



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Date: December 6, 2022

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District
Councilwoman Stacy Mungo-Flanigan, Fifth District
Councilman Al Austin, Eighth District

Subject: Long Beach as Autism Certified City

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Manager to work with the Health and Human Services and Economic Development Departments, as well as the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), to provide a report back on the feasibility of Long Beach becoming an Autism Certified City (ACC) with staff trained to interact with individuals with autism and other sensory disorders positively.

INTRODUCTION:

In recent years Long Beach has exerted a focused effort to ensure our city is welcoming to and accessible for all residents. It is a priority that Long Beach residents and guests know that we are a city welcoming of all people and that we emphasize everyone being able to enjoy Long Beach and everything we offer. Our commitment to openness and accessibility for all is wide-ranging. We continue to be a leading voice for LGBTQ rights hosting annual events and one of the region's largest parades, and we will have the second annual Trans Pride event, further highlighting our inclusion. As a city, we invite countless cultural organizations to be recognized and celebrated at City Hall, from Hispanic Heritage, to AAPI Heritage, to Nowruz, to Black History Month, to recognizing Cambodian Genocide, to honoring Native Americans. Our desire to create a fair and enjoyable city includes translation and hearing loop services at City Council meetings, creating all abilities playgrounds, to investing in sidewalk access and curb ramps throughout the city so that everyone, regardless of mobility limitations, can make their way along our streets and business corridors, to even including beach access mats to help everyone enjoy our coastline. These are just a few ways Long Beach has led the way to being a city for everyone.

However, we need to take another big step toward becoming a city where everyone can enjoy, thrive, and feel welcomed. Becoming an Autism Certified City (ACC) will help Long Beach City Departments lead the way. The ACC designation is awarded to communities where key stakeholders, including healthcare, education, local

government, hospitality, leisure, and corporate members, are trained and certified to better serve individuals with Autism and other cognitive disorders. This designation benefits residents and visitors as the community comes together to ensure everyone has options. Likely, various sectors and city departments currently meet many of the standards for Autism Certification; however, this effort would formalize that work and improve efficiencies throughout the city.

Becoming an Autism Certified City (ACC) is a community accessibility and inclusion strategy that directly impacts tourism and local business revenue, marketing, and brand. Through community designation as an ACC, Long Beach's healthcare, education, tourism, corporate, and small businesses, as well as public safety, complete Autism and sensory disorder sensitivity and awareness training certification through IBCCES. This knowledge and learning ensure concrete steps are in place to enhance the resident and visitor experience and welcome new and current autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and families who feel included, safe, and valued!

Long Beach can become an ACC when a representative number of healthcare, education, tourism, corporate, small business, and public safety personnel have completed training and certification through to become a Certified Autism Center (CAC). A city achieves certification by training IBCCES 80% of public-facing staff and management. The number of individual businesses required is unique to your business mix. This threshold is established at the initiative's inception, ensuring you have a target.

A growing number of cities have made significant steps to establish a comprehensive approach to appropriate training and organizing to support autistic individuals. Cities like Mesa, Arizona; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Visalia, California, have made Autism focused initiatives a priority as they work to be welcoming and accommodating to everyone.

The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) has done significant work on this topic. They have analyzed the opportunities gained for Cities that become Autism Certified and would be essential partners in developing a Citywide plan to become an Autism Certified City.

With these priorities in mind, it is appropriate and necessary for Long Beach to begin the process and develop a plan to become the next Autism Certified City.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact report has been completed due to the urgency of this item.