Sole Source Contract Filing Justification
Contract # K12837 with Noble Software Group, LLC.

Specific Problem or Need

What is the business need or problem that requires this contract?

Currently the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) does not have a risk assessment tool that is appropriate for the justice involved women in our state. These women are housed in Washington State Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) and Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women (MCCCW), as well as women in work releases around the state and in community corrections. The results of not having a tool specific to women’s needs increases their risk and does not provide the women in our care with the best tools for a successful reentry into our communities. All stakeholders for the Washington DOC have asked for more gender responsive and trauma informed care of the women in our custody for numerous years. We are currently harming these individuals and underserving them with an ineffective tool.

Sole Source Criteria Questions

1. Describe the unique features, qualifications, abilities or expertise of the contractor proposed for this sole source contract.

Rigorous research was conducted that informs efforts to prevent women from cycling in and out of the criminal justice system, and to improve the lives of system-impacted women. The suite of Women’s Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) instruments are the only validated, peer-reviewed risk/need instruments in the public domain specifically designed by and for system-impacted women. The WRNA not only measures women’s specific criminogenic needs, but also their strengths, to drive a comprehensive, holistic case-plan designed to work alongside women and their gender- and trauma-responsive treatment and supervision.

The WRNA was originally created through a cooperative agreement between the National Institute of Corrections and the University of Cincinnati through research conducted by Patricia Van Voorhis, Emily Salisbury, Emily Wright, and Ashley Bauman. The instrument is now managed by Dr. Emily Salisbury at Utah Criminal Justice Center (UCJC), College of Social Work University of Utah.

The Women’s Risk and Needs Assessment (WRNA) is the only tool that exist that serves the specific needs of incarcerated women, both at entry, through their incarceration, and out to the community. This tool is recommended by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). It is utilized in a number of other states, including our neighbors to the south, Oregon. It is a proven and effective tool and has documented results through data sources proving that the tool effectively reduces recidivism by sending women back to the communities more fully prepared. This assessment uniquely addresses
women’s relational issues to include identifying treatment needs that only a trauma informed tool can identify.

DOC is requesting to provide a sole source contract to Noble Software Group (Noble). Noble is the only vendor that provides a software implementation of version 7 of the WRNA and has many proprietary innovations, including but not limited to:

It features a case planning tool that allows for WRNA results to feed the case plan automatically and helps officers focus on critical needs prior to assigning general case planning goals;

The software is entirely based on Microsoft’s .NET framework;

It provides a form authorizing tool that allows for end users to create scoreable assessments and non-scored form for easy data collection;

It offers an automated inter-rated reliability site designed to offer staff the ability to watch professional interviews, complete assessments on those videos, and have the result of the completed assessments compared to a model assessment completed by experts;

The software supports transfers of individuals’ assessment and case plan data among the agencies that use the software.

2. **What kind of market research did the agency conduct to conclude that alternative sources were inappropriate or unavailable?**

The Gender Responsive Administrator for the Women’s Division spoke to the most renowned subject matter experts in the field of gender responsiveness and trauma informed care for justice involved women. They all recommended the WRNA and stated that it is the only tool of its kind that has been peer reviewed and is evidence based. She also searched for vendors at conferences specific to women’s needs, and on the internet. This is the only tool that offers such a comprehensive hands-on training packet and has a litany of certified trainers to include NIC trainers who can assure there is quality control in place. They also will train DOC trainers which saves the agency funds. Many states throughout the country including Oregon have utilized the WRNA. Noble is the only vendor that provides a software implementation of version 7 of the WRNA.

3. **What considerations were given to providing opportunities in this contact for small business, including but not limited to unbundling the goods and/or services acquired.**

The proposed recipient of the sole source contract is a small business.
4. **Provide a detailed and compelling description of the costs and risks mitigated by contracting with this contractor (i.e., learning curve, follow-up nature).**

The cost of annual hosting for Noble Assessment Platform and Noble View is approximately $32,520.00. Risks are mitigated by the fact that the WRNA is the only tool that exist that serves the specific needs of incarcerated women. It is a proven and effective tool and has documented results through data sources proving that the tool effectively reduces recidivism by sending women back to the communities more fully prepared. The tool is recommended by NIC and is utilized in a number of other states. Noble is the only vendor that provides a software implementation of version 7 of the WRNA.

On the other hand, the results of not having a tool specific to women’s needs increases their risk and does not provide the women in our care with the best tools for a successful reentry into our communities. We are currently harming these individuals and underserving them with an ineffective tool.

5. **Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of special circumstances such as confidential investigations, copyright restrictions, etc.,? If so, please describe.**

No. This sole source proposal is strictly because there is not other proven and effective tool that exists to serve the specific needs of incarcerated women and Noble is the only vendor that provides a software implementation of version 7 of the WRNA.

6. **Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of unavoidable, critical time delays or issues that prevented the agency from completing this acquisition using a competitive process? If so, please describe.** For example, if time constraints are applicable, identify when the agency was on notice of the need for the goods and/or service, the entity that imposed the constraints, explain the authority of that entity to impose them, and provide the timelines within which work must be accomplished.

No, DOC does not have any time-controlled restraints.

7. **Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of a geographic limitation? If the proposed contractor is the only source available in the geographical area, state the basis for this conclusion and the rationale for limiting the size of the geographical area selected.**

No.

8. **What are the consequences of not having this sole source filing approved? Describe in detail the impact to the agency and to services it provides if this sole source filing is not approved.**
Not having this sole source approved will not allow DOC to properly provide risk and needs assessments that are gender responsive, and trauma informed. Doing risk and needs assessments on women that were designed for men causes harm. DOC as an agency is aware of that due to the research and assessments that have been conducted in our state at the women’s facilities to include the recent Gender Informed Practices Assessment (GIPA) by CORE Associates. Each research paper and assessment has come back to us with the number one action item being that we do not use the right tools for risk and needs assessments or for classifying female incarcerated individuals.

Research continues to emerge that shows how we harm justice involved women with this lack of proper service. We not only harm justice involved women we also harm their children. Without these services women return to the communities, their families, children, without the proper tools for success. This can and does cause generational incarceration because moms cannot teach their girls about healthy relationships if we have not helped them understand what that is with proper programing and care.

Sole Source Posting

The sole source posting was published in WEBS on May 17, 2022. No response to the posting has been received.

Reasonableness of Cost

Since competition was not used as the means for procurement, how did the agency conclude that the costs, fees, or rates negotiated are fair and reasonable? Please make a comparison with comparable contracts, use the results of a market survey, or employ some other appropriate means calculated to make such a determination.

In comparison to the Washington One, which is the tool currently being used for all risk needs and assessments across the state, the cost is negligible. The Washington One will continue to serve the needs of the agency’s male population. The updates on that tool alone far exceed the starting cost of the WRNA. NOBLE offers a solution that will assure the system is always in working order as part of the contract, they will provide support as needed at no additional cost. The cloud environment will enable us to ask for updates if they become necessary due to legislation or litigation and add other tools if needed. The SaaS will save the investment of time for DOC IT staff. There are no other similar contracts for comparison but we believe it is a reasonable amount to pay to prevent future litigation, assure that proper classification of women, and have a clear pathway to implement change as needed.