



City of Tacoma

Questions and Answers

Solid Waste Excise Tax Communication Plan RFP Specification No. ES23-0002F

All interested parties had the opportunity to submit questions in writing by email to Dawn DeJarlais, Senior Buyer by date questions were due. The answers to the questions received are provided below and posted to the City's website at www.TacomaPurchasing.org. Navigate to [Current Contracting Opportunities / Services Solicitations](#), and then click *Questions and Answers* for this Specification. This information IS NOT considered an addendum. Respondents should consider this information when submitting their proposals.

Question 1: Could you provide additional detail on what 'expanded response to homeless encampments' on p. 6 of the Solid Waste Excise Tax Communication Plan RFP means? Particularly, is there potential for a portion of this new revenue source to be directed to removal of homeless encampments themselves?

Answer 1: This revenue source is designated to provide services related to cleanup of litter, debris, and illegal dumping in the public right of way, including in the vicinity of a homeless encampment. This could also include strategies to collect trash from people experiencing homelessness. Cleanup of an area after an encampment has been removed is included, but the direct removal of homeless encampments would not be covered by this funding.

Question 2: What is the history of community engagement and soliciting public input around the decision to levy this tax and how this tax revenue will be used?

Answer 2: This tax was included as part of the budget approval process for the 2023-24 biennium, which took place in the Fall of 2022. The excise tax was included in the presentations discussed in public meetings with the City Council Government, Performance and Finance Committee and at the full City Council Meetings, as well as at the Environmental Services Commission and in community budget workshops.

Question 3: Are any trash collection services currently provided for encampments?

Answer 3: There is a contract with Fairlane in place to provide cleanup of litter and debris in and around active encampments. Fairlane makes stops at encampments to clean up garbage and debris. A second contract with GEC provides cleanup of encampment areas after the encampments have been removed. A purple bag program has been piloted in some areas of the City. This program provides purple bags to people experiencing homelessness to collect their own trash, with a designated area where they can leave the bags to be collected. The HEAL team (see question 4) provides purple bags to individuals with instructions on how they can be collected.



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Question 4: What touchpoints does the City currently have with people and organizations who provide services to unhoused people in Tacoma?

Answer 4: The Neighborhood and Community Services Department provides homelessness services in the City of Tacoma. This includes a Homeless Engagement Alternatives Liaisons (HEAL) Team that engages with individuals experiencing homelessness to connect them with appropriate resources. Here is a link to the homelessness strategy for the City. [Homelessness Strategy-v3_footnotes.pdf \(cityoftacoma.org\)](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/~/media/2021/07/2021-07-20-Homelessness-Strategy-v3-Footnotes.pdf)

Question 5: Is the City reaching out/has the City reached out to people experiencing houselessness to understand their needs around solid waste management through a different scope or project? If so, can you provide the findings from that engagement?

Answer 5: The Environmental Services Department has piloted a purple bag program in select areas with people experiencing houselessness. Feedback gathered from participants has generally been appreciative of the purple bag service and it has been expanded to other areas in the City.

Question 6: What support services are provided to people who were living in an encampment that has been removed? (i.e. could you expand on “those living in the encampment are offered assistance finding shelter and services,” as the [Encampment Cleanups and Site Reclamation](#) webpage notes

Answer 6: Support services outside of encampment cleanup are not included within this revenue source. Some of the support services coordinated by the Neighborhood and Community Services Department include:

- Homeless outreach and site reclamation
- Complementary services, such as food and furniture banks
- Housing programs, such as permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing
- Homelessness prevention and diversion programs, such as COVID related rental assistance
- Permanent sheltering for individuals, families, youth, and young adults
- Emergency sheltering, including the Stability Site and Tacoma Emergency Micro-Shelters (TEMS)
- Temporary Sheltering hosted by non-profits and faith-based organization
- Storage of personal property at the stability site
- Access to SUD treatment assessments and detox, bus passes, transportation to shelters, clothing and sleeping bags (if needed), and warming supplies.