

8/20/25

**CONTRACT FOR SERVICES  
BETWEEN  
COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER  
AND  
ASCENDIENT HEALTHCARE ADVISORS**

**THIS CONTRACT** is made effective the **20<sup>th</sup>** day of **August, 2025**, by and between the **COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER**, a body politic and corporate of the State of New Jersey, with administrative offices at 2 South Broad Street, Woodbury, New Jersey, 08096, hereinafter referred to as **“County”**, and **ASCENDIENT HEALTHCARE ADVISORS** with an address of 601 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20004, hereinafter referred to as **“Contractor”**.

**RECITALS**

**WHEREAS**, the County has a need for a Public Health Accreditation Coordinator/ Consultant to assist the County Department of Health, as per **RFP-25-052**; and

**WHEREAS**, Contractor represents that it is qualified to perform said required services, and desires to so perform pursuant to the terms and provisions of this Contact.

**WHEREAS**, this Contract is awarded pursuant to, and consistent with, the County’s Fair and Open Procurement Process and the terms and provisions of N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual promises, agreements, and other considerations made by and between the parties, the County and the Contractor do hereby agree as follows:

**TERMS OF AGREEMENT**

**1. TERM.** This Contract shall be effective from August 20, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

**2. COMPENSATION.** Contractor shall be compensated in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00, as per Contractor’s proposal dated July 22, 2025 which was submitted in response to the County’s Request for Proposal, RFP-25-052, and annexed hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein.

Contractor shall be paid in accordance with this Contract document upon receipt of an invoice and a properly executed voucher. After approval by the County, the payment voucher shall be placed in line for prompt payment.

Each invoice shall contain an itemized, detailed description of all work performed during the billing period. Failure to provide sufficient specificity shall be cause for rejection of the invoice until the necessary details are provided.

It is also agreed and understood that the acceptance of the final payment by Contractor shall be considered a release in full of all claims against the County arising out of, or by reason of, the work done and materials furnished under this Contract.

**3. DUTIES OF CONTRACTOR.** The specific duties of the Contractor shall be for services as a Public Health Accreditation Coordinator/Consultant, to assist the County Department of Health with public health accreditation status as per **RFP-24-047**, and as set forth in Contractor's Proposal dated July 22, 2025, which is annexed hereto as Exhibit A and made a part of this Contract. Contractor agrees that it has or will comply with all of the requirements set out in **RFP-25-052**.

**4. FURTHER OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES.** During the performance of this Contract, the Contractor agrees as follows:

a. The Contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment and will ensure that equal employment opportunity is afforded to such applicants in recruitment and employment, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their age, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, nationality, sex, veteran status or military service. Such equal employment opportunity shall include, but not be limited to the following: employment, upgrading, demotion, or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. The Contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, notices to be provided by the Public Agency Compliance Officer setting forth provisions of this nondiscrimination clause.

b. The Contractor will, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, state that all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, nationality or sex.

c. The Contractor will send to each labor union, with which it has a collective bargaining agreement, a notice, to be provided by the agency contracting officer, advising the labor union of the Contractor's commitments under this chapter and shall post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment.

d. The Contractor, where applicable, agrees to comply with any regulations promulgated by the Treasurer pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:5-31 et seq., as amended and supplemented from time to time and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

e. The Contractor agrees to make good faith efforts to meet targeted County employment goals established in accordance with N.J.A.C. 17:27-5.2.

**5. LICENSING.** If the Contractor is required to maintain a license in order to perform the services which are the subject of this Contract, then prior to the effective date of this Contract, and as a condition precedent to its taking effect, Contractor shall provide to the County

a copy of all current licenses to operate in the State of New Jersey, which license shall be in good standing and shall not be subject to any current action to revoke or suspend, and shall remain so throughout the term of this Contract.

Contractor shall notify the County immediately in the event of suspension, revocation or any change in status (or in the event of the initiation of any action to accomplish such suspension, revocation and/or change in status) of license or certification held by Contractor, or its agents and/or subcontractors.

**6. TERMINATION.** This Contract may be terminated as follows:

a. Pursuant to the termination provisions set forth in the Request for Proposal and/or in the Bid Specifications, if any, as the case may be, which are specifically referred to and incorporated herein by reference.

b. If Contractor is required to be licensed in order to perform the services which are the subject of this Contract, then this Contract may be terminated by County in the event that the appropriate governmental entity with jurisdiction has instituted an action to have the Contractor's license suspended, or in the event that such entity has revoked or suspended said license. Notice of termination pursuant to this subparagraph shall be effective immediately upon the giving of said notice.

c. If, through any cause, the Contractor, shall fail to fulfill in a timely and proper manner his obligations under this Contract, or if the Contractor shall violate any of the covenants, agreements, or stipulations of this Contract, the County shall thereupon have the right to terminate this Contract by giving written notice to the Contractor of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof. In such event, all finished or unfinished documents, data, studies, and reports prepared by the Contractor under this Contract, shall be forthwith delivered to the County.

d. The County may terminate this Contract for public convenience at any time by a notice in writing from the County to the Contractor. If the Contract is terminated by the County as provided herein, the Contractor will be paid for the services rendered to the time of termination.

e. Notwithstanding the above, the Contractor, shall not be relieved of liability to the County for damages sustained by the County by virtue of any breach of the Contract by the Contractor, and the County may withhold any payments to the Contractor for the purpose of set off until such time as the exact amount of damages due the County from the Contractor is determined.

f. Termination shall not affect the validity of the indemnification provisions of this Contract, nor prevent the County from pursuing any other relief or damages to which it may be entitled, either at law or in equity.

**7. NO ASSIGNMENT OR SUBCONTRACT.** This Contract may not be assigned, nor subcontracted by the Contractor, except as otherwise agreed in writing by both parties. Any attempted assignment or subcontract without such written consent shall be void with respect to the County, and no obligation on the County's part to such subcontractor or assignee shall arise, unless the County shall elect to accept, and consent to, such assignment or subcontract.

**8. INDEMNIFICATION.** The Contractor shall be responsible for, shall keep save and hold the County harmless from, and shall indemnify the County against, any claim, loss, liability, expense (specifically including but not limited to costs, counsel fees and/or experts' fees), or damage resulting from all mental or physical injuries or disability, including death, to employees or recipients of the Contractor's services or to any other persons, or from any damage to any property sustained in connection with this contract which results from any acts or omissions, including negligence or malpractice, of any of its officers, directors, employees, agents, servants, or independent contractors, or from the Contractor's failure to provide for the safety and protection of its employees, or from Contractor's performance or failure to perform pursuant to the terms and provisions of this Contract, whether or not due to negligence, fault, or default of the Contractor. The Contractor's liability under this Contract shall continue after the termination of this Contract with respect to any liability, loss, expense or damage resulting from acts occurring prior to termination.

**9. INSURANCE.** Contractor shall, if applicable to the services to be provided, maintain general liability, automobile liability, business operations, builders and Workers' Compensation insurance in amounts and with companies deemed satisfactory by the County. Said policies shall be in compliance with any applicable requirements of the State of New Jersey and of the United States. Contractor shall, simultaneously with the execution of this Contract, deliver certifications of said insurance to County, naming the County as an additional insured.

If Contractor is a member of a profession which is subject to suit for professional malpractice, then Contractor shall maintain and continue in full force and effect, an insurance policy for professional liability/malpractice with limits of liability acceptable to the County. Contractor shall, simultaneously with the execution of this Contract, and as a condition precedent to its taking effect, provide to County a copy of a certificate of insurance, verifying that said insurance is and will be in effect during the term of this Contract.

The County shall review the certificate for sufficiency and compliance with this paragraph and approval of said certificate and policy shall be necessary prior to this Contract taking effect. Contractor also hereby agrees to continue said policy in force and effect for the period of the applicable statute of limitations following the termination of this Contract, and shall provide the County with copies of certificates of insurance as the certificates may be renewed during that period of time.

**10. SET-OFF.** Should Contractor either refuse or neglect to perform the services which Contractor is required to perform in accordance with the terms of this Contract, and if expense is incurred by County by reason of Contractor's failure to perform, then and in that event, such expenses shall be deducted from any payment due to Contractor. Exercise of such set-off shall not operate to prevent County from pursuing any other remedy to which it may be entitled.

**11. PREVENTION OF PERFORMANCE BY COUNTY.** In the event that the County is prevented from performing this Contract by circumstances beyond its control, then any obligations owing by the County to the Contractor shall be suspended without liability for the period during which the County is so prevented.

**12. NON-WAIVER.** The failure by the County to enforce any particular provision of this Contract, or to act upon a breach of this Contract by Contractor, shall not operate as or be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach, nor a bar to any subsequent enforcement

**13. PARTIAL INVALIDITY.** In the event that any provisions of this Contract shall be, or become, invalid under any law or applicable regulation, such invalidity shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provisions of this Contract.

**14. NOTICES.** Notices required by this Contract shall be effective upon mailing of notice by regular and certified mail to the addresses set forth above, or by personal service, or if such notice cannot be delivered or personally served, then by any procedure for notice pursuant to the Rules of Court of the State of New Jersey.

**15. GOVERNING LAW, JURISDICTION AND VENUE.** This Contract and all questions relating to its validity, interpretation, performance or enforcement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey. The parties each irrevocably agree that any dispute arising under, relating to, or in connection with, directly or indirectly, this agreement or related to any matter which is the subject of or incidental to this agreement (whether or not such claim is based upon breach of contract or tort) shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue of the state and/or federal courts located in Gloucester County, New Jersey or the United States District Court, District of New Jersey, Camden, New Jersey. This provision is intended to be a "mandatory" forum selection clause and governed by and interpreted consistent with New Jersey law and each waives any objection based on forum non conveniens.

**16. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS.** The parties acknowledge that Contractor is an independent contractor, and is not an employee, or agent of the County.

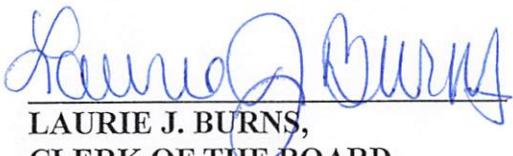
**17. BINDING EFFECT.** This Contract shall be binding on the undersigned, and their successors and assigns.

**18. CONTRACT PARTS.** This Contract consists of this Contract document, **RFP-25-052** issued by the County, and the Contractor's Proposal (Exhibit A). Should there occur a conflict between this Contract or **RFP-25-052**, and Contractor's Proposal, then this Contract, or the RFP, as the case may be, shall prevail.

**THIS CONTRACT** is effective as of the date first written above.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the County has caused this instrument to be signed by its Director and attested by its Clerk, pursuant to a Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners passed for that purpose, and Contractor has caused this instrument to be signed by its properly authorized representative and its corporate seal affixed the day and year first above written.

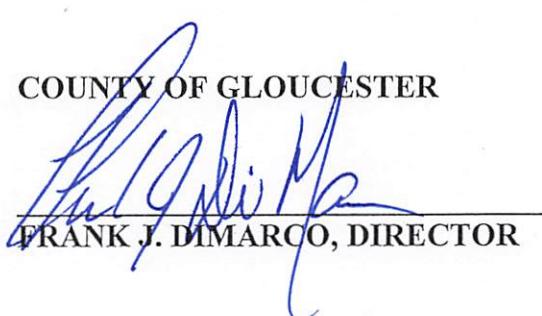
ATTEST:



Laurie J. Burns

LAURIE J. BURNS,  
CLERK OF THE BOARD

COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER



Frank J. DiMarco

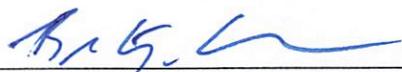
FRANK J. DIMARCO, DIRECTOR

ATTEST:



Brian K. Ackerman

ASCENDIENT HEALTHCARE  
ADVISORS



Brian K. Ackerman

By: BRIAN K. ACKERMAN  
Title: V.P., PARTNER

## **EXHIBIT A**

# TIMELINE & FEES

Ascendent is prepared to begin the work outlined in this proposal with GCDOH immediately upon your authorization to proceed. Given the nature of PHAB Pathways Recognition requirements and the desired timeframe expressed in the RFP, Ascendent proposes a project period that begins in August 2025 and extends through June 2026. There may be intermittent periods in this timeframe where it makes sense for Ascendent to pause our work while GCDOH develops or compiles documentation preparation to allow us to maximize the available budget. We can work with GCDOH leaders to devise the strategy that will yield the best outcomes once the engagement begins.

In alignment with the budget guidelines, fees to complete all work as described in this proposal is \$50,000, which is inclusive of all professional fees and expenses. This includes work associated with project management activities, facilitation of the Core Team meetings, review and feedback on remaining Track 2 documents and all Track 1 documents, development of detailed action plans and implementation frameworks, and organization of documents required for the final Pathways Track 1 and 2 submission packages. All work will be completed on or before June 30, 2026.

Our commitment to GCDOH and its stakeholders is to provide the highest level of service within the defined scope. If any approaches need modification based on our recommendations we will work collaboratively within the established project parameters to ensure the best outcomes for your Pathways Recognition success. Should scope changes be necessary to modify the proposal, we will discuss these adjustments transparently with clear parameters and mutual agreement.

We believe our scope of services will sufficiently prepare your health department within required timeframes for submission of documentation required for PHAB Pathways Recognition. Through our collaborative approach, regular communication, and comprehensive services, we will assist GCDOH in demonstrating conformity with applicable requirements and tell the story of how your department meets the needs of your community and staff.

However, should significant gaps emerge during our assessment process that require specialized attention beyond the defined scope of this proposal, we will first prioritize our guidance and recommendations for addressing these gaps. Implementation of recommendations and any resulting plan modifications will be the responsibility of the department, utilizing the tools, templates, and guidance provided through this engagement. Additional services would only be suggested if current gaps cannot be addressed through the provided recommendations and guidance and would be negotiated separately with clear scope and cost parameters to meet your specific needs in a cost-effective manner.

## Payment Structure and Flexibility

To support your budget planning and cash flow management, we can arrange for invoicing monthly, quarterly, or based on project phases. Estimated fees by Phase of work include:

- Phase I - \$10,000
- Phase II - \$15,000
- Phase III - \$25,000



July 22, 2025

Kim Larter, QPA  
Gloucester County Purchasing Department  
County Administration Building  
2 South Broad Street  
Woodbury, New Jersey 08096

**RE: PHAB Accreditation Coordinator/Consulting Assistance**

Dear Ms. Larter:

Ascendant Healthcare Advisors (Ascendant) appreciates the opportunity to outline our proposed process to assist the Gloucester County Department of Health (GCDOH) with its continued efforts to pursue Pathways Recognition through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Our proposal is based on our understanding of your needs from our previous work with GCDOH and the posted RFP.

Through our previous work with GCDOH, we acknowledge and understand the significant effort resources necessary for the PHAB Pathways Recognition process. We also understand achieving PHAB Pathways Recognition is a significant milestone, but the ultimate benefit and purpose of this work is continuous quality and performance improvement of the health department.

We have a depth of experience relative to PHAB's accreditation and recognition processes from a variety of perspectives, including:

- As staff members of local health departments;
- As consultants partnered with local health departments;
- As PHAB national site visitors, assessing the performance of local health departments; and,
- As a former employee of PHAB, reviewing materials/information from local health departments.

In addition, members of your proposed engagement team have significant experience assisting local health departments in New Jersey – including GCDOH – in this work. We believe these experiences and our existing relationship with GCDOH leaders position us well to efficiently and effectively assist with the work outlined in the RFP. We thank you again for your interest in working with Ascendant and look forward to discussing how we might exceed GCDOH's expectations.

Sincerely,

Brian K. Ackerman  
Vice President, Partner