



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 25-1839, **Agenda Item #:** 28.

9/11/2025

Posting Language

Authorize three contracts for higher education research, consulting, and technical assistance for the Office of Budget and Organizational Excellence with Huston-Tillotson University, Concordia University Texas, and St. Edward's University Inc., each for an initial term of one-year with up to four, 1-year extension options in amounts not to exceed \$12,000,000, divided among the contractors. Funding: \$2,400,000 is available in the Operating Budget of various City departments. Funding for the remaining contract term is contingent upon available funding in future budgets. Related to item #6

Lead Department

Financial Services Department.

Client Department(s)

Office of Budget and Organizational Excellence.

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$2,400,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operating Budget of various City departments.

Funding for the remaining contract term is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

Purchasing Language:

Professional Services.

MBE/WBE:

These contracts will be awarded in accordance with the City Code Chapter 2-9B (Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program). For the services required for these contracts, there were no subcontracting opportunities; therefore, no subcontracting goals were established.

For More Information:

Direct questions regarding this Recommendation for Council Action to the Financial Services Department - Central Procurement at FSDCentralProcurementRCAs@austintexas.gov or 512-974-2500.

Additional Backup Information:

These contracts will enable the City to formally engage three regional private academic institutions, Huston-Tillotson University, St. Edward's University, and Concordia University Texas, as strategic partners in applied research and technical collaboration aligned with Citywide Strategic Plan priority areas. This will enable departments to access a wide range of expertise and support, such as community-based research, student-led projects, program evaluation, and policy advisory services. Projects will be scoped, initiated, approved, and funded by City departments on an as-needed basis through a flexible and equitable framework.

This effort builds on the successful research collaboration model established through the City's longstanding interlocal agreement with The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin). Expanding this model to additional

institutions will provide new capacity and open pathways for broader regional participation, innovation, and insight. Each of these institutions brings unique strengths, deep community relationships, and academic expertise that support City goals.

The City's research partnership with UT Austin have resulted in a multitude of impactful projects over the last five years. These collaborations have shaped public-facing services, guided internal strategy, and elevated Austin's profile as a data-smart city. Beyond formal research projects, these university partnerships have also supported a wide range of activities such as student capstone and class projects using City data, faculty advising, technical workshops, shared data analysis, grant collaboration, and ongoing knowledge exchange, all of which contribute to a more connected and future-ready civic ecosystem.

Expanding this framework to additional universities will broaden the City's access to talent and resources and strengthen the regional innovation ecosystem. This expansion will support workforce development, create new opportunities for grant alignment, and build a cohesive, multi-institution partnership model, establishing the City as a leader in civic-academic collaboration.

These contracts are designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency across all participating universities. This new partnership model makes things more efficient by using a repeatable process instead of one-time deals. With organized steps, City staff can easily find partners, use faculty expertise, and start projects that match their goals. The process is now more centralized, clear, and collaborative, cutting down the time from idea to action from months to just weeks.

If this contract is not approved, the City will not have a diverse group of local universities to collaborate with on important projects that align with City goals.

Contract Details:		
Contract Term	Length of TContract Authorization	
Initial Term	1 year	\$2,400,000
Optional Extension 1	1 year	\$2,400,000
Optional Extension 2	1 year	\$2,400,000
Optional Extension 3	1 year	\$2,400,000
Optional Extension 4	1 year	\$2,400,000
Total	5 years	\$12,000,000

Note: Contract Authorization amounts are based on the City's estimated annual usage.