

Agenda Report

May 4, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Public Health Department

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH RICKY PICKENS JR. FOR THREE YEARS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$440,201 ANNUALLY WITH TWO OPTIONAL, ONE-YEAR EXTENSIONS, FOR GANG OUTREACH AND VIOLENCE INTERRUPTION SERVICES; AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO INCREASE THE GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS BY \$120,000 FOR FY 2026

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action herein is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of Section 15378(b);
2. Authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement as the result of a competitive selection process specified by Section 4.08.047 of the Pasadena Municipal Code with Ricky Pickens Jr., an individual, to provide gang outreach and violence interruption services for three initial years with an annual average base contract amount of \$440,201 and two optional one-year extensions subject to approval of the City Manager for a total amount not-to-exceed \$2,201,005 if the two, one-year extensions are granted. Competitive bidding is not required pursuant to City Charter Section 1002(F), contracts for professional or unique services; and
3. Amend the Public Health Department FY 2026 Operating Budget by appropriating \$120,000 from the unappropriated General Fund balance to support this engagement.

BACKGROUND:

Between 2019 and 2021, the Pasadena community experienced a rise in gang-related violence leading to a 125% increase in confirmed shootings. To address the increase in violence, the City secured specialized gang outreach and violence interruption services

in January 2021 through a contract with Ricky Pickens Jr. for a team of five violence interrupters to provide community-based mediation and conflict resolution. In the summer of 2022, the Office of the City Manager completed a competitive selection process and City Council awarded Ricky Pickens Jr. a three-year agreement. In August 2022, administration of the contracted services was transitioned to the Pasadena Public Health Department (“Department”), which has provided oversight of the contracted services in the time since. The Department immediately began collecting data to document the team’s activities and has presented quarterly updates to the Public Safety Committee.

In June 2025, the Department launched a competitive selection process and released a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) seeking high quality gang outreach and violence interruption services. The prior three-year agreement with Ricky Pickens Jr. expired at the end of October 2025 before the competitive selection process could be completed. To avoid disruption in gang outreach services, the Department issued a purchase order to Ricky Pickens Jr. to provide temporary services until the RFP process is completed.

The Department held a non-mandatory pre-proposal meeting attended by four individuals on June 30, 2025. A total of 5,253 prospective vendors were notified of the RFP opportunity in OpenGov. In addition, notice of the RFP was emailed to 51 additional individuals representing nonprofits, service providers, and independent contractors participating in the California Violence Intervention Program (CalVIP) Consortium facilitated by Department staff.

A total of 29 vendors downloaded the RFP and seven responsive proposals were received by the RFP deadline. The Department fielded an evaluation panel consisting of a Division Manager from the Public Health Department, a Commander from the Police Department, and a representative from the Office of the City Manager who scored proposals using the criteria set forth in the RFP (Attachment A). Based on the scoring, staff recommends entering into an agreement with the top scoring proposal from Ricky Pickens Jr. and his team of five gang outreach and violence interrupters.

Staff recommends authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Ricky Pickens Jr. for a three-year base term and two one-year optional extensions at the discretion of the City Manager through March 31, 2031, contingent upon funding availability and demonstrated program need.

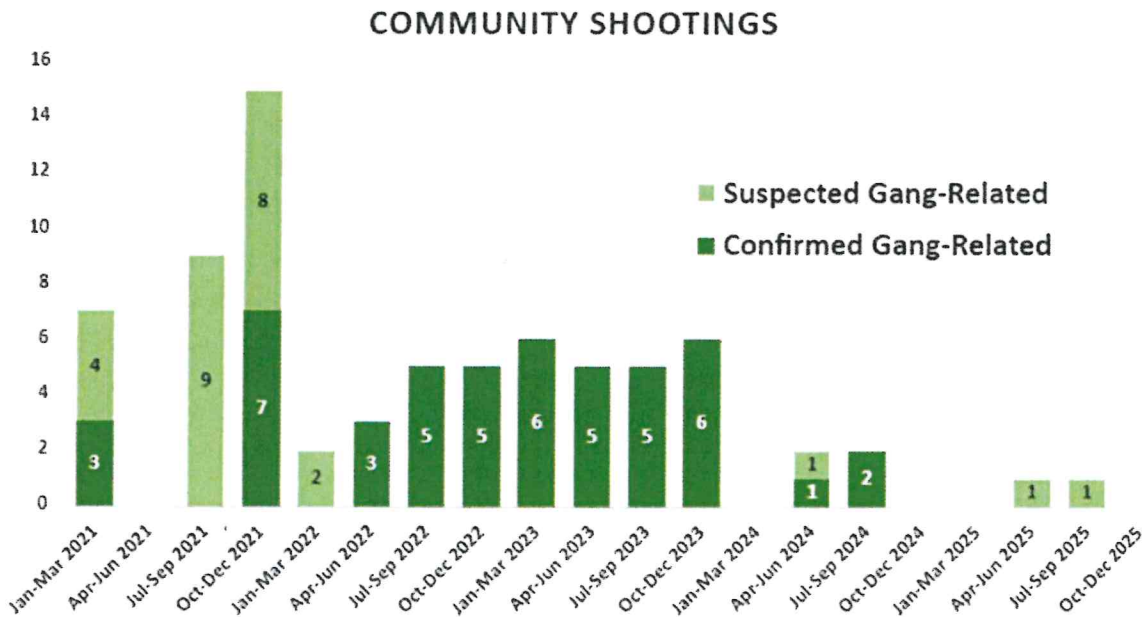
If approved, Mr. Pickens will serve as the Team Leader, supported by five gang outreach and violence interrupters. The team will be responsible for de-escalating tensions after gang-related incidents, engaging those most likely to be the victims and perpetrators of violence, collaborating with community partners to reduce the likelihood of retaliation, and referring community members to supportive services. Key responsibilities will include:

- **Preventing and Interrupting Violence:** Identifying potential conflicts, de-escalating tensions, and mediating disputes before they result in violence.

- **Conducting Targeted Outreach:** Engaging high-risk youth and individuals affiliated with gangs in Pasadena and surrounding areas through consistent, relationship-based contact.
- **Resource Navigation:** Connecting participants to supportive services such as employment and career pathways, educational and GED programs, mental health and trauma recovery services, substance use support, and housing navigation.
- **Community Integration:** Building relationships with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to foster safer, more cohesive neighborhoods.

Mr. Pickens brings more than 30 years of experience in the design and implementation of gang prevention, intervention, and outreach initiatives. His work includes direct engagement with individuals and families impacted by gang-related violence. Mr. Pickens is a certified trainer in evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies and has led trainings and workshops for hundreds of community leaders.

Since January 2021, Mr. Pickens and his team have provided violence prevention and intervention services to the City of Pasadena. During this time, his team has consistently delivered community-centered, trauma-responsive programming that aligns with the City’s public safety and health goals. Over the course of their prior engagement, Mr. Pickens and his team have helped the City achieve exceptional results including a reduction in confirmed and suspected gang shootings from a high of 31 in Calendar Year 2021 to two in Calendar Year 2025.



Source: Pasadena Police Department (2026)

In January 2026, the City experienced its first gang homicide since October 2023. Mr. Pickens and his team helped prevent retaliatory acts after the shooting, demonstrating the value of the recommended services immediately following traumatic incidents that have the potential to spark deep emotions.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed contracts align with the City Council's strategic plan goal to ensure public safety.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The action proposed herein is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 21065 of CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378. CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2) states that an activity is not subject to CEQA if "The activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment." The proposed action consists of a contract award for gang outreach and violence intervention services. No direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment would result. Under this definition, the proposed activity is not a CEQA "Project" and is, therefore, also not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City appropriates \$300,000 annually from the General Fund for gang intervention services. If approved, the cost of services will reach approximately \$420,000. Staff is recommending that the City Council approve the increase of \$120,000 appropriations from the General Fund for FY 2026 and allow for the budget allocation for future years. Ongoing, the contract includes a 2.5% cost of living adjustment in years two and three of the agreement; and a 2% cost of living adjustment in each optional one-year extension. The estimated total not to exceed for the contract is \$2,201,005.

	Year 1	Year 2 (2.5%)	Year 3 (2.5%)	Year 4 (2%) Optional Subject to Approval of City Manager	Year 5 (2%) Optional Subject to Approval of City Manager
Total	\$ 420,012	\$ 430,512	\$ 441,275	\$ 450,101	\$ 459,103

Respectfully submitted,

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