

Request for Proposals

Prime Age Employment Group (PAEG) Focus Groups

Olympic Community of Health

Funding Purpose & Overview

Olympic Community of Health (OCH) seeks to contract with one qualified entity to conduct and analyze focus groups to gather data, insights, and evaluation findings regarding effective communication strategies for [Olympic Connect](#), a Community Care Hub of Washington. This initiative aims to specifically improve engagement with the Prime Age Employment Group (PAEG)*, by refining outreach and messaging approaches to reduce stigma around seeking help in efforts to reach this population, and support them with addressing their health-related social barriers.

OCH is accepting proposals from entities from both within and external to the Olympic region of Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties in Washington state. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that align with their skills, strengths, and capacity in qualitative evaluation, focus group facilitation, and rural or suburban communication dynamics.

** The Prime Age Employment Group or PAEG is a term used to define those in the 25–54-year-old age group that are un- or underemployed. This population is a key audience for Olympic Connect.*

What is Olympic Community of Health?

Olympic Community of Health (OCH) is a non-profit organization serving the three-county region of Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties with partnerships with seven sovereign Tribal nations.

OCH's goal is to improve individual and population health and advance equity by addressing the determinants of health.

Olympic Community of Health OlympicCH.org		
Purpose	Vision	Mission
To tackle health issues that no single sector or Tribe can tackle alone	A healthier, more equitable three-county region	To solve health problems through collaborative action

What is Olympic Connect?

Olympic Connect is a Community Care Hub of Washington that connects people on the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas to the services they need to thrive. Through *Olympic Connect*, community-based workers (trusted helpers) provide clients with the one-on-one support they need to achieve their health and life goals. *Olympic Connect* is a community-driven network of partners that supports care coordination to local resources like health care, job training, food assistance, child care, housing, and more.

Olympic Connect strengthens the regional network of partners and coordinates between health care and social service providers, addressing health issues no organization or Tribe can tackle alone. *Olympic Connect* supports the community-based workforce by providing training and technical assistance, addressing service gaps, and collecting centralized data. By removing barriers and helping community members access services, we can create a region of healthy people and thriving communities. [Learn more about Olympic Connect.](#)

Project Details

Project Name: Olympic Connect PAEG Focus Groups

Funding Amount: Up to \$200,000

Overview: OCH seeks a contractor to conduct focus groups to gather data, insights, and evaluation findings regarding effective outreach, marketing, and communication strategies for Olympic Connect. This initiative aims to specifically improve engagement with the Prime Age Employment Group (PAEG), by refining messaging approaches to reduce stigma around seeking help with social barriers.

The primary objective of the PAEG Focus Group project is to:

- Identify effective ways to communicate with the PAEG population about Olympic Connect.
- Understand the top social needs and barriers faced by PAEG.
- Determine if and how current Olympic Connect messaging resonates with PAEG.
- Discover the optimal channels and locations to communicate about Olympic Connect.
- Identify who trusted messengers are for the PAGE population demographic.
- Develop effective communication strategies to reach the PAEG population and reduce stigma around seeking help.
- Identify ineffective communication methods (who, how and what)
- Understand what communication barriers exist amongst the PAGE population, such as lack of internet or computer access, etc.
- Tailor messaging strategies based on specific characteristics, including geography, age, gender, employment type (blue/white collar), etc.

Scope of Work:

The contractor would be responsible the following tasks:

1. Understand Olympic Connect
 - Gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's goals, messaging, and target audience (this will be facilitated by OCH staff).
2. Focus Group Development
 - Collaborate with OCH staff to develop effective focus group questions.
 - Work with OCH staff to create an interview guide tailored to the project's objectives.
3. Participant Recruitment
 - Identify and recruit participants from the local PAEG population.

- Develop and implement an incentive model to encourage participation, if necessary, to ensure comprehensive data collection from PAEG focus groups.
- 4. Conduct Focus Groups
 - Organize and facilitate focus groups, aiming for approximately five focus group sessions per county, each consisting of 5-7 participants. Prioritize in-person discussion sessions while utilizing virtual sessions sparingly, if necessary.
 - Ensure participant diversity across:
 - Geography
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Employment type (blue/white collar)
 - Employment status (un/underemployed)
- 5. Data Analysis
 - Analyze qualitative data gathered during the focus group sessions.
- 6. Reporting and Recommendations
 - Prepare a detailed report summarizing findings, and recommended outreach and communication strategies to promote and encourage PAEG engagement with Olympic Connect services.

The ideal contractor will:

- Demonstrate strong skills in building trust with participants to foster a safe and welcoming environment, encourage open sharing and active engagement in focus group discussions.
- Have extensive experience conducting qualitative evaluation, particularly with focus groups.
- Ideally possess knowledge of the region (Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties) or have experience conducting qualitative evaluation in rural or suburban settings.
- Provide a portfolio of qualifications, highlighting examples of previous work that demonstrates success in conducting qualitative evaluation with focus groups.

Eligibility

To ensure compliance with 2 CFR 200.317–200.326, potential contractors must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Legal Entity Status

Contractor must be legally registered entities authorized to conduct business within the United States. Eligible entities may include corporations, partnerships, sole proprietors, or non-profit organizations.

2. Procurement Compliance

Contractor must adhere to federal procurement standards outlined in 2 CFR 200.320, ensuring appropriate procurement methods such as micro-purchases and small purchases that meet the simplified acquisition framework.

3. Competitive Procurement Practices

While formal bidding processes may not be required, contractor must participate in a fair and competitive procurement process, with pricing and qualifications evaluated for reasonableness and compliance.

4. Financial and Administrative Capacity

Contractor must demonstrate the ability to manage federal funds responsibly, maintain financial accountability, and comply with record-keeping requirements. Documentation must show price reasonableness and equitable contracting practices.

4. Experience and Qualifications

Contractor must possess relevant experience, qualifications, and capacity to perform the required services or provide the necessary goods in accordance with federal procurement regulations.

5. Ethical Standards and Transparency

Contractor must certify compliance with federal ethical standards, including avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring transparency in all procurement-related activities (2 CFR 200.318).

6. Small and Minority-Owned Business Considerations

Preference may be given to small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women-owned enterprises in accordance with 2 CFR 200.321, encouraging diverse participation in federally funded projects.

7. Subcontracting and Oversight

If subcontracting is involved, contractor must ensure compliance with procurement regulations, maintaining oversight and accountability in agreements.

8. Federal Debarment and Suspension

Contractor must certify that they are not debarred or suspended from federal contracting as outlined in 2 CFR 200.214, which prohibits engagement with entities barred from receiving federal funds.

Role of Olympic Community of Health

OCH will provide the following roles and functions to support the selected contractor under this request for proposal/Scope of Work:

- Regular communication with relevant OCH staff to ensure alignment with project deliverables.
- Context and background information of Olympic Connect.
- Collaboration to develop PAEG focus group interview questions with final approval from OCH staff before facilitating focus groups.
- Approval of the PAEG focus group facilitation guide.

Funding Model & Budget

For the project outlined in the **Project Details** section above, OCH has provided an “up to” amount for funding. Applicants must submit a detailed budget that reflects their strengths, skills, and capacity to successfully implement the project.

- Budgets must be submitted in Microsoft Excel and should clearly delineate costs, demonstrating their direct connection to the project’s overall scope of work.
- While applicants have flexibility in determining the format of their budget submission, they should ensure clarity, transparency, and accuracy in cost breakdowns.

Funding Sources

This project is supported by two distinct funding sources:

- \$150,000 in federal funds awarded to OCH as a prime recipient of a federal award.
- \$50,000 independently designated by OCH to supplement the project’s funding.

OCH’s braided funding model enables an expanded geographic reach, ensuring that Olympic Connect services and resources are accessible, where eligible, across all three counties within the Olympic Region—Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties.

Timeline

Timeframe	Step	Notes
May 15	Funding opportunity released	
June 11, 1:00-2:00pm (Pacific time)	Optional virtual information session	Zoom registration
May 15-June 24	Frequently asked questions (FAQ) and responses available online	FAQ Document
June 24 by 5pm	Proposals due	Submit to: OCH@OlympicCH.org
June 25-July 7	Proposal review and scoring	
July 10	Notification of proposal status	Applicants will be notified via email
July 14	Submit selected proposal to OCHs federal funder, for approval	
August 1	Contracting	
September 1	Contract start date (anticipated)	

The contract for this scope of work is expected to start September 1, 2025, and will end with a negotiated end date (to be determined in collaboration with OCH during the contracting phase).

Proposal Overview, Scoring, and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals: Interested applicants will create a project proposal for Olympic Connect PAEG focus groups. The proposal narrative should be provided as a single PDF attachment, and the budget/budget narrative as an Excel attachment, then emailed to OCH@OlympicCH.org.

Proposals must align with the scoring information below and will include relevant contact information. Applicants may provide additional supplemental materials within the single PDF attachment.

OCH staff will conduct a technical review to ensure proposals include all required information. Applicants will receive notification of receipt of complete proposals or requests for additional information. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed or scored.

Each proposal will be reviewed by a minimum of two OCH staff members and scored based on the following criteria:

Element	Top scoring responses will demonstrate:	Points Available
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate strong skills in building trust with participants to foster a safe and welcoming environment, encouraging open sharing and active engagement in focus group discussions. • Have extensive experience in conducting qualitative evaluations. • Provide qualifications, including examples of previous work and demonstrated success in conducting focus groups. 	10
Content/ Subject Matter Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated subject matter expertise in alignment with the identified project. • Ideally possess knowledge of the region (Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties) or have experience conducting such research in rural or suburban setting. 	10
Approach & Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan/approach that demonstrates a clear proposal of project deliverables, milestones, and steps. • A reasonable approach that values qualitative measurement. 	10
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement and commitment to partner with Olympic Community of Health. • Commitment to learning about Olympic Connect and the Olympic region and what makes it unique. 	10
Equity & Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualitative approach to project design, measurement, and evaluation given the mostly rural makeup of the Olympic region and diverse communities. 	10

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of equity and inclusion in the approach and outcomes. • A commitment to simplicity and plain language so the information can be understood by lay and diverse audiences. • A creative approach to incentivizing participants of the PAEG focus groups, in compliance with Uniform Guidance. 	
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed budget inclusive of all costs in alignment with the “up-to” amounts identified in the above project scope. • A reasonable fiscal approach that demonstrates strong fiscal stewardship of public funds. • Alignment between the budget and proposal narrative. 	10
Total points available		60

Decision Making: OCH staff will make decisions based on the written proposal and budget along with organizational and regional needs to effectively communicate with PAEG about Olympic Connect.

Reviewers may reach out to applicants for clarifying or additional information.

Proposal Technical Assistance

- **Information session:** Join OCH for an optional information session via zoom. Wednesday, June 11 from 1:00-2:00 pm. [Zoom link.](#)
- **FAQ:** A [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) will be updated regularly throughout the process.
- **Email:** OCH@OlympicCH.org– send us any questions and we will respond within 1-2 business days and will update the FAQ document accordingly.

Contract Requirements

In an effort to aid in transparency and clarity, applicants should be aware of the following elements that will be required as a part of contracting with OCH for this work:

- Prior to contracting, OCH will certify that the applicant is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded in any Federal department or agency from participating in contract procurement. Prior to contracting, OCH must provide documentation satisfactory to the federal funder that the proposed contractor and any additional contractor identified subrecipient(s) are eligible to receive Federal assistance/funding.
- Contractors must provide proof of insurance coverage including commercial general liability insurance. Auto coverage will be required if the applicant proposes any travel related to the proposal.
- Contractors must provide OCH with a current, completed W-9.
- OCH processes payments electronically. Contractors will be required to provide banking information for payments.

- Contractors must submit invoices to OCH based on a cost-reimbursement model.

Proposal Process

Complete proposals include the following elements:

- Completed written proposal (submit as a single PDF attachment)
- Detailed budget submitted in Microsoft Excel (applicant to determine format)

Submit no later than 5pm on Tuesday, June 24 to OCH@OlympicCH.org

Applicants will be notified of final decisions by July 10.