

Request for
Proposal/Quotation
For Consulting Services

June 23 , 2025

City of Akron

Office of the Mayor and Akron
Police Department

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AKRON POLICE DEPARTMENT USE OF FORCE POLICY REVIEW

SCOPE OF WORK

Purpose:

The City of Akron, Ohio (hereinafter referred to as the City) is seeking a comprehensive review and analysis of the City of Akron Police Department's (APD) existing use of force policy and procedures, and any ancillary or supporting policies, procedures, rules, or guidelines.

This review must include: i) key stakeholder engagement and detailed analysis assessing existing policy in comparison to nationwide best practices, with an emphasis on current law and legal trends impacting police use of force policies and procedures; ii) a partnership arrangement with The University of Akron's Department of Criminal Justice Studies to participate in and complete portions of the work associated with the review and or follow-up monitoring and evaluation (see attached Exhibit A); iii) developing detailed recommendations for alteration or change to policies and procedures where needed; and iv) the creation of an achievable implementation strategy for any recommended changes.

Goals:

The City's goals in conducting this review are to:

1. partner with experts in both policing and law to complete a thorough and comprehensive review and assessment of APD's programs, training, policies, and practices related to use of force; identify inequities and disparate impacts, if any; and recommend other systems and practices, if any, for monitoring and tracking data in order to increase accountability and transparency;
2. determine whether APD's current use of force policies and procedures are in parity with nationwide best practices and if not, make recommendations where needed in order to create new policies and procedures that are reflective of best practices as well as the collective expectations and values of key stakeholders, including APD;
3. develop an engagement strategy that fosters trust between community members, groups, and key stakeholders, including the APD; and
4. if alterations are proposed to existing APD use of force policy, create an implementation strategy that is capable of being clearly interpreted, enforced, and trained on.

Deliverables:

1. public communication strategy/plan;
2. regular status updates;
3. a final written report and analysis;
4. engagement with internal stakeholders; and
5. engagement with external stakeholders.

Public Communication Strategy/Plan:

Consultant must provide a detailed communication plan that works directly with the Mayor's Administration ("Administration") to coordinate on all aspects of project updates, public announcements and communication with the public, and other key stakeholders. The Consultant shall be prohibited from disclosing any portion of the work without prior written consent from the City Administration, including the final report and any recommendations.

Regular Status Updates:

Consultant must provide regular, periodic, status updates to the Administration or City Council, as may be requested by the Administration. These updates must clearly describe Consultant's progress and be provided in the manner prescribed by the Administration.

A Final Written Report and Analysis:

Consultant must provide a final, written, report and analysis detailing the process for and results of each goal listed above as well as recommendations, where needed. The written report should include a thorough, but concise, executive summary and a feasible implementation strategy (if needed).

Engagement with Internal Stakeholders:

Consultant should expect robust, in person, engagement with internal City stakeholders including APD Leadership, patrol officers, representatives of other City departments, City Council members, Mayor and staff, the Citizen's Police Oversight Board, the Independent Police Auditors Office, and representatives of the police union.

Engagement with External Stakeholders:

Consultant should expect robust, in person, engagement with external public stakeholders, as the Administration expects a high level of public interest about the findings and recommendations resulting from this review. The Administration shall be the primary point of contact with any external parties; however, the Consultant should expect to be involved in a number of in-person and virtual/hybrid engagement sessions with members of the Akron community.

Timeline/ Milestones:

All deliverables and the work described above must be completed within six (6) months of full execution of the agreement(s) awarding the work. Prior to awarding any contract, the Consultant must provide the City with an estimated project timeline. A final project timeline in conformance with this paragraph must be provided to the City before initiation of any work.

Cost:

A budget and estimated cost for the entire project must be provided to the City and must include a total maximum “not-to-exceed” dollar figure above which the Consultant will bear the sole risk of loss. Costs should include all anticipated expenses related to the review as well as any expenses for travel, lodging, etc., keeping in mind the restrictions placed on the use of public funds, as prescribed by law.

Technical Assistance:

There will be two TA sessions scheduled by the Administration with potential Consultants and the University of Akron to discuss the University’s involvement. Proposing Consultants should not contact the University directly.

Background and Historical Information:

Akron is the 5th largest city in Ohio with a population of roughly 187,000. The City operates under and is governed by its Charter, which was first adopted by the voters in 1918 and which has been (and may be) amended by city voters from time to time. Specifically, in 2022 the residents voted to adopt a charter amendment that established the Citizens Police Oversight Board and the Office of the Independent Police Auditor. The City is also subject to certain general laws applicable to all cities in the State. Under the Ohio Constitution, the City may exercise all powers of local self-government, and may enact police, sanitary, and similar regulations to the extent not in conflict with applicable general laws. The Charter provides for a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor appoints the directors of city departments including the Chief of Police. The Mayor and Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Akron City Council, and the Citizens Police Oversight Board have requested a complete review of the Use of Force Policy to evaluate current policies, procedures, trends and training to ensure alignment with current best practice standards.

In the past, the City has commissioned a variety of reports to address issues raised by the citizens of Akron, including reports focused on policing. For example, in 2010, APD partnered with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to evaluate operations and explore opportunities for efficiency. The report listed 20 recommendations that ranged from how services were delivered to staffing suggestions. Many of the recommendations were implemented, while others were reconsidered based on evolving needs and budget constraints. There has never been a review/report that has specifically focused on the use of force policy with APD.

The current APD Use of Force Policy was last updated in 2016. In recent years, there have been several officer-involved shootings that have resulted in fatalities. This has raised concern amongst some members of the Akron community resulting in increased tension and mistrust between the community and APD. This review would be the first comprehensive assessment of the current use of force policy in conjunction with an engagement strategy to address concerns raised by community members, and key stakeholders.

Required Respondent Information

1. Letter of interest.
2. Proposed plan including plan for briefing the Mayor on the issues prior to and during the review process.
3. A summary of relevant experience in the last five years, including detailed descriptions of the outcomes achieved as a direct result of Consultant's efforts.
4. A complete list of current and former clients to whom similar services have been provided.
5. A list of three references, including contact information for each.
6. Provide/respond to the following:
 - a. The legal name of consultant/firm/individual, address, telephone number, number of years in business, and current number of full-time professional and technical personnel with the Consultant/firm;
 - b. Name of the individual or individuals who will be in charge of the actual work performed for the City;
 - c. The address (if different than that listed in (a)) of the office(s) where the work is to be undertaken;
 - d. What proposed project schedule would you recommend to most efficiently conduct the work detailed under Deliverables;
 - e. Provide a detailed itemization of the cost of services and any other customary charges for services to be rendered. Include staff hourly rates, alternative retainer proposals, a description of the process used to fairly allocate costs among consultant's/firm's;
 - f. Estimate of expenses incurred that will be billed to the City.

The City will entertain any suggested billing method, but prefers a firm, fixed annual fee schedule, including all expenses for the services outlined herein. The City may waive any of these requirements if the Mayor, in his sole and absolute discretion, determines it to be in the best interest of the City.

Selection Criteria

If the City chooses to enter into a contract with any proposer, it will select the lowest and best proposer. The City will use the following criteria to determine the lowest and best proposer:

1. Thoroughness and understanding of work to be completed;
2. Overall experience of staff assigned to the work;
3. Recent experience conducting similar efforts;
4. Experience conducting reviews that involve community and stakeholder engagement;
5. Willingness to adhere to contractual requirements, as mandated by the City; and
6. Cost.

In addition, the City may consider any other criteria determined, by the Mayor, in his sole discretion, to be in the best interest of the City.

Selection Process

The Mayor and designated members of City staff will review the submitted proposals for completeness and qualifications.

The Mayor, in his sole discretion, may invite selected proposers to an interview and/or to provide an oral presentation.

The Mayor, in his sole discretion, may also determine to select a proposer without staging interviews or oral presentations.

If a proposer is selected by the Administration a special services agreement for the work will be prepared and executed. The special services agreement will contain non-discrimination, indemnification, and termination for convenience provisions.

Liability Waiver

1. Consultant personnel signing the cover letter of the proposal must be an authorized signer with the authority to represent the firm and to enter into a binding contract with the City.
2. Proposed services and related pricing contained in the proposal must be valid for a period of 90 days after the deadline for submission of the proposal, 4:00 P.M, July 31, 2025.

3. The City will make every effort to administer the proposal in accordance with the terms of this RFP. The City reserves the right, however, to modify the activities, timeline, or any other aspect of the process at any time as deemed necessary by city staff or the Mayor.
4. By requesting proposals, the City is in no way obligated to award a contract and will not pay the expenses of consultants in connection with the preparation or submission of a proposal.
5. The awarding of a contract shall be contingent on the availability of funds.
6. Akron reserves the right to request and obtain from one or more of the consulting firms submitting proposals, supplementary information as may be necessary for city staff to analyze the proposals pursuant to the consultant selection criteria contained herein.
7. The City may require Consultants to participate in additional rounds of more refined submittals before the ultimate selection of a consulting team is made. These rounds could encompass revisions of the submittal criteria in response to the nature and scope of the initial proposal.
8. The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals; to waive any non-material irregularities or informalities in any proposal, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items.
9. Additionally, factors such as, but not limited to, the following may disqualify a proposal without further consideration:
 - a. Evidence of collusion among respondents;
 - b. Any attempt to improperly influence any member of city staff, Citizens Police Oversight Board, Office of the Independent Police Auditor or any elected official of the City;
 - c. A respondent's default under any type of agreement, which resulted in the termination of that agreement; and
 - d. Existence of any unresolved litigation between the respondent and the City.

Proposal Format and Submittal Instructions

Proposal may be submitted to the email address provided below or one original proposal and two copies of all materials submitted. The proposal should include the following information:

1. Letter of interest.
2. “Required Respondent Information” as listed above.
3. Attachments: Resumes

Submission Deadlines

You are invited to submit your Proposal to provide consulting services for the City of Akron. **Unless a specific note is made to the contrary, we will assume that your Proposal conforms to the requested format.**

All proposals must be submitted by **4:00 p.m. EST, July 31, 2025** to [Bonfire](#) and you must register with Bonfire in advance prior to submitting a proposal. Any proposal received after the deadline will not be considered. Do not wait until the deadline to register for Bonfire.

You are able to ask questions during the proposal process and to seek additional information, if needed. We want this to be an interactive process and will make every effort to provide sufficient data for your response. Please **submit all questions via the Bonfire application by selecting the Question/Answer section at the top right side of the Bonfire web page. Deadline for questions is 4:00 p.m. EST, Monday, July 21, 2025.** All questions and answers will be available to all parties registered.

If you decline to offer a proposal, please provide a written declination via email to: AIngram@Akronohio.gov

Proposals will be evaluated and the successful Consultant will be determined. The City reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals, waive formalities and to select the Consultant that best meet the needs of the City and its employees. The City reserves the right to select and terminate any Consultant, sub-Consultant, agency, company or administrator.

Exhibit A

UA Faculty Capabilities – Use of Force Policy Analysis

Here is a summary of services that may be provided by University of Akron personnel in coordination with the vendors who will be conducting the use of force review process. Please note that some services are contingent upon the availability of faculty and may be impacted by the timeline of the project. Participation of UA faculty will be governed by the Office of Research Administration once the scope of the project and requested role for faculty is defined and agreed upon.

UA faculty may provide:

Subject matter expertise on the legal (constitutional and state), administrative, and community expectations standards for evaluating police uses of force.

Regarding the administrative standard:

Research on best practices regarding use-of-force models and policy components including alternatives to force, warning before deadly force, de-escalation, and duty to intervene (not exhaustive). Research on evidence-based tactics, training, and accountability methods.

Regarding the community expectations standard:

Research related to police-community relations before and after critical incidents, dissemination of information regarding incidents, public education on the use of force and related concepts, and procedural justice policing strategies. Surveys, interviews, focus groups to determine the community expectations standard specifically for The City.

Historical, trend, and/or comparative analysis of data related to use of force incidents in The City (data dependent). Assistance in developing or procuring advanced use of force data-collection methods and dashboards useful for performance history audits.

Process and/or outcome evaluations of implemented policies. An evaluation process may include training, accountability mechanisms, and other relevant administrative practices.

Monitoring and reporting on policy, program, or practice implementation.

Coordination, implementation, and monitoring of a planned change initiative including best practices for buy-in, overcoming obstacles to change, and techniques for strategic planning including the development and measurement of policy objectives.

Interviews, surveys, and focus groups with various stakeholders regarding use of force standards and their implementation.

