

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY
STATE CONTRACTING STANDARDS BOARD



FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024
TRI-ANNUAL PROCUREMENT AUDIT REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Revision 0

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State of Connecticut contracting agencies have been given the incredible authority to procure goods and services for their needs in exchange for the commitment that they will adhere to the State's statutes and regulations governing the commitment and expenditure of public funds. The State Contracting Standards Board (SCSB) has been given the responsibility to monitor procurement practices by state contracting agencies and to take corrective actions for non-compliance with those statutes and regulations.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The State Contracting Standards Board's (SCSB) tri-annual audit program assesses a state contracting agency's compliance with state procurement rules, regulations, statutes, and guidance provided by the Department of Administrative Services and the Office of Policy and Management. A random sample of open procurement contracts from the state contracting agency was selected and examined for compliance with those regulations. This report presents our findings from those assessments performed in December 2023 by the SCSB Staff.

SCOPE OF AUDIT

The Department of Public Health was one of eleven contracting agencies selected for examination for FY2024. The State Comptroller's CORE system was used to identify the organization's contract portfolio, which indicated that the Department of Public Health had one hundred twenty-four contracts representing expenditures of approximately \$312,513,500. Contracts selected for testing were:

1. **Contract # 2022-0077** (\$2,345,184) - This contractor (Apex Community Care, Inc.) supports a full range of core medical and support services that contribute to access to medical care and improve the quality of life among low-income individuals living with HIV. This agreement ends in 2025.
2. **Contract # 2022-0106** (\$12,569,059) – The Contractor (School-Based Health Alliance) shall coordinate all activities related to the identification, selection, and

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distribution of the Crisis Cooperative Agreement Center from Disease Control (CDC). The grant requires \$12,018,594 to be distributed to School-Based Health Center sites for COVID-19-related activities. This agreement ends on 6/30/2024.

3. **Contract # 2023-0014** (\$3,983,890) – The Contractor (Family Centers, Inc.) will provide coordinated, culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate, school-based health center (SBHC) services that include outreach, primary care, mental/behavioral health, dental health care, and health promotion/education. This agreement ends on 6/30/2027.
4. **Contract # 2023-0022** (\$1,215,000) – The contractor (United Way of Connecticut, Inc.) shall provide the telephone access point 2-1-1 Health and Human Services (2-1-1 HHS) for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Information and Referral Service. This agreement ends in 2027.
5. **Contract # 2023-0050** (\$4,092,395) – The Contractor (Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.) shall provide the following services for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program (“Program”). This agreement ends in 2027.
6. **Contract # 2023-0097** (\$2,781,039) – The contractor (National Foundation for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) will continue services supporting the COVID-19 response in the State of Connecticut. This agreement ends on 12/30/2023.

NON-COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

In total, there were two findings over the six contracts tested. Our findings are as follows:

Contract # **2022-0077** – one finding:

1. **Compliance Requirement: (Ethics/Confidentiality Agreements)** – Agency employees must not participate in an RFP process if they have any interest that substantially conflicts with the proper discharge of their duties in the public interest (C.G.S. § 1-85). Did all reviewers sign an ethics and confidentiality agreement?

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Finding: No signed affidavits were available to support that each employee participating in the RFP process had no interest that would substantially conflict with properly conducting their official duties.

Agency Response: The Department of Public Health agrees with this finding. All reviewers signed the ethics and confidentiality agreements during the RFP Process, per the Procurement Standard Section III.B. However, the program could not provide one of the signed ethics and confidentiality forms because the files were misplaced.

Corrective Action Plan: The Program will scan all RFP documents at the close of each RFP Review Process. Copies of the RFP documents will be stored on a secured agency local drive within 3 days of the completion of the RFP Process. A copy of the documents will be saved in a secured folder on the Programs OneDrive.

Contract # **2023-0022** – one finding:

- 2. Compliance Requirement: (Client-Based Outcome Measures)** – OPM has established a minimum requirement that each POS agency must include client-based outcome measures in its POS contracts. Each POS agency is responsible for developing measures related to each purchased service and determining what data the contractor must collect related to that service.

Finding: There are no Client-Based Outcome Measures in this contract.

Agency Response: The Department of Public Health partially agrees with this finding. United Way of CT (Contract #2023-0022) provides the statewide, toll-free telephone access point 2-1-1 Health and Human Services for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Information and Referral Services, as mandated by the Federal

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1989 Omnibus Reconciliation Act. When routing the contract for execution, the Attorney General's Office questioned the outcome measure and if there was a mechanism to measure client satisfaction with appropriate information or services. The outcome measure was removed between 11.29.23 and 12.9.23 during revisions with the AG's Office, and DPH moved forward accordingly.

SCSB CPO Comment: A better course of action would have been to identify an alternate way to measure contract performance.

Corrective Action Plan: DPH will work with our external State Agency partners to ensure all future POS contracts include client-based outcome measures.

SCSB RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

SCSB respectfully requests that the Department of Public Health prepare a written response explaining how each finding noted above has been addressed and the procedures to be implemented to ensure future compliance within 90 days of the date of this report. Please contact the SCSB's Training Specialist, Carmen Hufcut (carmen.hufcut@ct.gov), if you need assistance developing a corrective action plan to address these non-compliant procedural issues. Further, please offer any suggestions for procurement training and other suggestions to make the procurement process more efficient and effective for your needs.

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Approval Date – August 9, 2024