

# **RFQ Packet A**

## **Request for Qualifications for**

### ***Grants Subject Matter Expert Services for Washington State Ferries***

**Vendor Name:** Spectrum Design

**Vendor Representative:**

Leslie Ann Rifkin, Owner

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**Request for Qualifications  
for  
*Grants Subject Matter Expert Services for Washington State Ferries***

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**Scoring Criteria 1: Qualifications/Expertise of Proposed Subject Matter Expert (**

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**A. Relevant Work History** - List of three (3) assignments in which the SME has worked for WSDOT, another state Department of Transportation (other DOT) or a public transit agency and that involved working with the US Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration and/or Federal Highway Administration and/or other federal agencies administering federal grant funding for transportation:

**Assignment 1:**

**On Call Support for FTA Grants, Washington State Department of Transportation, Ferries Division, Contract Number Y11713 !**

Duration: May 2015 – August 2018; Avg Hrs/week: 25 !

Over this time period, Leslie Rifkin of Spectrum Design (Vendor) initially was contracted to provide Specialized Professional Advice and Assistance on FTA Grants Planning, Administration and Management to Washington State Ferries (WSF). Upon the sudden departure of WSF's Grants Manager in 2016, the Vendor's contract scope was amended to include responsibility for the entire federal grant funding program across all grantor agencies as a contracted Grant Program Manager for WSF through the remainder of this contract. Tasks and Activities associated with these responsibilities included assisting the Assistant Secretary for Ferries and the WSF Director of Finance and Administration in strategic grant planning, management and administration:

- Coordinating through the WSF Budget Director on planning, programming, administrative, reporting, accountability and logistical support for WSF's federal grants processes and individual grants;
- Coordinating the grant program among WSDOT and WSF organizations, partner agencies and the general public;
- Coordinating grant development activities and preparing grant applications;
- Managing the regional transportation improvement program (TIP);
- Maintaining grant administrative processes and administration of individual grants;
- Working with the WSF project funding analyst to program grants on WSF capital projects;
- Participating in WSF's internal strategic planning effort for obtaining and using grants;
- Working with WSDOT and the Washington State Congressional Delegation to coordinate and deliver the regional transportation program;
- Participating in local, regional, state and federal funding strategy coordination and negotiation;
- Attending coordination, progress, and presentation meetings representing WSF.
- Providing information on federal grant programs;

- Identifying new opportunities to obtain federal funds for WSF's Capital Construction Program;
- Forecasting grant revenues and cash flow requirements;
- Providing expert advice on grant requirements;
- Managing grant reporting and close-outs;
- Participating in federal audits and oversight reviews;
- Representing WSDOT-WSF at meetings of regional planning organizations; Attending grantee training sessions and/or conferences sponsored by the grantor agency(s) related to grant planning, administration, and management; and Performing other related assignments as requested by the State.

**Assignment 2A:**

**Grant Program Manager, Washington State Department of Transportation, Ferries Division**

Contract Number K1192 for WSDOT Grant Management Services

Duration: September 2018 – August 2021; Avg Hrs/week: 25

The contracted scope of work for Leslie Rifkin of Spectrum Design (Vendor) was to serve as the WSDOT Ferries Division Grants Manager responsible for managing (planning, organizing, directing, training, coordinating and controlling) the acquisition, administration, and programming of grants and advising WSDOT employees regarding regulatory compliance for grants obtained from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and other grantors.

As Grants Manager, the Vendor was responsible for the following Tasks and Activities:

*1. ) Budget and Program Development and Delivery*

This activity consists of budget and program development and delivery tasks relating to federal and other grants. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Develop strategies for acquisition and utilization of federal funds by the Ferries Division;
- Participate in the development of the state legislative and Congressional agendas for Ferries Division funding;
- Prepare materials for Ferries Division and WSDOT executives, Office of Financial Management and legislative staffs, and the Governor regarding federal and other grant funding aspects of WSDOT Ferries Division programs and budgets;
- Enhance the ability of the WSDOT Ferries Division to utilize more federal and other grant funding;
- Forecast available federal and other grants;
- Estimate federal and other grant expenditure demand and reimbursement;
- Update the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP); !
- Advise the Ferries Capital Program Manager regarding assignment of federal and other grant funds to capital projects in the Capital Program Management System (CPMS) and the Transportation Executive Information System (TEIS), including verification that

programmed federal and other grant funding is supported by existing and forecasted grants;

- Advise the Ferries Capital Program Manager on federal and other grant aspects of OFM allotments, unanticipated receipts, project change management actions, work order authorization requests and journal vouchers.

## 2. ) *Acquisition of New Competitive/Discretionary Grant Funding*

This activity consists of tasks pertaining to securing new sources of grant funding. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Identify new grant funding opportunities;
- Assess grant competition requirements and advise management teams on potential funding;
- Coordinate internal grant/project selection process, compiling potential project proposals for funding;
- Facilitate the internal grant project selection process ;
- Organize and direct ad hoc teams preparing grant applications.

## 3. ) *Administration of Grants*

This activity consists of tasks pertaining to administration of grant agreements. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Prepare and process grant applications for secured funding with FHWA, FTA, FEMA and other federal and local agencies;
- Execute agreements, revise grant budgets, prepare amendments, and close out grants;
- Coordinate requests to flex funding between federal agencies, including internal staff, WSDOT, WSDOT staff and federal agency staff;
- Respond to inquiries.

## 4. ) *Monitoring and Reporting on Grants*

This activity consists of grant monitoring and reporting, including submittal of on-going reports required by grantors and by Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Develop and maintain the grants data base;
- Monitor grant expenditures;
- Control the use of federal funds against grant expiration dates;
- Monitor federal unbilled costs;
- Operate federal agency electronic grant systems;
- Task Ferries Division business offices to compile information and draft grant reports;
- Submit grant reports in electronic systems;
- Maintain grant records;
- Track and report the use of toll credits;
- Document how Ferries Division organizations track assets, goods and services obtained with federal funds to provide accountability;
- Perform other reporting activities as necessary.

### 5. *Guidance and Support for Regulatory Compliance*

This activity consists of tasks that provide and/or obtain support for Ferries Division staff regarding compliance with federal regulations. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Provide strategic and tactical advice about grant requirements, regulations and best business practices;
- Develop and maintain Ferries Budget and Program Development Office Grant Manual (policies, procedures and practices);
- Know and advise concerning federal grant regulations and monitor changes in federal, state and local requirements impacting grant administration and reporting;
- Coordinate with the Ferries Director of Contracts and Legal services to obtain interpretations of federal rules and regulations and advice on compliance matters;
- Review and advise concerning internal controls for the use of federal and other grants by various WSDOT Ferries Division organizations, focusing on:
  - Awareness of federal regulations
  - Allowable activities and costs
  - Records for PIFs, waiver requests, etc.
  - Cash management
  - Equipment and real property management
  - Matching rates, toll credits, earmarks and periods of performance
  - Procurement
  - Suspension and debarment
  - Program income
  - Reporting
- Identify problems with grant usage, develop alternative course of action and recommend alternative solutions;
- Assist the WSDOT Ferries Division coordinator of responses to federal and other grant components of audits, including:
  - Assess audit risks and strategies
  - Provided information requested by the auditor
  - Review and respond to audit findings
  - Coordinate corrective action pertaining to federal audit findings
  - Assist in other federal regulatory activities

### 6. ) *Liaison*

This activity consisted of communications with policy-makers, grantors, RTPO staff, departmental and division federal funds staff, and Ferries Division users of federal funds:

- The WSDOT Executive Leadership Team;
- The WSDOT Ferries Division Executive Team;
- Grantor agency staff (Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Homeland Security, etc.);

- Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) committees and staffs, such as the Puget Sound Regional Council's FTA Caucus and Regional Project Evaluation Committees;
- WSDOT Capital Program Development and Management (CPSM) Office federal funds and budget staff;
- The Ferries Division Budget and Program Development staff;
- Ferries Division directors and their staffs;
- Local government and transit agency officials.

**Assignment 2B:**

**Subject Matter Expert, Washington State Department of Transportation, Ferries Division #**  
 Contract Number K1192, Amd #3 for WSDOT Grant Management Services  
 Duration: September 2021 – August 2023; Avg Hrs/week: 25

Over this time period, the contracted scope of work for the Vendor was amended from Grants Manager to Coordinating Staff Person and Subject Matter Expert for various grant activities relating to:

- Development of grant policies, procedures and practices; planning for their implementation and review of their execution; !
- Strategic planning and coordination relating to grant matters at the Office of Financial Management (OFM), state legislative and Congressional levels and national and regional levels of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and other grantors;
- Performance of activities relating to the planning and programming of projects in Regional Long Range Plans, Regional Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP) and the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP);
- Monitoring, assessing, recommending responding to requirements of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO).

As Subject Matter Expert, the Vendor was responsible for the following Tasks and Activities:

*1. Budget and Program Development and Delivery*

This activity consists of budget and program development and delivery tasks relating to federal and other grants. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Develop strategies for acquisition and utilization of federal funds by the Ferries Division;
- Participate in the development of OFM's, Legislature's and Congress' agendas for Ferries Division funding;
- Prepare materials for Ferries Division and WSDOT executives, OFM and legislative staffs, regarding federal and other grant funding aspects of WSDOT Ferries Division programs and budgets;
- Develop strategies for the WSDOT Ferries Division to utilize more federal and other grant funding;
- Forecast new federal funds formula distributions and competitive grants;
- Contribute input to Long Range Plans, including federal sources of funding for financial plans;

- Planning and management of Regional and State Transportation Improvement Program % applications and amendments.

## *2. Relations with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations*

This activity carries out WSF responsibilities to MPOs and RTPOs. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Monitor the laws, policies, procedures and practices guiding how MPOs and RTPOs conduct business;
- Advise on MPO and RTPO planning requirements and provide input supporting MPO and RTPO planning;
- Advise on MPO and RTPO financial planning requirements and carry out fund distribution related activities;
- Conduct activities relating to programming projects in the TIP and STIP;
- Provide reports required by MPOs and RTPOs;
- Assess requirements and respond to selected initiatives pursued by MPOs and RTPOs;
- Represent WSF on various MPO and RTPO staff committees as assigned.

## *3. Acquisition of New Competitive/Discretionary Grant Funding*

This activity consists of tasks pertaining to securing new sources of grant funding. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Identify new grant funding opportunities;
- Assess grant competition requirements and advise management teams on potential funding.

## *4. Administration of Grants*

This activity consists of tasks pertaining to administration of grant agreements. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Prepare and process grant applications for secured funding with FTA;
- Execute agreements, revise grant budgets, prepare amendments, and close out grants for FTA grants;
- Coordinate requests to flex funding between federal agencies, including coordinating with internal staff, WSDOT staff and federal agency staff;
- Respond to inquiries.

## *5. Monitoring and Reporting on Grants*

This activity consists of grant related reporting. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Reports required by grantors, excluding project reports such as FFRs and MPRs;
- Reports required by MPOs and RTPOs;
- Back-up to the Grants Manager in operating federal agency electronic grant systems;
- Back-up the Grants Manager in submitting grant reports in electronic systems.

## *6. Guidance and Support for Regulatory Compliance*

This activity consists of tasks that provide and/or obtain support for Ferries Division staff regarding compliance with federal regulations. This activity included but was not limited to the following tasks:

- Provide strategic and tactical advice about grant requirements, regulations and best business practices;
- Develop and maintain Ferries Budget and Program Development Office Grant Manual and Guidelines dealing with policies, procedures and practices;
- Know and advise concerning federal grant regulations and monitor changes in federal, state and local requirements impacting grant administration and reporting;
- Identify problems with grant usage, develop alternative course of action and recommend % alternative solutions. %

## *7. Liaison*

This activity consists of communications with policy-makers, grantors, MPO and RTPO staff, departmental and division federal funds staff, and Ferries Division users of federal funds:

- The WSDOT Executive Leadership Team;
- The WSDOT Ferries Division Executive Team;
- Federal Transit Administration Staff;
- MPOs and RTPO committees and staffs, such as the Puget Sound Regional Council's FTA Caucus;
- WSF managers and staff managing and utilizing federal funds.

## *8. Work Force Development*

The Vendor provided knowledge transfer to WSDOT Ferries Division Budget and Program Development Office staff and the staff of WSF Directors managing and using grants.

## *9. Backup WSF's Grant Manager*

The Vendor provided back for the WSF Grants Manager when necessary to ensure continuity in the performance of their responsibilities.

### **Assignment 3:**

**Grant Administrative Services Consultant, Parsons Brinckerhoff for California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSRA) – Sacramento, CA**

PB project #13341, Contract # HSR 06-001 and HSR-14-66

Duration: February 2011 – June 2016; Avg Hrs/week: 25

Under contract to Parsons Brinckerhoff, Leslie Rifkin of Spectrum Design served as the first Grant Administrator for Development and Administration of the California High-Speed Rail Authority's federal funding program. Major accomplishments include:



- Provide start-up activities for all federal grant planning, administration and management services and obligated \$3.5 billion in Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) funding for new State high-speed rail authority;
- Primary point of contact internally and with FRA for administration of the CAHSRA's grant program. Serve as front-line liaison to the FRA, other federal funding agencies and any local pass-through recipients on grant administrative issues;
- Identify and coordinate appropriate chains of communication between the Authority staff and FRA;
- Recommend appropriate chains of responsibility within the organization to implement/maintain various regulatory requirements;
- Establish and update quarterly and annual work plan for the Grant Program. Identify critical path to obligating all HSR funding awards as well as administering current awards. Provide monthly updates to management team on grant progress, issues and opportunities;
- Develop and maintain grant administrative processes and controls for the agency, advising the agency on grant requirements, regulations and opportunities;
- Manage the obligation and execution of grant agreements for all awarded funding, including unobligated ARRA and 2010 funding. Identify needs for amendments to existing grant agreements. Develop and manage approved grant budgets, budget revisions and schedules;
- Implement all applicable OMB, USDOT, and other federal guidance required for grant program management internally with FRA and other California State agency staff as required;
- Identify, prepare and submit ongoing reports required by grantor agencies for each active grant agreement including monthly/quarterly/annual ARRA reporting, FRA progress reporting, budget and schedule updates;
- Develop positions and interpretation of federal rules and regulations that benefits the Authority and their projects in conjunction with the Attorney General's office;
- Advise the organization on maintaining the eligibility of various projects/project activities for federal funding;
- Maintain/update Authority passwords required to administer the federal grant program;
- Maintain paper and/or electronic files of all grant administration, reporting and agreements;
- Serve as technical resource to other Authority, State agencies, project partners and consulting staff impacted by grant requirements. Oversee interaction and sharing knowledge of grant program requirements across the organization, with partner agencies and the general public;
- Participate as team member in developing agreements for "pass-through" federal funds to other recipients (ex. Station Area Planning funding, LAUS funding, PTC grant);
- Monitor and report on status of project deliverables associated with active grant agreements and ensure proper recording and storage in deliverables tracking library;
- Develop and maintain reporting systems on grant activity, including grant monitoring by scope and line item;
- Oversee accurate, eligible and timely grant draw-downs and reimbursements with accounting staff and State Department of General Services;
- Coordinate federal oversight reviews as required;
- Identify and develop new sources of national and state grant funding including identifying strategic partnerships for joint funding requests. Track sources of funding and coordinate internal analysis for go-no go pursuit of funding;

- Coordinate grant applications submitted under the CAHSRA banner and on behalf of other jurisdictions. *Secured \$300 mill in new High-speed rail funding awarded in 2011 through FRA.*

**B. Expertise:**

**Describe the SME’s familiarity with relevant state laws, regulations, policies, procedures and practices regarding federal transportation grant funding:**

Ms. Rifkin has spent 15 years providing grant program leadership and support under contract to Washington State Ferries. She has directly supported the Budget Office in analysis of State biennial funding legislation, supplemental budget analysis, legislative questions/responses and legislative reporting. She has worked hand in hand with WSDOT’s Capital Program Development Office and WSF Capital program staff on state laws, policies and procedures pertaining to the funding of WSF’s capital program including review of CPDM/WSF Work Order Authorizations and federal aid agreement processes, review and comment on WSDOT’s Transportation Executive Information System capital program inputs/funding, as well as documenting WSDOT/WSF process and procedures for federal funding of the Capital program. She has advised the Ferries Capital Program Manager on federal and other grant aspects of OFM allotments, unanticipated receipts, project change management actions, work order authorization requests and journal vouchers.

**Describe the SME’s familiarity with relevant federal transportation agency laws, regulations, policies, procedures and practices regarding federal transportation grant funding.**

Ms. Rifkin is a national authority on federal transportation funding and grant administration with over 30 years of experience working with Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, USDOT Maritime Administration and Department of Homeland Security funding programs across all modes of transportation projects. This includes high-speed rail, light and commuter rail, ferry, port, bus, vanpool, roadway and station-area planning, bike and pedestrian programs. She has worked extensively with grantees at major transit agencies and State DOTs in Washington, Oregon, California, DC, Maryland, New York and New Jersey including the California High-speed Rail Authority (CA), Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division (WA), Sound Transit (WA), Community Transit (WA), Tri-Met (OR), WMATA (DC) to name a few. In her positions she has served as staff lead on providing expert review and interpretation of federal transit laws and requirements while documenting and training staff on these requirements.

Over the past seven years under contract to WSDOT/WSF Ms. Rifkin has been tasked with providing Guidance and Support for Regulatory Compliance which included:

- Provide strategic and tactical advice about grant requirements, regulations and best business practices;

- Develop and maintain Ferries Budget and Program Development Office Grant Manual (policies, procedures and practices);
- Know and advise concerning federal grant regulations and monitor changes in federal, state and local requirements impacting grant administration and reporting;
- Coordinate with the Ferries Director of Contracts and Legal services to obtain interpretations of federal rules and regulations and advice on compliance matters;
- Review and advise concerning internal controls for the use of federal and other grants by various WSDOT Ferries Division organizations, focusing on:
  - Awareness of federal regulations
  - Allowable activities and costs
  - Records for PIFs, waiver requests, etc.
  - Cash management
  - Equipment and real property management
  - Matching rates, toll credits, earmarks and periods of performance
  - Procurement
  - Suspension and debarment
  - Program income
  - Reporting
- Identify problems with grant usage, develop alternative course of action and recommend alternative solutions;
- Assist the WSDOT Ferries Division coordinator of responses to federal and other grant components of audits, including:
  - Assess audit risks and strategies
  - Provided information requested by the auditor
  - Review and respond to audit findings
  - Coordinate corrective action pertaining to federal audit findings
  - Assist in other federal regulatory activities

As a consultant to WSDOT/WSF, she has also been routinely called upon to provide expert analysis of federal transportation legislation for Washington State's federal congressional delegation and has been instrumental in helping to write key pieces of ferry legislation for the delegation in partnership with WSDOT's government affairs staff.

As a sub-consultant under contract to CDI/DCI Joint Venture Ms. Rifkin was tasked with performing enhanced Technical Capacity Triennial Reviews of Federal Transit Administration grantees nation-wide to identify areas of grants management non-compliance; federal contract # DTFT60-13-D-00014. She assessed transit agency's overall technical capacity with emphasis on level of staff expertise, training & education; technical expertise of senior management; organizational structure; staff turnover in key positions and organizational areas; transit service delivery; grants management & closeout; weaknesses in grant management processes.

In 2012 Ms. Rifkin was under contract to Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority (WMATA) as a **Grant Management Consultant** to provide specialized assistance in Federal Grants Planning, Administration and Management under contract #WMATA-0000068236 in order to further develop how the federal grants process is managed including the following elements:

- Review of administrative and logistical process and systems for capital grant program ! management, monitoring and reporting; !
- Review and analysis of existing and pending grant agreements and issues therein to facilitate grant obligation and/or close-out ;
- Assist in developing recommendations and action items for amendment, budget revision, closeout or other actions needed to manage grants;
- Development of Administrative Schedule of Reporting and other key deliverables required by FTA to maintain federal funding;
- Support assessment of technical capacity with WMATA and other consulting teams as needed including the review and documentation of WMATA's organizational structure, roles and responsibilities of key departments supporting the grant program such as Procurement, Accounting, Planning and others related to grant acquisition, management, draw downs, and close-out;
- Assist and advise in the development of survey instruments to gauge grant management practices at WMATA ;
- Support the review and identification of best practices for grant management and grant execution at comparable transit agencies for benchmarking;
- Develop grant administrative processes and controls for the agency, advising the agency on grant requirements, regulations and opportunities;
- Support development of preliminary action items and a work plan to improve organizational efficiencies and strengthen technical capacity of grantee;
- Support implementation of remedial actions needed to reduce grant backlog and administer active grants as well as the implementation of best practices in grant administration with WMATA and other consulting teams as needed;
- Develop positions and interpretation of federal rules and regulations that benefit WMATA and their projects;
- Advise the organization on maintaining the eligibility of various projects/project activities for federal funding;
- Support the development of a strategic grant funding plan aimed at maximizing and increasing WMATA grant funding. !

**Describe the SME's familiarity with the laws, regulations, policies, procedures and practices of regional transportation planning organizations responsible for distributing federal transportation grant funding.**

Ms. Rifkin provides expert level experience with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), having worked with these organizations over the past 25 years through other regional transit agencies and WSF. Specifically, over the past seven years under contract to WSDOT/WSF Ms. Rifkin has been tasked with maintaining those relationships including:

- Monitor the laws, policies, procedures and practices guiding how MPOs and RTPOs conduct business;
- Advise on MPO and RTPO planning requirements and provide input supporting MPO and RTPO planning;

- Advise on MPO and RTPO financial planning requirements and carry out fund distribution related activities ;
- Manage activities relating to programming projects in the Regional and State Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP/STIP);
- Provide reports required by MPOs and RTPOs;
- Assess requirements and respond to selected initiatives pursued by MPOs and RTPOs;
- Represent WSF on various MPO and RTPO staff committees as assigned;
- Review biennial Calls for Projects from the Puget Sound Regional Council for FTA and FHWA discretionary funding, summarize program requirements and recommend an internal program of projects to WSF Executive Team for grant application development.

**Describe the SME’s familiarity with the laws, regulations, policies, procedures and practices of the WSDOT, other DOT or public transit agency, including marine transit agencies, for financing transportation capital projects and operating activities with federal transportation grant funding.**

As described above, Ms. Rifkin has spent 15 years providing grant program leadership and support under contract to Washington State Ferries. She has directly supported the Budget Office in analysis of State biennial funding legislation, supplemental budget analysis, legislative questions/responses and legislative reporting. She has worked hand in hand with WSDOT’s Capital Program Development Office and WSF Capital program staff on state laws, policies and procedures pertaining to the funding of WSF’s capital program including review of CPDM/WSF Work Order Authorizations and federal aid agreement processes, review and comment on WSDOT’s Transportation Executive Information System capital program inputs/funding, as well as documenting WSDOT/WSF process and procedures for federal funding of the Capital program. She has advised the Ferries Capital Program Manager on federal and other grant aspects of OFM allotments, unanticipated receipts, project change management actions, work order authorization requests and journal vouchers.

Most recently she served as staff lead supporting WSF’s Senior Budget Manager to devise a new federal investment strategy that would shift most of WSF’s federal capital program funding to the operating program thus vastly simplifying the administration and use of federal formula funding from the FTA and FHWA. After this initiative received legislative approval in 2023, Ms. Rifkin has been instrumental in implementing the administrative and programmatic changes through the FTA, FHWA and PSRC to convert over \$150 mill in federal formula funding from WSF current capital funding to the operating program in the 23-25 biennium.

In serving as the first **Grant Program Manager** for both Community Transit and Sound Transit in Washington State Ms. Rifkin was instrumental in crafting the long-term federal funding strategies for both agencies, negotiating the entrance of Sound Transit into the PSRC’s FTA Caucus distributing formula funding to the region’s transit agencies and created the first distribution model used by the PSRC for equitable distribution of formula funding to those agencies. She also served as a grant writer for both agencies securing millions of dollars in federal discretionary funding for their capital programs.

In her work as a **Government & Financial Advisory Consultant** for the Port Authority of NY & NJ Ms. Rifkin was tasked with development of alternative public and/or private financing strategies and funding models as part of the Port Authority's Interagency Study of Private Passenger Ferry Services. She developed a strategy, final report and presentation of recommendations for near, mid and long-term federal funding and legislative strategies for private ferry service funding in the NY-NJ region. Her expert analysis of FTA formula funding and requirements yielded a novel strategy to secure/increase formula funding for the region attributed to private ferry service.

**Describe the SME's familiarity with federal, state and regional laws, regulations, policies, procedures and practices regarding equity in the distribution of federal transportation grant funding.**

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has been a key priority running through all new federal transportation funding legislation including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – our current 5 year transportation funding authorization. At the local level equity has become a key element of and scoring criteria within the Puget Sound Regional Council's formula distributions and discretionary competitions. Ms. Rifkin has been instrumental in supporting WSF's Assistant Secretary of Ferries in her negotiations with regional transit agency executives on establishing a new Equity Formula Distribution process for the PSRC which is projected to yield over \$3 million/biennium for WSF equity initiatives. She has provided ongoing support to the WSF Budget Office in implementing the equity distribution process including the development of applications for equity funding and the programming of that funding on Legislative priorities including Americans with Disabilities Act system-wide improvements. She has also provided analysis and recommendations to the WSF Budget Office on equity changes to the region's discretionary funding program criteria managed through the PSRC and the Regional Project Evaluation Committee, of which WSF is a standing member.

**C. Education, Licensing and Certifications:**

B.S., Environmental Studies, Huxley College of Environmental Studies at Western Washington University, 1980

Certified as a federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and state Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) in the State of Washington since 2002. King County certified Small Contractor & Supplier.

**D. Availability:**

Leslie Rifkin of Spectrum Design is available to serve as a federal transportation grants subject matter expert (SME) immediately with an annual availability of up to 1,100 hrs/year.

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## **Scoring Criteria 2: Samples (3) of Policies, Procedures and Practices Prepared for a Client Providing Guidance Regarding the Strategic Planning, Funds Management, Acquisition and Administration of Federal Transportation Grant Funding**

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Please see Appendix A attachments for copies of the following three Policies/Procedures/Practices developed by Leslie Rifkin, Spectrum Design:

**A1: Grant Program Quick Guide** - Guide to US Department of Transportation Funding Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration (2023), Washington State Ferries

**A2: Capital Program Guideline** – Programming Vessel Preservation & Improvement “Bucket Projects” in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (2021) Washington State Ferries

**A3: Options for Ongoing Grant Program Management & Administration (2011)**, California High-Speed Rail Authority

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## **Scoring Criteria 3: Firm’s Project Management System**

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### **A.1 Describe your firm’s Quality Assurance/Quality Control processes:**

For any WSF work products created by Ms. Rifkin the process used for QA/QC is to provide an initial draft of the work product to affected staff and incorporate their review in the final draft of the work product. As an example, when developing the Grant Program Quick Guide for WSF policies and procedures, Ms. Rifkin assembled the initial draft and created a review team consisting of WSDOT staff whose expertise would inform various sections of the procedures - capital development program manager from WSF and WSDOT, WSF Legal team, environmental teams with a final review and edit by the WSF Senior Budget Manager.

### **A.2 Describe your firm’s tracking system(s) to monitor the assignment’s budget and/or scope:**

Initially Spectrum Design will look at the total hours available to the contract over a given period of time and then determine a monthly average hours to equally spread the work over time. Spectrum Design uses an excel workbook to monitor the assignment’s total budget and remaining balances adjusted on a monthly basis based on daily journal entries of hours worked and assignments completed. Spectrum Design will also assure that assignments given fall within the agreed to scope of the contract before proceeding with the work.

### **A.3 Describe your firm’s scheduling process:**

Spectrum Design is a sole proprietorship with only a single employee. As such, scheduling required work is fairly straight forward. Ms. Rifkin will always guarantee availability before accepting a contract and usually only works with one client/contract at a time. As mentioned above, Ms. Rifkin will determine an average amount of hours per month for the contract given its total hours. Vacations/holidays will be factored into the monthly scheduling such that on certain months there may be slightly less than average availability and other months slightly more. Firm

deadlines required by the client or grantor agencies/stakeholders are always built into the monthly work plan so that assignments are never delivered late.

**A.4 Describe your firm’s process for interacting with your client’s staff:**

Ms. Rifkin will treat this assignment as if she is a contracted staff person and will make herself available to attend most meetings pertinent to her assignment. She will participate remotely in weekly standing Budget Office meetings, bi-weekly Grants Update meetings coordinated by the WSF Grant Manager as well as bi-weekly Grants check-ins coordinated by the Senior Budget Manager and once-monthly WSF Funding meetings coordinated through WSDOT. Ms. Rifkin has long-standing, positive working relationships with key staff who would interact with her on a daily/weekly basis as a grant Subject Matter Expert including Budget Office staff, Contracts & Legal, Executive Team members and key WSDOT staff people in capital development and public transportation divisions. She will avail herself of direct Teams interactions with staff as well as phone calls and emails as needed.

**A.5 Describe your firm’s ability to provide interaction with your client and/or stakeholders:**

Ms. Rifkin has long-standing, highly respected relationships with external stakeholders WSF relies upon to develop and implement their federal program. This includes many years of working with PSRC’s planning and programming staff on STIP development and funding, various Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, FTA’s grant administration, technical and executive teams, FHWA’s Regional Manager as well as Grant Program Managers at all the regional public transit agencies. Ms. Rifkin will leverage these relationships on behalf of her client and their needs.

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**Scoring Criteria 4: Project Delivery Approach**

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**A.1 How does your firm develop a work plan for this assignment?**

Ms. Rifkin will assess the overall scope of work and create a broad monthly workplan for key assignments in the scope of work based on prior experience in the timing of certain key deliverables for the grant program. That workplan will be refined in real-time as assignments and due dates crystalize or based on emergent needs.

**A.2 Who is involved with the decision-making process for the development of the work plan?**

The workplan will be shared with the Senior Budget Manager and Grants Manager for input.

**A.3 Describe each of the elements of the proposed work plan for this assignment.**

The plan of work will consist of the following elements, some of which will follow normal schedules and some of which may be ad-hoc depending on need.



Meetings: The workplan will include weekly/monthly meetings that follow a known timeline and schedule such as weekly Budget Office meeting, bi-weekly Grants Update and Grant Division meeting, monthly WSDOT-WSF funding meeting.

TIP/STIP development: The workplan will include the recurring elements on a monthly basis required to evaluate WSF's capital program based on changes to TEIS or new funding awards by grantor agencies to determine which projects may need to be included or updated in the STIP. Applications will be developed based on WSF need as it relates to PSRC's STIP amendment calendar and monthly internal project funding evaluations.

Grant Related Laws and Regulations: As new regulations are released by relevant federal agencies or as questions arise from the management team Ms. Rifkin will conduct an analysis and response as required.

Development of Policies and Procedures: These items will be woven into the workplan as assigned by the Senior Budget Manager based on the needs of the Budget Office and Grants Division.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO): Recurring assignments related to the MPO and RTPO will be programmed on a monthly, annual, and biennial basis to include evaluation of meeting materials for monthly FTA Caucus, RPEC and Transportation Operator's Committee meetings, evaluation of need to submit for monthly STIP amendments, review and recommendation for annual FTA formula funding apportionment and FHWA apportionment, and biennial CMAQ/STP competitions. Other specific ad-hoc assignments will be programmed as they may arise from the MPO/RTPO and as assigned by the Senior Budget Manager

**A.4 Describe how your work plan addresses contingencies that may arise during the assignment.**

Un-planned yet critical items always emerge in any assignment and will be incorporated into the work plan based on prioritization by the Senior Budget Manager.

**B. Describe your approaches to resolve issue(s) with the client and the client's staff; external parties, such as federal grantor agencies, regional planning organizations that distribute federal transportation grant funding; and stakeholders.**

As issues arise, they will be addressed in a respectful and professional manner through initial discussions with the Senior Budget Manager and through person to person TEAMS contact and/or via email communications as the situation arises. Where complex issues arise affecting multiple parties, a recommendation will be made to the Senior Budget Manager for a group meeting with the Vendor identifying the issue(s) and its potential resolution prior to the meeting.

**C. Provide assumptions for work breakdown structure, e.g., client vs. consultant deliverables.**

The work breakdown and deliverables will flow from the various elements of the work plan as identified in Project Delivery Approach above and based on their need, timing and complexity.

**D. Identify any key issues and critical milestones for the assignment.**

Initial key issues and critical milestones will include the following and will be based on approval and prioritization by the Senior Budget Manager:

- Submittal of monthly STIP amendments
- Submittal of annual FTA formula project programming documentation and associated STIP Amendments
- Submittal of quarterly financial reporting as required by the State legislature
- Submittal of annual FTA grant applications
- Monthly evaluation of upcoming meeting agendas
- Review and comment of Supplemental budget requests
- Review and comment of 25-27 federal funding in capital and operating program budgets
- Review and comment of proposed federal legislation and guidance as it is released and within the comment period
- Responding to immediate requests for information from WSDOT's federal and/or state delegation