



RE: **RFP for Community Engagement Services for the Unarmed Crisis Response Program**  
 TO: Mayor Taylor and Members of City Council  
 CC: Milton Dohoney, Interim City Administrator; Sara Higgins, Strategic Planning Project Coordinator  
 FROM: John Fournier, Assistant City Administrator  
 DATE: 5/26/22

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On March 10, 2022 the city advertised an RFP for community engagement services related to the city’s unarmed crisis response program. The intent of this effort is to conduct a high-quality, deep engagement to understand the community’s priorities for unarmed crisis response in our city. This will inform staff’s final recommendation to the Council on the form and structure of the program. There has been a significant and organize advocacy effort around unarmed crisis response in Ann Arbor, which has been immensely helpful to staff in considering what a successful program might look like. However, it is the recommendation of staff that the city should engage in a thorough discussion with the wider community so as to ensure that those who do not already have access to city leaders are also participating in the formation of this program.

The RFP closed on March 30, 2022 and four responses were received. An RFP committee consisting of John Fournier, Heather Seyfarth, and Sharie Sell evaluated the proposals, selected firms for interview, and recommended a firm to be awarded the contract. Heather Seyfarth is an urban planner and public engagement specialist in the City’s systems planning unit and Sharie Sell is a human resources service partner who is also the City’s DEI Coordinator.

The committee met on April 8<sup>th</sup> to evaluate and score the proposals, and to choose which firms to advance to the interview stage. All four responses are attached to this memo.

	Qualifications	Experience	Work Plan	Total
Groundswell Alliance	17	15	33	65
ICPJ	20	20	39	79
Martin Waymire	13	12	28	54
Public Sector Consultants, Inc.	18	15	37	70

The RFP committee decided not to interview Martin Waymire. Additionally, the committee decided not to interview ICPJ even though they were the highest scoring firm in our initial review. This is because the ICPJ proposal includes partnerships with many community organizations and leaders in the Ann Arbor area who could potentially be valuable as partners in the actual implementation of the unarmed response program and who the city may be interested in engaging in contractual relationships in the future to help lead or administer important parts of this program. Since the purpose of this engagement campaign is to directly inform the structure of the program, and to directly inform the contents of any future RFPs for contracted services related to the program, we decided to exclude ICPJ from consideration. If they were awarded this contract, any individual, group, or directly related group to the ICPJ proposal would be disqualified from future work on this program and staff felt that could be detrimental to the program’s success. In other words, you can either work on helping to draft an RFP, or you can bid on an RFP, but you can’t do both. Staff decided it was better to keep these organizations in the “potential bidder” side of the procurement process.

With this in mind, we opened fee proposals for Groundswell Alliance and Public Sector Consultants Inc. The full fee proposals are attached to this memo, however the overall cost of the Groundswell proposal was \$31,350 and the overall cost of the Public Sector Consultants, Inc. proposal was \$99,918. We did not open fee proposals for ICPJ or Martin Waymire.

Interviews were held for each firm on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Both firms presented very well, however Public Sector Consultants, Inc. were able to demonstrate a long track record of



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successfully working on public engagement campaigns related to human and social services programs across the state, including programs designed to provide mobile crisis response services and programs aimed at engaging hard to reach communities who historically have been difficult to engage in government outreach efforts. Additionally, they demonstrated a deep knowledge and an operational level understanding of how to make community engagement equitable and inclusive, which was a priority of the RFP committee.

There is a notably large difference in the fee proposals for these two firms. Public Sector Consultants, Inc. is a larger company that employs a broader array of staff on a full-time basis to conduct their outreach and engagement activities, which contributes to the larger cost. However, that also provides a benefit to the City in that Public Sector Consultants, Inc. is staffed sufficiently to provide project deliverables on time and up to the required standards because of their deep staffing availability. There is an expectation from the Council and the community that this project keeps moving apace, and so the committee valued the benefits of working with a larger firm in this context. Additionally, the RFP committee felt that the Public Sector Consultants, Inc. proposal was a more accurate reflection of the time and resources that would be required to successfully complete an ambitious engagement campaign such as this one. For these reasons, we had more confidence that they could deliver the end product that we requested on time and within budget constraints. Groundswell Alliance did give an excellent presentation and impressed the committee with their experience and commitment to inclusive engagement as well, and we will be keeping them in mind for future contracted engagement work.

The staff's recommendation is to move forward with a contract with Public Sector Consultants, Inc..