



## Suspension of Competition Acquisition Request

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1. Fully describe the product(s) and/or service(s) being requested.

The Department of Social Services is requesting services to assist in the creation of subsidized job opportunities by pairing job-ready CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participants with employers who are willing and able to hire them. The Department is also seeking a vendor to develop, maintain, and update a web-based platform that facilitates these connections and allows employers to submit wage reimbursement invoices, which the Department will process through the system. In addition, the Department seeks assistance in recruiting and engaging employers to participate in the New Employment Opportunities (NEO) Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) program by promoting the benefits of hiring CalWORKs WTW participants. The vendor will also serve as the primary point of contact between the Department and participating employers, supporting communication, onboarding, and ongoing coordination to ensure successful placements and to ensure that CalWORKs WTW participants obtain unsubsidized employment at the end of their placement.

2. Identify the selected vendor and contact person; include the address, phone number and e-mail address for each.

Economic Development Corporation serving Fresno County (EDC)

Will Oliver, President/CEO

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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.

\$799,000 for the first 9 month term, \$1,065,630 for the second, \$1,065,630 for the third year term for a total of a 2 year and 9 month base term; \$1,065,630 for each optional 12-month term thereafter (maximum 2 renewals) for a total of \$5,061,520.

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.

County of Fresno collaborated with EDC to develop and maintain the Ready2Hire website. The Ready2Hire website is a unique platform designed specifically for CalWORKs WTW participants to access and apply for job opportunities available exclusively through the NEO ESE program. Ready2Hire functions as the portal for communication between WTW participants and employers, invoicing system for the employer wage reimbursements, and for documentation and evaluation of WTW participant progress in their employment position, making it essential to program operations. EDC provides dedicated subcontracted training programs for CalWORKs WTW participants that lead to successful job placements or make the participant a better candidate for employment in highly sought after career fields such as construction and truck driving. EDC's has a designated Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) team that administers the Department's NEO ESE program by actively recruiting and maintaining employer participation, leveraging established relationships across multiple industries. This combination of exclusive platform ownership, established employer networks, and existing experience in providing all requested services makes EDC uniquely suited to support the objectives of the NEO ESE program and ensure its continued success.

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.

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- EDC's role in the operation and maintenance of the Ready2Hire website is essential to the Department, as it supports our goal of maintaining a platform capable of matching CalWORKs WTW participants with appropriate employers and processing wage reimbursement invoices on a monthly basis. Despite other economic and workforce development entities utilizing similar platforms, EDC has proactively created a system specifically for the Department's CalWORKs ESE program. Replicating this platform created by EDC would require significant time, resources, and retraining, leading to disruptions in both participant placements and payment processing.
- Additionally, EDC's BEAR team brings valuable expertise in employer outreach and incentive communication, which is critical to attracting and retaining employers. This, in turn, ensures a steady flow of job opportunities for CalWORKs WTW participants. The BEAR team's experience and infrastructure directly support the Department's mission of helping participants transition into long-term, unsubsidized employment.
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.

The Department conducted a thorough review of other economic and workforce development entities in Fresno County. Other organizations such as the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB), Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC), and Fresno Community and Economic Development Partnership (CEDP) have strong experience in job placement and training; however, they also provide a wide range of assistance (housing, utilities, health services, etc). However, EDC possesses the specialized expertise required to address the unique needs and benefits of CalWORKs WTW participants. Notably, few organizations offer business relocation and expansion support within the county and none offer a system comparable to Ready2Hire. Ready2Hire is the result of several years of collaboration and development between the Department and EDC. EDC is the only vendor that has proactively designed and developed this platform specifically for the Department to support CalWORKs WTW participants. Although other vendors are capable of creating a similar system, doing so would require significant time and financial investment to tailor it to these specialized requirements.

Additionally, EDC's established connections with organizations offering training programs, such as the Truck Driving program, expand the services available to participants. EDC's extensive experience working with employers, combined with the expertise of their Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) team who are familiar with CalWORKs regulations, terminology, and have direct experience with CalWORKs WTW participants, further distinguishes EDC as the only vendor uniquely qualified to meet the program's objectives.

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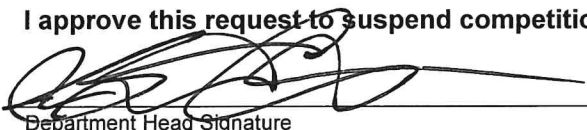
Staff Analyst

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Requested By:

Title

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



Department Head Signature

07/09/2025

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Riley Blackburn

Purchasing Manager Signature

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