
Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Meeting Date: 2/22/2022

Title: Single Source Agreement with the W. Haywood Burns Institute for a Learning Community Cohort

File Number: 2022-100

Background and Rationale:

In 2018, the W. Haywood Burns Institute (Burns Institute) initiated a Learning Community at no charge with Ramsey County and the City of Saint Paul in order to examine how institutional racism lives in county systems and challenged leaders to imagine how to deconstruct and reconstruct structures to advance racial equity. This initial cohort included leaders from the County Manager's Office, two Ramsey County Board Commissioners, Safety and Justice Service Team, Health and Wellness Service Team, Ramsey County Attorney's Office, Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, Public Defender's Office, Saint Paul Police Department, Saint Paul City Attorney's Office and community at the table. This cohort of staff and community members inspired leadership to initiate many of the transformative strategies and initiatives currently existing across county and city government focused around the public safety system including the creation and co-design of Transforming Systems Together, Alternative and Community Response to 911 calls, reformation of extended juvenile justice, and refined policy on pre-textual stops.

Building from the learnings of the Learning Community experiment with the first cohort, Burns Institute will engage a second cohort of system and community leadership across Ramsey County to participate in new Learning Community experience. This second cohort is intended include departments outside of the public safety system including leaders within Strategic Service Team, Information and Public Records, Economic Growth and Community Investment, leaders from suburban Ramsey County cities, and two Ramsey County Board Commissioners in order to promote innovation supporting racial equity across different service teams and sectors.

Always challenging racial hierarchy and the social control of communities of color by the justice sector and other public systems, Burns Institute employs strategies and tactics to establish a community centered approach of justice administration that is anchored in structural well-being. Burns Institute will lead the Learning Community through a series of substantive components and activities, in a brave and safe space that allows for honest and frank discussions about structural racism. The process encourages stakeholders to be iterative, cultivating a self-awareness and self-discovery their roles relative to the structural impediments to achieving equity. The goal of this work is to embed a keen understanding by system and community stakeholders of the need to deconstruct current apparatuses and renovating to help ensure that Ramsey County residents and employees get what they need at every turn in order to thrive.

Following county single source policy and procedures, the Burns Institute Learning Community project is both singular in its relevance and impactful in its product. Burns Institute has decades of experience working to advance the safety and well-being of people of color through system reform, combined with community capacity-building. It has used a data-driven process to help jurisdictions identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities since our inception. Additionally, the Burns Institute has partnered in the co-design of the TST since the inception, developing curriculum, providing guidance and facilitation, and strategic thought partnership in its distinctive development. They have

also worked with many of the same community and systems participants in other endeavors in the county over the last 15 years. They are the rare technical assistance provider that is comfortable and more importantly has the trust of Ramsey County community members and systems stakeholders.

Through its previous work with Ramsey County, Burns Institute has developed a unique process and have built impactful relationships to coach government and community leadership around how to transform systems to address structural racism. Ramsey County's internal structure has been assessed and does not have the expertise or capacity to provide the services offered by the Burns Institute Learning Community project. The process Burns Institute offers through the Learning Community has been created through their first cohort with Ramsey County and Lucas County, and is not offered by any other organization locally, nationally, nor globally. The Burns Institute has also tailored their approach to Ramsey County government and community's nuanced needs in order lead Ramsey County stakeholders through a journey to think differently about its impact and ownership of government systems. Furthermore, the Burns Institute has led to clear impact, as Ramsey County and other government partners have undertaken and implemented policy initiatives visioned through the Learning Community process.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the single source agreement with the W. Haywood Burns Institute, 475 14th St. #800, Oakland, CA 94612, for the Learning Community for the period of February 22, 2022, through February 21, 2024 in the not-to-exceed amount of \$250,000.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the agreement.
3. Authorize the County Manager to execute amendments to the agreement in accordance with the County's procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of available funding.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner McGuire, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By: 
Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board