



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 16, 2025

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Authorization to contract with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry

Please find enclosed a proposed resolution and accompanying memorandum from the Erie County Department of Probation and the Erie County Sheriff's Office requesting legislative authorization for both Departments to contract with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry. The purpose is to provide psychological assessments/screening of candidates being considered as sworn officers prior to hire.

The Probation Officer Trainee exam announcement includes a special requirement that each candidate successfully complete a psychological evaluation prior to an offer of employment. The Sheriff's office has the same need when hiring Sheriff's sworn Officers.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Commissioner Richard B. Robillard at the Erie County Probation Department or Sheriff John Garcia. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,



John C. Garcia
Erie County Sheriff

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/rbr
Enclosure

CC: Richard Robillard, Commissioner of Probation
John Garcia, Sheriff

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Erie County Probation Department and Erie County Sheriffs
Re: Office Authorization to contract with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry
Date: May 16, 2025

SUMMARY

Legislative authorization is requested to enter into contracts with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry to conduct psychological evaluations on new hire officers for both the Probation Department and the Sheriff's Office.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This request is budget neutral. Both departments have accounted for this service in their adopted 2025 budgets. The cost of each evaluation is \$375. In 2025 Probation has budgeted \$4,500. The Sheriff's office has budgeted \$25,000 in 2025. Future year authorizations will be part of the budget adoption process.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Erie County Probation Department and Erie County Sheriff's Office need legislative authority to contract with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry. Psychological evaluations are being conducted for new hires in the position of Probation Officer as indicated on the eligibility examination requirements. The Sheriff's Office also requires the same evaluations for Sheriffs sworn Officers prior to hire.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Erie County Probation Department Administration reviews psychological evaluations of each person considered for hire from the civil service list for Probation Officer prior to an offer of employment. The civil service exam posting for Probation Officer Trainee included the following special requirement:

"Background Investigation/Psychological Evaluation: Applicants will be subject to an extensive pre-employment background investigation and psychological evaluation. CONVICTION OF A FELONY WILL BAR AND CONVICTION OF A MISDEMEANOR OR OTHER OFFENSE MAY BAR PARTICIPATION IN EXAMINATION AND APPOINTMENT. Criminal convictions or other offense are subject to evaluation and may result in disqualification pursuant to Section 50 of the New York State Civil Service Law. The psychological evaluation will consist of a combination of psychological tests and interviews. Candidates must pass the psychological evaluation. In addition, a negative report or failing psychological evaluation may result in disqualification pursuant to Section 50 of New York State Civil Service Law.

Candidates must be a United States Citizen, an Erie County Resident, and where applicable a resident of the Town or Village where he or she is appointed per Public Officers Law at time of appointment. (See Erie County Policies and Procedures.)"

The work of a Probation Officer is demanding, often stressful work requiring the ability to implement skills of both a law enforcement and social work nature. Probation Officers work in the field and many Probation Officers carry firearms. The department believes it is pragmatic to take this step in light of the increasingly difficult work environment caused by the tenuous relationship between the community and law enforcement of late as well as a more efficient use of training resources.

Over the course of this year the Probation Department anticipates hiring new officers to replace retirees, those promoted and those who leave employment for other reasons.

The Sheriff's Office also has a need to have psychological evaluations completed on new officer hires in the best interest of discharging their duties efficiently and ensuring public safety.

Both Departments agree that the county's sworn staff should be evaluated in the same manor, with the same methodologies and validated instruments. University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry is preferred by the Sheriff's Office and the Probation Department because of their experience with working with law enforcement and their chosen methodologies and instruments.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The two departments will not have psychological evaluation reports available when considering an officer candidate for employment. Persons with psychological issues which make them ill-suited for the role of Probation Officer, Sheriff's Deputy, or Correctional Officer and could potentially be hired and trained.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

In coordination with Purchasing, contracting with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION AND SHERIFFS OFFICE

Re: Authorization to contract with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry

WHEREAS, the Probation Department and the Sheriff's Office jointly seek to engage University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry for the purpose of conducting psychological evaluations for individuals being considered for hire as Probation Officers, Deputy Sheriff Officers and Correctional Officers; and

WHEREAS, the civil service job posting for Probation Officer Trainee includes as a special requirement the successful completion of a psychological evaluation: applicants will be subject to an extensive pre-employment background investigation and psychological evaluation; and

WHEREAS, the Probation Department will henceforth require every new Probation Officer to have successfully completed a psychological Evaluation prior to hire; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Sheriff's Office in its responsibility to provide quality public safety services to the community also considers psychological evaluation results when hiring sworn Officers; and

WHEREAS, both the Probation Department and Sheriff's Office agree that using the same standards, methodologies, and evaluative instruments for both departments is in the best interest of the county; and

WHEREAS, University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry has experience performing psychological evaluations for law enforcement using standards, methodologies and evaluative instruments that are preferred by both departments.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to enter into contracts with University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry 462 Grider Street, 11th Floor, Buffalo, NY 14215-3098 for the purpose of conducting psychological evaluations on new hire Probation Officers and sworn Officers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given and hereby waives the procedures, as impractical, provided for in Section 26.08 of the Erie County Administrative Code for purposes of securing the services of University Psychiatric Practice dba UBMD Psychiatry to be retained to provide psychological evaluation services associated with the hiring of new Probation Officers and sworn Officers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that sufficient funding exist within the 2025 Operating Budgets for Department of Probation (Fund 110, Funds Center 12610) and Sheriff's Office (Fund 110, Funds

Centers 11510 & 11610) Account 516020 – Professional Services, Contracts & Fees to cover the costs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the County Executive's Office, Sheriff's Office, Department of Law, Department of Personnel, Department of Probation, Division of Purchasing and Division of Budget & Management.