health District and the advisory panel to ensure timely completion of this project.

2. Do proposers need to fill out EXHIBIT B: PROPOSER QUESTIONNAIRE FORM prior to Jan. 31 as a prerequisite or as long as it is with the completed bid package prior to Jan. 31?

Answer: Exhibit B should be completed and submitted **with** formal proposals by January 31, 2023.

3. Will the Health District be sharing any relevant data, previous assessments, and anecdotal observations prior to the RFP submittal that led to this decision for outside consultation?

Answer: No. While an extensive repository of data and other resources has been developed and additional relevant information is added regularly, this information will not be provided prior to the RFP submittal. Information from ongoing assessments,

including a community health needs assessment and an evaluation of upstream social safety systems, will be shared with the selected proposer. Extensive data on staffing levels for different Kitsap specialties benchmarked to state and national levels is being compiled and will be made available to the selected proposer, as well as a list of ongoing advocacy efforts, policy initiatives, and other governmental interventions which may help strengthen Kitsap's health system.

4. We can see KPI's being monitored on the website which comes from a state's perspective and availability of data. What other data will be available for this assessment?
 - a. Will the healthcare organizations in the service area be contributing or making available data per our requests including any financial, clinical and quality assessments or reporting they have been performing internally?
 - b. Will we be able to request information related to previous decisions that potentially impacted community access, prevention of disease or health outcomes?

Answer: Local healthcare systems have indicated that they will cooperate and share information in this effort, however the selected proposer will be expected to obtain additional information as necessary from a variety of sources to complete the study. The selected proposer should expect to obtain information on previous decisions and current policies that have potentially impacted community access and health outcomes from a variety of sources, including key stakeholder interviews, participation in ongoing meetings with local advocacy groups, review of data from ongoing assessments (noted above), evaluation of health indicators on the Health District's "Health Indicators, Reports, & Fact Sheets" webpage (https://kitsappublichealth.org/information/data_Indicators.php), media and news coverage, and others. The selected proposer will be expected to recognize, understand, and evaluate current policies that may undermine the functionality of the healthcare system and propose specific interventions or new policies that could strengthen health services in Kitsap.

5. Who will be organizing meetings with key health care provider stakeholders including the military hospital administration?

Answer: Meeting organization with key healthcare providers will be a joint effort between the Health District and the selected proposer.

6. Has there been any previous analysis, assessment or business development plan been performed or completed in relation to the potential public hospital idea or proposal?

Answer: The Health District is aware of at least two independent groups investigating the potential of a public hospital district in Kitsap, one convened by a group of citizen advocates and a second by a county commissioner. The selected applicant should expect to fully understand current efforts, participate in this process as applicable during the project period, and evaluate the pros and cons of this and other policy interventions.

7. Who will define what is considered “essential services” for the Kitsap peninsula?

Answer: The Health District, the Kitsap Public Health Board, the advisory panel, and selected proposer will collectively define what constitutes “essential services” for Kitsap. These include, but may not be limited to: hospital bed capacity; primary care and other specialty service-line capacity; adequacy of long-term care and respite facilities; availability of emergency medical services; behavioral health; and substance treatment facilities. The selected proposer will need to identify and assess ways in which these components of the local healthcare system support or degrade other aspects of the system.

8. Have you already identified your most vulnerable populations, their current state of health in terms of prevention and outcomes along with disparities? If so, please provide any data or reporting related to this identification and assessment.

Answer: The Health District has produced numerous indicators and community health fact sheets and reports that include sociodemographic data about vulnerable populations and health status and health behavior disaggregated by various sub-groups with analysis of disparities. These are available on our website:
https://kitsappublichealth.org/information/data_Indicators.php

9. What sources/data have you used (if any) to forecast future area demographics?

Answer: The Health District has not used any data sources to forecast future area demographics. The only forecast data we have used is for the entire county population, produced by the Washington State Office of Financial Management.

10. What is the current state or concerns with the ongoing military presence on the peninsula? Are there any risks or recommendations to close these operations by the federal government?

Answer:

- Naval Hospital Bremerton has been closed as an inpatient facility for a number of years, so existing or retired service members either have to use our private sector healthcare or travel to Madigan Army Medical Center on Joint Base Lewis-McChord for hospital services. The more recent closure of obstetrical services at Naval Hospital Bremerton has added additional stress on our local healthcare system. The following links provide some insight into this issue:
<https://bremerton.tricare.mil/Health-Services/Primary-Care>
<https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/local/2022/11/20/kitsap-emergency-rooms-healthcare-nurses-doctor-covid-st-michael/10490120002/>
- Locally, the Health District has asked the Navy if they have any plans reinstitute any medical services at the Naval Hospital, and the reply has been negative to this point in time.

11. Are we to assess social determinants of health as part of this assessment & recommendations including housing, food insecurity, transportation, etc.? If so, to what level is this in scope?

Answer: No, assessing the social determinants of health is not part of this assessment.

12. Policy review & recommendations. Is this project limited to the health department policies or does it include policies from the various healthcare providers?

Answer: Policy review and recommendation is a key deliverable of this undertaking and is not restricted to Health District policies. Numerous policy interventions have already been identified and include provider and nursing recruitment and retention policies, incentives to bring new service organizations to Kitsap, structure and function of organizations currently providing health services in Kitsap, identification of outdated or unnecessary regulatory barriers that reduce service availability, financial and reimbursement systems, and others.

13. Is there a maximum allowable budget for this project?

Answer: No, not at this time. The Health District had no frame of reference for costs for such an assessment. The Health District does have a budget in mind, but with no frame of reference, we did not want to put budgetary limitations on the Requests for Proposals at this time. If bids generally come back higher than our budgeted earmark, based on the nature and extent of the proposals, we will reevaluate the RFP process and budget after reviewing the bids.

14. Are indirects allowed to be budgeted in this project?

Answer: Indirects are allowed **IF** a contractor has a formal negotiated and approved indirect rate with a state or federal entity for the period of performance.

15. As outlined in the project details, the plan is to work closely with the advisory panel on this project. Does this advisory panel already exist, or is creation of this panel part of the expected tasks in this project?

Answer: The advisory panel is not yet created. The Health District will create the advisory panel and it will include the health officer and selected staff members from the Health District, one or two members from the Kitsap Public Health Board, and a limited number of other community members. The Health District expects to keep this group small and identify specific participants as we review proposals and go through the selection process.

16. Will the advisory panel advise/provide guidance on details like focus group composition, communities of interest, and specific socio-demographics that the applicant should be aware of or focus on?

Answer: Yes. The advisory panel will also assist in providing newer data from a variety of key informant interviews and focus groups that have recently been performed or are ongoing.

17. Will Kitsap County be involved in conducting the qualitative assessment (i.e., selecting community members and doing outreach and scheduling)? Will they be providing incentives?

Answer: Yes, the Health District will assist in the qualitative assessment.

18. The RFP references a project goal "from present through a 20-year window". Would the KPHB clarify the scope of the window, e.g., is it 20 years in the future?

Answer: Yes, the project goal is from present time to 20 years into the future.

Additional questions/answers as of January 20, 2023

19. Who is the main sponsor and who will be the final decision-maker?

Answer: The main sponsor of this study is the Kitsap Public Health District, acting at the direction of the Kitsap Public Health Board. A small panel of Health District employees, Health Board members, and representatives from partner agencies will review and score the proposals to help inform the District and Board, and the Health District and Health Board representatives will select the proposal that best meets the needs of the Health District and Health Board with respect to the RFP. See Section 8.0, Selection Process of RFP.

20. How will decisions be made? Consensus? Majority vote? Other?

Answer: The decision will be made by consensus of the Health District and Health Board representatives after proposals have been read and evaluated by the panel. The Health District and Health Board representatives may elect to interview two or three finalists to facilitate a consensus decision as part of the selection process. See Section 8.0, Selection Process of RFP.

21. Given the mentioned sensitivities in the RFP, who is responsible for handling PR issues if/when they arise? What role will the selected proposer have around this?

Answer: Public relations issues will be managed primarily through the Public Information Officer and communications team at Kitsap Public Health District in partnership with the selected proposer. The selected proposer will be expected to understand sensitive areas and nuances in this work, maintain credibility and trust, clearly explain and justify controversial policy recommendations, and take responsibility for the final assessment and recommendations.

22. Has the Health District budgeted for focus groups and key informant interview stipends, or do we need it as part of our bid?

Answer: Additional focus groups and key informant interviews, beyond those recently undertaken by the Health District, should be included in the bid.

23. Can you please be a bit more specific around administrative support? Should we build that into our proposal for the coordination of scheduling of all of the input sessions?

Answer: Yes. The Health District will provide administrative support by providing data from a number of recent community assessments, surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups, health indicators, ongoing meeting schedules, media releases, and historical information and can help identify and reserve meeting rooms as needed. Proposers should budget for their own administrative support to execute the work required under the contract.