



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

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**Agenda Date:** 8/26/2020

**In Control:** Intergovernmental Relations Committee

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**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT  
IGR COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Intergovernmental Relations Council Subcommittee

**FROM:** Jeff Coyle, Director, Government & Public Affairs Department

**SUBJECT:** State Representation Services Contracts

**DATE:** August 21, 2020

### **SUMMARY**

The Government & Public Affairs Department will provide a briefing on the process for selection of firms under the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for state representation services and present department's recommendation of the following contracts:

- a) Ancira Strategies in an amount not to exceed \$7,500 per month for the term of up to twelve months beginning September 1, 2020 through any Special Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature for a total contract amount of \$90,000.
- b) The Texas Lobby Group in an amount not to exceed \$7,500 per month for the term of up to twelve months beginning September 1, 2020 through any Special Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature for a total contract amount of \$90,000.
- c) Russell T. Kelley dba Blackridge in an amount not to exceed \$7,500 per month for the term of up to twelve months beginning September 1, 2020 through any Special Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature for a total contract amount of \$90,000.
- d) Focused Advocacy, LLC in an amount not to exceed \$7,500 per month for the term of up to twelve months beginning September 1, 2020 through any Special Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature for a total contract amount of \$90,000.
- e) Marc A. Rodriguez in an amount not to exceed \$7,500 per month for the term of up to twelve months beginning September 1, 2020 through any Special Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature for a total contract amount of \$90,000.

The agreements provide that the contracts may be renewed for up to two (2) additional 1-year terms through June 2025, upon approval by City Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

For almost 40 years, the City of San Antonio has contracted professional services for State Representation to supplement the City's state legislative advocacy efforts and to advance and protect the City's interests in Austin, Texas. Challenging budget constraints and the political environment make it imperative for local communities to have strong advocates and at the state level. Consultants enhance the City's ability to communicate with and educate elected officials on key legislative issues affecting our neighborhoods and they provide strategic advice and planning to maximize our community's efforts to secure passage or funding for the City's priority initiatives.

Furthermore, the City's legislative advocacy advances a broad range of community priorities. For example, the City has helped advance bills that have supported the redevelopment of a major city park as a destination for families and visitors and proposals to strengthen the missions at Joint Base San Antonio, including funding for the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Program. Each session, thousands of bills are filed that could potentially impact the City organization and representation services are needed to effectively advocate on behalf of the City and protect the authority of local elected officials to set policies consistent with the needs and interests of the San Antonio community.

In the past, the City of San Antonio has hired multiple consultants to represent and advocate for the City on a year-round basis. In 2010, the City moved to a model of one consultant contracted to operate year-round, including off-session years, and additional consultants have been hired to provide services only during the state legislative session. During the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session the City contracted with a total of four (4) consultants, which included one year-round consultant and three session-only consultants.

The Finance Department, Purchasing Division on behalf of the Government and Public Affairs Department released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) on February 12, 2020 seeking proposals for State Representation Services. The RFQ was advertised in the San Antonio Express News, the Austin American Statesman, TVSA cable channel, the City's webpage and an email notification was released to over 70 firms. The deadline for proposals was Monday, March 30, 2020. Eight responses were received and evaluated. The Evaluation Committee included representatives from Government and Public Affairs, City Manager's Office and the San Antonio River Authority.

The Evaluation Committee reviewed the proposals and invited six firms to be interviewed. After the interviews, the Evaluation Committee finalized discussion and selected five firms based on the following criteria: Experience, Background, and Qualifications; Small Business and Minority Women Owned Preference Prime Contract Programs, Local Preference Program and the Veteran Owned Small Business Programs.

There were no proposals submitted from local respondents for this contract; therefore, the Local Preference Program was not applied. There were no proposals submitted from veteran-owned small business respondents for this contract; therefore, the Veteran-Owned Small Business Preference Program was not applied.

## **ISSUE**

This selection of City representatives at the State Legislature is consistent with City policy of retaining consultants to supplement the City's advocacy efforts with key members of the State Legislature, Executive

and Administrative personnel. It is also consistent with the City policy of building strategic alliances with officials in Austin, Texas to further the interests of the community. Finally, it is consistent with City policy of developing a detailed strategy to further the City's adopted State Legislative Program.

The City has historically hired representatives, through an open and competitive process, to most effectively support and advance community priorities in a fiscally responsible manner. The consultant contracts are on a schedule to maximize the City's resources and to ensure the City's interests are covered during the months leading up to the legislative sessions and during the legislative sessions. Contracts for all five firms will begin in September 2020, allowing their assistance with the development of the City's State Legislative Program and to develop a legislative strategy for the 87th Legislative Session. The City's team will work to inform members of the State Legislature of legislation and/or regulations which could impact the City, prepare testimony, and assist with the scheduling of witnesses before legislative committees.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

This item is for briefing purposes and for the IGR Subcommittee to discuss staff recommendations for state representation services contracts before full City Council consideration.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

- a) Funding for the Ancira Strategies contract was allocated in the FY 2020 General Fund, in the amount of \$7,500 for the corresponding portion of this contract. The remaining amount will impact the General Fund in the amount of \$82,500 in FY 2021; contingent upon future City Council appropriation.
- b) Funding for the Texas Lobby Group contract was allocated in the FY 2020 General Fund, in the amount of \$7,500 for the corresponding portion of this contract. The remaining amount will impact the General Fund in the amount of \$82,500 in FY 2021; contingent upon future City Council appropriation.
- c) Funding for the Russell T. Kelley dba Blackridge contract was allocated in the FY 2020 General Fund, in the amount of \$7,500 for the corresponding portion of this contract. The remaining amount will impact the General Fund in the amount of \$82,500 in FY 2021; contingent upon future City Council appropriation.
- d) Funding for the Focused Advocacy contract was allocated in the FY 2020 General Fund, in the amount of \$7,500 for the corresponding portion of this contract. The remaining amount will impact the General Fund in the amount of \$82,500 in FY 2021; contingent upon future City Council appropriation.
- e) Funding for the Marc A. Rodriguez contract was allocated in the FY 2020 General Fund, in the amount of \$7,500 for the corresponding portion of this contract. The remaining amount will impact the General Fund in the amount of \$82,500 in FY 2021; contingent upon future City Council appropriation.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The evaluation committee determined that the top five teams all offered unique skills and relationships that would be advantageous to the City. The following members are recommended to be responsible for the delivery of services through these contracts:

- a) Ancira Strategies - Jesse Ancira and Nelda Hunter
- b) The Texas Lobby Group - Lara Keel and Carrie Simmons
- c) Russell T. Kelley dba Blackridge - Carol McGarah, Russell "Rusty" Kelley, Micah Rodriguez
- d) Focused Advocacy - Curt Seidlits, Brandon Aghamalian, and Snapper Carr
- e) Marc A. Rodriguez - Marc Rodriguez

Staff recommends the IGR Subcommittee approve the selection of the state representation services team and

move consideration of this item to the full City Council.