



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
November 3, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
 Submitted by: David Sprague, Interim Fire Chief, Fire Department  
 Subject: Contract: Restoration Family Counseling Center for Counseling, Education and Support

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with Restoration Family Counseling Center Inc. (RFCC) for counseling, education and support, for a total amount not to exceed \$80,000 from December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The term of this contract is from December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024 in an amount not to exceed \$80,000. This contract may be extended an additional two years and shall not exceed \$160,000 total. Funding is budgeted in 147-72-742-835-0000-000-422-612410. UC Settlement Fund). This expenditure supports firefighter and emergency medical response by providing training and support for employees that participate in the Peer Counseling Unit (PCU). The PCU provides critical support to emergency responders who suffer mental health impacts directly related to the emergency work.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Providing early intervention following traumatic incidents, and having an established peer-based counseling service are two key ways to prevent the progression of mental health problems in the workforce. Following the Berkeley Kittredge balcony collapse in 2015, Fremont Fire responded with their Peer Counseling Team (PCU) and provided debriefing for Berkeley firefighters. This spurred the Development of the Berkeley Firefighters PCU that delivers peer support in the form of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and 1:1 support to employees who seek help. The PCU follows a national curriculum developed by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation and the International Association of Fire Fighters.

The PCU has been incredibly impactful within the Department, normalizing the practice of organized post traumatic event proactive intervention (lessened the stigma), and in providing direct service to groups and individuals. This has been a critical internal service through the pandemic. The number of informal (1:1) contacts self-initiated by employees is conservatively estimated to be nearly four times what is documented

below. The PCU meets quarterly and the PCU Steering committee meets quarterly to review team performance and set goals for the next quarter.

Year	Defusing	Debriefing	One:One
2020	6	1	48
2021	8	-	52
2022	8	-	64

The PCU needs professional counseling, education, and support to continue its mission and work. Restoration Family Counseling Center Inc. (RFCC) is composed of professional staff who were influential founders and continue to be active participants in the West Coast Post Trauma Retreat (WCPR). WCPR is the gold standard in-patient, residential crisis treatment center for first responders on the West Coast. This group of clinicians within a geographic region that allows them to respond 24/7 within 30 minutes, has unique and relevant experience, and is able to respond to the unpredictable and often off hours nature of the PCUs requests for assistance.

BACKGROUND

The link between workplace experiences encountered during a career in emergency services and mental health problems is now well documented. In 2017 there were 103 documented firefighter suicides in the US and the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (FBHA) estimates that only 40% of firefighter suicides are reported. Suicide is a result of mental illness, including depression and PTSD. PTSD and depression rates among firefighters have been found to be as much as five times higher than the rates within the civilian population, which causes these first responders to commit suicide at a considerably higher rate (firefighters: 18/100,000; general population 13/100,000).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

This contract does not create environmental sustainability or climate change impacts.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Spending a career in public safety is extremely rewarding, but also has acute and cumulative impacts to employee’s mental health. It is the obligation of the employer to mitigate these impacts through education and post incident support. The PCUs efforts continue progress already achieved in reducing lost time, decreasing the number of workers compensation claims, and improving the mental health and resiliency of City of Berkeley employees.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Either to not enter into a contract with RFCC or reduce the funding for the contract, which would render the PCU unfunded and underequipped to provide mental health support to Department employees.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: RESTORATION FAMILY COUNSELING CENTER FOR  
COUNSELING, EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

WHEREAS, the link between workplace experiences encountered during a career in emergency services and mental health problems is now well documented. In 2017 there were 103 documented firefighter suicides in the US and the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (FBHA) estimates that only 40% of firefighter suicides are reported. Suicide is a result of mental illness, including depression and PTSD. PTSD and depression rates among firefighters have been found to be as much as five times higher than the rates within the civilian population, which causes these first responders to commit suicide at a considerably higher rate (firefighters: 18/100,000; general population 13/100,000) and

WHEREAS, providing early intervention following traumatic incidents, and having an established peer-based counseling service are two key ways to prevent the progression of mental health problems in the workforce, and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Firefighters Peer Counseling Unit (PCU) delivers peer support in the form of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and 1:1 support to employees who seek help. The PCU follows a national curriculum developed by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation and the International Association of Fire Fighters, and

WHEREAS, the PCU has been incredibly impactful, normalizing the practice of organized post traumatic event with proactive intervention, and

WHEREAS, the PCU needs professional counseling, education, and support to continue its mission and work, and

WHEREAS, Restoration Family Counseling Center Inc. (RFCC) includes professionals who were influential founders and continue to be active participants in the West Coast Post Trauma Retreat (WCPR). WCPR is the gold standard in-patient/residential crisis treatment center for first responders on the West Coast. This group of clinicians is hyper-local and able to respond to the unpredictable and often off hours nature of the PCUs requests for assistance.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract and any amendments with Restoration Family Counseling Center for Counseling, Education and Support, for a total amount not to exceed \$80,000 for a contract period of December 1, 2022 through November 30, 2024. Funding is budgeted in 147-72-742-835-0000-000-422-612410.