



Legislation Text

File #: 23-2975, **Version:** 1

Department: Community Services

Department Head/Elected Official: Thao Costis, Interim Executive Director

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Grant

Project ID (if applicable): N/A

Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Contracted Goal (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Current Participation (if applicable): N/A

Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: N/A - Goal not applicable to request

Request Summary (Agenda Caption):

Request by Community Services for approval to submit an application to the National Institute of Standards and Technology/U.S. Department of Commerce on behalf of the Office of the County Engineer and the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences in the amount of \$12,042,360, with no required match, for the FY 23 IFS Laboratory (CDS) project.

Background and Discussion:

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), under the 2023 Congressionally-Identified Construction Grant Program has identified Harris County as an eligible applicant for the Institute of Forensic Sciences - Design and Renovation project in the amount of \$12,042,360. Harris County is required to submit an application to NIST by May 25, 2023.

On May 19, 2020, Commissioners Court authorized architecture and engineering services for improvements to the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences Building located at 1861 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, TX, 77054. The outcome of these improvements is the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences (HCIFS) Masterplan Study, which provides a scope of work and cost estimate for "immediate needs" and "long-term needs". Key considerations for the improvements include efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and location.

Currently, HCIFS is split among two different facilities, both of which are undersized. This project addresses the necessary expansions and consolidations to improve operations. The expansion requires the relocation of several divisions within HCIFS to provide room for staff growth and additional services. The project will also provide for renovation and technological updates of the Medical Examiner morgue area and autopsy suites; relocation and expansion of the Forensic Genetics (DNA) Laboratory; expansion of Evidence Intake, storage, and Information Technology; addition of centralized breakroom and staff wellness/exercise area; assessment and potential replacement of morgue and toxicology storage coolers; and a building HVAC system. This includes the build-out of three existing shell floors currently unoccupied in the main HCIFS building.

Expected Impact:

Without this renovation, HCIFS will have no space to expand to accommodate steadily rising caseloads, particularly in the morgue where there is a great need to expand the decedent cooler storage space and no space to relocate / expand the Forensic Genetics Laboratory. The relocation of the Forensic Genetics Lab is necessary to allow DNA testing to keep up with the rising caseload and provide additional services that cannot be accommodated in the current Forensic Genetics Lab space.

Alternative Options:

Commissioners Court could find other funding for renovation.

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
12/17/2019	1.e.2	Authorization to negotiate with Page Southerland Page, Inc. for the Masterplan Study for the IFS Building.
5/19/2020	1.g.4	Approval of \$86,000 for the Masterplan Study for IFS building.
12/15/2020	1.f.1	Approval of Amendment #1 for additional \$31,400 for study efforts
12/14/2021	38	Approval of Amendment #2 for additional \$38,000 for morgue expansion study to complete study efforts.

Location:

Address (if applicable): 1861 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, TX 77021

Precinct(s): Precinct 1

Fiscal and Personnel Summary

Service Name	Institute of Forensic Sciences - Design and Renovation project		
	FY 23	FY 24	Next 3 FYs
Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$	\$4,515,885	\$7,526,475

Total Incremental Expenditures	\$	\$4,515,885	\$7,526,475
Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Existing Budget			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Current Budget	\$	\$	\$
Additional Budget Requested			
Grant	\$	\$4,515,885	\$7,526,475
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Additional Budget Requested	\$	\$4,515,885	\$7,526,475
Total Funding Sources	\$	\$4,515,885	\$7,526,475
Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	-	-	-
Total Personnel	-	-	-

Anticipated Court Date: May 16, 2023

Anticipated Implementation Date (if different from Court date): N/A

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

Contact(s) name, title, department: Thao Costis, Interim Executive Director, HCCSD

Attachments (if applicable): Institute of Forensic Sciences - Design and Renovation project Application