



HQ LP Project Development HQ Local Programs

HQ Local Programs

LAG Chapter 31 - Using Consultants

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Date: July 15, 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide interim guidance for Local Agency Guidelines Chapter 31 – Using Consultants.

Policy Changes

The following changes are effective with the date of this bulletin:

- 1) Negotiated Hourly Rate (NHR) agreements will be the only approved method of payment for Architecture & Engineering (A&E) and non-A&E professional services contracts after October 01, 2026. Cost plus fixed fee (CPFF) contracts are being eliminated for local agency consultant agreements.

Policy Changes

- New Standard: NHR has become the mandatory payment method.
- RFQs: All RFQ advertisements posted after the policy effective date must list NHR as the payment method.
- Deadline: No CPFF agreements will be approved after October 01, 2026.
- Exception: CPFF approvals after the deadline require explicit permission from the Assistant State Local Programs Engineer. Agency must submit a justification memo requesting a CPFF exception.

- 2) Updated Consultant Requirements for New Agreements (Award Data).

Policy Changes for new agreements

- All Funds Included: Award data is now required for all agreements and supplements funded through Local Programs, regardless of whether funding is Federal, State, or Local.
- Strict Timing: You must send award date to the Region Local Programs Engineer prior to asking for reimbursement.
- The Cause: This change is mandatory to comply with updated federal accounting standards and the resulting policy changes by WSDOT Local Programs.



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3) Update Consultant Requirements for Existing Agreements (Award Data)

Policy Changes for existing agreements and supplements

- All Funds Included: Award data is now required for all agreements and supplements funded through Local Programs, regardless of whether funding is Federal, State, or Local.
- Strict Timing: You must submit the original agreement and all supplements to date to RLPE prior to asking for reimbursement.
- Any agreement or supplement not previously submitted must be included with the submitted supplement.
- The Cause: This change is mandatory to comply with updated federal accounting standards and the resulting policy changes by WSDOT Local Programs.

Agencies will not be reimbursed prior to submittal and acceptance.

Guidance

The following changes are effective with the date of this bulletin:

Federal funded agreements

- 1) Consultant agreements and supplements must be submitted to the RLPE for review and concurrence given prior to execution of the agreement. Failure to receive concurrence may result in the agreement being ineligible for reimbursement. This mandatory tracking requirement applies universally to both Certification Acceptance (CA) and non-CA agencies.
- 2) Consultant agreement data must be submitted promptly to the RLPE to ensure local programs can process payment reimbursements.

Award Data Submittal Requirements

- Phase Funding: The specific dollar amount set up for Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right of Way (RW), or Construction (CN), if available.
- Completion Date: The end date of the consultant agreement.
- DCMS Contact: The specific contact information for the Diversity Management and Compliance System.



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State and Local funded agreements

- 1) Local agencies must submit supplemental consultant agreement data for every individual supplement prior to payment reimbursement processing by Local Programs. This mandatory tracking requirement applies universally to both Certification Acceptance (CA) and non-CA agencies.

All submittals must designate the specific project phase where the additional funds will be applied:

- PL: Planning
- PE: Preliminary Engineering
- RW: Right of Way
- CN: Construction

Resources

Local Agency Guidelines ([Manuals | WSDOT](#))

Implementation Plan

The information contained in this bulletin is available now and must be followed.

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