



# Seattle Social Housing Developer

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### Solicitation 26-1

**2026-2028 On-Call Architectural & Engineering Services for  
Small and Medium Social Housing Projects**

and

### Solicitation 26-2

**2026-2028 On-Call Architectural & Engineering Services for  
Large Social Housing Projects**

**Published:** 20 April 2026

**RFQ Responses Due:** 24 April 2026, by 5:00 p.m.

**1. If we do not meet the specific Threshold Criteria, can we still be considered?**

**Answer:** We have revised the threshold criteria, please see addendum #1.

**2. Does SSHD have an idea of when the shortlist will be released and when interviews will be?**

**Answer:** SSHD is aiming to have interviews wrapped up by 15 May 2026, with selections shortly thereafter.

**3. Can we exclude cover pages, table of contents, and divider pages from the page limit?**

**Answer:** Yes. Cover page, cover letter, table of contents, divider tabs, and resumes can be excluded from the page limit.

**4. Do you want us to include subconsultants? Or, if selected for this On-Call, can we solicit subconsultants for each Work Order, depending on the project?**

**Answer:** We are not looking to lock in teams and their subconsultants; sub-consultants can be solicited for each Work Order. However, please share proposed sub-consultants, their resumes, and W/MBE status.

**5. I briefly looked through the threshold criteria and I think we meet three of the five points (III, IV & V). But I wasn't quite sure about point IV. Do you think our experience would qualify as working with a "non-profit developer" or "cooperative."?**

**Answer:** We have revised the threshold criteria, please see addendum #1.

**6. Can firms qualify on the threshold criteria if partners or senior staff have experience working on those projects at larger firms?**

**Answer:** Qualifying work needs to be projects completed at submitting firm.

**7. Can a project currently under construction be a qualifying project?**

**Answer:** Yes, projects currently under construction can qualify.

- 8. [We have] worked with Housing Authorities on low-income housing and with private developers on multi-family housing over many years. The Passive House certified staff is a requirement we have not seen on previous public procurements. According to the Passive House Institute there are only 9 (nine) Certified Passive Designers in King County. We are asking that SSHD reconsider this as a requirement as it appears to significantly limit competition to only a handful of firms/individuals.**

**Answer:** SSHD has a mandate for meeting the Passive House standard for new construction. It is expected that teams have staff with a degree of competency and knowledge of what that entails for designing a project. Consultant shall have under its employment or as a sub-contractor one Certified Passive House Designer.

- 9. If we team up with a smaller firm with more permitting experience in Seattle (we currently only have one employee based in the Seattle area) would the experience be evaluated across the two firms? I.e. if we have more construction experience of a similar project type but the smaller firm has more local experience, would we qualify in aggregate if you look at our qualifications in combination?**

**Answer:** Firms can team up and submit a joint response.

- 10. Does previous experience from other firms get counted? For example, if one of the proposed team members has experience working on Passive House projects with a former employer would that be sufficient to meet the requirements for Passive House experience?**

**Answer:** Experience on Passive House projects would go toward narrative on Passive House. However, qualifying work needs to be projects completed at current firm.

- 11. Can you confirm whether PHIUS CPHC credentials satisfy the Certified Passive House Designer requirement, or if PHI certification is required?**

**Answer:** We are agnostic right now on PHI versus PHIUS. If you have either a PHIUS or PHI certified designer on staff or on the proposed team, that would be in line with what we're looking for.

**12. Can you confirm if we have fewer than two of the three criteria, Submitters should not apply?**

**Answer:** That's correct. You need to have one project with two of the three Threshold Criteria.

**13. Is it allowable to submit to both RFQ RFQ 26-1 and 26-2?**

**Answer:** We anticipate some firms will be able to fulfill the requirements for both RFQs, and if you want to apply for both, then that would be permitted. If you are submitting for both RFQ 26-1 and RFQ 26-2, please submit them as separate documents.

**14. Will SSHD send out the slides to attendees following this call, and will SSHD be sending out an updated RFQ incorporating these changes?**

**Answer:** Yes, slides have been sent to attendees, and the recording is now posted on the SSHD solicitations page. An addendum for both RFQs we will be submitting with the revised thresholds.

**15. Is the Passive House requirement required for funding?**

**Answer:** No, the Passive House requirement is a mandate of the Seattle Social Housing Developer, which was passed by a vote of the people. It is not a negotiable condition for our new construction projects.

**16. Are there specific insurance limit requirements?**

**Answer:** Yes, firms must have professional liability policies of \$2,000,000 per claim and commercial general liability of \$2,000,000 per occurrence.

**17. When does SSHD anticipate the first project starting?**

**Answer:** SSHD is looking at land sites currently and planning to select which sites to pursue by the end of April. We hope to have site control on two to four sites in May, and once we have site control, we will be matching sites to design professionals.

**18. Can you talk more about the W/MBE plan?**

**Answer:** We do not have a particular W/MBE requirement, but we do want firms to include women and minority owned business enterprises on their teams and would like you to address that in the submittal.

**19. Is it OK if a building envelope engineer is the certified Passive House company?**

**Answer:** We imagine that not all firms will have Passive House experience, and so teaming to get that experience on your project team would be expected.

**20. Do we need a PHIUS verifier?**

**Answer:** No, the Passive House verifier or certifier is an independent third party verifier, that SSHD will hire.

**21. Can projects be design-build?**

**Answer:** SSHD is a public development agency, and subject to public procurement rules. We are investigating the possibility of utilizing either design-build or GC/CM. But at this time, we are exploring if we're going to be required by law to select the construction only through competitive bidding process.

**22. Does the Passive House certified person or company need to have experience with multifamily, both large and small types?**

**Answer:** The revised threshold criteria is that the submitter has a project with two of the three criteria: multifamily building (not townhomes) experience, experience meeting public funder requirements, or meeting Passive House certification. This qualifying project needs to be completed or in construction currently, and has to have the appropriate size, whether it be for either RFQ 26-1 or RFQ 26-2. As we are required to meet the Passive House standard, if you

have not done a Passive House project, you will need to show how you can meet it in your submittal.

**23. Who is on the evaluation committee?**

**Answer:** SSHD will not be releasing the names of the people of the review committee.

**24. Do we anticipate a requirement for a third-party cost estimator and how involved will they be during the design process?**

**Answer:** SSHD does not anticipate that applicants will include a third-party cost estimator on their team. If your firm does provide cost estimation, please mention that in your submittal. But we know that not all design firms provide that service, and we will either hire a GC for pre-construction services or hire a cost estimator. If you have a firm that you use as a sub for cost estimating you can include them as part of your team in the submittal.

**25. SSHD has likely received feedback that the five threshold criteria will be a difficult hurdle for firms other than those with deep experience in affordable housing, or one of a handful of firms that have done passive house apartments. Has there been any discussion of expanding these thresholds to open up your process to a wider range of firms?**

**Answer:** SSHD has amended the threshold criteria for both RFQs, and now has only 3 criteria. A project must meet two of three criteria. All three of those criteria are important to us. SSHD understands there are some firms that haven't done government funded housing before, and so we wanted to provide access to them. SSHD understands there are some firms that haven't done Passive House before, and we wanted to provide access to them.

**26. Can you clarify if the qualifying projects must be built and occupied or can they be in design?**

**Answer:** They must be in construction, but they don't have to be complete.

**27. Consultant team members: If a submitting architecture firm, as prime, already meets the threshold expectations (both in project experience and having under its**

**employment one Certified Passive House Designer), do we also need a full team of subconsultant partners identified (representing ‘all project phase disciplines’, engineering services, cost estimators, etc) with demonstrated experience in the proposal submission’s 10 - pages? Or would you like us to list/suggest subconsultants covering the breadth of project phase disciplines without prescribing them as team members in our submission? (This pertains to response materials suggesting we name sub-consultants and provide resumes as well as scope of work section ‘d’)**

**Answer:** Submitters do not have to identify specific subconsultants and will not be limited to specific subconsultants listed in their proposals if selected for projects in the future. However, submitters are welcome to include subconsultants to demonstrate the capacity of your team or W/MBE participation.

**28. What is the Vendor Fact Sheet mentioned in the page count limitations section entail?**

**Answer:** RFQ-2 refers to a vendor fact sheet on page 5. This was a mistake in the RFQ, there is no vendor fact sheet.

**29. What is the expectation, format, and specific questions needed to satisfy the MWBE Inclusion Plan accompanying the submission? Is that a publicly available form?**

**Answer:** We do not have a particular W/MBE requirement, but we do want firms to include women and minority owned business enterprises on their teams and would like you to address that in the submittal. We do not have a form for the W/MBE inclusion plan, you are free to tell us your W/MBE status and your approach to hiring W/MBE subs in a format of your choosing.

**30. How many teams will be shortlisted? How many will ultimately be selected for the roster?**

**Answer:** SSHD is not planning on a specific number of shortlisted firms.

**31. Does a renovation (where we completed SD through CA) qualify for the Part I Threshold criteria? The criteria doesn’t specify new construction and we want to confirm.**

**Answer:** Yes, a renovation of an existing building can be the qualifying project for the threshold criteria.

**32. Please describe the steps involved in awarding a specific work order or task order to a consultant who is placed on the On Call Roster. Specifically, is there another RFP process for a specific work order, during which scope, fee, and schedule is agreed upon and is the process competitive among the On-Call Consultants? Is there a dollar limit to the amount of work that an On-Call Consultant can be assigned in a specific timeframe? We assume it is understood that Consultants on the On-Call Roster may need to decline work that isn't a good fit due to type of work or business workflow; what are the consequences of a Consultant needing to decline work – e.g. will they be removed from the On-Call Roster?.**

**Answer:** SSHD intends to include up to 6 firms on the roster for RFQ 26-1, and up to 8 firms on the roster for RFQ 26-2. However, SSHD retains the right to make a determination on the number of firms on the rosters after the selection process is complete. Not all firms meeting the threshold qualifications will be placed on the rosters. SSHD anticipates starting predevelopment on 2 – 4 new construction projects each year distributed across both RFQ 26-1 and RFQ 26-2, and acquiring 1 – 2 projects each year that may need assessments/renovations or TI's on commercial spaces. For new construction projects we plan to request proposals from 2 – 4 firms that would include a fee for feasibility and a fee methodology for full architectural services. Other factors in addition to fee will be considered, including schedule and experience with the particular design approach of a project. The proposal from the firm deemed most qualified will be offered the work first. There is no limit to the amount of work that a firm may receive on this roster. Firms can pass on invitations to submit proposals for scopes of work and stay on the roster. However, if a firm submits a proposal which is selected and fails to enter into a contract for the scope of work, SSHD may remove them from the roster.