



Sole Source Market Research Worksheet

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Per the [Sole Source Contracts Policy](#), section 10, agencies must conduct sufficient market research prior to filing a new sole source contract or an amendment that extends the period of performance or proposes scope changes. In order to demonstrate that a particular vendor is a sole source for a good/service, agencies must present compelling evidence to DES that the agency conducted market research for each contract term (including each/any term extension) and amendments. This **optional worksheet** can be used to assist with meeting this requirement.

Note: this worksheet is not an exhaustive list of market research techniques. If you have any questions or require assistance using this worksheet, please contact the Policy Team via email, DES.Contracting@des.wa.gov.

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A. Determining Business Need

Understanding the business need of your agency is the key to successful market research. Before drafting your sole source justification, take steps to understand the specific business need of the agency, the pool of potential vendors, the services they are able to offer, and whether sole source is the appropriate procurement route; per [RCW 39.26.010\(23\)](#), “the contractor is clearly and justifiably the only practicable source to provide the goods or services”. This is primarily accomplished through the following steps prior to market research:

- Understand previously delivered services (i.e., performance and specification requirements)
- Understand your target population (i.e., conduct stakeholder work to assess the needs of those that will receive the service and/or good)
- Understand the legal requirements (i.e., review legislative requirements, policy changes, environmental considerations)

Once you have determined the business need, you can proceed with conducting market research.

B. Market Research Techniques

1. Reviewing past solicitations

If your agency has procured the commodity or service in the past, reviewing the previous solicitation(s) can potentially provide evidence to support sole source determination, such as if there is a documented history of only one responsive/responsible vendor.

Has the agency purchased the good/service before? If yes, provide the results of the previous solicitation:

Date of purchase	Procurement Type	Notes supporting sole source determination
		There are no past solicitations.
		[add more rows as needed]

2. Internet search

Internet searches are helpful to understand what similar programs exist and what contractors or organizations might be able to meet your agency’s business needs. Many state governments

publicly post their RFPs online, so you may be able to find good examples of RFPs for similar services.

Use a spreadsheet or table (see example below) to track businesses you identify through your internet search.

Search terms used: [fenders, bumpers, rub rail]

Business name	Date & Method of Contact (phone, email, etc.)	Notes (can/cannot meet the business need, explanation)
		No results fit seaplane needs. Fender searches result in options for boating.
		[add more rows as needed]

Record research results about the commodity/service industry that support sole source determination here:

[No results fit seaplane needs. Fender searches result in options for boating.]

3. Database searches

DES Statewide Contracts

1. Navigate to the [DES Statewide Contracts Search Tool](#)
2. Enter keyword(s) related to your commodity/service/business need.
3. Search terms used: [fenders, bumpers, rub rail]
4. Record search results:

Statewide Contract No.	Contractor Name	Method of Contact (phone, email, etc.)	Notes (can/cannot meet the business need, explanation)
22923	Sentinel Offender Services		Electronic monitoring service
05218	Birch Equipment		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment

	HAV Inc		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>J & I Power Equipment</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Jennings Equipment</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>US Mower</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Vans Equipment</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Alamo Group</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Ariens Company</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Blueline Equipment</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Brin Tractor</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Clark Equipment</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Coates Landscape Supply</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment

	<i>Deere & Company</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Diamond Mowers, LLC</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Fiber Marketing International</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Great Plain Manufacturing</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Horizon Distributors</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Hustler Turf Equipment</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Makita USA</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Morbark, LLC</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Moridge Manufacturing</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>MTD Products</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>NC Machinery</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment

	<i>Pacific Golf & Turf</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Pape Machinery</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>RMT Equipment</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Venture Products</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	<i>Vermeer Mountain West</i>		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment
	Western Equipment Distributors		28 different categories all of which are lawn/garden/heavy equipment

5. Did you locate a statewide contract that can meet your agency's business need? For more information, see [How to use statewide contracts](#). DES manages statewide contracts that leverage the state's collective buying power to help agencies save money, reduce risk, and streamline purchasing. Agencies should use statewide contracts and/or DES-approved cooperative agreements (i.e., NASPO ValuePoint contracts) before any other procurement method.

WEBS

Searching for Similar Solicitations posted by other agencies.

1. Navigate to the [Washington Electronic Business Solution \(WEBS\)](#) for Government Customers webpage.
2. Navigate to the "Search for Solicitations" tab.
3. Select relevant commodity codes:

Manage Commodity and NAICS Code(s) → Search Codes to add	
Code	Title

4. Open solicitations from the search results to review details.
5. Call or email the agency contact if more information is needed.
6. Record results:

Solicitation title	Cust. Ref #	Notes
		No similar solicitations.
		[add more rows as needed]

Searching for Vendors

1. Navigate to the [Washington Electronic Business Solution \(WEBS\)](#) for Government Customers webpage.
2. Navigate to the "Search for Vendors" tab:
3. Select relevant commodity codes:

Search for Commodity or NAICS codes
 Enter in a keyword or keywords for your search criteria. Click "Search Commodity Codes" to execute the search. Click the boxes next to the codes and click "Save" to add them to the vendor search.

Search by
 Keyword or Code: → Search Codes

or Search by
 Category:

You must click "search codes", then select and save specific codes prior to moving forward. Otherwise, your search results will not include the above criteria.

4. Record search results:

Contractor Name	Method of Contact (phone, email, etc.)	Notes (can/cannot meet the business need, explanation)
Andersons's Fabrication	360-736-3220	Does not manufacture/install the required product.

B & P Consort, Inc.	360-308-8110	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Bud Clary Chevrolet	360-423-1700	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Columbia Valley Boats, LLC	360-319-2700	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
ConvergeOne, Inc	503-748-4824	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Correctional Industries	360-725-9100	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Delta Electric Motors	206-767-9506	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Frank Lay	509-826-4711	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
General Oceanics, Inc	305-621-2882	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Global Diving & Salvage	206-623-0621	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Hurley Engineering	253-272-9389	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
King Salmon Marine, Inc	250-830-2962	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Michael Ross	360-751-3135	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
PublicQuest Solutions LLC	239-384-1828	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Redwood Plastics & Rubber	509-536-7700	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Rognlin Marine	360-705-9118	Does not manufacture/install the required product.

Seaquill Fisheries	425-345-8883	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Seaview Boatyard North	206-783-6550	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Silverback Industries LLC	360-306-9506	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Sirocco Marine	954-764-9561	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Swift Justice	253-223-9699	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Three Rivers Marine Inc.	425-415-1575	Does not manufacture/install the required product.

OMWBE Directory of Certified Businesses

1. Navigate to the Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises (OMWBE)’s [Certified Business Directory](#).
2. Use search criteria/search terms relevant to your agency’s business need.
3. Contact OMWBE staff for assistance if your search results is zero vendors, contact technicalassistance@omwbe.wa.gov.
4. Record search results:

Contractor Name	Method of Contact (phone, email, etc.)	Notes (can/cannot meet the business need, explanation)
Associated Underwater Services	509-533-6500	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
Seawater Marine, LLC	206-446-0053	Does not manufacture/install the required product.
		[add more rows as needed]

4. Conducting an RFI

An RFI is an informal solicitation of ideas, solutions and/or recommendations (usually to assist in the development of a scope of work for an RFP; an RFI does NOT result in a contract being

awarded). An RFI can strengthen sole source determination as it can be used to gather additional information about the marketplace (such as vendor availability and interest).

DES provides a [Request for information \(RFI\) template](#) with examples of questions that may be helpful to gather information.

After conducting an RFI, the results can be saved to the contract file. Record results that support sole source determination here: [DNR has researched alternatives to tire use at seaplane docks since 2010 and has not found proven alternatives or any companies that would attempt to develop solutions given the limited number of seaplane docks. Kemore has the technology to introduce the alternative to tires. Seaplane facilities require a specific float system different from boat fenders and other bumper systems. Seaplane operators risk expensive damage to the seaplane floats if utilizing a dock with inadequate fendering. Kenmore Air is the only known seaplane company that has successfully installed and utilized an alternative to tire at seaplane docks.]

5. Additional Market Research Techniques

Depending on the commodity and/or service being procured, there may be additional or alternative market research techniques that are applicable.

Contacting Peer Agencies

Speaking with peer agencies, associations, cities, counties, states etc., can be an easy way to understand what best practices exist in contracting for a specific service or product. It is likely that others have experienced some of the same challenges you have. Know who your sister agencies and counterparts are and reach out.

Contact Name	Date/Method of Contact (phone, email, etc.) for follow-up, if applicable	Notes
		No other agencies have dealt with this requirement.
		[add more rows as needed]

Interviewing Vendors

Pending the results of a database search or RFI, the agency may be able to conduct interviews with vendors for collecting information on the market. Interviews can be conducted in-person, virtual, by phone, or written via email. Interview questions include:

1. Briefly describe your idea/technology to meet the agency's business need.
2. Who is your direct competition?
3. Are there any other potential markets and/or possible emerging markets?

If your search turns up a large number of vendors, it may be faster to conduct a **survey** via email instead of reaching out to vendors individually.

Record results of interviews here:

Contact Name	Date/Method of Contact (phone, email, etc.) for follow-up, if applicable	Notes
		[add more rows as needed]

Trade Publications

Trade Publications (i.e., trade journals, industrial publications/catalogues/magazines) are a great source for industry information, as they are published by and for people in a particular industry. Historically these publications were print only, but many are now available online and easily accessible. Trade publications are periodicals that keep professionals up to speed on a given industry's trends and best practices.

You can search for trade publications using an internet search engine or through specific databases for trade journals. The way the search is conducted will be very specific to the commodity/service area, so we suggest working closely with your SMEs/program staff to assess which sources are appropriate.

Other Methods

This worksheet is not an exhaustive list of market research methods. Some commodities or services will require a different approach. For example, if the purchase is for social or human services, it may be necessary to take additional steps to understand the needs of

the population receiving your services and how the target population will be matched and referred to the services. Understanding the business need of your agency is key to successful market research.

If you have any questions or require assistance, please reach out to the Policy Team via email, DES.Contracting@des.wa.gov.