



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 25, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: David Sprague, Fire Chief
Jennifer Louis, Police Chief

Subject: Contract: Cooke and Associates for Applicant Background Investigations

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract amendment with Cooke and Associates to expand capacity to perform background investigation services from \$50,000 to an amount not to exceed \$300,000 from August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Funding will be recommended through the first amendment in the FY24 appropriations ordinance using funds from the fire and police department budgets who have a need for this service including the Fire Department using funds from Measure M, Measure GG, Measure FF, and the General Fund. The Police Department, from the General Fund. Other departments may utilize this contract in the future as needed.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City has an increased need for background investigation services for multiple Departments including Fire and Police. As part of the Employer of Choice Initiative, both departments are working to create efficiencies in their hiring processes. The background investigation step is one identified component of the process where capacity of current investigatory resources has created bottleneck. In what is the most challenging and competitive labor market that current staff have ever experienced, increasing the capacity of investigators is an important step in moving applicants through the process efficiently from application to job offer.

Both departments are in a near continuous recruitment cycle and have a need for immediate investigation support. Thus, a request was made to waive the competitive procurement process, which was approved by the General Services Manager and the City Manager.

BACKGROUND

As the number of internal police officers available for this assignment has been drastically reduced over the past three years due to staffing challenges related to recruitment and retention, the Police Department has relied on a greater number of vendors to provide this service. At the same time, recent successes from the newly formed Recruitment and Retention Team has placed more applicants in the process. The time from application to job offer has been delayed by availability of investigators – which can have the result of an applicant accepting employment elsewhere.

The Fire Department has historically relied on external investigators. These resources are also strained by the number of organizations that are attempting to hire emergency workers of various classifications.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There were no identified environmental impacts.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Background investigations are an essential component of the recruitment and selection process for some classifications including public safety personnel. Conducting comprehensive and thorough background checks is crucial to maintaining the safety and integrity of our community.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Maintain the current level of investigator capacity while a full procurement process is undertaken which will cause further delays in filling of vacancies, increase voluntary and forced overtime and impact employee morale.

CONTACT PERSON

David Sprague, Fire Chief, (510) 981-3473
Jennifer Louis, Police Chief, (510) 981-5900

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: COOKE AND ASSOCIATES FOR APPLICANT BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

WHEREAS, background investigations are an essential component of the recruitment and selection process for some classifications including public safety personnel, and

WHEREAS, conducting comprehensive and thorough background checks is crucial to maintaining the safety and integrity of our community, and

WHEREAS, as part of the Employer of Choice Initiative, departments are working to create efficiencies in their hiring processes, and

WHEREAS, the background investigation step is one identified component of the hiring process where capacity of current investigatory resources has created bottleneck, and

WHEREAS, in what is the most challenging and competitive labor market that current staff have ever experienced, increasing the capacity of investigators is an important step in moving applicants through the process efficiently from application to job offer, and

WHEREAS, thus a request was made to waive the competitive procurement process, which was approved by the General Services Manager and the City Manager.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract amendment with Cooke and Associates to expand capacity to perform background investigation services from \$50,000 to an amount not to exceed \$300,000 from August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2026.

