



## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**MEETING DATE:** February 5, 2024

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**FROM:** Melissa Eads, City Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Approve a Contract Award between the City of Sonora and EPIC Recruiting in an Amount not to Exceed \$200,000 for Phase 1 of the City of Sonora Police Department with an On Demand Option for Online Recruiting

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### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval with consideration of the legal assessment of the Consultant's request for license language for retaining rights to enforce copyrights.

### PURPOSE:

The City of Sonora solicited proposals from qualified consultants to provide professional advertising and marketing services to assist the Department's goal of recruiting and hiring police officers. The selected consultant is to design, develop, and execute customized marketing strategies, content, and videos to promote Sonora Police Department recruitment opportunities; online recruiting platforms targeting designated marketing areas to recruit applicants; launch digital media strategy; plan, execute, and reporting for social media; including targeted messaging to job seekers interested in law enforcement; promote the application process; share details of recruitment events; provide analytics to measure advertising effectiveness.

### BACKGROUND:

The Police Department currently has a staffing allocation of fourteen (14) sworn and a total of twenty-five (25) paid employees. The agency provides an array of services for the City of Sonora, which include administration, professional services, patrol staff, detectives, 911-PSAP/Dispatch, records, animal control, parking enforcement, property and evidence, training, homeless outreach, community engagement services, and a volunteer unit.

In recent years, the Sonora Police Department has encountered a crisis in recruiting new sworn and non-sworn personnel to the Department. The Department struggles to maintain basic staffing levels, which makes creating an environment of diversity seem unattainable. This crisis is part of a broader trend affecting law enforcement agencies nationwide. The Sonora Police Department currently has approximately seven (7) sworn and three (3) non-sworn vacancies, resulting in a patrol readiness level of 42%. The recruitment crisis has led to staffing shortages, increased workload, extended working hours, and employee fatigue. The subsequent employee burnout creates more vacancies as employees look elsewhere, further exasperating the problem. The use of a professional advertising and marketing service would assist the Department's goal of recruiting and hiring police officers and have a positive impact on employee retention.

Marketing a department has now become the norm for law enforcement agencies. The platforms by which a new generation of employees are utilizing have shifted; radio and newspaper publications are no longer formats by which prospective applicants are informed about available positions. Additionally, marketing organizational culture is of critical importance, including developed collateral that highlights the City's strengths as an employer. EPIC has developed collateral for the Sonoma County Sheriff, to view this work product, visit their website at <https://joinsonomasheriff.com>.

## **DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:**

On November 28, 2023, the City released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for recruiting, marketing, and advertising services for the Sonoma Police Department. The current budget allocation approved by the Council is \$200,000. Task Orders and budget allocations will accompany subsequent phases. The RFP was sent to the City maintained list of consulting firms and posted on the City website.

Three (3) Consultants proposed for the project in accordance with the RFP requirements. EPIC, Find A Force, and Safeguard. The Review Panel, comprised of Department and Administrative Staff, ranked EPIC as the most qualified firm.

The complete Scope of Services has been included in the draft contract. A summary of Phase 1 Services includes:

- Brand Development, Research and Strategy
- Video and Photography Production
- Platform Design and Development of Recruitment Website
- On Demand, Online Recruiting

Additional on-demand phases are included and will be dependent upon subsequent budget authority.

EPIC has requested consideration of license language for retaining rights to enforce copyrights. This provision is being considered by legal counsel. To prevent delays, staff recommends approval with consideration of the legal assessment of this provision.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Contract amount was budgeted and approved by the Council. This action ratifies past Council direction and action with no additional impacts.

## **COUNCIL ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the Contract as attached.
2. Do not approve a Contract at this time.
3. Provide further direction.