



**CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL**

Meeting Date: 12/3/2019

ALL

Item Creation Date: 11/13/2019

E29260 (1of2) - Benzene Air Quality Management Project (WILLIAM MARSH RICE UNIVERSITY) - ORDINANCE

Agenda Item#: 43.

**Background:**

**Professional Services for S83-E29260 - Approve an ordinance authorizing an agreement between the City of Houston and William Marsh Rice University for the maximum contract amount of \$328,904.00 for the benzene air quality management project for the Houston Health Department.**

**Specific Explanation:**

The Director of the Houston Health Department and the Chief Procurement Officer recommend that City Council approve an ordinance awarding a **one (1) year agreement** between the City of Houston and **William Marsh Rice University** for the maximum contract amount not to exceed **\$328,904.00** for the benzene air quality management project for the Houston Health Department. The Chief Procurement Officer and/or the Director of the Houston Health Department may terminate this contract at any time upon 30-days written notice to the contractor.

The Houston Health Department needs a method to quickly store, display, and interpret pollution information collected during environmental emergencies for internal decision-making as well as providing alerts to the public. The Intercontinental Terminals Company, LLC (ITC) fire in Deer Park and the Valero floating roof tank leak, for example, represent air pollution events not quickly resolved. It is critical to determine outdoor air concentrations of benzene in communities when similar events occur to secure decision-making data for local health officials and provide reliable information to the public about possible alerts to shelter in place or evacuate a local area.

This project requires expertise in sophisticated statistical analysis of disparate hazardous air pollution data, guidance for the public exposed to the pollution and an innovative platform for communicating the information electronically. The expertise to accomplish all aspects of this project is not available within the City. The project will develop a tool to communicate guidance to the community during air pollution events.

Researchers from Rice University will focus on the statistical analysis and communication to the public incorporating the evidence-based recommendations of short-term guidelines for ambient air levels of benzene which is the most commonly encountered hazardous air pollutant in the Houston Metropolitan Area. These researchers will work together with the department to test the system using the ITC fire data.

**MWBE Participation:**

M/WBE Zero Percentage Goal documents approved by the Office of Business Opportunity.

**Pay or Play Program:**

The proposed contract requires compliance with the City's 'Pay or Play' ordinance regarding health benefits for employees of City contractors.

In this case, the department has requested a waiver because the contract is strictly environmental support services utilizing an Interlocal Agreement. The Office of Business Opportunity has approved the request.

**Hire Houston First:**

This procurement is exempt from the City's Hire Houston First Ordinance. Bids/proposals were not solicited because the Department is utilizing state private entity for implementation for this agreement for a tool to communicate air levels of pollution during a disaster event.

**Fiscal Note:**

No Fiscal Note is required on grant items.

11/22/2019

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**Jerry Adams, Chief Procurement Officer  
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**Department Approval Authority**

11/22/2019

**Estimated Spending Authority**

