

RFP 2021-001
Compensation Study
Addendum No. 1

Schedule Change

PLEASE NOTE: The schedule of events has changed for this RFP, as follows:

Consultant Interviews (if necessary)..... **June 14, 2021**

Respondent Questions and Answers

1. The RFP states that the consultant is to evaluate, examine and recommend the appropriate classification and appropriate number of positions for full-time non-represented positions.

Q: Is the determination of the number of positions required to perform the work of the unit an absolute proposal requirement?

A: No, it is not. We may choose to contract with a separate consultant for this service or postpone the service until we have been in our consolidated facility for a year or more.

2. I see that the label on the project is "Comprehensive Compensation Analysis." This typically involves updating job descriptions, use of questionnaires and creating or updating a class and pay plan. It also typically involves matching updated job descriptions with other agencies within the market in which you compete for labor, to assure market competitiveness. However, the scope of work seems quite a bit broader, so, I am seeking clarification. I see that SS911 project also includes: An evaluation and recommendation as to the number of non-represented positions to staff the agency. An "industry analysis" of each position.

Q: Have the expectations for the above been fully defined by the SS911 Leadership Team or is it up to consultant to define what such an analysis would entail?

A: The SS911 Leadership Team has not fully defined the expectations. We would like to review the consultant's experience and recommended approach prior to finalizing the work we would like completed.

3. It appears the major 911 players in the Puget Sound area are: SS911, ValleyCom, NorCom, Snohomish County 911, TCom, CenCom

Q: Do these agencies define the basis for an "industry analysis" or is there a broader or different definition that should be on our radar?

A: It would be important to utilize comps with other regional 911 agencies for the non-represented positions (managers/directors) overseeing 911 operations.

Due to our size, we typically use some larger communication centers as well (most recently Portland and Seattle PD). Unlike any of the other regional communications centers, SS911 also provides some Law Enforcement records services, including warrants and firearm licensing. IT, Finance, HR and other administrative positions will need to be competitive with other governmental entities in Pierce County.

4. Do you have flexibility with the project timeline? We could probably get started in early August with kick-off and questionnaires but not get too deep into the study until September-October.

Q: If you have any guidance for us in response to this inquiry, please respond as appropriate.

A: We do have some flexibility in our timeline, but we request you include any prior commitments that may affect timelines in your response. Our goal is to find the best consultant and the timeline will only be one aspect of the review.

5. We approached a somewhat similar workload/staffing analysis project recently. The city decided to let us define what the dimensions of a staffing/workload analysis would entail.

Q: Is that also the case at SS911?

A: Yes.

6. If there is going to be a "compensation study," as the title of the RFP reads, the comparisons with industry standards on compensation should include more than base salaries.

Q: Have you determined how you define "compensation"? That determination affects the scope and, therefore, the pricing.

Base Wage (or Salary)	Longevity Pay	Vacation Pay	Holiday Pay	Sick Leave
Hours of Work	Deferred Compensation	Other adds-to-pay		
Medical	Dental	Vision	Life	Other Insurance adders
Education Pay	Certification Pay	Training Pay		
Allowances (e.g. vehicle, uniform, equipment)				

A: We have not "defined" compensation, but the analysis should look at all of the items listed in the table above.

7. The RFP uses the term "total compensation analysis."

Q: How broad does your agency define compensation for the purposes of the compensation study?

Q: Can the scope be amended to provide more specificity in this regard?

A: We will not be amending the scope in the RFP. We would like to evaluate consultants based on their experience and their approach to completing the analysis.

Please include leave benefits, health benefits, retirement benefits and/or other non-wage based compensation you are recommending to be included in the analysis.

8. The request for proposal indicates that South Sound 911 is seeking workforce planning (as noted on page 8 of the RFP, "Evaluate, examine and recommend the appropriate classification and appropriate number of positions for full-time non-represented positions.") as part of the compensation study. Our firm does not offer workforce planning.

Q: Is that a requirement of the vendor you partner with?

A: It is not, although we may award to two vendors if we decide to proceed with that service.

9. How would you describe the state of the South Sound 911's compensation program? What are the pain points or primary challenges of the current compensation program?

A: The plan has not been looked at holistically since the agency has formed, and many of the technical positions are holdovers from the prior agency. We have some challenges with compression between operational supervisors (represented positions) and managers.

10. As part of the compensation study, is South Sound 911 interested and/or in need of evaluating its compensation/total rewards philosophy?

A: Since we have not contracted for this service before, we would like to hear what the recommendations/options are from the consultant team (so, yes we are interested).

11. Does South Sound 911's compensation program include a formal job evaluation system?
Is South Sound 911 interested in its compensation program being built using both market data and a job evaluation system?
Is South Sound 911 open to its compensation system being "market-based"?

A: Yes, we are interested in using both market data and a job evaluation system. We are open to the system being market-based, although we would like a focus on governmental agencies.

12. Does South Sound 911 have or use any compensation surveys that it would like incorporated into the compensation study?
Are there any particular compensation surveys for which South Sound 911 desires for a compensation consultant to provide as part of the compensation study?

A: The only surveys we have used in the past were provided by the Association of Washington Cities (AWC). This has been challenging due to the uniqueness of our agency.

13. Are there special market forces at play for any of South Sound 911's jobs? If so, can you please explain these market forces?

A: I wouldn't classify any as "special." All manager positions have been promotions from within, but most director positions have been external hires. There are supply/demand issues due to the operational knowledge needed for some of the manager/director positions and for other administrative positions that have widespread supply/demand issues in both public and private sector entities. Rising home prices and other economic factors in the Puget Sound area are not unique to South Sound 911 but need to be considered in the evaluation.

14. Does South Sound 911's compensation program include a formal pay structure?
Does South Sound 911 desire for a pay structure to be developed as part of the compensation program or does the organization desire to use distinct market ranges for jobs?

A: All non-represented positions are paid using a 5-step classification plan, with a 5% difference between each step. New employees are typically hired at Step 1, with increases to the next step on an annual basis; however, there is flexibility allowed when hiring an employee with prior experience or allowing an employee to progress more quickly through the steps.

15. Does South Sound 911's desire that the compensation study include the review or design of an incentive plan?

A: We would like to review all options.

16. Does South Sound 911 desire that formal guidelines, often called Compensation Administration Guidelines, be developed to document the compensation system?

A: We are interested in reviewing proposed guidelines.

17. Should the results of the compensation study show that market adjustments are needed for employees, does the organization have resources available to make these adjustments?

A: Yes, but any adjustments are contingent on approval from our Board of Directors. We will be involving our Finance Committee in the review of the compensation study, which is comprised of four members of the Board of Directors, and the recommendation will come from them.

18. Has South Sound 911 received a proposal from a vendor that has already scoped the compensation study, thus the reason for SS911 conducting an RFP?

A: No

19. Newly added positions, vacated positions, and a few others have gone through an internal review process more recently. What is the number of these positions that have gone through an internal process?

A: About 10

20. Please describe the internal review process at South Sound 911.

A: We have used the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Salary and Benefit Survey, with a focus on governmental agencies in the Puget Sound area.

21. Were the analyses of the recently internal reviewed positions a result of the merging of the three organizations?

A: Not really – the merging of employees was operational staff only. Internally reviewed positions were either new or positions that expanded responsibilities due to the mergers.

22. Is there an internal budget timeline that could impact the RFP, and could that timeline be shared?

A: We would like the study completed by the end of September in order to roll out adjustments at the beginning of 2022; however, we can make changes at any time during the year so there is flexibility in the timeline.

23. When was the last update done on the job descriptions?

A: This is being done on a continuous basis, so we are fairly current on job descriptions.

24. In the RFP, utilization of position questionnaires are referenced in updating job descriptions. This would involve distributing questionnaires, tracking filling out by employees, getting them back in signed off and completed form. This assumes the consultant will have a central role in design of the questionnaire and getting approval of the agency to improve the match-making process for compensation comparisons as well as internal equity between positions in the agency to avoid compression issues.

Q: What capacity does the existing HR staff (director and support staff) have to assist in the position questionnaire and employee feedback process? Or, is this the responsibility of the Consultant?

A: Internal staff will be able to assist as described.