



## Exploring a Standing Contract for Short-term Studies

**Goal:** Create an opportunity to contract with one professional services consultant to perform a variety of short-term (or long-term) research studies.

**Background:** The City of Saint Paul does not have a pre-qualification process for using professional services from an available list. Unlike purchasing goods or materials, professional services are more challenging, especially if there is a selection process. What typically lengthens the process is the time it takes the committee to evaluate before making decisions on the type of needed professional services. A key factor that must be considered is contract negotiation. Per Section 86.05, the City Attorney's Office (CAO) approves all contracts, deeds, leases, and other instruments on behalf of the City or the Board of Water Commissioners.

### **Process:**

STEP 1 – Identify the problem(s) and/or questions the Audit Committee would like the consultant to address.

STEP 2 – Secure ongoing budget commitment from the full City Council through a resolution and identify the appropriate budget amount.

STEP 3 – Identify the type of services needed and the reason those services cannot be provided by Council or City staff.

STEP 4 – Involve the City Attorney's Office and Procurement early to create a master service contract for (1) type of services needed, cost of the research being sought, length of contract (i.e., 1 year with option to renew), etc.

STEP 5 – Invite and solicit the consultant via an informal request for proposal with specific scope around the sought subject matter areas, cost (i.e., at an hourly rate or cost of the identified policy areas), evaluation and rating process, timeline, and length of the contract with a clear expectation of a final report with recommendations.

STEP 6 – Work with the City Attorney's Office, Procurement and selected consultant to finalize the contract.

**Process Outcome:** The Audit Committee would use this ongoing contract to be responsive to issues and questions that arise out of the City Council, Budget Committee or Organizational Committee that require more in-depth analysis or research than Council or City staff are able to provide. The opportunity to have on consultant doing on-demand work will:

- Enhance accountability of City operations to performance expectations outlined in adopted codes, policies and budgets.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of City operations; and
- Demonstrate to the public of the City Council's commitment to efficiency and positive outcomes, especially as it contemplates the balance between tax increases or service reductions.
- Support the Committee's Values Statement:
  - **Cooperation and Respect:** The Audit committee will partner with the administration, staff, and stakeholders with cooperation and respect to build public and internal trust through outstanding service delivery.
  - **Transparency and Integrity:** The Audit committee will engender trust by operating with transparency and integrity, using sound methodologies and thoughtful systems analysis.
  - **Co-learning and Co-development:** The Audit Committee will operate with a spirit of evaluating "with" and not evaluating "on" that results in co-learning and co-development with the administration, staff, and stakeholders.
  - **Race Equity:** The Audit committee will use a race equity lens in choosing what will be evaluated, consultant selection, and how services will be evaluated.