



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
June 9, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager  
Submitted by: David Sprague, Fire Chief  
Subject: Contract: Medical Priority Consultants, Inc dba Priority Dispatch

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a waiver of competition based on a Sole and Single Source justification and execute a contract with Medical Priority Consultants, Inc., doing business as Priority Dispatch, for the purchase, implementation, and maintenance of the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) ProQA Priority Dispatch System software for Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), Fire Priority Dispatch System (FPDS), and Police Priority Dispatch System (PPDS), including training, quality assurance tools, and ongoing software maintenance, in an amount not to exceed \$942,533 for a five-year base term beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2031 with two, two-year extension options not to exceed a total of \$793,765 for the four extension years, and for a total contract amount not to exceed of \$1,736,298 over nine years.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

All funds required to pay for this contract will be paid for by the Fire and Police Departments. Funding sources may include but are not limited to Fire General Fund, Measure FF (Fire & Emergency Services, 2020), and Police General Fund.

The five-year base term is a fixed price, inclusive of implementation. Each option year is escalated by five percent (5%). The total contract, inclusive of all extension years, a fifteen percent (15%) contingency, and a seven percent (7%) per year out-year cost uncertainty factor shall not exceed \$1,736,298.

Description	Total
Five Year Base Term	\$819,594
15% Contingency	\$122,939
Five Year Base Sub-Total	\$942,533
Two Year Extension #1	\$741,836
Two Year Extension #2	
7% per year for out-year uncertainty factor	\$51,929
Four Year Extension Sub-Total	\$793,765
<b>Total (Nine Years)</b>	<b>\$1,736,298</b>

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Berkeley’s emergency communications center needs a standardized way to process police and fire calls so dispatchers can quickly determine the appropriate response, capture key information, and provide consistent support to field units and callers. Manual call handling can lead to differences in how calls are screened and prioritized, especially during stressful incidents or high-volume periods.

This work is part of Berkeley’s broader dispatch modernization effort, which was assigned to the Fire Department and began during the Reimagining Public Safety initiative. This effort was further informed by recommendations from two dispatch consultant teams, Federal Engineering and Mission Critical Partners. Since 2020, the Fire Department has been advancing this effort using Measure FF (Fire and Emergency Services, 2020) funds.

Priority Dispatch’s Fire Priority Dispatch System (FPDS) and Police Priority Dispatch System (PPDS) systems walk dispatchers through a consistent sequence of questions and response steps so they can gather the most important scene details, identify the right response level, and relay accurate information to first responders in real time.

Berkeley’s Communications Center currently handles approximately 180,000 calls annually. Without standardized fire and police dispatch protocols, call-takers rely on

their individual judgment and experience to prioritize incidents, determine appropriate response levels, and provide instructions to callers. This variability creates:

- Inconsistent response assignments based on dispatcher interpretation
- Over-deployment or under-deployment of emergency resources
- Missed opportunities to provide life-saving pre-arrival instructions
- Little to no ability to perform quality assurance that drives meaningful improvements to initial and ongoing training
- Increased liability exposure from unstandardized dispatch practices

Implementing protocol-based dispatching advances several Strategic Plan goals:

- provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities.
- create a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city.
- be a customer-focused organization that provides excellent, timely, easily-accessible service and information to the community.
- attract and retain a talented and diverse City government workforce.

### BACKGROUND

A structured dispatch protocol improves consistency, reduce missed information, and supports more efficient use of fire and police resources. In practice, it gives dispatchers a validated workflow that reduces improvisation under pressure, strengthens the quality of the first response, and reduces liability for the individual dispatcher and the city.

Implementation of protocols will:

- Enhance and streamline call processing by automatically providing, in order, only those questions and instructions that are appropriate to the specific call circumstances, and by automatically skipping other questions and instructions that do not apply. This allows call takers to focus their attention on providing quality service.
- Help maintain consistently high levels of service by reducing human error and improving call-taker compliance with industry best practices and accreditation standards
- Improve resource management during normal operations and large-scale emergency events through call prioritization
- Increase emergency call-taking and dispatching efficiencies, resulting in more effective and appropriate utilization of resources and reduced risk of liability to the center and the City
- Increase first responder safety by collecting relevant information (i.e., nature of

each call, times, actions taken, changing conditions, etc) and creating a complete historical record of each call.

- Enhanced dispatcher training and performance consistency with quality assurance features and data reporting capabilities
- Guaranteed improved training academy and decreased attrition rates, thus improving the police department's ability to increase and maintain staffing

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

This administrative action to purchase dispatch software has no direct environmental or climate impacts. The project supports efficient deployment of emergency resources, which may indirectly reduce unnecessary vehicle responses and emissions.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Per Section 11 of the City's Purchasing Manual this is both a Sole Source and a Single Source request.

#### **Sole Source Justification (Only One True Provider)**

The Alameda County Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) mandates use of medical priority dispatching the County. As the City moves forward with implementing protocol-based dispatcher software, selecting one that will allow future adoption of the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) module to comply with local mandates is pragmatic and cost-effective. As such, the City requires a 911 dispatch triage scripting solution that produces MPDS determinant codes and includes standardized caller interrogation protocols, pre-arrival instructions, and integrated quality assurance. MPDS and the associated International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) standards are proprietary and delivered exclusively through Priority Dispatch Corp via its ProQA/AQUA software platform. Priority Dispatch is the sole source provider of software that meets IAED standards and produces MPDS determinant codes. Based on market research, no other vendor can provide a compliant solution; therefore, only one true provider exists to meet the City's operational and regulatory requirements.

On October 26, 2021, the City Council approved a contract with Federal Engineering, Inc. through a competitively procured professional services contract to conduct a comprehensive Dispatch Needs Assessment for the Berkeley Emergency Communications Center. Federal Engineering's analysis, presented to the Public Safety Policy Committee and subsequently to the full City Council on May 15, 2023, recommended implementation of a standardized, scripted emergency medical and fire dispatch protocol system as an essential step to modernize call-taking, improve pre-arrival instructions, and align the City's practices with national standards. Specifically, from page 79 of Federal Engineering's final report: *"In Alameda County, agencies are required to have all medical calls processed using the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) protocol."*

*While Federal Engineering is vendor neutral and does not specifically recommend any one vendor for agency solutions, in this instance we do recommend that IAED EMD protocol be implemented in the Emergency Communications Center (ECC), so that BFD maintain compliance with [future] EMD call triage and dispatch and continue to receive its ALS funding.”*

Separately, on October 15, 2024, the City Council approved an agreement with Mission Critical Partners, LLC by piggybacking on the State of California’s CMAS Contract No. 3-13-70-3020A, a competitively bid cooperative purchasing vehicle that satisfies the City’s procurement requirements and provides cost-effective access to specialized emergency communications consulting services. Mission Critical Partners’ subsequent work for the City has independently confirmed the need to implement a scripted protocol system of the type offered by Priority Dispatch to achieve the goals identified in the Reimagining Public Safety initiative and the Dispatch Needs Assessment.

Together, the consistent recommendations of two independent, competitively procured consulting firms, the regional requirement for MPDS-compliant 911 dispatching, and the fact that only Priority Dispatch’s ProQA/AQUA platform can generate IAED-standard MPDS determinant codes with the required scripting, instructions, and quality assurance support treating ProQA as a sole-source solution for Berkeley’s priority dispatch implementation.

### **Single Source Justification (Multiple Providers Not Amenable to Competition)**

While multiple vendors exist in the broader dispatch software market, alternative solutions do not meet the City’s requirements for regulatory compliance, and regional interoperability. MPDS/IAED protocols are widely adopted as the industry standard, used in approximately 4,000 911 dispatch centers nationwide, including about 85% of the most populous cities and counties in the US use at least one module (MPDS, FPDS, or PPDS). Fire and EMS dispatch centers throughout the region and throughout the State utilize software from Priority Dispatch ensuring standardized determinant coding, coordinated mutual aid, and aligned clinical protocols. These include Alameda County Regional Emergency Communications Center, Alpha One Ambulance, American Ambulance (Fresno), Amador County Sheriff’s Office, American Medical Response (AMR) Monterey County, AMR of Sacramento, AMR of San Diego, Amwest Ambulance, Barstow Police Department, CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department, CAL FIRE Camino Dispatch, CAL FIRE Humboldt Del Norte Fortuna, CAL FIRE Mariposa, CAL FIRE Monte Vista San Diego (El Cajon), CAL FIRE San Bernardino Unit, CAL FIRE St Helena, CAL FIRE Grass Valley, CAL FIRE Mendocino, Calaveras County Sheriff Department, Cathedral City Fire Department, Center High School, City of Napa Central Dispatch, CONFIRE JPA (San Bernardino County), CONFIRE High Desert Government Center, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Davis Police Department, Downey Fire Department JPA, Enloe Medical Center, Eureka Police & Fire, Fairfield Police Department, Fresno County EMS, GreatCall, Inc. (San Diego), Hall Ambulance Service, Heartland Fire Department, Hemet Fire Department, Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office,

Kern County Bakersfield City Fire, Department King American Ambulance, Laguna Beach Fire Department, Marin County Fire Protection District, Medic Ambulance, Mountain View Police and Fire Communications, Murrieta Fire & Rescue, Naval Support Facility Redzikowo, Nor Cal Ambulance, North County Dispatch JPA (Rancho Santa Fe), Oakland Fire Department, Ontario Fire Department, Palo Alto Police, Placer County Sheriff, Placentia Emergency Communications, Pro Transport-1, REDCOM JPA (Sonoma County), Richmond Police Department, Riverside City Fire Department, Riverside County Fire Department, Riverside Police, Rocklin Police Department, Roseville Police Department, Royal Ambulance, Sacramento Regional Fire & EMS ECC, San Diego Fire-Rescue, San Francisco Emergency Communications Department (ECD), San Jose Fire Department Communications, San Mateo County Public Safety Communications, San Ramon Valley Fire Department, Santa Barbara City Police & Fire, Santa Barbara City Fire Department, Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District, Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, Santa Clara City Communications, Santa Clara County Communications, Santa Cruz Regional 911, Shasta Area Safety Communication (ShasCom), Solano County Sheriff (Fairfield), South Lake Tahoe Police Department, Stockton Fire Department, Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety, Tulare County Consolidated Dispatch, Torrance Fire & Police, Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department, Vacaville Police Department, Valley Regional Emergency Communications Center, Ventura County Fire Protection District, Yolo Emergency Communication Agency, and the Yuba City Police Department.

Adoption of a non-MPDS system would create incompatibility with regional partners, introduce operational inefficiencies, and fail to meet LEMSA requirements. Market research also confirmed that Priority Dispatch is not available through cooperative purchasing agreements or piggyback contracts. Accordingly, although other vendors exist, competition is not practicable, and a single-source procurement is justified based on the City's specific operational, clinical, and interoperability requirements.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Continue current dispatch practices without implementing a protocol-based system. This alternative was not recommended because it would leave the Emergency Communications Center without a standardized, validated process for police and fire call-taking. Maintaining the status quo would continue the current 70% to 80% attrition rate for new dispatchers, continue the risk of inconsistent call handling, variable prioritization of incidents, limited quality assurance capability, and increased liability exposure.

#### CONTACT PERSON

David Sprague, Fire Chief, (510) 981-3473

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: MEDICAL PRIORITY CONSULTANTS, INC DBA PRIORITY DISPATCH

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley seeks to modernize its emergency communications operations to improve the consistency, accuracy, and effectiveness of police, fire, and emergency medical call-taking and dispatch services; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley's Communications Center would benefit from a standardized, protocol-based dispatch system that guides call-takers through validated questions, response determinations, pre-arrival instructions, and quality assurance processes in order to improve service delivery, support responder safety, and reduce variation in call handling; and

WHEREAS, the City's dispatch modernization effort was assigned to the Fire Department and advanced as part of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative, and was further informed by recommendations from two independent, competitively procured consulting firms, Federal Engineering, Inc. and Mission Critical Partners, LLC; and

WHEREAS, Federal Engineering, Inc., retained by the City through a competitively procured professional services contract approved by the City Council on October 26, 2021, conducted a comprehensive Dispatch Needs Assessment for the Berkeley Emergency Communications Center and, although generally vendor-neutral and not recommending specific agency solutions, expressly recommended in this instance implementation of the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch emergency medical dispatch protocol in order to modernize call-taking, improve pre-arrival instructions, maintain compliance with Alameda County requirements for future EMD call triage and dispatch; and

WHEREAS, Mission Critical Partners, LLC, retained by the City through the State of California's competitively bid CMAS cooperative purchasing program approved by the City Council on October 15, 2024, independently confirmed the need to implement a scripted protocol dispatch system of the type offered by Priority Dispatch to support the goals of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative and the Dispatch Needs Assessment; and

WHEREAS, the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency requires use of the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) as the governing clinical framework for dispatch in this region, and the City therefore requires a 911 dispatch triage scripting solution that produces MPDS determinant codes and includes standardized caller interrogation protocols, pre-arrival instructions, and integrated quality assurance; and

WHEREAS, MPDS and the related International Academies of Emergency Dispatch standards are proprietary and are delivered exclusively through Medical Priority Consultants, Inc., doing business as Priority Dispatch, via its ProQA and AQUA software

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platform, together with associated training, quality assurance tools, maintenance, and support; and

WHEREAS, based on market research, no other vendor can provide a software solution that meets IAED standards and produces MPDS determinant codes, and Priority Dispatch is therefore the sole source provider able to satisfy the City's operational and regulatory requirements for MPDS-compliant dispatching; and

WHEREAS, although multiple vendors exist in the broader dispatch software market, those alternative solutions do not meet the City's requirements for regulatory compliance, clinical standardization, and regional interoperability, and adoption of a non-MPDS system would create incompatibility with regional partners, introduce operational inefficiencies, and fail to satisfy applicable LEMSA requirements; and

WHEREAS, the use of a structured dispatch protocol system will improve prioritization of emergency incidents, enhance quality assurance and training, support more effective deployment of public safety resources, and reduce liability exposure associated with unstandardized dispatch practices; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager may execute a waiver of competition based on a Sole and Single Source justification and execute a contract with Medical Priority Consultants, Inc., doing business as Priority Dispatch, for the purchase, implementation, and maintenance of the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) ProQA Priority Dispatch System software for Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), Fire Priority Dispatch System (FPDS), and Police Priority Dispatch System (PPDS), including training, quality assurance tools, and ongoing software maintenance, in an amount not to exceed \$942,533 for a five-year base term beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2031 with two, two-year extension options not to exceed a total of \$793,765 for the four extension years, and for a total contract amount not to exceed of \$1,736,298 over nine years.