



Services to Victims of Crime

Questions & Answers

Last Updated: November 18, 2015

General Questions:

1. What is the Services to Victims of Crime Initiative?

The Services to Victims of Crime Initiative will prepare contracted service providers who deliver victim service and violence against women programs for the process of open procurement. A critical component of this initiative involves consultation with contracted programs and stakeholders.

2. What does open procurement mean?

Open procurement is a process for contracting services where potential providers submit a competitive proposal. Open procurement aligns with the Province's procurement policy ([Chapter 6 of the Core Policy and Procedures Manual](#)), which is based on the principles of fair and open public sector procurement – competition, demand aggregation, value for money, transparency and accountability.

The overall goal of open procurement is to ensure that contracts are awarded to the most qualified proponent. Successful proponents will demonstrate relevant capacity and experience.

3. Why is the procurement process changing?

Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch (CSCP) is required to have a procurement process for acquiring government services that is fair, transparent, accountable, and aligned with government-wide procurement policy. This aligns with other government departments that have already adopted open procurement processes.

4. Why is this happening now?

In recent years, the majority of contracts for these services have been direct awarded to agencies without an open process. In order to align with government procurement policy, we are moving towards a process to ensure contracts for these services are awarded in a fair, transparent, and accountable manner.

5. How will open procurement affect existing contracted service providers?

Under the new plan, most service providers will be required to submit a competitive proposal. Open procurement will be new for many service providers so the Branch is working to ensure all service providers are informed and prepared.

6. Will there be any help from CSCPb for organizations that do not have experience with open procurement?

We know that many organizations have concerns about procurement and as part of the consultation process we will listen to these concerns. We are committed to ensuring all organizations are informed and prepared for future procurement processes. We continue to explore vendor training opportunities to assist service providers in responding to open procurement. Further information on vendor training and procurement timelines will be provided in the coming months.

7. Will particular programs be exempt from open procurement processes?

Current government policy describes how contracts for goods and services in B.C. are to be procured ([CPPM Chapter 6](#)). We will examine all options for procurement and select the methods which are the most appropriate in each situation. However, we expect the majority of contracted services will be subject to open procurement processes.

8. When are the changes to the procurement processes going to be put in place? (NEW)

We are proceeding with our regular Program Application process for Fiscal Year 2016-17 contracts. Contract terms for 2016-17 will be 16 months running from April 1st, 2016 to July 31st, 2017. Contracted service providers can expect to receive Program Application packages within the next week or so.

We will proceed with plans for open procurement for contracted Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs beginning in January 2017. This will include contracts in existing service areas at current funding amounts. It is anticipated that it may take until July 2018 before this process is complete. We continue to explore vendor training opportunities to assist service providers in responding to open procurement. Further information on vendor training and procurement timelines will be provided in the coming months.

9. When will the final procurement plan be released? (NEW)

The final procurement plan will be released closer to the end of 2016 as we prepare for open procurement to take place in January 2017.

10. Are CWWA programs being considered for merging with other programs?

CWWA programs are not currently being considered for amalgamation with other program types.

11. Will there continue to be a gendered analysis on the issue of violence against women?

Preserving a gendered analysis on issues related to Violence Against Women is important and this feedback has been considered in the development of the draft procurement plan.

12. What impact will open procurement have on the continuity of services to clients?

We don't expect that open procurement activities will have any impact on the continuity of services to clients.

13. Will there be training available through CSCPb for new programs?

Training opportunities will be considered as part of the implementation of the procurement plan.

14. Is CSCPb undertaking open procurement as a way to reduce the number of contracts it has with agencies for these services?

No, CSCPBC does not have specific plans to reduce the number of contracts or contractors delivering these services.

15. Is CSCPBC undertaking this process as part of a cost cutting exercise?

No, this is not a cost-cutting exercise.

16. How does the work you are undertaking connect to the Community Social Services Innovation and Sustainability Roundtable and Action Plan?

The Branch is participating in the sustainability initiative and will look for opportunities to leverage innovative practices identified through roundtable activities. For example, key learnings from the Community Service Alignment Pilots and Contract Efficiencies and Flexibility Initiative may provide opportunities. For information on the innovation and sustainability roundtable visit www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/service_providers/index.htm.

Questions about Phase 1 Consultation:

17. What did you do in phase 1 of this initiative?

Phase 1 of the Services to Victims of Crime initiative commenced with an online survey of 200 contracted service providers. The survey was launched on May 16, 2014 and closed on June 20, 2014 and covered topics on program design and service delivery, records management, working with Aboriginal, Immigrant and Refugee clients and coordination activities. The survey had a strong response rate and the information obtained informed consultation activities in phase 2. A detailed summary of the survey results is available for download [here](#).

Questions about Phase 2 Consultation:

18. What did you do in phase 2 of this initiative?

Phase 2 of the Services to Victims of Crime initiative involved a series of eight (8) regional, in-person consultation sessions focused on getting further feedback from contracted service providers on specific issues pertaining to program design and service delivery. The consultation also provided additional information about funding and open procurement. Consultation sessions took place in October, November and December 2014.

19. Where did the regional consultation sessions take place?

- **Thursday, October 9, 2014 – Cranbrook:**
Days Inn, 600 Cranbrook Street, N. Cranbrook, BC
- **Wednesday, October 15, 2014 – Nanaimo:**
Grand Hotel, 4898 Rutherford Nanaimo, BC
- **Friday, October 17, 2014 – Prince George:**
Coast Inn of the North, 770 Brunswick Street Prince George, BC
- **Tuesday, October 28, 2014 – Fort St. John:**
Quality Inn Northern Grand, 9830 – 100 Avenue, Fort St. John, BC

- **Thursday, November 13, 2014 – Terrace:**
Best Western Plus Terrace Inn, 4553 Greig Avenue, Terrace, BC
- **Tuesday, November 18, 2014 – Langley:**
Sandman Hotel, 8828 – 201 Street, Langley, BC
- **Tuesday, November 25, 2015 – Kelowna:**
Holiday Inn Express, 2429 Highway 97 North, Kelowna, BC
- **Tuesday, December 2, 2014 – Vancouver:**
Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street, Vancouver, BC

20. What was the agenda for the regional sessions?

The agenda along with background materials was provided to participants in advance of each session and is available for download [here](#).

21. Who could attend the regional sessions?

The regional sessions were open to service providers who are currently contracted to deliver victim service and violence against women programs. Service providers were asked to identify one person per organization to represent their agency at the session. Service providers were encouraged to consult with program staff as appropriate in advance of the sessions.

22. I could not attend a forum in person. Was there an option to provide feedback in some other way?

Service providers were encouraged to identify someone in their organization who could attend a session. For those that could not attend, or who had further feedback to share with the Branch after attending a session, written feedback could be sent to victimservices@gov.bc.ca.

23. How has feedback from service providers influenced the initiative so far and what opportunities will there be opportunities for service providers and victims of crime to participate meaningfully in the consultation process moving forward?

Feedback received throughout the initiative has been utilized to inform each phase of consultation. The feedback received during these sessions is being very carefully considered.

Reports summarizing feedback obtained through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the initiative are available for download on the Ministry's website.

A draft procurement plan, incorporating feedback from stakeholders to date, is available online [here](#) for further input from service providers. Input and feedback received will be considered in finalizing the plan in the coming months.

Questions about Phase 3 – Draft Procurement Plan:

24. What did you do in Phase 3 of this Initiative? (NEW)

Phase 3 of the Services to Victims of Crime initiative involved the release of a draft procurement plan for consultation. The draft procurement plan built upon consultations undertaken in Phases 1 and 2,

and directly incorporated feedback heard through the regional consultation sessions. A summary of what we heard through consultation can be found [here](#).

Open Procurement Implementation and Timelines:

25. How will the new procurement plan be rolled out? (NEW)

We are proceeding with our regular Program Application process for Fiscal Year 2016-17 contracts. Contract terms for 2016-17 will be 16 months running from April 1st, 2016 to July 31st, 2017. Contracted service providers can expect to receive Program Application packages within the next week or so.

We will proceed with plans for open procurement for contracted Victim Service and Violence Against Women Programs beginning in January 2017. This will include contracts in existing service areas at current funding amounts. It is anticipated that it may take until July 2018 before this process is complete. We continue to explore vendor training opportunities to assist service providers in responding to open procurement. Further information on vendor training and procurement timelines will be provided in the coming months.

Procurement documents will be posted on BC Bid and all service providers within a service area will be notified when an RFP or another solicitation document is posted.

Service Areas

26. Are service areas changing and why? (NEW)

There are no plans to increase the number of service areas at this time. In the draft procurement plan a total of 97 service areas were proposed. The goal was to have in-person programming available in some capacity in each of the service areas, creating one of the most comprehensive and community-based network of services across B.C. While nearly all service providers support additional services across the province, many expressed concern about creating new service areas without new funding to support additional programming.

Funding Formula

27. Is a new funding formula for contracted services being implemented? (NEW)

In response to feedback, we have chosen not to proceed with a new funding formula at this time. While most service providers agreed that proposed funding formula factors are transparent, consistent and responsive to previous feedback, there continues to be concern over the actual impact of a new funding formula on service providers and service areas.

28. Why was the development of a new funding formula for contracted programs being considered?

CSCPBC has identified some challenges with the way in which funding is currently distributed across the province. Challenges include an aging funding formula for victim service programs as well as a lack of a clear formula for Violence Against Women counselling and Outreach Programs, which has resulted in discrepancies in funding for these programs across BC communities.

29. How will the competitive RFP process impact collaboration between agencies?

An agency's relationships with other service providers in the community will be considered in the context of the RFP process. Successful proponents will demonstrate strong relationships with other relevant services in the community.

30. Will programs remain local and be provided by agencies in the community?

Successful proponents will have a demonstrated understanding of the local community context, along with the capacity and experience to provide the services they are bidding for.

31. How will value-added services be taken into consideration?

Throughout consultation in Phase 2, agencies shared an interest in seeing the Ministry consider the added value they are bringing to services through activities such as fundraising or leveraging other support. This feedback has been considered in the development of the draft procurement plan and is incorporated into draft procurement documents.

32. Will union and non-union agencies be able to bid on contracts?

It is not anticipated that there will be any restrictions in the RFP process related to whether an agency's staff are union or non-union. Currently services are delivered in both union and non-union environments.

33. Will there be any contracts direct awarded once the new procurement plan is implemented?

In limited circumstances, government procurement policy allows for direct awarding of contracts. One example is contracting with a public sector organization such as a municipality, regional district, First Nations government, health authority or school district. The Ministry will consider options to direct award as/where appropriate; however, a key consideration will be whether there are other qualified agencies in a service delivery area available to provide the services.