

ICPOC Communication to City Council Regarding the Unarmed Response Community Engagement Process

City Council resolution [R-21-129](#) directed the City Administration to work “in consultation with the Independent Community Police Oversight Commission” in the process of exploring an unarmed response program. ICPOC asked that the city do significant community outreach of individuals most likely to benefit from an unarmed response program before determining the structure of such a program. After our Commission was informed that city staff could not undertake such in-depth outreach, the City decided to solicit proposals to conduct that work (RFP 22-28).

On June 15, Public Sector Consulting (PSC) was contracted for \$99,918 to do community engagement. However, after a number of interactions with PSC, **our commission has grave concerns about this outreach process.**

In conversations with PSC, it has become clear that **they do not intend to do outreach or have direct contact with those most in need of an unarmed response program.** These people include:

Those who are unhoused, people who have experienced behavioral or mental health crises, LGBTQ individuals, immigrants, people without immigration documentation or those from mixed-status immigration families, college students, high school students, sex workers, those who are criminalized for their substance use, people who are over-policed, whether in neighborhoods or on public transit, those with previous contact with the criminal legal system, those who are asset-limited-income-constrained and employed, those in poverty, marginalized Black and Brown people and all groups historically excluded from participating in the development of programs that impact them.

PSC is not located in Ann Arbor and has no local connections to Ann Arbor. They do not have people of color or other underrepresented people in their leadership or outreach teams. Their sole instrument thus far is an online survey, which is only accessible to those privileged enough to have computer and internet access. They have expressly stated that they have no plans to interview unhoused people, for example, or to go into those communities that would most benefit from an unarmed response plan – they have **no plan to meet people where they are.**

An unarmed response program is fairly innovative, so, **what we asked for was deep engagement of people who have been historically disenfranchised and left out of the decision-making process. It is not acceptable for the City/PSC to simply survey the same people who always participate because they have the luxury and time to participate in a business-as-usual online process.**

It is critical that the unarmed response plan be designed *with* community members, not *for* them by people with no context of the situations that might lead one to prefer an unarmed response to police.

- We request that those most likely to be impacted by an unarmed response program be prioritized in outreach;
- We further request that PSC must include outreach to and participation of disenfranchised and underserved populations in order to fulfill their contract with the City;
- We also request that PSC be contacted as soon as possible and that the City determine how they plan to accomplish the goal of community outreach as outlined here;
- We also request to see the raw data collected by PSC;
- Last, we request that the City administration report back to ICPOC as soon as they get feedback from PSC regarding how they will accomplish this outreach.

The Independent Community Police Oversight Commission