

## **About Kailash / Acclaim Systems**

Good Morning! My name is Kailash Kalantri and I am the President of Acclaim Systems. I have been in the IT field for 20+ years and we have been doing business in Harrisburg for the last 17 years. Acclaim was nominated by PA Career Link in 2016 and we were the recipient of the Governor's Achievement Award. I want to thank Chairman MetCalfe, Representative Grove and the entire committee for House Bill 1704 for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

As you perhaps know, all Commonwealth Employees are required to do complete background checks, sign financial disclosures and are not allowed to do business with Commonwealth Agencies. These rules and guidelines were established to validate employee qualifications and experience, to avoid abuse of power and to prevent conflicts of interest. Interestingly enough, a contractor hired to work in the same agencies, alongside Commonwealth employees does not have any such requirements or constraints. This can lead to situations where improperly vetted contractors may be hired. It can also lead to a situation where a contractor may be dealing with the very agency that he is contracted to. At the very least, contractors should be required to go through the same formal vetting process that employees do and they should be required to follow the same guidelines and rules about doing business with Commonwealth that employees have to. Let me briefly touch upon each of these points:

### **1. Background Checks**

CoPA must ask vendors to do background check for employment and education to validate the candidate's resume and experience. This will be at NO Cost to the Commonwealth and will help confirm the qualification of the consultant.

This is required as some candidates falsify information on the resume. It is important to hire a qualified candidate so that the job is done right the first time. We need candidates with integrity as they may have access to confidential data and information. This check may help with Security as well.

### **2. Independent Consultants with Firms - Conflict of Interest, Favoritism**

Independent consultants billing directly to CoPA for their services must not be allowed to do business directly/indirectly with that Agency as they have access to internal confidential information which leads to conflicts of interest. In these cases, CoPA is paying the consultant to build his/her business rather than doing the work that the consultant has been hired for. Favoritism with Agency managers is another issue that may increase kickbacks/corruption. Consultants may also team up with other independent consultants at same or other agency to help each other.

A consultant should not be part of the hiring process for other contracting staff. This would apply to the independent consultants as well.

### **3. Financial Disclosures**

Every consultant working for CoPA must be asked to sign a financial disclosure that they are not doing any business with the Agency/CoPA directly or indirectly.

These measures should equally apply to existing and future consultants and will go a long way in ensuring a higher quality of consultant and lead to greater probity and reliability in their dealings with the Commonwealth. I thank the committee for its time and attention to this matter.