King County
Department of Local Services

NORTH HIGHLINE VACANT TO VIBRANT PROGRAM 26DO-NHV2V

- **Release Date:** 9/21/2026
- **Bid Due Date:** 10/12/2026 no later than 2PM PST
- **Total Funding Available:** $250,000
- **Estimated Maximum Award:** $250,000

Submitting a Bid

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is now open, and all bidders ("Bidders") must submit their bid via Microsoft Forms no later than the due date(s) noted above. The services procured through this RFP shall be provided in accordance with the following and the attached instructions, requirements, and specifications. Bidders are responsible for regularly checking King County Department of Local Services' Economic Development page for any updates, clarifications, or Addenda to this RFP.

All RFP Documents, including required bid documents are available here ("online"): Economic development - King County, Washington.

ONLINE SITE: https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/local-services/governance-leadership/local-government-for-unincorporated-king-county/economic-development

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1. Introduction

The King County Department of Local Services (DLS) is pleased to release this Request for Proposal (RFP) for North Highline Vacant to Vibrant Program with funding from Council, Ordinance 20023.

The Awardee shall identify, secure, lease, activate, and operate a temporary commercial space within North Highline for approximately twelve (12) months. The Awardee will recruit and support local artists, makers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses while managing day-to-day operations and reporting outcomes to King County.

This procurement is intended to support economic development, activate a vacant commercial space, increase commercial corridor vibrancy, and provide entrepreneurship opportunities for local residents.

A. Funding Source

This project is funded through King County Ordinance 20023, the 2026-2027 Biennial Budget, which provides $300,000 to establish and implement the Vacant to Vibrant pilot program in North Highline. $250,000 is available for this RFP.

B. Equity, Racial and Social Justice

For many in our region, King County is a great place to live, learn, work, and play. Yet we have deep and persistent inequities - especially by race and place – that, in many cases, are getting worse and threaten our collective prosperity. Equity, Racial and Social Justice (ERSJ) is an integrated part of DLS' work. Our goal is to ensure that all people, regardless of who they are and where they live, have the opportunity to thrive, with full and equal access to opportunities, power, and resources.

DLS seeks to support community-led and community-informed organizations that uphold the values of and are embedded in the communities they serve across all aspects of their leadership and service. We further seek to support organizations that recognize and address the disparities that exist in our communities, both across DLS and by specific program area.

The Bidder may be asked to demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to the principles of ERSJ as demonstrated by the values of their staffing and board, services tailored to community need, and commitment to social justice, racial equity, and continuous improvement. One aspect of this work includes understanding – at both a program and system level – structural and institutional racism as it plays out for individuals, and the disparate impacts on individuals' collective experiences and outcomes compared to the population as a whole.

2. North Highline Vacant to Vibrant Overview

A. Program Purpose Statement

The purpose of the North Highline Vacant to Vibrant Program is to temporarily activate one vacant commercial storefront and create opportunities for local artists, makers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses to showcase and sell their products or services, build business skills, and increase visibility within the community. The program is intended to increase activity and vibrancy in the

surrounding commercial area, support local economic development, and test a storefront activation model that may inform future efforts.

The Awardee will be responsible for implementing and managing the program, including identifying and leasing an appropriate commercial space, preparing and activating the space, recruiting and supporting participants, marketing and community outreach, providing or coordinating business support, managing day-to-day operations, collecting performance information, and reporting results to DLS.

DLS has allocated up to $250,000 for the program. Funding may support costs necessary to identify, lease, prepare, activate, and operate one commercial storefront for approximately 12 months.

Work not included in this Scope of Work includes the purchase of real property, permanent capital improvements to private property, or ongoing operations beyond the contract period unless otherwise authorized by King County.

B. Background

North Highline's commercial areas continue to experience vacant storefronts, which can limit economic activity, reduce pedestrian activity, and affect the vibrancy of commercial corridors. The Department of Local Services (DLS) is exploring temporary storefront activation as a way to bring activity to vacant commercial spaces while supporting local artists, makers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses.

C. Objective

1. Scope of Work

The Awardee will, at a minimum:

- Identify and secure one suitable vacant commercial storefront within North Highline.
- Prepare and activate the space for public use.
- Recruit and support approximately 12–18 local artists, makers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses.
- Provide participants with opportunities to showcase and sell products or services.
- Provide or coordinate business development, technical assistance, or other support that helps participants build business skills and capacity.
- Operate the storefront as a safe, welcoming, and publicly accessible space during established operating hours.
- Conduct marketing, outreach, and community engagement to increase awareness and participation.
- Develop and maintain a website or online presence that provides information about the program, storefront, participants, and opportunities for community feedback.
- Track participation, activities, community engagement, and other measures identified by DLS.
- Submit required progress, financial, and final reports to DLS.
- Document lessons learned and recommendations that may inform future storefront activation efforts.

2. Period of Performance

The period of performance of any contract resulting from this Solicitation is tentatively scheduled to begin on or around November 1, 2026, and end by December 31, 2027. The contract period is expected to include program start-up, storefront identification and leasing, site preparation, approximately 12 months of storefront operations, and program closeout. An amendment extending or shortening the period of performance, if any, will be at the sole discretion of DLS.

3. Focus Population(s)

The program is intended to serve local artists, makers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses connected to North Highline, including individuals and businesses that may face barriers to accessing commercial space, business opportunities, or economic development resources.

The program should prioritize meaningful participation by businesses and entrepreneurs from communities that have historically experienced barriers to economic opportunity, including Black, Indigenous, Latinx, immigrant, refugee, and women-owned businesses, as well as artists, makers, and entrepreneurs who live or work in North Highline.

The Awardee should demonstrate how its outreach, recruitment, participant support, and program operations will be accessible and responsive to the communities served.

4. Outcomes

The program is intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- One vacant commercial storefront is activated and operated as a public-facing space for approximately 12 months.
- Approximately 12–18 local artists, makers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses participate in the program.
- Participants have opportunities to showcase and sell their products or services and increase their visibility.
- Participants gain business experience, skills, connections, or other resources that support their business development.
- The activated storefront contributes to increased activity, visibility, and community engagement in the surrounding commercial area.
- DLS receives measurable information about program participation, community engagement, storefront activity, and other results.
- DLS receives lessons learned and recommendations that can inform potential future storefront activation efforts.

3. Eligibility and Minimum Qualifications

D. Eligibility

This Solicitation is open to entities that are legally able to enter into a contract with King County and meet the requirements of this Solicitation, including:

1. Nonprofit corporations with federal tax-exempt status and a registered Federal Identification Number (TIN or EIN);
2. Federally recognized Tribes or Tribal organizations;
3. For-profit organizations, including limited liability companies (LLCs), corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships, and social enterprises;
4. Community-based organizations or other eligible entities with demonstrated experience providing economic development, business support, commercial activation, or related services; or

Businesses or organizations using a fiscal sponsor will not be considered. Small nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply.

E. Minimum Qualifications

Eligible applicants must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Have at least three (3) years of experience providing economic development, business support, commercial activation, arts entrepreneurship, community-based programming, or a substantially similar service.
2. Have sufficient financial and organizational capacity to manage the proposed program and the anticipated contract.
3. Have a TIN, EIN, or other acceptable identification number to facilitate payments from King County.
4. Be in good standing and eligible to receive federal, state, and county funds and not be currently debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from receiving public funds.
5. Agree to comply with DLS Standard Terms and Conditions and all applicable federal, state, and local laws and requirements.
6. Demonstrate experience managing a public-facing program, commercial space, storefront, marketplace, or similar community-based operation.
7. Demonstrate the ability to identify, lease, prepare, and operate an appropriate commercial storefront within North Highline.

4. Available Funding

DLS has allocated up to **$250,000** for the North Highline Vacant to Vibrant Program.

The maximum amount an applicant may request is **$250,000**. Applicants must submit a detailed budget showing how requested funds will support the full scope of work and proposed activities.

Eligible costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Commercial storefront lease costs;
- Utilities and internet;
- Temporary site preparation and improvements;
- Temporary signage and wayfinding;
- Program staffing and management;
- Participant recruitment and support;
- Marketing and outreach;
- Community engagement and events;
- Website development and maintenance;
- Program supplies and operating expenses;
- Performance measurement and reporting; and
- Other reasonable costs necessary to implement the program and approved by DLS.

DLS reserves the right to not award all funds advertised in this Solicitation.

Any contract awarded as a result of this Solicitation is contingent upon the availability of funding.

Applicants should provide a budget covering the anticipated contract period and clearly identify costs associated with storefront start-up, approximately 12 months of operations, and closeout.

5. RFP Process

A. Timeline

The following timeline represents the tentative schedule of the entire RFP process, from release of the Solicitation to contract execution for program implementation. **The dates listed here are subject to change.**

RFP Process	Date
RFP Release Date	9/21/2026
Q&A Period	9/28/2026 – 10/1/2026
Application Due Date	10/12/2026 by 2PM PST
Apparent Successful Bidder Notification	10/19/2026
Negotiation Period	10/19/2026-10/22/2026
Contract Execution Period	10/26/2026
Program Start Date	11/1/2026

6. Application Process

Responses are hereby solicited and will be received via email no later than the due date and time noted on the first page of this RFP. Bidders are responsible for regularly checking the DLS website for any updates, clarifications, or Addenda.

Please complete and submit the Proposal Response Form and Pricing Sheet in the same format that it was downloaded.

7. Selection Process

A. Scoring Criteria

Each responsive bid will be reviewed strictly in accordance with the requirements stated in this RFP and any Addenda issued.

Each bid received by the stated deadline will be reviewed by the Contract Manager to ensure that the bid application contains all the required information requested in this RFP. Each responsive bid that meets the RFP requirements will be evaluated by the DLS designated Review Panel. Any bid that does not meet the stated qualifications and/or does not contain all the required information may be rejected as incomplete.

The Solicitation Specialist may, at their sole discretion, contact the Bidder for clarification of any portion of their bid. The Bidder should take every precaution to ensure that all answers are clear, complete, and directly address the specific question or requirement.

Each responsive bid will be reviewed and evaluated by a Review Panel. The process for selecting awardees will include evaluation of the narrative and accompanying documents, and potentially,

interviews or similar convenings. Below are the selection criteria that will be used during the evaluation process.

Responses that provide specific, detailed examples may be rated more favorably.

CRITERIA	POINTS
Organizational Capacity & Readiness	20
Community Impact & Outcomes	20
Community/Local Entrepreneur Engagement & Cultural Responsiveness	20
Past Performance Measurements	20
Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice Commitment	10
Budget, Cost-Effectiveness, & Financial Stewardship	10
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	**100**

B. Review Panel

The Review Panel may consist of King County staff, subject matter experts, community members, evaluators, and other individuals selected by DLS based on the needs of the Solicitation.

DLS values community perspectives and may include community members with knowledge of North Highline and/or experience related to economic development, small businesses, arts, entrepreneurship, or commercial activation.

The Review Panel will evaluate responsive applications using the criteria identified in this Solicitation and may participate in interviews or similar convenings.

C. Final Determination

1. Responsive Determination

   The County will consider the application and other information available to it to determine whether the applicant has complied with the requirements of this Solicitation.

2. Responsible Determination

   In determining whether an applicant is responsible, the County may consider the applicant's:

   a. Ability, capacity, and skill to perform the project;
   b. Financial resources and organizational capacity to perform the project;
   c. Relevant experience and past performance;
   d. Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and requirements;
   e. Performance on current or previous County contracts; and
   f. Other information relevant to the award decision.

   Failure to meet the responsiveness or responsibility requirements may result in rejection of the application.

DLS reserves the right to make final selections based on the requirements of this Solicitation, the Review Panel's recommendations, available funding, and the overall needs of the program. DLS may not select the application with the highest score and may enter into negotiations with selected applicants before executing a contract.

D. Funding Allocation and Contract Negotiations

DLS anticipates awarding one (1) contract for up to $250,000 for the North Highline Vacant to Vibrant Program.

The amount ultimately awarded may differ from the amount requested. If necessary, DLS may discuss adjustments to the proposed scope, budget, timeline, or activities with a selected applicant to align the proposed program with available funding.

Contract negotiations will begin after DLS identifies a selected applicant and determines the proposed funding amount. A contract will not be considered final until executed by the County and the selected Awardee.

8. Glossary of Terms

- **Activation/Activate:** The temporary use of a vacant commercial storefront for public-facing activities that increase activity, visibility, and community engagement.
- **Applicant:** The person or entity that prepares and submits an application in response to this Solicitation.
- **Awardee:** The Applicant selected by King County to receive funding and enter into a contract to implement the North Highline Vacant to Vibrant Program.
- **Contractor:** The term used within the King County DLS Standard Terms and Conditions for the entity awarded a contract.
- **DLS:** King County Department of Local Services.
- **North Highline:** The unincorporated King County area identified by County Council for this program, including White Center and surrounding commercial areas within the designated program area.
- **Participant:** An artist, maker, entrepreneur, or small business selected to participate in the Vacant to Vibrant Program.
- **Review Panel:** The team of individuals appointed by DLS to review and evaluate applications and make recommendations regarding potential awards.
- **Solicitation:** This document and related materials describing the competitive process, program requirements, application requirements, and contracting process.
- **Vacant to Vibrant Program:** The North Highline temporary storefront activation pilot described in this Solicitation.

9. RFP and Contract Terms

E. RFP Terms

1. Revisions to the RFP

If DLS determines, in its sole discretion, that it is necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an Addendum to this RFP will be posted on online (see RFP cover page for web address). The date of the most recent Addendum will be noted.

DLS also reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the RFP in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

2. Cost to Propose

DLS will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Bidder in preparation of a bid submitted in response to this RFP, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related in any way to this RFP.

3. No Obligation to Contract

This RFP does not obligate DLS to enter into any contract for services specified herein.

4. Rejection of a bid

DLS reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any bid received without penalty and not to issue any contract as a result of this RFP.

5. Best and Final Offer (BAFO)

DLS reserves the right to request a BAFO before awarding any contract to further assist in determining the awarded bid. Terms of the BAFO will be communicated by the Contracts Manager.

6. Award

Final selection of awardees may be made by King County division and department directors based upon final score calculations and recommendations from the RFP Review Panel. DLS may enter into contract negotiations based upon the final selections.

DLS intends to award one (1) contract. The Contracts Manager will notify all Bidders via email of the acceptance or rejection of their bid.

7. Waiver of Administrative Irregularities

King County reserves the right to waive minor administrative irregularities or informalities in an RFP.

8. Public Records Act

a. Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) requires public organizations in Washington to promptly make public records available for inspection and copying unless they fall within the specified exemptions contained in the Act or are otherwise privileged.
b. Any submitted bids and RFP materials become public information and may be reviewed by anyone requesting to do so at the conclusion of the RFP, negotiation, and contracting process. This process is concluded when a signed contract is completed between the County and the selected bid.
c. Any bids submitted under this RFP shall be considered public documents and, with limited exceptions. Any bid that is recommended for contract award will be available for inspection and copying by the public.

   If any Bidder considers any portion of their bid to be protected under the law, the Bidder shall clearly identify on the page(s) affected such words as "CONFIDENTIAL", "PROPRIETARY", or "BUSINESS SECRET". The Bidder shall also use the descriptions above in the following table to identify the effected page number(s) and location(s) of any material to be considered as confidential.

Type of Exemption	Beginning Page / Location	Ending Page / Location

If a request is made for disclosure of such portion, the County will review the material in an attempt to determine whether it may be eligible for exemption from disclosure under the law. If the material is not exempt from public disclosure law, or if the County is unable to make a determination of such an exemption, the County will notify the Bidder of the request and allow the Bidder ten (10) calendar days to take whatever action it deems necessary to protect its interests. If the Bidders fails or neglects to take such action within said period, the County will release the portion of the bid deemed subject to disclosure.

By submitting a bid, Bidder assents to the procedure outlined in this Section and shall have no claim against the County on account of actions taken under such procedure.

F. Contract Terms

1. King County Standard Terms and Conditions

Awardees from this RFP process will enter into negotiations to contract with King County DLS. Funded organizations will be required to meet baseline requirements, including insurance, equal employment opportunity, record keeping, and more. Prospective applicants are encouraged to review and confirm they can comply with DLS' Local Services Terms & Conditions within the Agreement.

A contract may be negotiated with the Bidder whose bid would be most advantageous to King County in the opinion of DLS, all factors considered.

The contract must include, and be consistent with, the specifications and provisions stated in this RFP.

2. Insurance Requirements

Based on the services anticipated under this solicitation, the successful awardee will be required to obtain and maintain appropriate business insurance and provide evidence of coverage prior to contract execution. Specific insurance coverage types and minimum limits will be provided to the successful awardee following the award announcement and will be based on the final Statement of Work (SOW) and contract requirements.

3. Data Collection and Reporting

All DLS Community Services contracts include an expectation that the funded organization will collect and report information necessary to monitor program performance. DLS is committed to collecting only the data and information necessary for routine contract monitoring, evaluating program performance, and meeting King County reporting obligations.

The primary purpose of performance measurement is to use data to understand program activities, outcomes, and effectiveness; support shared accountability for program implementation and impact; and inform future program and funding decisions. Performance data also enables King County to meet reporting requirements to the King County Council and other partners.

The contractor will be required to submit monthly reports to DLS. At a minimum, monthly reports will include:

- Number of vendors participating in the program
- Sales or revenue numbers, as applicable
- Number and type of events held
- Estimated number of visitors or participants
- Marketing and outreach activities and updates
- Program expenditures and spend-down status, including the amount of funds expended and remaining

Additional data collection or reporting requirements may be established based on the final Statement of Work and contract. DLS will work with the funded organization to finalize reporting formats, definitions, and submission procedures following award and during contract development.

10. List of Attachments

A. Proposal Response Form (Microsoft Forms)
B. Pricing Sheet