



**San Diego County**  
**Local Agency Formation Commission**  
 Regional Service Planning | Subdivision of the State of California

**7c**

**AGENDA REPORT**  
 Business | Action

October 3, 2022

**TO:** Commissioners

**FROM:** Keene Simonds, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT: Authorization to Enter into an Agreement for Advisory Human Resources Support with Regional Government Services Authority**

**SUMMARY**

The San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will consider authorization to enter a two-year agreement with Regional Government Services Authority (“RGS”) to provide advisory human resources support to the Executive Officer. The agreement would augment the Commission’s existing contract with the County of San Diego for payroll and benefit administrative services to include other human resource functions as needed. Expected uses include advising on employee relations and assisting in an update to the Commission’s personnel policies. The proposed agreement includes a not-to-exceed amount of \$100,000 with budgeted funds covering expenses. Approval recommended.

**BACKGROUND**

**Human Resources Support & Related Personnel Policies**

San Diego LAFCO currently receives human resources support services in the form of payroll and benefit administration from the County of San Diego. These support services tie back to LAFCO’s initial organization in 1963 as a County function and subsequently transitioned into contract form in conjunction with the Commission becoming independent in 1995. The current agreement with the County covering – and among other functions – payroll and

<p><b>Administration</b>          Keene Simonds, Executive Officer          2550 Fifth Avenue, Suite 725          San Diego, California 92103-6624          T 619.321.3380          www.sdlafco.org          lafco@sdcountry.ca.gov</p>	<p><b>Chair Jim Desmond</b>          County of San Diego</p> <p><b>Joel Anderson</b>          County of San Diego</p> <p><b>Nora Vargas, Alt.</b>          County of San Diego</p>	<p><b>Vice Chair Paul McNamara</b>          City of Escondido</p> <p><b>Mary Casillas Salas</b>          City of Chula Vista</p> <p><b>Kristi Becker, Alt.</b>          City of Solana Beach</p>	<p><b>Chris Cate</b>          City of San Diego</p> <p><b>Marni von Wilpert, Alt.</b>          City of San Diego</p>	<p><b>Jo MacKenzie</b>          Vista Irrigation</p> <p><b>Barry Willis</b>          Alpine Fire Protection</p> <p><b>David A. Drake, Alt.</b>          Rincon del Diablo</p>	<p><b>Andy Vanderlaan</b>          General Public</p> <p><b>Harry Mathis, Alt.</b>          General Public</p>
---	--	--	--	---	--

benefit administration was approved in June 2020. All other human resource functions at LAFCO are administered by the Executive Officer consistent with adopted personnel policies – which and markedly – generally reference back to following County procedures with prominent examples including recruitment, training, and disciplinary actions.

## DISCUSSION

This item is for San Diego LAFCO to consider authorizing an agreement with RGS for advisory human resources support for a two-year period at a not-to-exceed amount of \$100,000. The agreement tracks with the Executive Officer identifying an increasing need for additional support services that are no longer available to LAFCO through the County of San Diego. A review of available options paired with existing familiarity with RGS prompted the Executive Officer to contact RGS and discuss LAFCO needs now and going forward. These discussions are reflected in the scope of work included in the RGS engagement letter and premised on providing LAFCO advisory human resources services as needed. LAFCO would be assigned lead advisor with an hourly billing rate between \$130-200. Specific advisory support service categories to be covered in the agreement include all of the following:

- Recruitment and Onboarding Services
- Classification and Compensation Reviews
- HR Record Keeping
- Benefits Design and Communication
- Performance Management
- Personnel Policy and Procedures Review
- Employee Relations
- Risk Management

Additional information regarding RGS' advisory functions are included in the engagement letter to the Commission provided as Attachment One.

## ANALYSIS

Proceeding with an agreement with RGS addresses an existing need sourced to San Diego LAFCO becoming independent of the County of San Diego in 1995 and the gradual decrease in human resource support thereafter and now limited to payroll and benefits administration.<sup>1</sup> Most notably, the proposed agreement with RGS would include advising on employee relations to help ensure LAFCO remains in compliance with all related requirements and following best practices for the cumulative benefit of recruiting and retaining quality employees while limiting liabilities. An update to the Commission's adopted policies is also needed and – among other virtues – scale our personnel procedures to reflect the employer-employee needs of a relatively small government agency.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Commission authorizes the Executive Officer to enter into agreements for professional services up to a monetary value per vendor/contract of \$125,000. The Executive Officer is bringing forward the agreement with RGS to the Commission given the expectation of future renewals that will surpass the \$125,000 limitation.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended San Diego LAFCO authorize the Executive Officer to enter into an agreement with RGS for advisory human resources support consistent with the scope of work provided as Attachment One. This recommendation is consistent with Alternative One outlined in the proceeding section.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION

The following alternative actions are available to San Diego LAFCO and can be accomplished with a single-motion:

Alternative One (recommended):

Authorize the Executive Officer to enter into an agreement with RGS for advisory human resources support consistent with the terms and scope of work provided as part of Attachment One subject to review and approval by Commission Counsel.

Alternative Two:

Continue consideration of the item to a future meeting and provide direction to staff for additional information as needed.

Alternative Three:

Take no action.

## PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERATION

This item has been placed on San Diego LAFCO's agenda for action as part of the business calendar. The following procedures are recommended in the consideration of this item:

- 1) Receive verbal presentation from staff unless waived.
- 2) Commission discussion.
- 3) Consideration of the staff recommendation.

Respectfully,



Keene Simonds  
Executive Officer

Attachment:

- 1) RGS Engagement Letter with Scope of Work

**Blank for Photocopying**

September 21, 2022

Via email to keene.simonds@sdcounty.ca.gov

Keene Simonds, Executive Officer  
San Diego LAFCO  
2550 Fifth Avenue #725  
San Diego, CA 92103

**RE: HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES**

Dear Mr. Simonds:

Thank you for giving Regional Government Services (RGS) the opportunity to provide this proposal for Human Resources (HR) services to San Diego LAFCO (SDLAFCO). RGS is uniquely qualified to provide these services based on our specific and substantial expertise and experience working with public agencies throughout California and the flexible and scalable services provided by our team. Regional Government Services is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) established in 2002 to serve the needs of cities, counties, special districts and other governmental entities throughout California. We provide a ready source of project and consulting services to meet the needs of our partner agencies in a broad range of administrative and support service areas. RGS has a proven track record working with local government agencies to successfully deliver effective HR management systems and administration in organizations which are similar in terms of demographics, size and needs as SDLAFCO.

I have attached a proposal and draft Scope of Service describing our HR services, and current hourly rates. SDLAFCO has requested a two-year contract not to exceed \$100,000. RGS bills only for actually hours worked.

I look forward to further discussion with you; and to identifying a more prioritized scope of HR services that we may provide to SDLAFCO. If you have any questions regarding this proposal, please feel free to contact me at (650) 587-7303 or via e-mail at [bbennett@rgs.ca.gov](mailto:bbennett@rgs.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Bobbi Bennett*

Bobbi Bennett, Human Resources Services Director  
**REGIONAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

## ABOUT REGIONAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### Organizational Profile

Regional Government Services (RGS) is a joint-powers authority (JPA) established in 2002 to provide organizational services to other California public agencies. We have over 100 employees throughout California serving more than 150 cities, special districts, counties, other JPAs and special consortiums of government agencies. RGS provides consulting services in the areas of human resources and financial management, organizational development, community engagement, strategic planning, and more specifically to public agencies.

RGS is a virtual government agency, and has developed a unique network of geographically distributed Advisors who work both onsite at partner agency offices, and through various remote access technologies to deliver services to partner agencies, reducing overhead and expanding our ability to provide high-quality services throughout the state. RGS Advisors form ad hoc teams to provide services and project delivery, and do not operate in a traditional organizational hierarchy.

Our Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, Richard Averett, has worked with the Board of Directors since the JPA's inception to implement the Authority's strategic plan. Sophia Selivanoff, Deputy Executive Director, joined RGS in 2009 and currently directs and manages all RGS services provided to partner agencies, develops new business and partner relationships, and supervises all client services team members throughout RGS. Bobbi Bennett, Human Resources Services Director, who has worked with RGS since 2015, supervises all human resources team members throughout the Authority.

At RGS, we believe in striving to be a partner to the agencies we serve, not simply a consultant or contractor. We believe in relationships that are lasting and mutually respectful and beneficial. In order to establish a mutually respectful relationship as well as a productive one, RGS has adopted the following values and business methods.

### Our Values

- **Expert Services:** RGS serves exclusively public sector agencies with its team of public sector experts.
- **Innovation:** RGS encourages and develops innovative and sustainable services to help each agency meet its challenges through new modes of service provision.
- **Customer Driven:** RGS customizes solutions to achieve the right level and right kind of service at the right time for each agency's unique organizational needs.
- **Perseverance:** Sometimes the best solutions are not immediately apparent. RGS listens, works with you, and sticks with it until a good fit with your needs is found.
- **Open Source Sharing:** RGS tracks emerging best practices and shares them, our clients and our advisors learn openly from each other's hard-won experience.

- **Commitment:** Government agencies are the public’s sole provider for many services, public trust is earned and must be used wisely. Each agency should and will know how RGS sets its rates. RGS’ pledge to you is that we will act with honesty, openness, and full transparency.

## PROPOSED HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES

### Overview of Human Resources Consulting Capability

RGS Advisors have extensive human resources experience in public agencies in California, and provide a variety of HR consulting services. In addition to a core team of experienced HR generalists with outstanding communication, interpersonal, analysis and problem-solving skills, we have assembled a staff of subject-matter experts to offer “best practices” advice and HR deliverables in areas of: recruitment, selection methods, and employee onboarding; job analysis, work classification and organizational structures; design and administration of pay and benefit models and systems; performance management, competency building and evaluative feedback; disability and medical leave management; policy and procedure development and implementation; employee dispute resolution; administration of discipline; and labor relations.

RGS also offers expert resources in the allied fields of occupational safety and health, risk management, and organizational development to supplement core HR services; as well as delivering a supervisory skill building training program designed to align with public sector employment practices.

### Human Resources Services

RGS consulting staff anticipate delivering comprehensive as needed generalist HR consultation and administration services. The areas of services listed below can be included within an ongoing HR service model based on SDLAFCO needs. In addition, more specifically-scoped HR services and projects not listed may also be added at SDLAFCO’s request or RGS’ recommendation.

- **Recruitment and Selection/Employment Administration:** Develop and administer effective and compliant recruitment and selection/skills-testing processes (written tests, skills test, interviews, etc. as needed), pre-employment and hiring practices (post offer/pre-employment background checks and physical exams), and on-boarding of new staff.
- **Classification and Compensation Administration:** Develop classification and compensation policies and models, review and update job descriptions, establish study protocols and compensation evaluation guidelines; perform analytic classification studies and conduct compensation surveys; and ensure alignment with state and federal laws related to compensation including pay equity, minimum wages and compliance with Fair Labor Standards Act requirements.
- **Payroll Review:** Review SDLAFCO’s payroll processes and practices to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, memorandums of understanding, and best practices in payroll administration.

- **Benefit Administration Services:** Review and can assist with pay changes and benefit forms, provide related education and information to employees and supervisors; address problems with benefit providers and systems. This may also include assisting employees with retirement processing and with life or disability insurance claims. RGS can assist to resolve day-to-day issues that occur in the interpretation and application of complex regulations and systems, particularly in the following areas:
  - **Medical Leave Administration:** Identifying pay and benefit requirements and formulating appropriate communications, ensuring legal compliance and recordkeeping, monitoring eligibility, managing modified work issues, and following up as needed with return to work or end of employment planning.
  - **COBRA Benefits:** Identifying requirements and formulating appropriate communications, ensuring legal compliance and recordkeeping, monitoring eligibility, enrolling and ending services.
  - **ADA Administration:** Identifying a schedule for reviewing and updating essential functions and physical demands contained in job descriptions; serving as the interactive process coordinator; and ensuring appropriate communications and records are made regarding agreed-upon temporary or permanent accommodations.
- **HR Recordkeeping:** Develop appropriate employment event documentation templates, and recordkeeping systems and standards as needed.
- **Benefits Design and Communication:** Analyze benefit policies, plans and offerings and their usage and functionality, and communicate information to employees about benefit offerings; RGS will also determine best practices and benefit integration strategies to maximize benefits while achieving cost containment. As needed, RGS can provide strategic guidance in the development of new or enhanced benefit offerings; and carry out effective implementation of selected benefits.
- **Performance Management:** Develop performance and behavioral expectations and standards and an evaluation system to support Agency standards. As needed, RGS can provide performance management training and coaching to supervisors, facilitate employer-employee communication, and address issues that impact performance. RGS can also support formal performance corrections by drafting and administering performance improvement plans and disciplinary documents.
- **Personnel Policy and Procedures Development:** Update or develop new policies and procedures consistent with current legal standards and organizational objectives; and develop implementation and training plans for required changes.
- **Employee Relations Administration:** Review, interpret, and apply various provisions of policies, procedures, employment agreements and compensation resolutions; provide related education and information to employees and supervisors; write clarifying language and obtain agreement to same when needed. RGS can advise managers on the resolution of complaints

and disputes, conduct research and prepare documents to support effective problem-solving, and facilitate formal and informal communications between employees and/or management to achieve agreements that result in a productive and positive workplace.

- **Training:** Develop organizational training plans, and can handle administration of training on behalf of the organization. RGS can provide legally required training (sexual harassment prevention, etc.) as well as training in performance management, supervisory roles, problem-solving, communication skills, and more as needs are identified and/or training is requested.
- **Selected Employment-Related Risk Management Functions:** RGS can oversee or assist with workers' compensation third-party (TPA) claims management, ensure compliance with HIPAA and other medical privacy laws; and manage administrative leave and fitness for duty situations. RGS may also develop, deliver, and provide training and programs for a variety of employee health, wellness and safety issues upon request.
- **Strategic Human Resources Planning:** Assess current and long-range organizational needs and priorities and review assigned functions and roles with associated competencies for the purpose of developing plans and timelines to improve organizational capacity and skills and to enhance organizational and administrative structures.

RGS staff prides itself on its ability to work collaboratively with appropriate stakeholders to deliver accurate, professional products and services within reasonable timelines, meet deadlines, and provide clear, honest, and effective communications, all of which help to promote good relations throughout our partnership. RGS Advisors will be reasonably available to perform services during the normal work week and within the agreed upon schedule.

#### **Optional: Human Resources Needs Assessment and Workplan**

RGS suggest to initiate a new HR services partnership with an assessment of the organization's human resources needs. This assessment results in the development of a prioritized workplan of actions and projects to ensure compliance with mandated employment regulations and achieve an effective human resources administrative system. As agreed with SDLAFCO, RGS will conduct a Human Resources Assessment during the first three months of providing HR services.

To conduct this assessment, a team of RGS HR Advisors will review written policies and procedures and other relevant documents and records to evaluate SDLAFCO's alignment with a range of requirements and best practices, and to acquire an understanding of the competence and functionality of SDLAFCO's human resources management structure and systems. In addition, RGS will interview staff to develop an understanding of the communication channels, working relationships and cultural dynamics that affect the delivery of SDLAFCO's HR services.

## **PROJECT TEAM APPROACH AND QUALIFICATIONS**

RGS is a virtual government agency, and has developed a unique network of geographically distributed Advisors who work both through various remote access technologies and, when needed, onsite to deliver services to partner agencies, reducing overhead and expanding our ability to provide high-quality services throughout the state.

RGS delivers ongoing HR Management Services through a team of Advisors. For SDLAFCO, the core team will consist of a Lead Advisor and journey-level HR Advisors who will carry out activities to develop HR systems, resolve HR issues, and ensure timely delivery of HR functions. The Lead Advisor will serve as SDLAFCO's primary service provider and point of contact, and will identify, prioritize, and resolve or recommend resolution actions regarding employment-related issues. Together this core team will provide continuity of services and ensure that identified deliverables are provided.

At times, it may be of value to have a RGS HR Advisor be onsite. RGS presently has a well-qualified journey-level Advisors who are regionally available (within driving distance). While not all members of the assigned team will be in geographical proximity to SDLAFCO's offices, RGS will make every effort to ensure that travel costs are minimized through effective remote service delivery and the assignment of at least one journey-level team member within SDLAFCO's geographical region.

## **SIMILAR ENGAGEMENTS AND REFERENCES**

RGS understands and remains current on all requirements for effective public agencies HR functions. RGS presently serves as a full-service HR Department for a number of California public agencies, and has provided this service for over approximately 10 years. Additionally, RGS serves as the comprehensive HR management provider with as-needed services for multiple public agencies. RGS also provides various HR supplemental and project support services to dozens of other agencies throughout California.

References may be provided upon request.

## **SERVICE COST/BILL RATES**

RGS provides services on an hourly basis, plus direct costs. Work is performed as agreed, and subsequently billed each month based on hours actually worked. SDLAFCO has identified a two year contract with a not to exceed of \$100,000.

Bill rates are as follows:

Title	Hourly Rate
Chief Operating Officer	\$140 to \$230
Deputy Chief Operating Officer	\$135 to \$205
Senior/Lead Advisor	\$130 to \$200
Advisor	\$120 to \$170
Project Advisor	\$110 to \$130
Project Coordinator	\$90 to \$125
Technical Specialist	\$80 to \$120

RGS Advisors are skilled at prioritizing projects and working within the budget of partner agencies. While it is anticipated that expenses for travel, advertising, training or testing materials, and other direct external costs will be minimal, such expenses are not included in hourly rates, and will be invoiced to SDLAFCO at cost with no markup. Mileage for site visits will be calculated/invoiced using the current IRS rate.

## Scope of Services - *DRAFT*

Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement, RGS shall assign RGS employee(s) to serve as Advisors to the San Diego LAFCO, hereafter “Agency”, which may require performing any or all of the functions described below:

1. Provide as needed human resources consulting services to the Agency. Consulting services include implementation of work on identified priority projects, and also include the following activities as needed:
  - 1.1. Provide professional advice regarding best practice to facilitate the effective and compliant administration of the Agency’s human resources related policies and practices, and payroll practices.
  - 1.2. Provide professional guidance and assistance to the Agency staff in the areas of performance management, training development, compensation, and benefits.
  - 1.3. Development and coordination of executive and non-executive level recruitments.
  - 1.4. Review payroll processes and practices to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and best practices.
  - 1.5. Benefit review and analyze of administration; assist with benefit administration.
  - 1.6. Analyze a variety of information and recommend appropriate management action; provide written documentation of analysis and recommendations as needed.
  - 1.7. Draft specific documentation relevant to resolving a range of human resources issues; coach managers as needed on effective actions and communications to achieve resolution; coach managers on conducting sensitive personnel conversations.
  - 1.8. Draft required communications, including administrative and human resources policies, procedures, forms and templates as needed to develop an effective and compliant system of human resources management practices and transactions.
  - 1.9. Review of classification descriptions and FLSA designation and recommend updates as needed.
  - 1.10. Conduct salary surveys of comparable agencies.
  - 1.11. Coordinate and assist with leave management, including but not limited to workers’ compensation, medical leaves, and reasonable accommodation.
  - 1.12. Update HR systems documentation for current best practices.
2. Be reasonably available to perform the services during the normal work week. Meet as often as necessary for the purpose of consulting about the scope of work performed with the appropriate Agency project manager and with the RGS Lead Advisor or Advisors.
3. RGS will maintain open communication lines with Agency staff through written documentation, video conference calls, phone, and e-mail.
4. The Agency will only be invoiced for the actual hours worked. The work will be done remotely or onsite. RGS Advisors may only work onsite with the authority of the RGS Human

---

Resources Services Director.

5. Projects and activities may be modified on request of the Agency.
6. The RGS team assigned will be led by a Lead Advisor, who will both perform work and direct projects to other RGS staff as needed. RGS staff, with equal or lower bill rates, will be assigned to projects or tasks at Lead Advisor's discretion.

**Blank for Photocopying**