



August 26, 2026

## Maritime Workforce Assessment RFP

### Consultant Q&A Summary

The following consolidates responses to questions from prospective consultants regarding the Maritime Workforce Assessment RFP, and provides additional guidance for all interested respondents.

#### Budget & Pricing

NWM has not established a specific budget ceiling for this project. Given the unique nature of the work, we do not want to unnecessarily limit proposed approaches. Respondents are encouraged to propose a scope and budget that appropriately reflect their recommended methodology and level of effort. Tiered pricing or scope options are welcome. Cost-effectiveness is an evaluation criterion but will be considered alongside the quality, experience, and comprehensiveness of the proposal.

Pricing for expansion into Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii should be presented as optional additional scope, separate from the core Washington State work.

#### Timeline & Location

NWM anticipates a project kickoff as soon as October 2026, with the Washington State scope ideally executed over approximately 4-5 months. Alternative timelines may be proposed, particularly for the optional West Coast expansion.

There are no on-site staffing requirements, and consultants may propose the working structure they believe will best accomplish the scope. Project meetings and presentations may be conducted in person or by Zoom.

## **Proposal Requirements**

There are no additional formatting, page-limit, budget-template, or attachment requirements beyond those outlined in the RFP. Proposals should be submitted in PDF format. That said, longer is not always better – we encourage respondents to keep response packages succinct.

## **Research Approach & Methodology**

NWM is intentionally leaving room for consultants to recommend the strongest methodology to address the questions outlined in the RFP. Proposals may include stakeholder interviews, employer engagement, focus groups, workshops, primary research, or other methods the consultant believes will produce meaningful and defensible findings.

NWM welcomes proposals that validate the existing Blue Schools career pathways—Vessel Operations, Marine Construction, and Marine Resources—or identify opportunities to refine them based on the findings of the assessment.

NWM has existing Blue Schools planning materials, employer relationships, pathway information, and related resources that can help inform the work and can be made available to the selected consultant as appropriate. We are also in the process of conducting a preliminary lit review of existing workforce and labor-market data, which, while not exhaustive, will be provided to the selected team as a starting point.

## **Maritime Expertise & Workforce Assessment Experience**

NWM recognizes that qualified teams may bring different combinations of maritime industry knowledge, workforce-development expertise, labor-market analysis, and research experience. While familiarity with maritime and related industries is an important selection criterion, NWM welcomes firms demonstrating a range of relevant experience paired with a strong and credible methodology.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

NWM has relationships with maritime employers, educators, workforce partners, and other industry stakeholders who may help inform the assessment. Consultants may propose how stakeholder and employer engagement should be incorporated into the project, including recommendations for additional participants.

While it is not a critical part of the scope, NWM is also open to approaches that build industry understanding and buy-in throughout the research process, where doing so strengthens the final findings and their usefulness.

### **Intended Use & Geographic Focus**

This assessment will directly support Northwest Maritime's Blue Schools Initiative, informing workforce-development strategies, validating or refining career pathways, and helping quantify regional maritime workforce supply, demand, and gaps.

The core framework should prioritize Washington State's workforce needs. Approaches for Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii should be treated as optional additional scope and may either build from the Washington framework or reflect state-specific methodologies and conditions. We anticipate affirming whether the scope will be Washington-only or extend to the other states before work begins.