



**Date:** September 2, 2025

**To:** W. Bowman Ferguson, City Manager  
**Through:** Bertha Winbush, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Amy Blalock, Acting Communications Director  
**Subject:** Second Amendment to Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City of Durham and Durham County to Contract for a Joint Crisis Communications Plan

### **Executive Summary**

The City of Durham and Durham County are working together to develop a Joint Crisis Communications Plan to ensure timely, accurate public information during emergencies. This project is funded equally by both organizations, with the City's portion not to exceed \$50,000.

The original interlocal agreement (ILA) was approved in January 2024 and amended in January 2025 to extend the timeline due to limited responses from Durham County's initial request for proposals (RFP). After a successful second RFP process, Durham County contracted with IEM International, Inc. in April 2025 to develop the plan, with that agreement running through May 2026.

To align the City's agreement with Durham County's contract timeline and allow additional time in case of delays, the City is requesting a second amendment to extend the agreement through December 31, 2026.

### **Motion**

To authorize the City Manager to execute the Second Amendment to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Durham County for a Joint Crisis Communications Plan, extending the term of the agreement to December 31, 2026.

### **Background**

Local governments across the country have faced an increase in crisis events, from cyberattacks to natural disasters. In these moments, a quick, accurate, and coordinated public response is essential.

This Joint Crisis Communications Plan will assess the current capabilities of both the City and Durham County; identify likely crisis scenarios; recommend staffing levels; provide tools such as response templates, media strategies, and staging area plans for public and family notifications; and offer staff trainings and workshops.

### **Issues and Analysis**

In spring 2024, the City's Communications Department partnered with the Durham City-County Emergency Management Division (OES-EM) to develop a scope of work for a coordinated crisis communications plan. Durham County managed the RFP process with input from both City and County communications directors.

The first RFP yielded limited viable responses. After a second round, five qualified vendors responded, and IEM International, a crisis management firm based in Morrisville, NC, was

selected. Durham County executed a contract with IEM in April 2025, which runs through May 2026.

To align the City's agreement with Durham County's contract and ensure sufficient time for project completion in case of delays, the City is requesting the agreement be extended through December 31, 2026, allowing for continued coordinated oversight.

**Alternatives**

City Council could choose not to approve the amendment and allow the agreement to expire prior to plan completion. However, extending the agreement helps align timelines, ensures continued project oversight, and preserves the City's ability to ensure the final plan meets expectations before payment is made to Durham County.

**Financial Impact**

The City's share of \$50,000 was approved in the FY23-24 carryover budget and will be funded from account 0W010000-725000.

**Equal Business Opportunity Summary**

Due to the nature of this agenda item, a review by the Underutilized Business Compliance was not required.

**Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices**

Due to the nature of this agenda item, obtaining Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices information is not applicable.

**Attachment**

City/County Interlocal Agreement  
City/County First Amendment Interlocal Agreement  
City/County Second Amendment Interlocal Agreement