



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2647, **Version:** 1

Department: Purchasing

Department Head/Elected Official: DeWight Dopslauf

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Contract - Award

Project ID (if applicable): N/A

Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable): Merrill Hines dba Final Advocate Forensics, PLLC

MWDBE Contracted Goal (if applicable): 0%

MWDBE Current Participation (if applicable): 0%

Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: 0% - Specialized, Technical, or Unique in Nature

Request Summary (Agenda Caption):

Request by the Office of the Purchasing Agent for approval of a professional services exemption from the competitive bid requirements and that the County Judge execute an agreement with Merrill Hines dba Final Advocate Forensics, PLLC in the amount of \$151,800 for medical examiner services for the Institute of Forensic Sciences for the period of May 16, 2023 - May 15, 2024, Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: 0% - Specialized, Technical, or Unique in Nature.

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. Merrill Hines (through Final Advocate Forensics, PLLC) to provide medical examiner services. Dr. Hines is an experienced forensic pathologist and has provided consultation to HCIFS in the past. He is already aware of the Department's needs, standard operating procedures, and accreditation requirements. There is no expectation that he would perform any autopsies that might require future courtroom testimony.

Expected Impact:

Dr. Hines will assist with caseload reduction by performing assigned autopsies. 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):

- ☒ 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
N/A	N/A	N/A

Location:

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

Precinct(s): Choose an item.

Fiscal and Personnel Summary			
Service Name			
	FY 23	FY 24	Next 3 FYs
Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Total Incremental Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Existing Budget			
2651 - American Rescue Plan 2021	\$151,800	\$	\$
1000 - General Fund	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Current Budget	\$151,800	\$	\$
Additional Budget Requested			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Additional Budget Requested	\$	\$	\$
Total Funding Sources	\$151,800	\$	\$

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

Anticipated Court Date: 05/16/2023

Anticipated Implementation Date (if different from Court date):

Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note: 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;
Jessica Barelas, Senior Buyer, Purchasing

Attachments (if applicable): Letter