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**Sponsor:** County Attorney's Office

**Meeting Date:** 12/22/2020

**Title:** Youth Diversion Professional Services Agreements

**File Number:** 2020-582

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**Background and Rationale:**

These agreements align with the County Board's mission/values including:

- a. Expansion of front-end services for any Ramsey County youth who comes in contact with the criminal justice system (Residents First),
- b. upstream efforts that can help people stay out of the justice system,
- c. a lighter touch for youth referred to the justice system,
- d. earlier interventions (i.e., assessments and referrals to community-based services),
- e. restorative justice approaches, such as reduced incarceration and lower jail population (future cost savings),
- f. benefit to the community and criminal justice system through reductions in prosecution costs, court resources, and Public Defense resources.

Ramsey County has recognized the need to provide more youth opportunities to make amends for the harm they have caused without furthering their involvement in the justice system and saddling them with resulting consequences of having a criminal record that will inhibit their ability to successfully transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency. The need for services for youth is increasing. The County is increasingly relying on community partners to provide youth with community-based alternatives to traditional justice system involvement to:

- a. help youth understand the impact of their actions on others,
- b. promote healing, accountability, community safety and wellness,
- c. address the underlying contributors to harmful behavior and meet individual needs of youth,
- d. improve connections to school, community and positive caring adults,
- e. engage youth in positive pro-social activities, and
- f. support youth to prevent harmful behavior from recurring.

On October 14, 2020 a continuous Request for Proposals was released for youth services in order that Ramsey County could contract with vendors whose expertise is to provide individualized, culturally responsive services for youth referred to the legal system. Ramsey County recognizes that challenging behaviors are often an indicator of underlying trauma or other adversity in a young person's life. The County also knows that justice involvement in adolescence can be detrimental to the growth and development of young people and inhibit their success as they transition to adulthood. The County is working collaboratively with its community and system partners to (re)imagine justice for youth by transforming the responses to be more restorative and focus on understanding and addressing developmental needs and other underlying contributors motivating a young person's behavior. The selected vendors will provide services for youth referred to the justice system that serve as restorative, community-based alternatives to meet the needs of youth outside the traditional legal system, repair harm caused, prevent harmful behaviors from recurring, and promote youth well-being and success in life.

The services selected will help build a continuum of responses to better meet the individual needs of

youth. Some of the needs that have surfaced in youth referred to the justice system include mentorship, mental health, chemical dependency, school connection, employment assistance, and engaging in community activities and programs. Selected vendors will provide services to address the needs identified above and/or to provide alternative, restorative responses to the traditional legal system, including community circles to repair harm caused, prevent harmful behaviors from recurring, and address the impact on any people who were harmed in the community. Vendors will respond in a timely manner, serve youth and their families within the community, provide trauma-informed services, and tailor services to racial, cultural, and language backgrounds of youth in ways that increase their connection to school, community, caring adults, and positive youth development activities.

Below is a competitive solicitation summary:

Request For Proposals (RFP) TITLE: Community Services for Youth Referred to the Justice System

RFP Release Date: October 14, 2020

RFP Response Date: November 05, 2020

Number of Contractors Notified: 450

Respondents: 9

Proposal Evaluation Committee: 1. Co-Developer & Program Director for Healthy Youth Development, University of Minnesota, Prevention Research Center 2. CEO/Founder, Project Restore MN 3. Public Defender, Public Defender's Office 4. Strategic Initiatives and Community Relations Director, County Attorney's Office 5. Assistant County Attorney, County Attorney's Office

RFP Evaluation Criteria: 1. Project Understanding and Approach 2. Cost 3. Organizational Experience and Qualifications 4. Staff Qualifications and Capacity

Vendors Recommended: 1. Lutheran Social Service of MN, Saint Paul, MN 2. Restorative Justice Community Action, Minneapolis, MN

The evaluation team evaluated the proposals based on the criteria identified in the solicitation and is recommending Lutheran Social Service of MN and Restorative Justice Community Action to provide youth diversion professional services. The full term of the agreement is December 28, 2020 through December 31, 2025, according to rates and terms established in the agreement.

#### **Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the selection of and the Agreement with Lutheran Social Service of MN, 2485 Como Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55108 for Youth Diversion Professional Services for the period of December 28, 2020 through December 31, 2025, according to rates established in the agreement.
2. Approve the selection of and the Agreement with Restorative Justice Community Action, 401 Groveland Ave, Suite 50, Minneapolis, MN 55403 for Youth Diversion Professional Services for the period of December 28, 2020 through December 31, 2025, according to rates established in the agreement.
3. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the Agreements.
4. Authorize the County Manager to approve and execute amendments and change orders to agreements, in accordance with the County's procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of the available funding.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.

Motion passed.

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

By:   
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Janet Guthrie, Chief Clerk - County Board