



Date: December 4, 2023

To: Wanda S. Page, City Manager
From: Christina Riordan, Director of Budget and Management Services
Subject: Contract Agreement with ETR Services, LLC to provide services for the Community Conversations Project

Executive Summary

The Community Conversations Project is an effort by the City of Durham's Budget and Management Services Department to engage residents in thoughtful conversations about their priorities for the FY 2024-25 Budget. The development and facilitation of the project will be done by ETR Services, LLC. The engagement will consist of a minimum of three in-person events. Attendees should be representative of the City's residents, with a focus on people of color, youth, and other marginalized groups. Residents will also be compensated for their participation in the project. City staff and volunteers may provide informational presentations at the three public group meetings.

Motion

To authorize the City Manager to execute the contract with ETR Services, LLC for professional services not to exceed the amount of \$118,200 for FY2023-24.

Background

In 2019, staff from Durham City, Durham County and the Durham County Schools launched the Community Conversations initiative an intensive community engagement initiative that brought residents from across the City together to have deep conversations about their needs and priorities for the public budget. In 2020, some work was done on a new model that used consulting assistance; however, the program was called off due to COVID-19 and its various impacts on the community.

During the budget development process for FY2024, a Council budget request was submitted to reboot the program to engage with residents from across the City to have conversations about their needs and priorities for the City's FY 2024-25 budget. Funding for the request was allocated funds in the FY2023-24 budget. Budget and Management Services was tasked with managing the project and began the RFP process in August, received seven respondents and is bringing forward a contract for engagement services with ETR Services, LLC.

Issues and Analysis

On August 2, 2023, the City of Durham advertised a Request for Proposal (RFP) for community consultant services to facilitate conversations with the Durham community around needs and priorities for the FY2024 -25 budget. The requested work included evaluation of the findings, and the production of a report for residents, elected officials, and city staff. Particular consideration was given to consultants who had unique linkages to historic Durham communities, including direct work experience with community leaders, groups, and organizations in historically underrepresented communities.

The RFP closed on August 28, 2023. Seven proposals were received and reviewed by a scoring

committee. After changes to the timeline and scope of work, BMS met with the four top-scoring firms to discuss the changes and elaborate on their connection to the Durham community. ETR Services, LLC. was selected by the committee to provide the requested services. Since 2015, ETR has provided professional services to the City of Durham Department of Human Resources and has conducted community conversations with representatives from underserved communities throughout North Carolina for various government agencies.

ETR will be expected to work with City staff to develop and carry out engagement on the project, including providing input on scope development, leading the development of community engagement strategies and materials, facilitating engagement events, evaluating findings, and presentation of results.

This contract includes costs associated with all professional, analysis, and administrative services as well as all expenses associated with the materials, supplies, overhead, stipends for participants, childcare and transportation.

Engagement is expected to take place during January and early February with results available before the FY 2024-25 budget process.

Alternatives

The City Council could choose not to approve the contract with ETR Services, LLC. If a contract is not approved, staff would not have the capacity to complete the engagement in time to inform the FY2024-25 budget process.

Financial Impact

Funding for the contract is available in the Budget and Management Services Budget (06000000-728600) and was approved during the FY2023-24 budget process.

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

The Underutilized Business Compliance Division has reviewed the proposal submitted by ETR Services, LLC. and have determined that they are in compliance with the Equal Business Opportunity Program Ordinance.

Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices

According to ETR Services, LLC's response to the "Contractor Workforce Diversity Questionnaire," they indicated the management and professional positions within their business include women and minorities. Of their five employees, two are women, who function as Senior Research Associates and four are minorities that function as the President/CEO and Senior Research Associates.

Part A – Employee Diversity Breakdown Table for Primary Location

Employment Category	Total Employees	Total Males	Total Females	Males					Females					
				White	Black	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	Indian or Alaskan Native	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	Indian or Alaskan Native	
Project Manger		1	2		1					1	1			
Professional		2			1	1								
Labor														
Clerical														
Totals	5	3	2		2	1				1	1			

Attachments

- FY23-24 Contractual Agreement
- FY2023-24 Scope of Work
- FY2023-24 Budget Breakdown