



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Holly Joshi
Chief of Violence
Prevention

SUBJECT: Clinical Mental Health Services
Contract

DATE: April 14, 2025

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (May 1, 2025 21:16 PDT)

Date: **05/01/2025**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Waiving The City Of Oakland's Local And Small Local Business Enterprise Program Requirements And Competitive Bidding Process And Awarding A Professional Services Agreement To Healing Change Therapy & Consulting, Inc For Clinical Mental Health Services In An Amount Not To Exceed Two Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$240,000) For The Term Of July 1, 2025, To June 30, 2027

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed resolution will authorize the City Administrator to enter a professional services agreement with Healing Change Therapy & Consulting, Inc., to provide clinical mental health services to staff from the Department of Violence Prevention who experience direct and vicarious trauma through their work serving individuals at the center of group violence and gender-based violence in Oakland. The DVP maintains an existing contract with Healing Change Therapy & Consulting Inc that ends on June 30, 2025, and the DVP desires to continue these critical services for two years by executing a new professional services agreement with Healing Change Therapy & Consulting from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027, for a total cost of \$240,000.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The City of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) is tasked with reducing group and gun violence, gender-based violence, commercial sexual exploitation, and trauma associated with these forms of violence in Oakland. In service of this mission, the DVP employs three types of direct-service staff: (1) life coaches who provide intensive coaching services to individuals at the center of violence; (2) violence interrupters who proactively mediate group-related conflicts to prevent violence and respond to incidents of violence to prevent retaliation, and (3) supervisors who direct and oversee the work of life coaches and violence interrupters. In performing their jobs, these staff members routinely support individuals in moments of extreme

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stress and trauma. Research shows that repeated exposure to traumatic events experienced by others can lead to secondary trauma and compassion fatigue, and the likelihood of experiencing secondary trauma is heightened for people who have a personal history of similar trauma.¹ In addition to their professional experience, DVP direct service staff are hired due to their lived experience and relatability to clients they serve, and thus, many have personal histories that make them more susceptible to secondary trauma.

Recognizing the critical need for mental health services for its direct service staff, the DVP released request for qualifications (RFQ) #271171 for clinical and holistic mental health services on August 4, 2023. This solicitation was posted on the DVP's website, shared via email with community organizations funded by the DVP, and posted in the East Bay Times. The RFQ requested responses from providers qualified to deliver individual and group therapy sessions to support staff with the following:

- Making sense of traumatic experiences and how to move forward
- Reducing intrusive flashbacks and thoughts
- Understanding how trauma affects emotional, mental, and physical well-being
- Effectively managing distress
- Taking steps to heal

The RFQ also stated that providers should have experience working with Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color experiencing high levels of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout, as well as previously incarcerated, historically excluded, and marginalized communities.

The Department of Workplace and Employment Standards (DWES) set the Local/Small Local Business Enterprise (L/SLBE) Program requirement for this project to 20% after completing an availability analysis that identified one firm certified through the program to provide mental health services. Two providers responded to the RFQ for clinical mental health services, neither of which were certified through the L/SLBE Program. Based on RFQ #271171, the DVP contracted with Healing Change Therapy & Consulting Inc. to provide clinical mental health services to DVP staff from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, for a total cost of \$150,000 ([Resolution 90037 C.M.S.](#)) due to the lower cost of services and staff preference for the provider. From January 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, 11 of the DVP's 22 direct service staff received 557 50-minute therapy sessions with Ameeta Singh, LMFT #50409, the sole owner and operator of Healing Change Therapy & Consulting Inc. This represents an average of 37 sessions per month.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

This proposed resolution will allow the DVP to contract with Healing Change Therapy & Consulting Inc. to deliver clinical mental health services to DVP direct staff from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027, for a total cost of \$240,000. Healing Change Therapy & Consulting Inc. will provide up to 48 50-minute therapy sessions per month to support staff in processing direct and vicarious trauma that they experience through their work with the DVP. This represents an

¹ Hensel, J., Ruiz, C., Finney, C. & Dewa, C. (2015). Meta-Analysis of Risk Factors for Secondary Traumatic Stress in Therapeutic Work With Trauma Victims: Secondary Traumatic Stress Risk Factors. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. 28. 10.1002/jts.21998.

increase of approximately 10 sessions per month from the current service delivery to account for four new staff members who will be hired by October 2025, as well as other staff who may join during the service period. Additionally, the DVP will encourage participation from current direct service staff who have not yet used the available services.

The DVP has elected not to release a new RFQ for this service given that DVP staff strongly desire to continue receiving services from Ms. Singh due to the trust, comfort, and history they have established with her during the current contract period. Unlike other services, individual therapy services require a strong personal connection between the provider and service recipient in order to be successful. DVP staff have established this connection with Ms. Singh and do not wish to switch providers and destabilize their mental health care.

The proposed resolution advances the citywide priority of **holistic community safety** by supporting the health and wellness of staff who deliver critical violence intervention services. It also addresses the citywide priority of **responsive, trustworthy government** by acknowledging the City's responsibility to provide healing services to employees who are repeatedly exposed to trauma in their jobs.

FISCAL IMPACT

This resolution will authorize the City Administrator to negotiate and execute a professional services agreement with Healing Change Therapy and Consulting, Inc., for mental health services in the amount of \$240,000. Funding for this service will be available through Measure NN, in Fund (2255), Organization (70211), Program (PS37), and Project (1008028). **Table 1** provides a proposed budget for services.

Table 1. Proposed Budget for Services from Healing Change Therapy & Consulting, Inc. from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027.

Budget Item	Unit cost	Quantity	Total cost
Individual therapy sessions (50 minutes)	\$200/session	1,152 sessions (48 per month)	\$230,400
Individual mental health assessments	\$100/assessment	16 assessments	\$1,600
Administrative Tasks	\$200/hour	40 hours	8,000
Total			\$240,000

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No public outreach was deemed necessary for this report beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

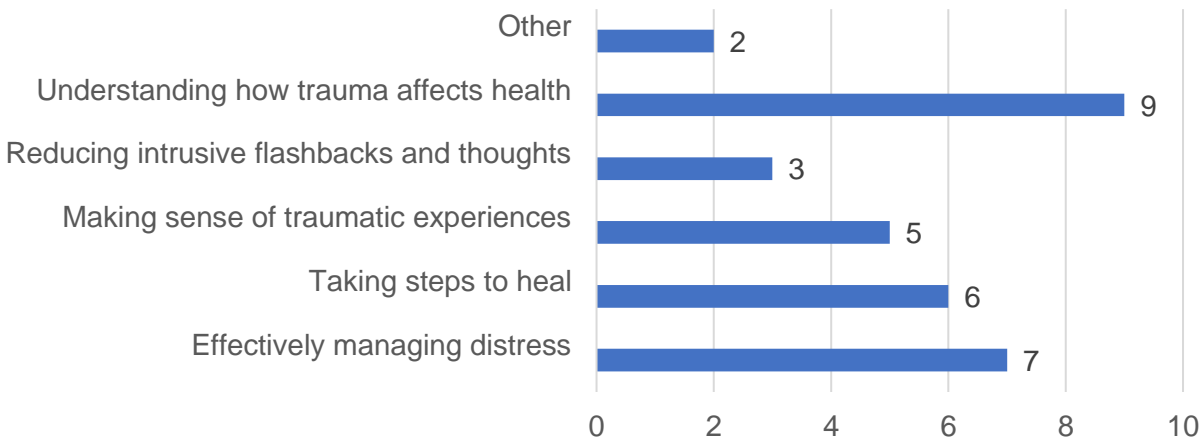
COORDINATION

This report was developed in coordination with the City Attorney's Office, Finance Department, and City Administrator's Office.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION, AND FOLLOW-UP

The DVP has an existing contract with Healing Change Therapy & Consulting, Inc. to deliver clinical mental health services to direct service staff from January 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Through March 2025, 11 direct service staff participated in 557 individual therapy appointments with Ms. Singh. In March 2025, DVP leadership surveyed these staff and found that nine of the 10 staff who responded ranked the services received as a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5. **Figure 1** identifies areas in which services from Healing Change Therapy & Consulting, Inc. have impacted DVP staff and supported them in healing from and processing trauma.

Figure 1. DVP Staff Responses to the Question: “What Has The Clinical Support Helped You With?”



Qualitative responses from staff to survey questions are provided below.

Question: What have you appreciated most about the service?

- “I appreciate the most that she is able to meet weekly and if she senses that I’m having a rough week that she allows that space to offer more sessions that week if needed. I also appreciate how she has taught me to set boundaries with my family.”
- “Having a safe space to express myself and decompress about work related/professional and personal issues.”

Question: What do you wish was different about the services?

- “Nothing at all.”
- “More sessions.”

Question: Is there any other feedback you would like to share?

- “No, just that she is great. Would love to keep working with her.”
- “Ms. Ameeta is needed in a world filled with Trauma and people suffering from depression and anxiety.”
“It’s been a wonderful experience!”

"I hope the DVP continues to provide this service for our direct service staff who are vicariously or directly impacted by the traumas and lived experiences of the participant base."

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: There are no economic opportunities associated with this report.

Environmental: There are no environmental opportunities associated with this report.

Race & Equity: Of the 11 direct service staff members who have accessed services from Healing Change Therapy & Consulting, Inc. since January 1, 2024, all identify as people of color. The mental health services procured through this contract will support increased job satisfaction and retention for people of color employed by the City of Oakland.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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For questions regarding this report, please contact Holly Joshi, Chief of Violence Prevention, at 510-238-3707.

Respectfully submitted,



Holly Joshi (Apr 29, 2025 16:36 PDT)

Holly Joshi
Chief of Violence Prevention
Department of Violence Prevention

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