Personal Services Contracts (PSCs)

Civil Service Commission (Commission) Authority
Consistent with its Charter authority to oversee the merit system, the Commission sets policy on the review of proposed Personal Services Contracts (PSCs)—that policy being that where there is a merit system, services provided to the public are to be performed by public employees hired through the City’s merit system. Based on the criteria specified in its policy, the Commission determines if the scope of service is appropriate for contracting out under a PSC.

PSCs include agreements for services paid by the City and County of San Francisco with individuals, companies, corporations, non-profit organizations, and other public agencies. It is not the Commission’s role to determine positions where work or services can be performed by contract at a lesser cost than similar work performed by City and County employees; by Charter definition (10.104-15), this function, often called “Prop J” contracting, is performed by the Controller and the Board of Supervisors.

Revised Policy
The Commission most recently updated its longstanding policies and procedures (originally adopted in 1996) governing PSC requests for approval on May 6, 2013, after carefully considering stakeholder input during its public meetings. The Commission’s revised policy became effective on October 25, 2013 with the launch of the City’s PSC database (the policy is available on the Commission’s website at www.sfgov.org/Civil_Service).

Role of the Department of Human Resources (DHR)
DHR reviews all departmental requests for PSCs and modifications to previously approved PSCs, to determine if they comply with the Commission’s policies. Under the Commission’s policy, DHR is responsible for establishing the procedures for PSC submissions. DHR’s updated PSC submission guidelines (also issued on October 25, 2013) are attached to the Commission’s policy for reference; though they may be updated by DHR as needed.

Once it has completed its review, DHR will then post and forward to the Commission requests for PSCs in excess of $100,000 (referred to as “Regular PSCs”) and those requests for PSC modifications that require Commission approval pursuant to the Commission’s policy. Requests for PSCs of $100,000 or less do not require Commission approval; these “Expedited PSCs” are reviewed and approved by DHR.

DHR is also responsible for reporting information regarding contract awards to the Commission by August 1st each year.

Requests for PSC Approval
All requests for PSC approval must be submitted through the Citywide PSC Database.

Questions:
For questions regarding the procedures for submitting a request for PSC approval, contact the Department of Human Resources at (415) 557-4800.

For questions regarding the Civil Service Commission’s policy on PSCs, you may contact Commission staff at (415) 252-3247.

The information provided in this Adviser is for information purposes only and does not constitute nor intend to provide legal advice.

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