



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-6604, **Version:** 1

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**Department:** Community Services

**Department Head/Elected Official:** Adrienne M. Holloway, Ph.D., Executive Director, Community Services

**Regular or Supplemental RCA:** Supplemental RCA

**Type of Request:** Contract - Award

**Project ID** (if applicable): 21/0032

**Vendor/Entity Legal Name** (if applicable): Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)

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

**Request Summary (Agenda Caption):**

Request by Community Services for approval of a contract award to Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services for legal services in support of the Immigrant Legal Services Fund (ILSF) for Harris County in the amount of \$499,749.66.

**Background and Discussion:**

On November 10, 2020, Harris County Community Services Department (CSD) received Commissioners Court approval to design and implement the Immigrant Legal Services Fund (ILSF) Program in Harris County. Commissioners Court allocated \$2,000,000 of Harris County General Funds for the one-year provision of deportation defense legal services, subject to a one-year extension. The services are to be provided by non-profit legal service providers (LSPs) with demonstrated experience in immigration law and removal defense. CSD designed the Program's guidelines and created a Request for Proposal (RFP) following Commissioners Court Order. CSD utilized Harris County Purchasing Department for the procurement process. Purchasing accepted proposals from non-profit immigration legal service providers to deliver direct legal representation to immigrant Harris County residents in detention or facing the threat of deportation.

In October 2021, the legal service providers were selected by an evaluation committee composed of representatives of each County Precinct, the County Judge's Office, several County agencies, as well as non-voting members comprised of community advocates and immigration law experts. Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) was selected as one of the providers, along with BakerRipley, Kids in Need of Defense, Inc. (KIND), and Justice for all Immigrants (JFAI). The selected LSPs will provide direct legal representation to eligible clients. Indigent individuals unrepresented by legal counsel and facing deportation who are residents of Harris County may qualify for services under the Program. The Contract's term will be one year, subject to a one-year extension. RAICES will provide free holistic legal representation to immigrants detained in immigration detention facilities and facing the threat of deportation in Harris County.

**Expected Impact:**

The approval of this item will allow for direct legal services needed for the operation of the Immigrant Legal Services Fund Program housed in Harris County Community Services Department. This Program seeks to reduce unnecessary deportations and empower vulnerable communities in Harris County by providing direct legal representation to indigent Harris County adults, children, or families in detention or facing the threat of deportation. Harris County seeks to protect the rights of its immigrant community members because they are vital to our community and local economy. Providing fair representation in immigration proceedings is the single most effective way to ensure that due process for all Harris County residents is safeguarded, and that immigrant families who have a legal right to remain in the country are not separated. Every year, thousands of detained families and individuals are forced to represent themselves in immigration court because they cannot afford legal representation. This results in the deportation of many Harris County residents who have a valid claim to remain in the country. The Immigration Legal Services Fund Program will help keep families together, will help keep communities stable, and will help our economy grow.

RAICES provides holistic representation to individuals and families detained or facing deportation. This Contract is expected to provide direct representation to at least 75 Harris County residents who are detained or facing deportation within its first year of funding.

**Alternative Options:**

Alternative option is not to approve this Contract.

**Alignment with Goal(s):**

- 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
02/25/2020	Supplemental 8.c	Public Meeting on immigrant legal service program - No Action
09/15/2020	8.g 8.e	Discussion of creation of immigrant legal service program- No
11/10/2020		Action Guidebook approval and allocation of \$2,000,050 in County
01/26/2021		General Funds for one year for the provision of non-profit legal service providers, with a one-year extension. Approved. Amended order clarifying allocation of funds. Approved.

**Location:**

Address (if applicable): N/A

Precinct(s): Countywide

<b>Fiscal and Personnel Summary</b>			
Service Name	Immigration Legal Services Fund		
	<b>FY 21-22</b>	<b>FY 22</b>	<b>Next 3 FYs</b>
<b>Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)</b>			
Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
<b>Total Incremental Expenditures</b>	\$	\$	\$
<b>Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)</b>			
Existing Budget			
1000 - General Fund	\$499,749.66	\$291,521	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
<b>Total Current Budget</b>	\$2,000,000	\$1,166,667	\$
Additional Budget Requested			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
<b>Total Additional Budget Requested</b>	\$	\$	\$
<b>Total Funding Sources</b>	\$	\$	\$
<b>Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)</b>			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	-	-	-
<b>Total Personnel</b>	-	-	-

**Anticipated Implementation Date:** November 30, 2021- Vendors can start billing after creation of PO

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

**Contact(s) name, title, department:** Dulce Lizet Islas, J.D, Assistant Director of Legal Services, CSD

**Attachments (if applicable):** RAICES Agreement