



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: October 28, 2025
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: November 26, 2025
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Procurement Officer
SUBJECT: Contract Award for Supply of Employee and Family Assistance Plan Services

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council authorize City staff to negotiate to the satisfaction of the City's Chief Human Resources Officer, City's Director of Legal Services, and the City's Chief Procurement Officer and enter into a contract with Homewood Health Inc. ("HHI") under which HHI will provide Employee and Family Assistance Plan services for an initial term of (3) three-years with an estimated contract value of \$1,122,076 plus applicable taxes, with the option to extend for (6) six additional (1) one- year terms, with an estimated contract value of \$3,570,983, plus applicable taxes over the entire term of the contract to be funded through the operating budget.
- B. THAT Council delegate its authority to execute the Agreement to the City's Director of Legal Services, Chief Procurement Officer, and Chief Human Resources Officer;

FURTHER THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by Council's approval of Recommendations A and B unless and until the City executes and delivers the Agreement.

Purpose and Executive Summary

The City requires a qualified vendor to supply to employees with counselling and coaching assistance on lifestyle issues, mental health and wellness, crisis management, trauma and depression care services as part of the Employee and Family Services Assistance Plan (EFAP).

The City recognizes that enhancing and promoting employee mental health requires proactive, consistent, and ongoing resource support. Due to the demanding and complex nature of the work performed daily by City employees, and the importance of work-life balance, it is imperative the City continue to be able to offer a multi-faceted and dynamic approach to supporting employees and their dependents well-being. The purpose of this RFP was to identify

and contract a vendor to supply professional service, support and administration for the City's EFAP program.

City staff on the RFP evaluation committee and the Bid Committee have considered the responses received and recommended that the City negotiate an agreement with Homewood Health Inc.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008) requires Council approve contracts with a total value greater \$3,000,000 following review and recommendations by the City's Bid Committee. The Bid Committee has considered the bids and recommends Homewood Health Inc. as the successful proponent.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The City's Department of Human Resources requires a qualified provider to supply counselling and other related services to meet the objectives of its EFAP program.

Currently there are three components to the City of Vancouver's EFAP program:

- Core EFAP services and the available coaching assistance related to lifestyle issues such as, but not limited to, health and nutrition. This component is supported by education sessions on topics related to mental health and wellness. Studies show that coaching programs can lead to clinically meaningful improvements which lower long-term health risks and can translate into fewer disability claims, reduced absenteeism, and overall cost savings for employers.
- Crisis Management Services. These are the services we use when there is a critical event at the City such as a fatality or serious incident.
- Trauma Care and Depression Care. These services were added April 15, 2017. It was recognized that First Responders and other City employees exposed to traumatic events are at a higher risk of post-traumatic stress symptoms and other mental health concerns. This offering provides for up to 20 weeks of treatment for City employees by clinicians with expertise and specific training in evidence-based therapy related to this post-traumatic stress and depression.

The purpose of the RFP was to identify a supplier with the capability to meet the City's requirements for providing employee and family assistance plan services while offering a competitive price and satisfactory service.

Discussion

Canadian employers are not explicitly legally required to offer EFAP but have a general duty under occupational health and safety legislation to provide a safe and healthy workplace, which can include addressing psychological safety and supporting employee mental health. The evidence consistently points to EFAPs as a valuable investment that proactively address underlying issues affecting employee well-being, leading to measurable benefits for employers through reduced costs in areas such as absenteeism and workplace injuries.

The City issued an RFP, PS20251231-HR-RFP on July 5, 2025, for services related to the City's Employee and Family Services Assistance Plan. The City advertised the RFP on the City of Vancouver website and BC Bid, in accordance with the City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008).

The RFP was issued in accordance with the City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008). The City received responses from:

- Homewood Health Inc.
- Green Shield Holdings Inc.
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver

The responses were evaluated, using both quantitative and qualitative factors, by an evaluation team comprised of representatives from Human Resources, Vancouver Public Library, and Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services under the stewardship of Supply Chain Management, to assess each response's overall value. The requirements focused on Proponents' ability to provide the following key attributes of a successful EFAP program:

- Core EFAP services including but not limited to culturally competent, identity affirming counselling that prioritizes addressing clinical need without a generalized session limit, coaching assistance related to lifestyle issues such as health, nutrition, financial stress and burnout, and education sessions on a variety of topics.
- Rapid access to specialized long-term support, without need for formal referral, for employees that are exposed to traumatic events, experiencing traumatic stress symptoms and / or struggling with depression or anxiety.
- Crisis management services involving a multi-faceted, resilience-based approach to crisis intervention, designed to offer assessment and emotional first aid to employees after a critical incident, in-person or virtually. Response must be dynamic, timely and accessible for any City business unit at any City worksite, as required.
- Leadership and team support, including leadership coaching and team-based interventions aimed at resolving conflicts and enhancing team communication, cohesion, and collegiality.

Some of the criteria considered in the overall evaluation process included:

- Key personnel of the proponent's team;
- Experience and qualifications of the proponent;
- Transition and implementation plan;
- Innovation & alternate solutions;
- Indigenous participation and social diversity; and
- Commercial proposal

In addition to these categories the evaluation team evaluated a number of more specific detailed requirement questions related to the proponent's EFAP program capabilities including but not limited to the following:

- Scope of Services;
- Culturally competent and trauma informed mental health support;
- Provider matching process;
- Lifestyle / life events support for employees and covered dependents;
- 24/7 Available trauma response / Critical Incident Stress Management Services;
- Team Support Services;
- Intake processes;
- Promotion of EFAP services;

- Confidentiality; and
- Reporting.

The evaluation team concluded that the proposal submitted by Homewood Health Inc. met the City's requirements and provided the best overall value to the City.

Financial Implications

Finance has reviewed and confirmed that funding is available from operating budget. The annual costs to provide these services remain constant in comparison to the current contract. As a result of the RFP, the City is able to achieve cost certainty for the proposed nine-year term.

Legal Implications

The City's Procurement Policy (ADMIN-008) requires the Director of Legal Services to execute all contracts with a total value greater than \$3,000,000 that have been awarded by the Bid Committee and Council.

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