

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Conference Planning & Production, Trade Show & Event Management Services

Issued by Washington Health Care Association (WHCA)

Terms Initial one-year term, with renewal options

Key Dates	
October 22, 2026	RFP Issue Date
November 20, 2026	Proposal Deadline
On or before January 1, 2027	Anticipated Contract Start

1. Organization Overview

The Washington Health Care Association (WHCA) is a nonprofit trade association representing skilled nursing and assisted living providers throughout Washington State. WHCA provides advocacy, education, regulatory expertise, and resources to support its members and the residents they serve. Our members care for seniors and individuals with disabilities, helping improve quality of life, independence, and well-being.

WHCA hosts two major in-person educational conferences annually, providing professional education, networking, industry engagement, and trade show opportunities for long-term care professionals and business partners.

We are committed to exceptional customer service and creating welcoming, professional, and memorable conference experiences. We believe that experience begins with the first interaction—whether someone is seeking information, asking a question, registering, or attending an event. We value responsiveness, courtesy, attention to detail, and a genuine commitment to helping others.

WHCA seeks an experienced event management and production company to assume primary responsibility for the operational planning, coordination, and execution of our conferences. The selected contractor will share our commitment to hospitality, professionalism, and thoughtful event experiences while making effective use of available resources.

2. Events Covered

Both events are multi-day conferences featuring educational breakout sessions, keynote presentations, trade shows, networking, committee and board meetings, political action fundraising activities, and associated events. NOTE: Hotels are already secured for the 2027 events, although support in securing hotels for 2028 may be considered under this contract.

	Annual Convention & Trade Show	WHCA/Idaho Fall Conference
Timing	May; typically Western Washington	Fall; typically Eastern Washington (Spokane)
Next event	May 23–26, 2027; Vancouver, WA	Tentatively September 2027
Attendance	Approximately 400	Approximately 325
Host	WHCA	WHCA in collaboration with Idaho Health Care Association

The contractor will work under WHCA’s direction and coordinate with the Idaho association partner, as appropriate.

3. Partnership Objectives and Responsibilities

The primary objective of this partnership is to engage a professional conference production company that assumes responsibility for event operations while allowing WHCA staff to focus on member engagement, relationship building, educational programming, and other association priorities.

The selected contractor will be expected to:

- **Assume operational responsibility:** Manage conference logistics, coordination, registration services, vendor relationships, and onsite production and execution.
- **Maximize WHCA staff engagement:** Reduce the need for WHCA staff to manage routine transactional and production activities, allowing them to prioritize meaningful interactions with members, exhibitors, sponsors, speakers, and industry partners.
- **Provide proactive project management:** Maintain effective communication, clear accountability, established timelines, and timely coordination with WHCA staff and partners.
- **Deliver an exceptional guest experience:** Create welcoming, well-organized, and engaging conferences with responsive customer service for attendees, speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors.
- **Manage resources efficiently:** Identify cost-effective solutions, appropriately staff event operations, and recommend opportunities for continuous improvement.
- **Maintain accurate records and reporting:** Ensure reliable registration information, financial reporting, and event documentation.
- **Establish sustainable processes:** Develop efficient, repeatable systems and procedures that support consistent execution of both conferences.

WHCA staff will remain actively involved in supporting conference activities and the overall guest experience, while the contractor assumes primary responsibility for event logistics and operational execution.

A. Division of Responsibilities

WHCA seeks a collaborative partnership in which the contractor assumes primary responsibility for conference production and operational execution while WHCA retains strategic direction, program content, member relationships, and financial authority. The following matrix outlines the anticipated division of responsibilities. Specific assignments may be refined through the planning process and mutually agreed upon by WHCA and the selected contractor.

Function	WHCA Responsibility	Contractor Responsibility
Event strategy and goals	Lead and approve	Advise and support
Educational programming and speakers	Content, selection, and CE oversight	Speaker and session logistics
Venue research and selection	Final selection and approval	Research, comparative analysis, and recommendations
Venue and vendor contracts	Final approval and execution	Solicit proposals, negotiate, and coordinate
Registration	Policies, pricing, and oversight	Registration administration, check-in, and customer service
Sponsorship and exhibitor sales	Recruitment, sales, relationships, and sponsorship benefits	Coordinate delivery of sponsorship benefits (signage, sponsor recognition, distribution of promotional materials, etc) and manage exhibitor logistics
Marketing strategy and production	Strategy, direction, content oversight, and approval	Produce assigned materials and distribute approved communications as directed
Hotel, catering, and AV coordination	Approve plans and expenditures	Lead logistical planning and vendor coordination
Trade show production	Strategy, exhibitor relationships, and approval	Floor plans, setup, logistics, and teardown
Onsite event execution	Member engagement, hospitality, educational programming, and collaborative staffing support	Lead production, operational execution, vendor coordination, and transactional services
Budget and expenditures	Establish overall budget and approve expenditures	Coordinate line-item expenses, track, report, and recommend
Financial reconciliation	Financial oversight and final approval	Prepare supporting records and reconciliation reports
Post-event evaluation	Joint	Joint

4. Scope of Services

A. Project Management and Communication

The contractor will provide comprehensive project management and maintain close, proactive communication with WHCA throughout planning, execution, and post-event activities.

- Assign a designated project manager as WHCA's primary point of contact, with backup coverage.
- Maintain event timelines, milestones, task lists, production schedules, and shared project documentation.
- Participate in regular planning meetings, increasing in frequency as events approach; remain available for additional calls, meetings, and emails reasonably necessary to deliver services.
- Provide timely responses, progress updates, documented decisions, and early notice of concerns requiring WHCA action.
- Coordinate with WHCA staff, vendors, and the Idaho association partner as appropriate; offer practical recommendations.

Communication expectations: Routine planning meetings, coordination calls, emails, project updates, and other communication reasonably necessary to fulfill the contracted scope must be included in the proposed management fee. No additional meeting or communication charges without WHCA's prior written approval.

The use of project management tools that facilitate effective communication, collaboration, task tracking, and accountability is encouraged. Respondents should identify any preferred platforms or applications they propose to use and describe how these tools would support coordination, transparency, and timely execution of conference planning activities. Any proposed tools should be accessible and easy for WHCA staff to use, with associated costs clearly identified in the proposal.

B. Venue Selection and Hotel Coordination

- Identify venue options, solicit competitive proposals, and present comparative cost-benefit analyses addressing space, room blocks, catering minimums, AV, accessibility, location, attendee experience, and contractual risks.
- Recommend venues and support negotiations; coordinate approved venues, room blocks, commitments, meeting space, and hotel logistics.
- Serve as primary logistical liaison with venue personnel.

WHCA retains final authority for venue selection and contract approval.

C. Registration and Attendee Services

- Recommend or use WHCA-approved registration technology; configure categories, prices, discounts, and payment options as directed.
- Manage registration, confirmations, reminders, changes, attendee inquiries, badges, onsite check-in, and attendee support.

- Provide courteous, knowledgeable, responsive assistance to members and prospective participants.
- Maintain accurate registration records, reports, and reconciliation support; coordinate data accuracy with WHCA's membership database.

WHCA retains ownership of attendee data, registration policies, pricing, and financial controls, including validation of information entered into WHCA systems.

D. Trade Show, Exhibitor and Sponsor Logistics

- Manage trade show floor plans and coordinate exhibit assignments with WHCA.
- Prepare exhibitor information, deadlines, and logistical instructions; coordinate setup, teardown, freight, electrical, and AV needs.
- Track sponsor and exhibitor benefit fulfillment such as recognition, signage, and onsite deliverables.
- Serve as primary logistical contact for confirmed exhibitors and sponsors, coordinating with WHCA as needed.

WHCA retains recruitment, sales, pricing, agreements, and relationship management.

E. Conference Marketing and Communications

- Develop conference marketing and communications production schedules.
- Create promotional materials and prepare announcements, emails, reminders, and attendee/exhibitor information using approved branding and content.
- Coordinate website, email, and social media updates as assigned; distribute approved communications through authorized WHCA systems.
- Monitor assigned campaigns and ensure timely updates to conference schedules and logistics.

WHCA retains marketing strategy, branding, messaging, and final content approval.

F. Food, Beverage, Audiovisual and Event Production

- Coordinate catering recommendations, quantities, dietary accommodations, and service schedules.
- Obtain AV proposals and coordinate staging, lighting, sound, presentations, layouts, seating, and room utilization.
- Manage signage, printed materials, supplies, vendor delivery, setup, teardown, production schedules, and issue resolution.
- Collaborate with WHCA to create a warm, welcoming, professional atmosphere through thoughtful space planning, signage, room arrangements, lighting, and other cost-effective design elements that enhance comfort, engagement, and connection.
- Recommend practical enhancements reflecting each event's purpose and WHCA's professional image, within approved budgets.

All expenditures and contractual commitments require WHCA approval.

G. Speaker and Educational Session Logistics

- As assigned, coordinate speaker schedules, room assignments, AV needs, instructions, and deadlines.
- As assigned, collect speaker materials, biographies, photographs, and presentations; support check-in and session readiness.
- Coordinate attendance tracking and required documentation; provide timely program and speaker updates for conference communications.

WHCA retains educational programming, speaker selection, continuing education accreditation, and educational content compliance.

H. Onsite Conference Management

WHCA typically has approximately 10–12 staff members onsite during its conferences. A primary objective of this partnership is to allow WHCA staff to focus on member engagement, relationship building, educational programming, and other association priorities rather than routine transactional activities and event production logistics.

The selected contractor will provide a right-sized core production team responsible for managing onsite operations, coordinating vendors, delivering responsive attendee services, and ensuring the event runs smoothly. The contractor is not expected to duplicate WHCA's onsite staffing but should assume primary responsibility for operational execution, reducing the need for WHCA staff to manage routine logistical and transactional functions.

The contractor's onsite responsibilities include:

- Direct event setup, daily operations, and breakdown.
- Manage registration operations, attendee check-in, registration questions, and onsite customer service.
- Coordinate trade show setup, exhibitor logistics, and teardown.
- Serve as the primary onsite liaison with hotel, catering, audiovisual, and other vendors on WHCA's behalf.
- Oversee meal service preparation, meeting room configurations, room transitions, and production schedules.
- Manage attendee navigation, wayfinding signage, and information resources.
- Conduct operational briefings and maintain close communication with designated WHCA staff.
- Respond promptly to attendee needs and resolve onsite logistical and production issues.
- Ensure event spaces are prepared, welcoming, and functioning as intended.

WHCA Staff Support: WHCA staff will remain actively involved in supporting a successful conference experience. Their responsibilities will include providing association-specific expertise, supporting educational programming, welcoming and engaging exhibitors, sponsors, and speakers, addressing member-related matters, and providing hands-on assistance when needed to ensure a smooth and positive guest experience. These activities will be coordinated with the production team, with the contractor retaining primary responsibility for event logistics and operational execution.

Proposed Staffing Model: Proposals should identify the recommended core onsite production team, individual roles and responsibilities, staffing schedules, and associated costs. Respondents should explain how their staffing model will work collaboratively with WHCA staff while maximizing opportunities for WHCA staff to engage with members and other stakeholders.

I. Budget Management and Financial Coordination

WHCA's direct event operating expense budgets typically range from \$120,000 to \$160,000 per conference, depending on the event. These budgets are separate from the professional event management fees contemplated under this RFP and generally include venue, catering, WHCA staff travel, audiovisual services, equipment, printing, speaker fees, and other conference-related expenses.

- Develop line item event operating budgets within WHCA-approved parameters; track projected and actual expenses and report regularly.
- Identify cost savings; maintain transparent vendor pricing, invoices, and financial documentation.
- Track contractual commitments and deliverables; obtain WHCA approval before incurring expenses or commitments.
- Assist WHCA Finance with timely post-event reconciliation.

All contracts must be executed by the WHCA CEO or authorized designee. WHCA retains control of event funds, payment authorization, accounting, and financial policies.

J. Post-Event Reporting and Evaluation

Within 30 days after each conference, provide:

- Final registration and attendance reports and exhibitor/sponsor fulfillment summary.
- Vendor performance assessment, expense reconciliation, and outstanding obligations.
- Attendee feedback summary using WHCA-approved evaluation tools.
- Recommendations for operational and guest-experience improvements and updated planning documentation.

5. Budget and Pricing Expectations

WHCA anticipates an annual professional services budget of approximately \$60,000 for both conferences combined. Respondents are encouraged to propose efficient, scalable approaches within this budget.

The management fee should include routine project management, planning, communication, coordination, and may include onsite staffing. Professional management fees and required contractor expenses are distinct from separately budgeted direct event costs such as venue, catering, audiovisual services, exhibit services, and printing. WHCA will provide budgets for direct event costs and will coordinate with the selected contractor and provide oversight on modifications to expenses and revenues.

In addition to management fees, proposals must disclose travel, onsite staffing (if not included in the management fee), technology, subcontractor fees, commissions, rebates, and other third-party compensation.

Additional services or expenses outside the agreed scope require prior written WHCA approval. These should be disclosed in the proposal.

A. Cost Efficiency and Vendor Relationships

WHCA encourages respondents to leverage their established vendor relationships, industry networks, purchasing expertise, and creative approaches to identify cost savings and operational efficiencies while maintaining or enhancing service quality and the overall guest experience.

WHCA is interested in understanding how the selected contractor's relationships and expertise may provide added financial value to the association. Any proposed savings must be transparent and should not compromise the quality of conference services or attendee satisfaction.

6. Contractor Qualifications and Evaluation

WHCA seeks a contractor experienced in comparable association conferences and trade shows, preferably serving nonprofits or membership organizations, with strong registration, hotel, catering, AV, exhibitor, project management, communication, customer service, staffing, and financial controls.

Proposals will be evaluated for relevant experience, service model, staffing, communication, guest experience, technology, cost and value, financial accountability, references, and ability to partner effectively with WHCA. WHCA may interview shortlisted respondents.

7. Contractual Expectations

The final agreement will define services and deliverables; timelines and performance standards; communication and staffing continuity; financial approvals; ownership of WHCA data, materials, and records; confidentiality and data security; insurance and indemnification; termination and transition assistance; third-party compensation disclosure; and remedies for service deficiencies. WHCA may negotiate terms, reject proposals, or decline to award a contract.

8. Proposal Submission Requirements

Submit a proposal addressing each category below. Clearly identify exceptions, exclusions, and any additional costs.

Submission category	Required information
1. Company & Contact Information	Legal business name, business address, website, primary contact name and title, email address, and telephone number. Identify the person authorized to discuss and negotiate the proposal and, if different, the individual authorized to sign a contract.
2. Company Profile & Experience	Company overview, relevant experience, comparable association conferences and trade shows, and examples of similar events.
3. Proposed Service Model	Describe your proposed approach to planning, coordinating, and executing both conferences, including how responsibilities would be shared with WHCA staff. Explain how your service model would reduce WHCA's administrative and operational workload, support member engagement, and create efficiencies across both events. Identify any recommended adjustments to the proposed scope of services, with supporting rationale.
4. Project Management & Communication	Tools, meeting cadence, response times, escalation, coordination practices; confirm routine meetings, calls, and emails are included in the fee.
5. Staffing & Personnel	Project manager and key staff, roles, qualifications, onsite staffing levels, and backup coverage.
6. Customer Service & Guest Experience	Approach to responsive inquiries, hospitality, welcoming environments, and experiences for attendees, speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors; examples.
7. Registration & Event Technology	Platforms, reporting, data accuracy, coordination with WHCA systems, and fees.
8. Pricing & Fees	Provide itemized pricing for each conference and combined annual services, including staffing, travel, technology, subcontractors, optional services, and exclusions. Disclose any vendor commissions, rebates, referral fees, or other third-party compensation. Identify proposed payment terms, including deposit requirements, invoicing schedules, and payment milestones.
9. Cost Savings & Added Value	Describe how established vendor relationships, industry networks, purchasing expertise, and operational efficiencies could reduce WHCA's conference costs while maintaining or improving service quality and the guest experience. Provide examples of savings achieved for comparable clients, where available.

10. Transition & Onboarding	Proposed onboarding process, timeline, key milestones, and information or support needed from WHCA.
11. Financial Controls & Risk Management	Approach to budget tracking, vendor oversight, financial reconciliation, data security, and contingency planning.
12. References & Recommendations	Three comparable client references and examples of improvements achieved through your services.

A. Required Pricing Summary

Pricing component	Annual Convention	Fall Conference
Professional management fee	\$	\$
Onsite staffing (if separate)	\$	\$
Travel and lodging	\$	\$
Registration technology and fees	\$	\$
Other required charges	\$	\$
TOTAL PROPOSED COST	\$	\$

Combined annual proposed price for both conferences: \$ _____

Include all required professional services and contractor expenses. Exclude direct event expenses paid separately by WHCA, such as venue, catering, AV, and printing. Alternative service models are welcome if differences from the requested scope are clearly identified.

B. Submission Information

Submit proposals electronically in PDF format to events@whca.org. WHCA reserves the right to request additional information, conduct interviews, negotiate terms, or decline to award a contract.

Milestone	Date / information
RFP Issued	October 22, 2026
Questions Due	October 29, 2026
Proposal Deadline	November 20, 2026
Submit Proposals To	ATTN: WHCA Event Selection Committee events@whca.org
Anticipated Selection	December 8, 2026
Anticipated Contract Start	On or before January 1, 2027