



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Damon Covington
Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Professional Service Agreement with
Core Psychological Corporation

DATE: November 7, 2023

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Nov 29, 2023 21:54 PST)

Date: Nov 29, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution: (1) Authorizing The City Administrator To Enter Into A Professional Services Agreement With Core Psychological Corporation (Formerly Known As Cordico Psychological Corporation) To Provide Pre-Employment Psychological Evaluations For The Period Of November 1, 2023 To April 30, 2025 At A Total Contract Amount Of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000); And (2) Waiving The City's Competitive Request For Proposals / Qualification (RFP/Q) Process And Local And Small Business (LBE / SLBE) Enterprise Program Requirements For The Proposed Agreement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oakland Fire Department (OFD) is recruiting Fire Fighter Trainees and Fire Fighter Paramedic Trainees to fill three academies in the next two (2) years. Adoption of this proposed resolution will authorize the City Administrator to enter a new contract with Core Psychological Corporation to provide pre-employment psychological evaluations of the Fire Fighter Trainee and Fire Fighter Paramedic Trainee candidates as part of the pre-employment process to identify the most suitable candidates for hire.

The nature of the work of firefighters, including repeated exposure to painful and provocative experiences and erratic sleep schedules, can pose significant risk to firefighters' mental health.

Conducting an effective pre-employment evaluation is especially important when hiring first responders and public safety professionals. As the individuals who are responsible for keeping communities safe, it should be clear that the individuals are psychologically prepared for the rigorous roles and responsibilities involved in fulfilling the job.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Core Psychological Corporation is a California Professional Corporation, registered with the California Secretary of State and headquartered in Sacramento County. Their team of psychologists provides a wide range of psychological services for law enforcement and other public safety agencies in California, including police departments, sheriff's offices, fire departments, probation departments, dispatcher agencies, district attorney's offices, coroner departments, and crisis negotiators. Psychological services include pre-employment psychological evaluations, fitness-for-duty psychological examinations, threat assessments, violence risk assessments, critical incident response, and specialized wellness support services for first responders.

On December 1, 2020, the Oakland Police Department contracted with Cordico Psychological Services to utilize their wellness apps, Headspace and Cordico Shield, [Resolution No. 88405 C.M.S.](#)

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Adoption of this resolution advances the citywide priority of providing a responsive transparent government, because the psychological evaluation of applicants gives the City a heightened level of understanding about the quality of candidates seeking employment for these high stress positions.

Pre-employment psychological evaluations are both time-sensitive and high-stakes in nature, and thus require extensive specialized professional training and expertise, in addition to a demonstrated capacity to deliver these services in a reliable, timely, and highly professional manner. Core Psychological Corporation has the capacity to deliver this service, including accommodating "surge" scheduling when assessment volumes increase substantially in response to hiring demands and other factors. Core's Gold River location was equipped to complete up to 15 pre-employment psychological evaluations daily (up to 90 per week with Saturday appointments) in full compliance with all Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements, including administration and scoring of all psychological testing, completion of all psychological interviews, writing of psychological reports, and submission of verbal and written reports.

The psychologists who will provide these services for the Oakland Fire Department meet the following **minimum** standards:

- **Ph.D. Psychologists with a minimum of 15 years post-doctoral degree;**
- **Professionally licensed as a Psychologists in the State of California for a minimum of 10 years;**
- **Minimum of 1,000 pre-employment psychological evaluations independently conducted according to California POST regulations, and meet or exceed all POST requirements for conducting evaluations;**
- **International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Associate Membership;**
- **Substantially exceed the POST Continuing Education requirements; and,**

- *Never disciplined or otherwise sanctioned by the California Board of Psychology, or any other professional organization or regulatory agency.*

Core Psychological Corporation's long-term experience and professional expertise include the following.

- A team of psychologists who provides services for more than 250 law enforcement and other public safety agencies, including the Sacramento Metro Fire District, the Sacramento Police Department, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office, the Oakland Police Department, the Fremont Police Department, and many other city, county, state, and federal agencies.
- Dr. Ardalan and Dr. Reynoso have performed well over 1,000 pre-employment psychological evaluations according to California POST regulations. Core Psychological Corporation's doctors are amongst the most highly experienced in the State of California performing these evaluations and meet (or substantially exceed) all of the POST requirements for conducting the evaluations.
- Dr. Ardalan and Dr. Reynoso possess professional expertise in violence risk assessment and have all completed advanced specialized professional training in threat assessment.
- Dr. Reynoso has performed more than 1,000 psychological violence risk assessments, Dr. Ardalan has been providing critical incident services for law enforcement agencies for approximately 15 years.

Waiver of Bidding and Advertising Requirement and the Local and Small Local Business Enterprise Program Provisions

Oakland Municipal Code Section 2.04.051.B permits the City Council to waive the request for proposal/qualifications (RFP/Q) requirements upon a finding that it is in the best interest of the City to do so. Staff recommends that it is in the best interest of the City to waive the RFP/Q process due to the impending need for the services to meet the timeline for the academy. An RFP/Q process will be conducted for the next recruitment. Staff also recommends that the City Council waive the Local and Small Local Business Enterprise Program Provisions as Core Psychological Corporation is in Gold River, California.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding for this proposed contract from November 1, 2023, to April 30, 2025, shall not exceed \$100,000 and was appropriated in the General Fund (1010), In-Service Training Organization (20631), Academy Project (1004398), Fire Department Safety, Education, and Training Program (PS27).

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures, because staff is requesting to waive the RFP/Q process due to the impending need for the services to meet the timeline for the academy.

COORDINATION

Staff collaborated with the Controller's Bureau in the production of this report. The Office of the City Attorney reviewed the Report and Resolution to form and legality.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: No economic opportunities are identified in this report. However, professional advice and pre-employment psychological evaluations may enhance the City's risk management strategies.

Environmental: No environmental impacts or opportunities are identified in this report.

Race & Equity: Professional advice and pre-employment psychological evaluations will assist the Oakland Fire Department in hiring effective personnel to serve all Oakland residents, particularly its most vulnerable populations.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution: (1) Authorizing The City Administrator To Enter Into A Professional Services Agreement With Core Psychological Corporation (formerly known as Cordico Psychological Corporation) To Provide Pre-Employment Psychological Evaluations For The Period Of November 1, 2023 To April 30, 2025 At A Total Contract Amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000); and (2) Waiving The City's Competitive Request For Proposals / Qualification (RFP/Q) Process And Local And Small Business (LBE / SLBE) Enterprise Program Requirements For The Proposed Agreement.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Sonia Lara, Fire Personnel Officer at SLara@oaklandca.gov or by phone at 510.238.7803.

Respectfully submitted,



Damon Covington, Fire Chief

Prepared by Sonia Lara, OFD Personnel Officer