



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-6348, **Version:** 1

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**Department:** Purchasing

**Department Head/Elected Official:** DeWight Dopslauf

**Regular or Supplemental RCA:** Regular RCA

**Type of Request:** Contract - Award

**Project ID (if applicable):**

**Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable):**

**MWDBE Participation (if applicable):** N/A

**Request Summary (Agenda Caption):**

Request for approval of a personal services exemption from the competitive bid requirements and that the County Judge execute an agreement with Dr. Melissa Blessing in the amount of \$132,000 for medical examiner services for the Institute of Forensic Sciences for the period of November 30, 2021 - November 29, 2022.

**Background and Discussion:**

The Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (HCIFS) is experiencing an increased case load this calendar year in addition to an unprecedented attrition of Assistant Medical Examiners. To ensure timely completion of statutorily required autopsies, HCIFS is contracting with Dr. Melissa Blessing to provide medical examiner services. Dr. Blessing is an experienced forensic pathologist and has provided consultation to HCIFS in the past. She is already aware of the Department's needs, standard operating procedures, and accreditation requirements. There is no expectation that she would perform any autopsies that might require future courtroom testimony.

**Expected Impact:**

Dr. Blessing will assist with caseload reduction by performing a maximum of 10 autopsies per month. This will assist with turnaround time of case report completion, assisting with meeting accreditation standards, and providing information to decedent families.

**Alternative Options:**

The alternative is for HCIFS to continue processing cases as soon as possible with current staff leading to staff burnout, further attrition, and longer turnaround times.

**Alignment with Goal(s):**

- ☒ X Justice and Safety  
☐ Economic Opportunity  
☐ Housing  
☐ Public Health  
☐ Transportation  
☐ Flooding  
☐ Environment  
☐ Governance and Customer Service

**Prior Court Action (if any):**

Date	Agenda Item #	Action Taken

**Location:**

Address (if applicable): 1861 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, Texas, 77054

Precinct(s): [Choose an item.](#)

<b>Fiscal and Personnel Summary</b>				
Service Name		FY 21-22	Estimates	
			FY 22	Next 3 FYs
<b>Incremental Expenditures</b>				
Labor Expenditures		-	-	-
Non-Labor Expenditures		-	-	-
<b>Total Incremental Expenditures</b>		-	-	-
<b>Funding Sources</b> (General Fund, PIC Fund, Debt or CP, Grants, or Other - Please Specify)				
Existing Budget	GF	33,000	99,000	
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Total Current Budget		33,000	99,000	
Additional Budget Requested	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Total Additional Budget Requested		-	-	-
<b>Total Funding Sources</b>		-	-	-

<b>Personnel</b> (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	-	-	-
<b>Total Personnel</b>	-	-	-

**Anticipated Implementation Date:** 11/30/2021

**Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note:** Not an emergency, disaster, or COVID-19 related item

**Contact(s) name, title, department:**

Julie Prine, JD, MFS, Chief of Staff / Senior Director, Operations  
Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences

**Attachments (if applicable):**

Professional Service Agreement between Harris County and Dr. Melissa Blessing