



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**

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**Agenda Item Number:** 22

**Agenda Date:** December 12, 2024

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Government Affairs

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Sally Basurto

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:**

Renewal of Federal Representation Services Contracts.

**SUMMARY:**

An Ordinance authorizing the execution of renewals of the Professional Services Agreement for Federal Representations Services with Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP for a period of two years, at an amount not to exceed \$540,000.00; Serna & Serna for a period of two years, at an amount not to exceed \$90,000.00. The renewed agreements commence on January 1, 2025 and end on December 31, 2026. Funding for the first year of the contract in the amount of \$315,000.00 is available from the General Fund FY 2025 Adopted Budget and funding for future years is contingent upon City Council approval of the annual budget.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The City of San Antonio has retained consultants to represent its interests with the federal government for more than 28 years. The City retains consultants to support and strengthen the City's advocacy efforts with federal agencies, members of Congress, and the Administration to advance legislation and seek federal funding that is beneficial to the San Antonio community. The

City's federal priorities for each of the two-year Congressional sessions are stated in a City Council approved Federal Legislative Program developed by the Government Affairs (GA) Department in collaboration with other City departments, federal consultants, partner organizations.

On December 15, 2022, City Council approved, through ordinance number 2022-12-15-0982, the execution of professional services agreements with Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and Serna & Serna for federal representation services through December 31, 2024. Under the approved Professional Services agreements the City has a right to renew for two additional two-year terms upon City Council approval.

Federal consultants are responsible for supporting and implementing the City's Federal Legislative Program through the development of strategic action items that include timelines, goals, and objectives to advance the City's priorities. During the 118th Congress San Antonio's federal consultants assisted in the coordination of advocacy visits to Washington to pursue grant funding, supported City Councilmember and staff participation in U.S. Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, and Federal Administration events.

In addition, Federal consultants helped coordinate the advocacy work for the SAT-DCA nonstop flight – a major priority for the San Antonio community. Consultants supported the City's Government Affairs efforts to successfully help pass legislation in support of the San Antonio nonstop flight to Reagan National Airport.

Two major funding bills, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) made available trillions of dollars for infrastructure, clean energy development, sustainability, and resilience. Significant work was dedicated to identifying and advocating for available funds for the community. Through these efforts over \$180 million was awarded to the City of San Antonio in 2023 and 2024. Federal consultants assisted in the city's pursuits of this funding with federal agencies and the administration.

GA is currently in the process of developing the federal legislative program for the 119th Congress, which will start in January 2025. Consultants have helped to continuously monitor legislative activities, develop strategies to advance the City's interests, and identify issues that are likely to be addressed by the incoming Congress. The Federal consultants' team is equipped and prepared to advocate on behalf of the San Antonio community with the incoming Congress, administration and agencies.

## **ISSUE:**

This ordinance renewing the City's Federal Representation Services Agreements is consistent with City policy of retaining consultants to supplement the City's advocacy efforts with federal agency personnel, Congressional members of key committees of jurisdiction and the President's Administration. It is also consistent with the City policy of building strategic alliances with officials in Washington, D.C. who may be able to further the City's interests. Finally, it is consistent with City policy of developing a detailed strategy to further the City's Federal

Legislative Program.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The City Council could choose not to exercise the agreement renewals and staff could begin an RFP process to solicit Federal Representation Services for the 119th U.S. Congress. If this option is selected the City would be without federal representation in Washington D.C. to advocate for City priorities during the beginning of a new Congressional session and a new presidential administration.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Ordinance renewing Professional Services Agreements for Federal Representation Services with Akin Gump for a period of two years, at an amount not to exceed \$540,000.00; and Serna & Serna for a period of two years, at an amount not to exceed \$90,000.00. Funding is available from the General Fund FY 2025 Adopted Budget and funding for future years is contingent up on City Council approval of the annual budget.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval.