



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: County Executive Office
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: December 13, 2022
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme: NA
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s) Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Contact Info: Nancy Anderson, Assistant County Executive Officer
SUBJECT: **State Advocacy Contracts** (Hurst Brooks Espinosa, LLC (HBE) and Governmental Advocates (GA))

DocuSigned by:

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County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the attached Agreement for the services of independent contractor Hurst Brooks Espinosa, LLC to provide State advocacy services for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025 for a term of three years at a cost of \$81,000 for the initial year, with an increase of approximately 3% for the two subsequent years, with a total amount not to exceed \$250,800 for a three-year term with the option to extend for a maximum of two years; and
- b) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the attached Agreement for the services of independent contractor Governmental Advocates, Inc. to provide additional State advocacy services for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 for a total amount not to exceed \$60,000 for a one-year term with the option to extend for additional two years, for a maximum three-year term; and
- c) Determine that the above actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) because they consist of the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

Each year the Board of Supervisors identifies specific issues, projects and/or programs (priorities) that warrant targeted legislative advocacy and includes these priorities as part of its legislative platform for the upcoming calendar year. Once the platform is adopted by the Board, staff determines various legislative strategies centered on the identified priorities such as enacting or amending legislation, creating partnerships with federal agencies and exploring funding opportunities. To assist the County in implementing the legislative platform at the state level, staff recommends entering into an agreement for State lobbying and advocacy services with Hurst Brooks Espinosa, LLC (HBE) as well as an agreement for additional state advocacy services with Governmental Advocates, Inc (GA). Hurst Brooks Espinosa (HBE) will focus on enhanced policy and budgetary advocacy while Governmental Advocates will focus on legislative relations and coalition building.

Background:

In November 2021, staff informed your Board that the competitive bidding process for Advocacy Services would occur in 2022. In September 2022, staff released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for State Lobbying and Advocacy Services. Historically, the County of Santa Barbara has had one federal advocate and one state advocate. In recent years, State legislative action has been predominantly impacting policy issues for local governments resulting in funding allocation changes initiated through the Governor's budget. Upon review of proposals submitted through the competitive process, the evaluation team comprised of department heads ranked HBE the highest; however, since Governmental Advocates has extensive experience and history with the County and success with assisting the County on legislative relations, staff determined it would be beneficial to be represented by both lobbyists for the coming year. Staff will track usage of both contracts in the coming year to determine if this is an effective model.

HBE, which is known for extensive experience in engaging the Governor's Office on policy issues impacting counties, will focus on advocacy services to monitor and provide updates on key County legislation relating to the policy platform. This includes direct advocacy efforts such as monitoring and drafting legislation, drafting letters with active positions, providing regular updates and communication on priority bills and issue areas, and engaging in lobbying for priority legislation. Governmental Advocate's primary focus for 2023 will be on legislative relations and coalition building. This includes leveraging critical connections and working with key government leaders to promote the Legislative Platform, providing state government relation services, and assisting in coordinating communications and meetings with legislators and state agencies as needed and directed by the County Executive Office. It is recommended that the Board enter into a three-year contract with HBE and a one-year contract with GA, with options to extend for an additional two years.

Performance Measure:

The performance of the advocates will be assessed by obtaining feedback from members of the Board of Supervisors, department directors and the County's elected representatives regarding the professionalism, timeliness and quality of assistance rendered by the advocate in performing the scope of work articulated above. Staff will monitor the use of both agreements in 2023 to determine if the County will continue to have two state lobbying firms for subsequent years.

Other measures that will be examined include the number of bill sponsors secured, the number of bills enacted and the deviation from original conceptual language to the enacted version of the legislation should the County submit legislative language/propose new bill for consideration as part of its annual legislative platform. The achievement of objectives contained within the legislative platform (such as maintained or increased program funding, legislative or regulatory changes, improved relationships with agencies, etc.) will also be examined annually.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

The total contract cost for Hurst Brooks Espinosa, LLC for a three-year term will be a maximum of \$250,800, which includes travel reimbursement expenses, which is budgeted for. The initial year of the contract includes a monthly retainer of \$6,750, which is an annual cost of \$81,000. Each subsequent year will include a modest increase to accommodate for COLA expenses. The total contract amount for three years will not exceed \$250,800. The total contract cost for Governmental Advocates, Inc. for a one-year term will be a maximum of \$60,000, which includes a monthly retainer of \$5,000. The cost of the combined services for the first contract year total \$141,000 and is budgeted in the County Executive Office department budget. This amount is \$72,700 more than the cost of state lobbying services in 2022 and will be absorbed within the department's budget from savings.

Key Contract Risks:

County of Santa Barbara staff foresee no significant contractual issues. These contracts have low risk.

Special Instructions:

Clerk of the Board to forward one fully executed original contract to County Executive Office, ATTN: Jasmine McGinty

Attachments:

Attachment A: Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor with Hurst Brooks Espinosa, LLC

Attachment B: Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor with Governmental Advocates, Inc.

Authored by:

Jasmine McGinty, Principal Analyst

Cc: Jean Kinney Hurst, Partner, Hurst Brooks Espinosa, LLC
Cliff Berg, Governmental Advocates, Inc.