



City of Killeen

Legislation Text

File #: RS-23-153, **Version:** 1

Consider a memorandum/resolution to award RFQ 23-29, Fire Department Mental Health Clinician to A & L Solutions in the amount of \$45,000 annually.

DATE: September 19, 2023

TO: Kent Cagle - City Manager

FROM: Jim Kubinski - Fire Chief

SUBJECT: Fire Department Firefighter Mental Health Services Contract

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

Repeated exposure to traumatic events while on-duty has been proven to have a negative effect on the mental health of firefighters throughout the nation. Firefighters and EMT's are 1.39 times more likely to die by suicide than the public according to a recent study released by the CDC in 2021, with anywhere from 100-200 firefighter suicides reported each year. The issues is being addressed by governments throughout the country in many different ways with some entities considering the suicide of a firefighter as a "line of duty death".

The Killeen Fire Department recognized this issue and implemented a Firefighter Peer Support Team approximately five years ago. Many studies showed that the first line of defense against firefighter suicide was having a peer that could listen to a members' struggles while being guaranteed total confidentiality. Numerous members were trained through the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Peer Support Training program. After completing the training, members have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide support to their peers, have a basic understanding of common behavioral health issues affecting the fire service, can serve as a bridge to community resources or behavioral health treatment when indicated, and are able to build or enhance their peer support programs. However, the team has recognized that the peer support program alone is not a complete solution. Many Killeen Fire Department members that have made contact with a peer support team member and needed more assistance resulting in their recommendation to make an appointment with a mental health professional was made by the team member. The use of the city's EAP and health insurance can result in a broken continuum of care and delays in obtaining an appointment that often deterred the individual from seeking additional treatment.

City Council directed the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for firefighter mental health and wellness initiatives to help combat this increasing problem. The Killeen Fire Department Peer Support Team issued a Request for Qualifications to obtain a trained mental health team that would be available twenty-four hours per day and seven days per week that would allow for immediate treatment by a trained professional for any Killeen Fire Department member who is struggling from the mental stresses of our profession. A list of qualifications, with items specific to the unique needs of the fire service, was created by the team. Two vendors submitted proposals to the team with one vendor meeting all of the requirements set forth in the

RFQ.

ARPA funding will be utilized for the contract through December 31, 2024, which is the deadline for use of ARPA funding received by the City of Killeen. The remaining contract period and extensions will be funded through the Fire Department operating budget.

The term of the agreement is for one (1) year with the option to up to four (4) additional one (1) year periods if both parties agree, in writing, ninety (90) days before the end of the initial term.

THE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Option 1- Disapprove the contract with A & L Solutions and re-issue a RFQ.

Option 2- Approve the contract with A & L Solutions.

Which alternative is recommended? Why?

Option 2 - Approve the contract with A & L solutions to provide mental health services to Killeen Fire Department personnel and authorize the City Manager or his designee to execute the contract as applicable local ordinances and state law.

CONFORMITY TO CITY POLICY:

This item conforms to all applicable city policies.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

What is the amount of the expenditure in the current fiscal year? For future years?

The annual expenditure is \$45,000. Total ARPA funds to be spent is \$56,250 (10/1/2023 through 12/31/2024). The FY 2025 Budget will need to include \$33,750 for 1/1/2025 through 9/30/2025). FY 2026 through FY 2028 will need to include \$45,000 per year. The total 5-year contract amount is \$225,000.

Is this a one-time or recurring expenditure?

Recurring

Is this expenditure budgeted?

Yes, ARPA funds are available in the General Fund Non-Department account 010-9501-491.50-86 for Fire Department Mental Health for the first fifteen months. Future funding will need to be included in future budgets.

If not, where will the money come from?

N/A

Is there a sufficient amount in the budgeted line-item for this expenditure?

Yes

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the award of RFQ 23-29, Fire Department Mental Health Clinician to A & L Solutions in the amount of \$45,000 annually to provide mental health services to Killeen Fire Department Fire Fighters and that the City Manager or designee be authorized to execute any change orders as permitted by state and local law.

DEPARTMENTAL CLEARANCES:

Finance
Legal
Purchasing

ATTACHED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Contract
Evaluation Matrix