

**Request for Qualifications**  
**Middle and High School Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Family Support**

**COVER SHEET**

**Organization Information:**

Organization name: Refugee Women's Alliance

Organization address: 4008 Martin Luther King Jr. Way S., Seattle, WA 98108

Describe your legal status and, if applicable, state of incorporation (for example, Washington State non-profit corporation, Washington State partnership, sole proprietorship):

Washington State Non Profit

**Application Components and Checklist (submit in this order)**

- Cover Sheet
- Key People
- Previous Experience
- Tracking to Success
- Women and Minority Inclusion; Non-discrimination

**Contact Information:**

Contact person: Someireh Amirfaiz  
(please print clearly)

Title: Executive Director

Mailing address: 4008 Martin Luther King Jr. Way S., Seattle, WA 98108

Day/Work phone: 206-721-8440 Email address: Someireh@rewa.org

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information is provided in Attachment 3.

## Request for Qualifications

### Middle and High School Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Family Support

---

#### Part 1 – RFQ Response

##### Key People

Refugee Women’s Alliance (ReWA) is a non-profit, multi-ethnic organization that promotes inclusion, independence, personal leadership, and strong communities by providing refugee and immigrant women and their families with culturally and linguistically appropriate services. We achieve this by hiring and investing in the professional development of refugees and immigrants from the same countries as our clients. With 140 staff speaking 37 different languages and dialects, ReWA has uniquely qualified staff members prepared to deliver the City of Seattle’s proposed services.

The key staff delivering middle and high school social, emotional, behavioral, and family support are qualified bilingual, bicultural youth workers and educators who have many years of experience working with staff and administration within Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Through a partnership with the SBOC/Seattle World School, these staff members operate the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center and several other sites providing homework assistance, cultural exploration, literacy instruction, and math skill development. Staff members at minimum hold a Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited university, Washington State teaching certifications, or work as Instructional Assistants (IAs) within SPS during the school day. Staff are well trained in best practices for English Language Learner (ELL) students and receive professional development on an ongoing basis. All key staff members track student academic progress and grade matriculation within this program through attendance records, state tests, and teacher survey evaluations.

Key staff members include:

- **Tsege Tsegay** is a Program Coordinator for ReWA’s Parent Education Program 22 years of experience working with youth and their families, providing resources and education, and serving as a liaison between school, family, and community. She speaks Amharic, Tigrinya and English. Tsege has developed important linkages with the Seattle Public School District, advocating for youth and parent education and coordinating with other programs and social service providers to make appropriate referrals.
- **Thao Ngo** is a Vietnamese Family Advocate who has worked with families at Highland Park and the SBOC/World School providing translation and interpretation, family engagement, and parent education to Vietnamese parents and their children.
- **Shamso Yusef** is a Somali Family Advocate that has over 12 years of experience providing parent engagement, parent education and social services support to the Somali community. She works with parents/students at the SBOC/World School and with the Highline School district.
- **Jeffrey Sikora** is ReWA’s Education Director and will lead the project to achieve proposed outcomes and indicators. Jeff holds two Masters degrees in Education and Finance from the State University of New York and has over 26 years of

## **Request for Qualifications**

### **Middle and High School Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Family Support**

---

experience in education and working with youth. Jeff has a proven track record as an education leader working with ReWA's youth and families from low-income, diverse communities. He provides management of ReWA's English as a Second Language (ESL), Parent Education, Citizenship and Youth Education programs. He is skilled at monitoring, evaluating and motivating staff to meet and exceed contract outcomes and indicators and has expertise in the design and evaluation of programs to ensure effectiveness.

#### **Previous Experience**

In the past two years, ReWA has served 217 middle school students and 303 high school students. These students include 100% refugee and immigrant youth at three program sites in Seattle. Our student population is extremely diverse. We serve middle, and high school refugee and immigrant students, primarily in South Seattle. The majority of our students are identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (60%) and African/African American (36%). Nearly 100% of the youth we serve are English Language Learners (ELL).

The 2010-2011 Washington State Report card reveals that for ELL students:

- 5<sup>th</sup> Graders: 71.9% did not meet the standard in reading, compared to 27.9% of all students
- 8<sup>th</sup> Graders: 73.8% did not meet the standard in math, compared to 38.4% of all students
- 10<sup>th</sup> Graders: 93.3% did not meet the standard in science, compared to 47.5% of all students

The ELL students and families we serve are struggling to survive in the US and living in extreme poverty. Parents often have little or no English language proficiency and struggle to find jobs. As a result, incomes are low and below 30% of median income; families are surviving on less than \$20,000 a year. This qualifies more than 95% of our students for the free and reduced price lunch program with SPS.

Through 24 years of providing culturally competent and responsive services, ReWA has extensive experience in collecting data and reporting on program outcomes, including working with outside evaluators and funders to develop effective evaluation tools. We have worked together with the City of Seattle to develop rigorous evaluation procedures for our After School Youth Program through our Human Services Department contracts. We've also worked closely with Seattle Public Schools to develop rubric for literacy and math assessments.

Specifically in the past two years, ReWA has developed and implemented quality programming geared to meet the needs of the "whole" child—a holistic service delivery model that aims to address the complex needs of our students. This model has proven to help achieve significant gains in both the academic and social development of our

**Request for Qualifications**  
**Middle and High School Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Family Support**

---

students.

The primary focus of our programs is academic based and involves increasing parent knowledge and involvement in their children's education through rigorous case management conducted at the children's school, home visits, and attendance support for academic tutoring such as ReWA's Project ASTUTE After School class. Through rigorous academic work, goal setting, and support of bilingual/bicultural youth program staff, 100% of the students we served from 2009-2011 at Project ASTUTE matriculated to the next grade level. At our two community-based sites in Seattle, 90% students improved semester grades in one or more core subject areas including math, English/language arts, and science, and 92% improved English language or literacy skills. At our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center program in the 2010-2011 school year, 82.8% of regular participating students (who attend the program for 30 days or more) increased their standardized test scores in reading. Similar gains were made in math, with 84.4% of regular participants increasing standardized test scores.

ReWA's also provides family advocacy and parent education to help parents become more effective and engaged in their children's academic success. ReWA's Parent Education Program focuses on teaching immigrant and refugee parents how to effectively engage with their children's school at multiple levels, including meeting with guidance counselors, attending school events, and tracking their children's academic progress. The specific topics covered in the Parent Education classes are Gaining an Understanding of the US School System, MSP/HSPE Standardized Tests, School Graduation Requirements, and Raising Children to Become Bicultural. Adult participants are evaluated through pre- and post- assessments to measure the level of knowledge learned and skill development with an average of 90% level gains. For example, in the 2010-2011 school year, pre-assessments showed 95% of parents knew little about course topics while post-assessments showed 93% of parents experienced knowledge level gains.

ReWA also collaborates with other organizations to enhance the services we provide to clients, including partnerships with Vietnamese Friendship Association, Horn of Africa Services, Catholic Community Services, City of Seattle Parks and Recreation, Powerful Voices, Woodland Park Zoo, Jack Straw Productions, and Rainier Valley Food Bank out of shared motivations to serve refugee and immigrant youth and families and improve academic and socioeconomic success.

City of Seattle Human Service Department  
Sindy Nguyen  
[sindy.nguyen@seattle.gov](mailto:sindy.nguyen@seattle.gov), (206) 684-0417

Jeff Soder, Current Supervisor, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers, OSPI  
[Jeff.soder@k12.wa.us](mailto:Jeff.soder@k12.wa.us), (360) 725-6049

## **Request for Qualifications**

### **Middle and High School Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Family Support**

---

Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center/Seattle World School  
Martin O'Callaghan, Principal, Seattle World School  
[mocallaghan@seattleschools.org](mailto:mocallaghan@seattleschools.org), (206) 252-2200

Linda Todd, Refugee School Impact Grant Coordinator  
[ljtodd@seattleschools.org](mailto:ljtodd@seattleschools.org), (206) 252-0068

While students within ReWA's programs have a strong desire to succeed, they face a great number of barriers to performing well academically and adjusting socially. They are typically newcomer refugees who have experienced war, trauma, and displacement. Challenges and barriers include:

- **Language:** All students are Early Language Learners (ELL), many with no native language literacy or basic math skills, and the majority have limited or no previous education. This makes the process of learning a new language and new subjects very time intensive and difficult.
- **Acculturation:** Students are faced with learning a new language and a new culture at the same time. For parents, they do not understand the behavioral norms and expectations for US schooling, with many being illiterate in their native language and unfamiliar with the engagement expected of them. They have limited English proficiency, reducing their ability to engage easily with school administration and staff.
- **Mental Health Issues:** Many students are political or economic refugees who have experienced trauma, deprivation, and/or victimization before they arrived in the US. Studies estimate that refugees suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at rates 10 times higher than the age-matched general population. These issues contribute to difficulty learning, low self-esteem, displaced anger, and disciplinary issues.

These and other barriers contribute to the achievement gap between our refugee and immigrant students and their native-born peers, putting our students at a high risk of failing their classes, not meeting standard on state tests, and not graduating on time.

ReWA engages long-term with youth to provide academic support, bilingual support, and family outreach through wraparound services to help youth overcome these challenges and barriers and achieve academic success. We provide diverse case management services, from weekly contact with students and parents through a combination of home visits, phone calls, or meetings at the school to providing linkages to family support services. We also proactively engage youth in academic enrichment activities including taking field trips to local college and university campuses to explore post-secondary education options, as well as helping students find work experience or employment opportunities.

## **Request for Qualifications**

### **Middle and High School Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Family Support**

---

ReWA provides family advocacy and parent education to overcome barriers and help parents become more effective and engaged in their children's academic success. Adults learn skills such as building positive relationships, improving communication with their children, learning positive discipline techniques, becoming more involved in their child's education, and preventing children from participating in unlawful activities.

#### **Tracking to Success**

Within the last two years, ReWA has tracked academic outcomes and indicators through:

- Daily attendance
- Regular access to student academic progress through the SOURCE
- Quarterly and semester student grade reports
- Standardized test scores
- Teacher survey evaluations that track literacy reports and grade matriculation
- Lexile Reading Measurement
- Entry Assessment Mathematics Evaluation (EAMES)

Our organization uses this data on an ongoing basis to track, report, and continuously improve student outcomes. In 2011, through a number of measures, ReWA reported the following student outcome improvements:

- 91.6% of students improved English literacy skills
- 82.8% of students increased their reading skills
- 84.4% of students increased their math skills
- 92.4% of students made level gains in academic progress
- 100% of students matriculated to the next grade level
- 100% of students improved social skills development
- 88.9% of students completed homework to their teachers' satisfaction

Additionally, ReWA's Youth Program staff meet monthly to evaluate program quality, assessing each student's academic and social development, and generating plans at the program and individual student level. We use a variety of resources to develop these plans based on need, including the above academic reports; teacher and school counselor feedback; home visits with parents; and conferences with students. In this way, all content areas—including literacy, reading, writing, science, math, and social skills—are evaluated to inform our student academic and enrichment planning, with referrals to ReWA's After School programs, extended day opportunities at their schools, and other after school academic programs  
(Data sample: Please see attached report.)

#### **Woman and Minority Inclusion; Non-discrimination**

ReWA will not subcontract or hire additional employees for this program.

