



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Monica Elise Davis
Deputy City Administrator

SUBJECT: State and Federal Lobbyist Contract
Amendment

DATE: September 3, 2025

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Sep 11, 2025 14:14:20 PDT)

Date: Sep 11, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Amending Two Contracts to Townsend Public Affairs (TPA) To Service As The City Of Oakland State Lobbyist And Provide Grant Support By Extending The Term Through October 1, 2025 To September 30, 2027 And Adding Funds For A Total Amount Not To Exceed \$420,000 And To Serve As The City Of Oakland Federal Lobbyist And Provide Grant Support By Extending The Term Through October 1, 2025 TO September 30, 2027 And Adding Funds For An Amount Not To Exceed \$252,000 And Authorizing The City Administrator, Without Further Council Action, To Exercise An Option To Renew Each Contract For A Third Year Under the Same Terms And Conditions For An Amount Not To Exceed \$210,00 For The Third Year of the State Lobbyist Contract and \$126,000 For The Third Year Of The Federal Lobbyist Contract And Authorizing The City Administrator To Waive The City's Local Business/Small Local Business Program Participation Requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the Mayor issued a Request for Proposals (RFPs) for state and federal lobbying services and grant support in March 2022. TPA was the sole respondent to each RFP. This proposed resolution would approve two new two-year contracts with TPA, one for state lobbying and grant support and one for federal lobbying and grant support, with an option to extend for a third year. This will align with the current Presidential/Administration term in Washington and ensure continuity in legislative advocacy.

REASON FOR URGENCY

Due to the expiration of the current contract with TPA on September 30, 2025, and the increasing urgency around rapidly evolving legislative activity at both the state and federal levels, this item is being submitted directly to the City Council agenda, bypassing the Rules Committee, to ensure uninterrupted strategic advocacy for the City of Oakland. The City is currently navigating significant challenges and opportunities in the legislative landscape, ranging from shifting federal funding priorities, executive orders, and budget rescissions, to accelerated

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timelines for critical infrastructure, housing, and public safety legislation. This period of legislative flux has a direct and immediate impact on Oakland's ability to secure resources, shape policy, and defend key community priorities.

To remain competitive, coordinated, and proactive in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., it is essential that the City continue uninterrupted engagement with TPA, our legislative advocacy partner. Extending and expanding this contract at this time ensures continuity of representation during a pivotal transition period aligned with the current Presidential and Congressional terms, while allowing the City to advocate effectively in fast-moving policy environments. Delaying action on this item could compromise the City's ability to respond to and influence major funding and legislative developments, potentially resulting in lost opportunities or diminished positioning at the state and federal levels.

BACKGROUND

As the state lobbyist for Oakland, Townsend has successfully worked in partnership with the Mayor, City Council, and the City Administration to pass important pieces of legislation, secure funding for critical City projects, and further the goals of the City. Each year, Townsend works with the Mayor, City Council, and City Administration to formulate legislative priorities (Legislative Priorities are provided as Attachment A & B). During their tenure with the City, TPA has secured over \$843 million in state and federal appropriations and grants for the city of Oakland's projects, including public safety, housing and development, transportation, parks and recreation, education, and cultural resources. Working in close partnership over the last three years, the City/TPA Grants Team has helped secure \$37,283,454. Successful grant projects include: Funding to address the unhoused, providing interim shelter & services, Supporting public safety efforts, Park construction and beautification, Urban forestry/tree planting efforts, Community resilience, Emergency services, and Community outreach and education.

TPA has achieved high levels of success over the years in both Sacramento and Washington D.C., in part because their staff has an in-depth understanding and deep-rooted knowledge of Oakland's local issues and political landscape. TPA has the ability to work with longstanding coalitions, as well as help establish new ones as dictated by emerging issues. Due to their experience, knowledge of the City's operations, and successful track record in executing the City's legislative priorities in state and federal matters, staff recommends that the City Council award two contracts to TPA to serve as the City's state and federal lobbyists and to help provide grant support.

Legislative History

The City of Oakland retained Townsend Public Affairs as its state lobbyist in 2006 after conducting an Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Their contract was extended through 2009, when another RFP was conducted. In May 2009, the Council adopted a resolution awarding a contract to TPA, after issuing another RFP. Council voted to extend the contract in 2011 and then again in 2015 (approving a contract through 2017).

For federal lobbying services, the City issued an RFP in 2011. After the RFP process was completed, TPA emerged as the most responsive and responsible proposer and was selected to represent the City as its federal lobbyist. TPA has served as the City's federal lobbyist since

that time. Council awarded the contract to TPA in February 2014 and then voted to extend that contract through 2017. In March 2017, the Office of the Mayor issued a RFPs for state and federal lobbying services. Three proposals were submitted in response to the State Lobbying RFP, and one proposal was submitted in response to the Federal Lobbying RFP. After a thorough selection process, Townsend Public Affairs emerged as the most responsive and responsible business for both federal and state lobbying services for the period of October 2017 through September 2020.

On June 2, 2020, during the height of the pandemic, the City Council approved a one-year extension, from October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021, for both the State and Federal Lobbyist contracts at the same rate ([88140 CMS](#)). At that meeting, Council directed staff to return with an additional one-year extension. On June 30, 2020, Council approved an additional year's extension for the state and federal lobbyist contract at the existing rate for October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022 ([88183 CMS](#)).

In addition, in June 2021, the City Administrator's Office entered into a professional services agreement contract with TPA for \$49,999 for grant support services including: identifying, researching, and monitoring grant funding opportunities, review of grant application development and assistance with submittals, providing full application requirements, assembling project background and details, conducting funding advocacy and supporting post-award grant administration and compliance. That contract expired in June 2022.

In March 2022, staff released a Request for Proposals for state and federal lobbyist services, including grant support with the approval of the City Council ([89399 CMS](#)). It was advertised through customary outlets, including The East Bay Times, The Oakland Post, El Mundo, San Francisco Chronicle, iSupplier, and on the City's website. Staff also directly notified 4 firms about the opportunity to submit proposals. By the submittal deadline of April 13, 2022, one proposal was received for both the state and federal lobbyist RFPs. [On September 20, 2022](#), the City Council approved the TPA Agreements for State and Federal Lobbyist services for two years with the option to extend administratively for an additional year. The current agreement is set to expire on September 30, 2025.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

This proposed resolution will advance the Citywide priorities of 1) **holistic community safety**, 2) **housing, economic, and cultural security**, 3) **vibrant, sustainable infrastructure**, and 4) **responsive, trustworthy government** because TPA provides support for grant funding in programmatic offerings that are related to these priorities. As was previously approved by the City Council, staff is again requesting that the City's Local/ Business/Small Local Business participation requirements be waived. While Townsend Public Affairs has operated an office in Oakland since 2006 and was previously certified as a Local Business Enterprise (LBE) from 2007 through 2022, under current regulations, it does not qualify as an LBE as its headquarters are not in Oakland. Townsend Public Affairs subcontracts 25% of the work to [360 Total Concepts](#), who is a certified Small Local Business Enterprise (SLBE). Due to TPA's in-depth understanding and deep-rooted knowledge of Oakland's local issues and political landscape, and a strong track record of success (see Past Performance and Evaluation Section), staff is requesting that the City Council waive the 50% L/SLBE requirement. Staff is requesting that the term of the existing contracts be extended for an additional two years, with an option to

administratively extend a third year if performance measures are completed. Below is the summary of the scope of services.

Scope Of Services

TPA will work closely with the City to draft a comprehensive state and federal legislative advocacy plan in coordination with the Mayor and City leadership. The process includes:

Developing a Legislative Agenda

- TPA works with the Mayor, Council, and City Administration to create the annual list of legislative priorities, which includes an annual review of their legislative activities on behalf of the City, as well as the forward-looking list of priorities for the upcoming legislative session. These are presented to the Council's Rules and Legislation Committee and the City Council in December, to provide ample time to take necessary action during the beginning of the legislative session.
- Identifying issue areas drawing on identified City priorities,
- Identifying elected representatives and key decision-makers who will carry legislation or partner with the City on particular priorities,
- Formulating legislative strategy, including building coalitions as needed

Tracking State and Federal Activities of Interest

- Regular contact with Bay Area legislative leaders, key agency officials, the State and federal Administration; and staff,
- Monitoring selected hearings and committees,
- Identifying legislative and/or policy opportunities in advance; and,
- Informing and working with relevant community organizations to build support for sponsored legislation.

Identifying Grant Funding Opportunities and Supporting Grant Funding Applications

- Identifying, researching, and monitoring grant funding opportunities,
- Review of grant application and assistance with submittal,
- Providing full application requirements, assembling project background and details, drafting written proposals in coordination with city staff
- Submitting applications, conducting funding advocacy, and supporting post-award grant administration and compliance

Developing Appropriate Materials for Meetings and Maintaining Records

- Preparing agendas, memos, and talking points,
- Developing relevant support materials, including research,
- Providing regular updates regarding advocacy and public policy initiatives,
- Providing summary reports; and,
- Being available for in-person briefing(s), as requested

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the amended resolutions authorizes the City Administrator, or Designee, to add to the awards and extend the duration of two professional services agreements to Townsend Public Affairs to serve as the 1) state lobbyist and provide state grant support in an annual amount of \$210,000, with a total amount not to exceed \$420,000 and 2) federal lobbyist and provide federal grant support in an annual of \$126,000, with a total amount not to exceed \$252,000 for the period of October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2027.

Funding for these contracts is budgeted and available in the following funding sources:

Fund Source	Organization	Project	Account	Amount
1010 General Purpose Fund	90591 Citywide Activities	1000467 State Lobbyist	54011-Contract Contingencies	\$252,000
		1000468 Federal Lobbyist	54919 – Misc. Contract Services	\$420,000
Total Funding				\$672,000

Additionally, without returning to City Council, both agreements will also provide the City Administrator the option to renew the contracts under the same terms and conditions in an amount not to exceed two hundred and ten thousand dollars (\$210,000) for the State Lobbyist contract, and in an amount not to exceed one hundred and twenty-six thousand dollars (\$126,000) for the Federal Lobbyist contract for a third year term period of October 1, 2027 to September 30, 2028. Funding for the extension of the contract is not budgeted and is dependent upon additional appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2027-28 budget.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The City previously issued a Request for Proposals, with the notice of that RFP published in the East Bay Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Oakland Post, Oakland El Mundo, and iSupplier, as well as on the City of Oakland's website. No additional outreach was conducted related to this report.

COORDINATION

The Mayor's Office, Oakland City Attorney's Office, and the Budget Office were consulted in writing this report.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION, AND FOLLOW-UP

Attachment A provides a detailed accounting of the state advocacy success with TPA.

Attachment B provides a detailed accounting of the federal advocacy success with TPA.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The services provided by our state and federal lobbying teams provide opportunities to secure additional funding for economic development, workforce projects, and other projects that bring potential economic benefit to the residents of Oakland.

Environmental: The services provided by our state and federal lobbying teams provide opportunities to secure additional funding for Oakland parks and other environmental and climate change resilience projects.

Race & Equity: The services provided by our state and federal lobbying teams provide opportunities to secure additional funding to address social equity disparities relating to infrastructure, access to affordable housing and childcare, and many other issues.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Amending Two Contracts to Townsend Public Affairs (TPA) To Service As The City Of Oakland State Lobbyist And Provide Grant Support By Extending The Term Through October 1, 2025 To September 30, 2027 And Adding Funds For A Total Amount Not To Exceed \$420,000 And To Serve As The City Of Oakland Federal Lobbyist And Provide Grant Support By Extending The Term Through October 1, 2025 TO September 30, 2027 And Adding Funds For An Amount Not To Exceed \$252,000 And Authorizing The City Administrator, Without Further Council Action, To Exercise An Option To Renew Each Contract For A Third Year Under the Same Terms And Conditions For An Amount Not To Exceed \$210,00 For The Third Year of the State Lobbyist Contract and \$126,000 For The Third Year Of The Federal Lobbyist Contract And Authorizing The City Administrator To Waive The City's Local Business/Small Local Business Program Participation Requirements.

For questions regarding this report, please contact TONYA ALLEN, CITYWIDE GRANTS COORDINATOR, at 510-238-7044.

Respectfully submitted,


Monica Davis (Sep 11, 2025 09:40:26 PDT)

MONICA ELISE DAVIS
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Prepared by:
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City Administrator's Office

City Council
September 15, 2025

Attachments (2):

Attachment A: State Advocacy Success Memo
Attachment B: Federal Advocacy Success Memo