

CORRESPONDENCE

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Adriana Bautista
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 11:53 AM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: pabloalvarado@ndlon.org; Jose Madera; Heavenly Hughes
Subject: Letter regarding RFP for Gang Outreach and Violence Interruption Services
Attachments: Gang Prevention RFP Inquiry April 2026.pdf

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [redacted] why this is important

[I] **CAUTION:** This email was delivered from the Internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you **know** the content is safe. Report phish using the Phish Alert Button. For more information about the Phish Alert Button view article "KB0011474" on the DoIT portal.

Dear City Clerk,

Please find a letter addressed to City of Pasadena Honorable Mayor and City Council including the Public Safety Commissioners, and City Manager. This letter attached with the title "Gang Prevention RFP Inquiry April 2026.pdf" is in regards to an agreement that is scheduled to be presented for approval to the Public Safety Committee.

Please share this communique with all addressed parties. Thank you in advance.

With kind regards,

Adriana

--

Adriana Bautista

Dear City of Pasadena Honorable Mayor and City Council, City Manager Furtrell, the Public Safety Commissioners, and City Staff,

We see the item to approve an agreement with Ricky Pickens is returning to the Public Safety Commission. Despite local contractors with more experience and more cost-effective proposals having been submitted, the Commission is being asked to approve the agreement with an out-of-state sole proprietor, who does not have the trust of the community the City is contracting him to serve.

Several of the organizations, including the leading vendor, have participated in training run by 2nd Call who are nationally recognized and far more experienced than every organization who submitted to this proposal. The fact that 2nd Call ranks fourth in the evaluation does not make sense, based on their established experience as an organization running for over 25 years.

The evaluation summary reveals a bias towards contractors who have already done work with Pasadena's departments; however, there are organizations that have a local, physical presence and are considered national leaders in the gang intervention and prevention field. It doesn't make sense that a national vendor such as 2nd Call that has a website with clear offerings, staff listing, and history would rank below individual proprietors and less experienced vendors who do not offer training and are not nationally recognized in their field.

The community would like to ask a few questions below regarding a matter that affects gang-impacted communities and the community violence intervention program being implemented by the City.

A contract for community violence intervention services started in response to a string of tragic and fatal shootings that occurred in Pasadena around 2021. The contract primarily provided gang interruption services. We have heard for the past two to three years the chief and other officers say how shootings are down.

In 2026, we are no longer in a place of violent crisis, and due to the fires in Pasadena and Altadena both cities are forever changed. Over 9,000 properties have been erased in Altadena, and Pasadena alone lost just under 150 in districts 1 and 4. The culture and dynamics will never be the same.

Are we in need of primarily violence interrupters?

The community would say we are in need of **credible** messengers who are not in the gang culture and do not say or move like they are. We are in need of interventionists *and* preventionists who are trained and understand that it's not about getting a job but a transformation of a mindset that has done the individual no good in any area of their lives for they know what it took for them to transform.

We have questions and demands for a program that the City says on one hand shooting and activity has decreased dramatically, yet still chooses to hire a vendor who is primarily a violence interrupter, when a vendor that is dynamic in providing the range of services including prevention is needed.

As our elected officials please hear our case. Think about our questions and demands to be answered.

1/ Why lock the new City Manager and community into a vendor and program for five years until 2031, or even three years until 2029.

2/ Where are the measurables for this program? Real time data and human testimonies of the journey and process of transformation. Where they placed in the RFP to gauge success or failure of this program.

The community is in a great position to pivot and enter into services that also offer strong and established Gang Intervention and Prevention programs and vendors for this field.

It is understood and well-known that the selected contract with the City of Pasadena primarily provides gang interruption services. To understand the needs of our City, we must also understand the full scope of what violence interruption, gang intervention, and prevention entail, and what makes them different from one another.

Violence interrupters are “individuals who, because of their past positions in the community or, in some cases, their prior history with a gang, retain the ability to reach and talk to key active gang members. Violence interrupters utilize these personal relationships to address ongoing disputes, which may prevent them from escalating into shootings. Their activities include talking individuals and groups out of planned violent events and, in some cases, talking with and/or bringing together key individuals who are involved to cool down those conflicts.” (Source: [National Gang Center](#))

So let's pivot to understand: **What is Gang intervention and prevention?**

Gang interventionists are and should be effective with clients, helping clients recognize that they are ready to leave and live in a different way. Interventionists should have a current working knowledge of local gangs and gang dynamics especially the youth bridge to OG's culture and dynamics. Interventionists should work to establish connections within the community with all the different partners, groups and orgs. Interventionists should establish relationships with agencies that assist with education, tattoo removal employment, substance abuse, family problems, and other services clients need. Interventionists should create spaces and places for leadership transformation which is a long-term process that involves various training models that help the clients identify and change their self-image, internal scripts, personal behavior, and goals. Their plans need to be developed and revised as necessary based on a client's current needs. Interventionists should have a high character and high trust

position within the community of being an influencer of facilitating communication of understanding and deescalating that covers a reach from parents and family members to community stakeholders and supportive professionals who can encourage and support clients' efforts to change. Interventionists need to be in a local radius of the community in order to best serve, to be current and consistent fixtures within the community and quickly accessible by phone, and more importantly, in person. Culture is personal and relationships are the key to success or failure.

Gang prevention consists of strategies, programs, and community efforts aimed at stopping youth from joining gangs and reducing gang-related violence. It involves a mix of community mobilization, offering educational/employment opportunities, youth and social programs, and supporting families who need support and resources. A visible presence in the community is important in this approach.

So in regards to the RFP's selection, a number of questions arise.

The staff should consider presenting a year-long contract for a service provider who provides Interventionists and Preventionists rather than a Violence Interruptor program to the Council and community.

3/ How was the scoring for the vendors?

There were vendors who were in this field and based locally who submitted bids for this RFP yet were not in the top three with their depth of experience in this work, understanding, and level of trust within the community.

Municipal contract procedures must abide by State law, and the community wonders whether the RFP was written in such a way that favors the selected vendors' focus over the full spectrum of community violence intervention services that are needed in the City.

4/ Do any of the vendors in the top three have web sites?

Did staff or those on the RFP panel review the websites and accessibility of services to see what is clearly offered to the public from the vendors who applied? This is important because the vendor should be accessible to the community and, at a minimum, visible online in the form of a website the city is voting to spend over 2 million taxpayer dollars. We should see the scope of their work, experience and training certificates.

This work is not done in a secret vacuum, and the under-wraps perception has fostered mistrust in many community spaces from the start of the program in January 2021.

5/ In the scoring and criteria, are there points for local hire of a company and a company that is located in Pasadena with leadership and staff accessible to be in the community within a 15 mile radius? Was this clearly reflected in that scoring?

6/ Who were the top three vendors and why? Are they all locally based with experience and community trust? Why is an out of state sole proprietor vendor preferable to established, public-facing vendors whose training is more visible and rates more competitive?

7/ Did the RFP ask about training models that the vendor could provide for their clients in a one year span that individuals can access, especially in deescalation and trauma informed care?

8/ Who were the evaluators of the RFP?

Were there any police or police staff on the RFP panel? If this RFP was written for services inclusive of Violence Interruptors, having police does not bring trust or understanding to the process. The police should have a respectful relationship but not an indistinguishable and intertwined working one that may seem they are in cahoots, and having a member of the police on the panel is not a great start of trust for the vendor chosen.

There is a delicate balance that must be maintained to instill community trust in violence prevention programming, and having police on the panel would reduce that trust as this work, and “non-policing approaches to violence prevention can produce significant benefits without the attendant harms of policing and punishment.”(Source: [John Jay](#), NYC)

Was there inclusion of City staff from Recreation and Parks included on the panel who may be more familiar with the needs of gang-impacted communities and violence prevention?

Would the staff allow the community to provide feedback and take that feedback into consideration?

9/ Can we as a community to consider: to pivot to a new RFP that in the model inclusive of Gang Interventionist and Preventionist could take our community on the journey to real results and life transformations from within our community that becomes more than stopping violence but investing to prevent it at its many entry points in our community. Showing that Pasadena is strategically willing not to keep putting on a band aid to a decades old problem but learn to understand and care, and move to a model that touches to deal deeply with the causes of violence.

To hire a vendor who is only an interruptor would be a disservice to the City. Pasadena, is in need of a program that is an Intervention and Prevention and can also, if in times of crises, be Interruptors to all-around cover the community violence reduction strategies. A three-in-one program that is cost effective using every tax payer dollar wisely, whose administrative and supervisory staff have a physical presence in Pasadena. Having folks on a team that build trust and respect within the community.

Selecting a community violence interventionist preventionist that can foster community trust is intrinsic to the success of this work and our community. Why was a local, community based organization with leaders (credible messengers) available on the ground not selected?

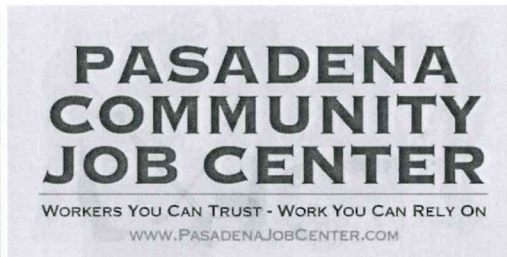
We ask these questions sincerely, as the cost is high in a year of financial struggle for the city and community. We demand answers for an over \$2 million 3 to 5 year program that will cost our community with no measurables or data implemented. Where is the accountability? This could be a program that, inclusive of intervention and prevention and not simply referrals, would invest in the community and lives with no added cost.

We demand this from our elected officials. To reconsider and make a new RFP be done for a one year program that could lead to two years with more community input. We must ensure a program such as this works with transparency, accountability and community trust.

We will see results if we allow this program to grow and develop to a model that other cities replicate for the data and real life testimonies shown in lives and the well-being of our community. Elected officials, is it not worth it, at this moment, to get this right?

Thank you all for your time and consideration in this very important matter for our community.

Sincerely,



RECEIVED

2026 APR 30 AM 8:38

April 29, 2026

CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

Pasadena City Council
100 N Garfield Ave
Pasadena, CA 91101

RE: Contract with Ricky Picken Jr.

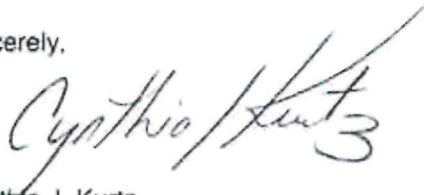
Mayor Gordo and Members of the Pasadena City Council;

I have had the privilege of working with Ricky Pickens and want to show my strong support for allowing him to continue the work he and his team do in Pasadena. Controlling gang violence is not something that comes from a handbook or manual. It requires one on one contacts with people on the street - people you know and who know and trust you. It isn't something that you can easily learn or teach others how to do. You learn when you are on the streets yourself and when you know people in gangs or who are gravitating towards gang life.

Pasadena has had some horrific gang violence in the past and I credit Ricky and his team as well as the Pasadena Police Department working together for reducing the violence and making Pasadena a much safer place.

I hope you will approve his contract and allow this important work to continue.

Sincerely,



Cynthia J. Kurtz
710 S. Arroyo Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91105