



Suspension of Competition Acquisition Request

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1. Fully describe the product(s) and/or service(s) being requested.
Specialized legal services, provided by Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (LCW), in regards to upcoming contract negotiations with various bargaining units. LCW will act as Lead Negotiator and assist the County during MOU Negotiation.
2. Identify the selected vendor and contact person; include the address, phone number and e-mail address for each.
Lieber Cassidy Whitmore
POC: Shelline Bennett
5250 N. Palm Ave. #310
Fresno, CA 93704
Ph: 559 256 7800
3. What is the total cost of the acquisition? If an agreement, state the total cost of the initial term and the amounts for potential renewal terms.
\$300,000 first 3-yr term, +\$75,000 per one year extension, maximum two extensions, total NTE \$450,000.
4. Identify the unique qualities and/or capabilities of the service(s) and/or product(s) that qualify this as a Suspension of Competition acquisition.
LCW is one of the foremost leading authorities in Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining, and is uniquely qualified due to their familiarity with Fresno County as they have represented the County in various labor related matters such as arbitration, mediation, and contract bargaining. They have also acted as consultants to County representative during MOU negotiations. Furthermore, LCW has a track record of successfully negotiating thousands of agreements on behalf of many California counties.
5. Identify from Administrative Policy #34 what circumstances constitute a Suspension of Competition.
 - ☐ In an emergency when goods or services are immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, welfare, or safety, or for the protection of County property.
 - ☐ When the contract is with a federal, state, or local governmental agency.
 - ☐ When the department head, with the concurrence of the Purchasing Agent, finds that the cost of preparing and administering a competitive bidding process in a particular case will equal or exceed the estimated contract amount or \$5,000 whichever is more.
 - ☐ When a contract provides only for payment of per diem and travel expenses and there is to be no payment for services rendered.
 - ☒ When obtaining the services of expert witnesses for litigation or special counsel to assist the County.
 - ☐ When in unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Supervisors or the Purchasing Agent/Purchasing Manager determines that the best interests of the County would be served by not securing competitive bids or issuing a request for proposal.
6. Explain why the unique qualities and/or capabilities described above are essential to your department.
Fresno County will soon be negotiating successor Memoranda of Understanding with multiple bargaining groups, including FDSA, SEIU, and CAN. The Department of Human Resources does not have sufficient manpower to take on all upcoming negotiations, nor does County Counsel have sufficient manpower with sufficient labor law expertise. It is imperative that the Department of Human Resources obtain specialized legal services from a law firm familiar with the County of Fresno and its Labor Relations practices in order to successfully reach agreement with each bargaining unit before their contracts expire.
7. Provide a comprehensive explanation of the research done to verify that the recommended vendor is the only vendor with the unique qualities and/or capabilities stated above. Include a list of all other vendors contacted, what they were asked, and their responses.
Each year, the Department of Human Resources evaluates the need to contract with special counsel regarding employee-employer relations and negotiations and LCW is the only local firm that possesses the expertise and knowledge to administer the required services within the timeframes established. The department will be heading into negotiations with major employee organizations such as FDSA and SEIU, where continuity of service and institutional knowledge are vital. LCW possesses said familiarity with the County's labor history and is richly experienced in interfacing with the HR department, CAO, and County Counsel on complex labor issues. Additionally, LCW has significant labor law presence in the Central Valley, including LCW's Regional Training Consortium, attended by thousands of Fresno County employees, as well as access to legal experts in all areas of labor law, Statewide through their offices. They further have the full trust and support of County Counsel.

Requested By:

Title

I approve this request to suspend competition for the service(s) and/or product(s) identified herein.

jbarr 1/8/2025 3:21:27 PM
Department Head Signature

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rblackburn 1/9/2025 11:19:23 AM
Purchasing Manager Signature

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