

## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Resolution authorizing execution of an agreement with Stein, Lotzkar and Starr, P.S., Inc., to provide public defense services for the period January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2030, in the amount of approximately \$8 million plus all applicable taxes for cases, plus other sums as provided for therein, including appeals and court costs.

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*City Manager's Office*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>ACTION</b>	This Resolution authorizes the execution of a four-year contract agreement for public defense services with Stein, Lotzkar and Staff, P.S., Inc.
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## RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Resolution No. 10584

## BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The city provides public defense services to indigent defendants charged with misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors arising under Bellevue City ordinances through contracts with qualified private counsel. The city entered a contract with Stein, Lotzkar, and Starr, P.S., Inc. (SLS) to provide these services for a four-year period starting on January 1, 2018, with the option to renew for an additional four-year term and was renewed. The current contract for public defense services expired at the end of 2025.

The agreement was developed in response to Request for Proposals (RFP) 25082 – Public Defender Services. The RFP identified evaluation criteria, including cost and the capability, expertise, and responsiveness of proposers. Council approval of this agreement will allow the city to maintain continuity of constitutionally required services while it implements updated statewide indigent defense caseload standards during the contract term. The attached Agreement is with SLS to provide representation from appointment through trial and sentencing, including review hearings and appeals to the King County Superior Court.

## POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

### Policy Impact

This contract is a continuation of an existing service. Under state and federal law, a person facing criminal prosecution is entitled to be represented by counsel, and the city is responsible for ensuring that defendants have access to adequate legal counsel. Without this service, the city would violate RCW 10.101.005, which requires effective legal representation be provided to indigent people.

## **Fiscal Impact**

This action will obligate the City to a total not to exceed amount of approximately \$8 million, plus all applicable taxes and other sums as provided for therein, including appeals and court costs, for the period January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2030. Contract expenditures are planned to be funded within the city's adopted 2025–2026 operating budgets for the first year of the contract, with funding for future years to be requested through subsequent budget processes.

The proposed compensation structure is consistent with the city's existing public defense contract and aligns with the contractor's requested framework. However, this structure is based on a per-case model that predates the Washington State Supreme Court's adoption of new indigent defense standards in 2025, including case credit limitations, which the city will have ten years to fully implement.

At this time, the proposed contract does not fully account for the potential operational or fiscal impacts associated with implementation of the new caseload standards. City staff are continuing to evaluate those impacts, including effects on caseload capacity, staffing requirements, and overall costs. Approval of this item allows the city to maintain continuity of public defense services while staff continues its analysis of the new standards and develops recommendations for future contract modifications, if necessary, to ensure compliance and fiscal sustainability.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Adopt the Resolution authorizing execution of an agreement with Stein, Lotzkar and Starr, P.S., Inc., to provide public defense services for the period January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2030, in the amount of approximately \$8 million plus all applicable taxes for cases, plus other sums as provided for therein, including appeals and court costs.
2. Do not adopt the Resolution and provide alternative direction to staff.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Proposed Resolution No. 10584

## **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

Contract for Public Defense Services