



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Joe DeVries
Deputy City Administrator

SUBJECT: Clinical Mental Health Services
Contract

DATE: November 13, 2023

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Dec 5, 2023 16:34 PST)

Date: Dec 5, 2023

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 Awarding A New Professional Services Agreement To Healing Change Therapy And Consulting, Inc. For Clinical Mental Health Services In An Amount Not To Exceed One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) For A Term Ending June 30, 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposed resolution will authorize the City Administrator to enter a professional services agreement for \$150,000 with Healing Change Therapy And Consulting, Inc. to provide clinical mental health services to staff from the Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) who provide direct services to individuals impacted by violence in Oakland. This business is owned and operated by a woman of color and was selected through a competitive request for qualifications (RFQ) process. The term of the professional services agreement will be from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025 (18 months), and \$109,174 of the total contract amount will be funded through external grants.

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 two types of direct-service staff: (1) family coaches/case managers who work with individuals at the center of gun violence and their families to change negative behaviors and thinking patterns; and (2) crisis responders who respond to shootings and homicides to support victims and their families. In performing their jobs, these staff members are repeatedly tasked with supporting individuals in moments of extreme 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 trauma¹. DVP direct service staff are hired in part due to their lived

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.

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experience and relatability to the 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 a request for qualifications (RFQ) 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, and responses were due by August 31, 2023. 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 and historically excluded populations.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Two providers responded to the RFQ for clinical mental health services: Healing Change Therapy and Consulting, Inc. and Sister to Sister 2, Inc. Both providers have adequate credentials and offer the individual and group therapy services requested by the DVP. The DVP is requesting approval to contract with Healing Change Therapy and Consulting, Inc. for the following reasons:

1. Healing Change Therapy and Consulting, Inc. charges \$200 per session for individual and group therapy, while Sister to Sister 2, Inc. charges \$300 per session for individual therapy and \$350 per session for group therapy.
2. The DVP has an existing contract with Healing Change Therapy and Consulting, Inc. for clinic mental health services for the term of June 30, 2023, to December 31, 2023. DVP staff unanimously report positive experiences receiving services from Ameeta Singh, the licensed marriage and family therapist who is the owner and operator of Healing Change Therapy and Consulting, Inc. DVP direct service staff strongly desire to continue receiving services from Ms. Singh due to the trust and rapport they have established with her during the current contract term.

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. This firm did not apply to the RFQ released by the DVP, however, as previously noted, the DVP's direct service staff strongly desire to continue receiving individual and group therapy services from Ms. Singh due to the trust, rapport, and comfort they have established

with her over the past few months. For this reason, the DVP is requesting that City Council waive the L/SLBE Program requirement for this project and allow the DVP to contract with Healing Change Therapy and Consulting, Inc.

FISCAL IMPACT

This proposed 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 \$150,000. Funding sources for this contract are provided below.

Fund	Organization	Account	Project	Program	Amount
2128 - Department of Health and Human Services	78111 – Department of Human Services: Administration	54911 – Services: Contract	1006738 - SAMHSA 09-29-24 FY24	SC22 - FOSTERING SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	\$100,000
2152 - California Board of Corrections	70211 – Oakland Unite	54911 – Services: Contract	1006525 - CALVIP 22-25	SC22 - FOSTERING SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	\$9,174
1010 - General Fund: General Purpose	70211 – Oakland Unite	54911 – Services: Contract	1006367 - Reimagining Public Safety	SC22 - FOSTERING SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	\$40,826

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

During the pilot period of these services, fifteen direct service staff have had approximately one hundred total appointments with Ameeta Singh. In a survey of direct service staff who have used the services, respondents said that the services have helped them most in making sense of traumatic experiences, reducing intrusive flashbacks and thoughts, and understanding how trauma affects emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing. All respondents reported very favorable experiences and said that they would definitely continue to use the services if they were offered, and one respondent stated, "Ameeta was the best thing that could have happened to me and our team."

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

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

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


Race and Equity: Of the 20 DVP staff members who perform direct service work, all 20 identify as persons 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

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Waiving The City Of Oakland's Local And Small Local Business Enterprise Program Requirements And Awarding A New Professional Services Agreement To Healing Change Therapy And Consulting, Inc. For Clinical Mental Health Services In An Amount Not To Exceed One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) For A Term Ending June 30, 2025.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Jenny Linchey Acting Deputy Chief of Grants, Programs, and Evaluation, Department of Violence Prevention, at 510-238-2374.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe DeVries, Deputy City Administrator
City Administrator's Office

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