



Legislation Text

File #: 0888-2019, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND:

This ordinance authorizes the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court to enter into contract with Alvis, Inc. for assessment specialist services. The Court was awarded a grant which is provided from the Ohio Department of Public Safety / Office of Criminal Justice Services. The award was for \$50,000 to cover the cost of assessment specialist services.

In 2015, the Department of Probation Services (DOPS) committed to becoming an evidence-based organization, and to employing the Risk, Needs, Responsivity (RNR) Principle through a differential, risk-based supervision structure. Two major hurdles were identified in the planning phase: how to manage the high volume of new cases that the DOPS receives (approx. 500/month) while keeping caseloads manageable; and how to allow placement, duration and programming decisions to be guided by the assessment without access to the information prior to sentencing. In a significant demonstration of commitment to this project, the judges agreed that they would allow these decisions to be made post-sentence, by the DOPS.

Defendants sentenced to a period of probation report to the DOPS for intake and screening by the DOPS Support Unit. If screened as moderate or high risk, or eligible for one of the specialized caseloads, defendants are assigned to the corresponding unit where she/he will receive a full assessment(s). Defendants may be transferred to another supervision level if the screening and assessment risk levels differ. It is not uncommon for cases to be transferred between officers as part of this post-screening and assessment process. Due to significant caseload sizes it takes officers several weeks to complete the assessment process. This delay can have a negative impact on the success of the defendant and increase their risk of re-offending if their criminogenic needs are not identified early in their supervision.

The FCMC DOPS will partner with Alvis for contracted assessment services, specifically the ORAS CST and MAT and the IDA, for defendants who screen as moderate or high-risk or who are eligible for the department's special programs (excluding domestic violence). Each month approximately 190 defendants require a full assessment based on the results of the screening or because of their special profile (soliciting, mental health, opiate-related case). We plan for project staff to complete 120 assessments per month. These assessments will take place either prior to sentencing at the request of the Court, during the intake process at the FCMC DOPS, or shortly after intake. Reducing the number assessments that need to be completed by the FCMC DOPS' moderate and high-risk officers will allow them to schedule the remaining assessments in a timelier manner, and will allow them to engage in case planning and interventions much earlier in the supervision process. This project will more swiftly and accurately inform the initial placement and reduce the need to transfer defendants between officers. Contracting for assessment services will also allow us time to gather data to better understand and prioritize our staffing needs as we further develop our EBP paradigm.

EMERGENCY ACTION is requested in order to prevent a break in service.

FISCAL IMPACT: The funds are available in the General Government Grant Fund.

To authorize the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court to enter into contract with Alvis, Inc. for assessment specialist services; to authorize the expenditure of up to \$50,000.00 for assessment services from the general government grant fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$50,000.00)

WHEREAS, it is in the city's best interest that the Franklin County Municipal Court receive support for an enhanced probationary service for offenders; and

WHEREAS, funds in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 is budgeted within the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges General Government Grant Fund for this contractual agreement; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Franklin County Municipal Court in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Administrative and Presiding Judge to enter into a contract and associated expenditures with the Alvis, Inc. in order to assure the start of the assessments thereby preserving the public peace, property, health, safety, and welfare; Now, Therefore

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS

SECTION 1. That the Administrating and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court be and is hereby authorized to enter into contract with Alvis, Inc. for assessment specialists through December 31, 2019.

SECTION 2. That the expenditure of \$50,000 or as much thereof as may be necessary is hereby authorized from the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges' general government grant fund according to the account codes in the attachment.

SECTION 3. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.