

Date: April 27, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Johnny Vallejo, Acting Economic Development Director



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **CaliforniansForAll Youth Climate Corps Program**

The State of California's Governor's Office recently allocated \$150 million to fund youth workforce programs through its CaliforniansForAll Youth Job Corps program. Grant funding was allocated to the State's thirteen largest cities with amounts being determined by population size. As California's seventh-largest city, Long Beach will receive \$6.3 million in cost-reimbursement funds. Under this State grant program's funding requirements, youth workforce programs created and/or funded by this allocation should be designed to increase youth employment, develop youth interest in and experience toward careers in public service, and strengthen capacity to address areas of education, climate change, and food insecurity.

On November 9, 2021, the City Council approved the Climate Action and Environmental Committee to take up the creation of a \$5 million Long Beach Climate Corps and provide recommendations. The purpose of this memo is to provide 1) an overview of the CaliforniansForAll Youth Workforce Development Program; 2) a summary of the City's research, outreach and community engagement and feedback; 3) Youth Climate Corps Program (Program) recommendations; and 4) outline the next steps for implementation of the Program.

### **About The CaliforniansForAll Youth Workforce Development Program**

The CaliforniansForAll Youth Workforce Development Program is funded as a part of the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan Act. This reimbursement grant program brings together youth who live in underserved neighborhoods to help address urgent challenges in their communities, while simultaneously being paid to learn skills that lead to career pathways. Cities receiving funding are responsible for identifying job placements and recruiting, hiring, and providing case management for youth. These programs may run continuously or be intermittent summer programs. The grant requirements include the following:

- Eligible Applicants: Cities over 300,000 population
- Eligible Expenses: Paid job placements for youth in public agencies/nonprofits, wrap-around services for youth, and administrative costs for recruiting, hiring, and administering the program
- Participants: Youth ages 16 to 30 who may have difficulty finding employment, are low-income, are unemployed and/or out of school, are or were justice-involved, are in or

transitioning from foster care, are engaged with mental health or substance abuse system (75 percent of selected participants must meet two of these criteria)

- Placement Requirements: Paid placements in public agencies or nonprofit organizations only
- Outcomes: Paid youth job placements in public agencies or nonprofits and after-program placement in permanent jobs or continuing education
- Performance Period: All funding must be spent by June 2024 (California State fiscal year)

### **Youth Climate Corps Program Development and Recommendations**

A team of City staff from the City Manager's Office, Office of Sustainability, and Economic Development, Development Services, Health and Human Services, Parks, Recreation and Marine and Public Works Departments reviewed current data, City-approved plans, and models of similar youth development programs to inform the development of a City Youth Climate Corps Program (Program).

The following Federal, State and Regional green job efforts were reviewed and consulted in the Program's development:

- Civilian Climate Corps (CCC) Act of 2021: Proposed funding for a civilian workforce to support climate-based projects in partnership with a qualified youth service or conservation corps and/or disadvantaged community. Service projects opportunities can have wide-ranging goals from GHG reductions to urban greening.
- California Climate Action Corps Fellows: Program supports organizations in engaging communities in climate action, assessment, and education projects around urban greening, edible food recovery, and wildfire prevention.
- CaliforniaVolunteers' California Climate Action Corps: Fellows are AmeriCorps members who serve full-time (for either a two-month summer term or 11-month term) while gaining valuable experience, mentorship, and training. The fellowship connects organizations and agencies with talented, motivated emerging leaders to move the needle on climate change in the community.
- CivicSpark Fellows: Fellows are AmeriCorps members who serve with State, local, and community-based organizations tackling the most pressing environmental and social equity issues through planning and policy support for community resilience. Fellows build capacity for local governments to address emerging environmental and social equity resilience challenges such as climate change, water resource management, affordable housing, and mobility

Several green jobs/workforce plans and data were reviewed and consulted in the Program's development, including:

- Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI) Report: This report estimates that green jobs in LA County could grow nearly 80 percent by 2050. The recommendations included: 1) Accelerate Economic Recovery: boost green job creation with increased public investment in green infrastructure; 2) Bolster Workforce Pipeline: bolster workforce training programs for growing sectors; 3) Advance Equity and Inclusion: increase underrepresented groups in workforce training; and 4) Clearly Define Green Jobs and Track Metrics.
- Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County Brief: This report pointed out that during the first few months of the pandemic, communities of color faced unemployment rates near 20 percent, compared to 14.9 percent in the State, and 11.1 percent nationally. These rates have worsened during the pandemic, and the loss of jobs and associated income contributed to increased levels of food insecurity and deepened existing racial and economic inequities caused by a reduced access to healthy food. Long-term impacts include diminished work and academic performance, anxiety, depression, and early onset obesity.

The following City Plans that include grants that translate into opportunities for youth job placements were reviewed and consulted in the program's development:

- Draft Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP)
- Blueprint for Economic Development
- Youth and Emerging Adults Strategic Plan
- Pacific Gateway Local Plan 2021-2024
- Parks Make Long Beach: Parks Department Strategic Plan
- Sustainable City Action Plan
- City Mobility Element and CX3 Pedestrian Plan
- Health and Human Services Strategic Plan
- Public Works Facilities Condition Assessment Reports

Job placement priorities were considered using the City's Equity Toolkit and Long Beach Recovery Act Collective Impact model and included climate change placement priorities in organizations that:

- Improve and support communities of color disproportionately affected by environmental justice and pandemic impacts
- Provide placements that simultaneously provide living-wage jobs while also providing immediate eco-system and climate benefits that lead to long-term improvements to air and water quality, heat island reduction, community beautification, quality of life and build community ownership/stewardship

- Mutually reinforce the City’s recovery programs such as food security, economic inclusion, etc., to form a coordinated approach to support lasting economic recovery and public health equity
- Provide a foundation for future skill development, training, and long-term job placement for wealth-building opportunities for young people and disadvantaged families

Key strategies for paid job experience under the Program have been identified in the following climate placement areas in collaboration with Conservation Corps of Long Beach, City Departments, and other nonprofit partners that are consistent with grant goals to strengthen capacity to address challenges in the areas of education, climate change, and food insecurity.

<b>Climate Placement Areas</b>
<b>Urban Greening and Natural Systems Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tree planting and urban forest management</li><li>• Water efficient landscaping/irrigation installation</li><li>• Native ecosystem restoration</li><li>• Environmental stewardship, ambassador programs</li><li>• Rain gardens and rainwater rescue</li><li>• Mulch delivery program</li><li>• Architecture/design, business/development, education/literacy, or similar in this placement area</li></ul>
<b>Urban Agriculture and Food Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishing and supporting urban farms and community gardens, Master Gardener training</li><li>• Hosting food distribution events, crop swaps and helping set up healthy market locations</li><li>• Operating public orchards and fruit tree programs</li><li>• Architecture/design, business/development, education/literacy, or similar in this placement area</li></ul>
<b>Waste Reduction and Clean Energy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishing and/or supporting recycling and composting and food waste programs</li><li>• Green Business outreach and assessments</li><li>• Rooftop solar outreach and installation</li><li>• Architecture/design, business/development, education/literacy, or similar in this placement area</li></ul>

Based on the research, grant program requirements, logistics, and funding timeline City staff have identified the following placement opportunities:

- Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB): The City has a long-term service contract with CCLB who provides a variety of environmental stewardship services and participants will support the City’s urban forestry and greening, urban agriculture, mulch, composting, rainwater capture, and similar climate-related programs designed to clean air, water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Other Community Based Organizations (CBOs): Nonprofits that support the climate placement areas of 1) urban greening and natural systems services; 2) urban agriculture and food security; and 3) waste reduction and clean energy.

- City Manager, Office of Sustainability: Participants will support the Office's tree planting and mulch programs, urban agriculture and native plant nursery programs at Willow Springs Park, the City's Green Business Program, and work with a variety of community partners to promote renewable energy technology and green job training.
- Development Services Department: The Development Services Department is leading the development of the City's first Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), which identifies strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prepares the community for the impacts of climate change, improves the quality of life, and enhances economic vitality in Long Beach so the city becomes more sustainable and resilient in the face of climate change impacts such as air pollution, extreme heat, drought, coastal storm surge, and sea level rise. Participants can work on implementation of the CAAP including, developing City policies and program recommendations, track metrics and collect data, conduct community outreach, and create inclusive community engagement activities, and prepare public materials and presentations that educate and communicate impacts of climate change.
- Economic Development Department: Participants can connect Long Beach small businesses to, and assist them with enrollment in, energy and water efficiency rebates/programs, green fleet or clean fuel rebates/programs, the City's green business program, sustainable energy programs, and similar grant, loans or assistance programs. Participants can also assist with program and grant administration.
- Health and Human Services Department: Participants can support the implementation of community-supported agriculture projects that can provide food to vulnerable residents of Long Beach, increase knowledge and self-efficacy to promote food growing and consumption of healthy foods through educational and skill-building opportunities, and the establishment of healthy food markets and crop-swap pop ups. Activities can also include outreach and promotion of food-related resource programs, and health equity related programs such as government benefit programs to mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19. This work can be led in collaboration with the department's Office of Youth Development.
- Legislative Department: In collaboration with the Mayor's Office, and the City Council District offices, the Legislative Department can host a dedicated, limited term internship Climate Action Fellow that can liaise with community stakeholders on climate action initiatives.
- Library Services Department: Long Beach has 12 libraries and several family learning centers that support lifelong learning, academic, and career success that can support youth participating in the Youth Climate Corps. Participants placed in this department can help design inclusive physical safe spaces and virtual settings to encourage positive social engagement, skill development, and improve access to critical services such as credit recovery and high school completion programs, and English Language Learner resources that support program participants.

- Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department: Long Beach has 167 parks, over 3,200 acres of open space and 6 miles of beaches. These sites house 29,000 trees, a dozen community gardens, numerous lakes, streams, and nature preserves that provide access to open space and healthy outdoor recreation, and contribute to food security, clean air, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Participants can support a robust urban agriculture program in parks to address food insecurity, assist with park forestry and waterwise native landscape stewardship projects, develop ParkRx health programs connecting medical providers to parks, and serve as park ambassadors to support healthy and clean parks to encourage park usage.
- Public Works Department: Participants can support urban greening and watershed management activities related to trees, landscape, and water capture/cleaning in the public right-of-way and can help implement energy and water efficiency projects in City facilities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

These programs include a wide breadth of opportunities for young people to explore and engage in climate change-related careers through policy-related efforts, economic development practices, entrepreneurial activities, workforce development, health, sustainability, and education. Participant placements will take into consideration the diversity of work histories, skill sets, academic backgrounds, training experience, and knowledge of prospective participants. Youth will be placed in the following classifications depending on duties:

Classification	Hourly Rate	Participation Length	Max Hours	# of Youth
Climate Corps Fellow IV	\$27	2 years	1,500	16
Climate Corps Fellow III	\$24	6 months	450	30
Climate Corps Fellow II	\$21	6 months	450	138
Climate Corps Fellow I	\$16	6 months	450	204
Total				388

## Outreach and Engagement

Program recommendations were presented to the Sustainable City Commission (Commission) at their meeting on [February 24, 2022](#). Over 70 CBOs were informed of the opportunity to provide input at the Commission meeting and invited to submit public comment. The City also released a community survey soliciting feedback on the draft Program recommendations. This survey was made available online in English, Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog, and in hard copy at Long Beach libraries. In addition to soliciting feedback on the Program recommendations, this survey also asked for interest from local CBOs for placement opportunities and for potential participants to indicate their interest in the future program. The survey was shared with the over 70 CBOs and youth engagement and workforce organizations. The City also consulted with Conservation Corps of Long Beach to identify possible placement opportunities. The Program recommendations and survey and engagement results were presented to the Climate Action and Environmental Committee on [March 15, 2021](#).

## Program Implementation

As the region’s workforce development board, the Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network (Pacific Gateway) will manage the Long Beach Youth Climate Corps Program. Pacific Gateway has extensive experience in the development and implementation of training programs, provision of federally-funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, the convening of major employer and service partners, and has been the recipient of numerous City, State, and national workforce grants.

Pacific Gateway will continue outreach efforts that will engage existing participating CBOs and new stakeholders that have expertise working with youth from North, Central, and West Long Beach, and the Washington Neighborhood, which are communities that are predominately Black, Latinx, and Asian American/Pacific Islander and experience higher levels of housing displacement, unemployment, air pollution, and other public health impacts. Pacific Gateway will also leverage the City’s role as a founding partner of the Long Beach College Promise and through this role create on-ramps to Long Beach Youth Climate Corps for students in government/public administration, environmental science, planning, public health, and other related academic pathways and degree programs at Long Beach City College and California State University, Long Beach.

Funding allocations for the Long Beach Youth Climate Corps will be informed by best practices for similar workforce programs with a focus on paid work experience coupled with strong wrap-around and support services, training, and case management to ensure the success of youth participants. The Program funding is allocated as follows:

<b>Program Funding</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Paid Work Experience	\$5,000,000
Youth Training and Literacy, Wrap-around and Support Services, and Program Administration	\$1,300,000
Total	\$6,300,000

Pacific Gateway will track, case manage, and coordinate payroll for all 388 participants. Pacific Gateway will also coordinate supportive wraparound services and allocate specific funding to provide services such as transportation assistance, clothing vouchers, rental assistance, and utility payment assistance to ensure participants have the flexibility and a foundation of support to successfully participate in the program. Participants will also receive follow-up services such as job counseling, employment placement, and access to industry-recognized training to further support their long-term career goals. Pacific Gateway has a supportive service matrix and contracts with hundreds of training providers across the State, affording them the capacity to readily be of service to the program’s 388 residents and their families.

As placement partners, City Departments and CBOs will be responsible for 1) identifying climate-related placements and working with Pacific Gateway to secure Youth Climate Corps participants for these placements; 2) onboarding and supervising Youth Climate Corps participants; and 3) sharing potential future job opportunities available to Youth Climate Corps participants.

## Next Steps

The City received notification in April 2022 that the State has awarded \$6.3 million in grant funding for the City of Long Beach Youth Climate Corps Program. A City Council agenda item to accept and appropriate the funding is scheduled for May 3, 2022. Pacific Gateway will then begin to set up the program, identify partners, placements, and participants, with the program kickoff and first youth job placements anticipated by Summer 2022.

As this State grant is funded as a part of the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan Act, the data on the Program will be tracked and reported as a part of the Long Beach Recovery Act throughout its implementation. The grant requires that the City report the following metrics on a quarterly and annual basis to the State:

- Number of participants in program
- Number of participants employed in each focus area
- Number of participants enrolled in job training/readiness programs
- Number of participants completing job training/readiness programs
- Average participant wage/hours worked across the program
- Participant stories

The City is very pleased to have secured important funding to support workforce efforts that build a more resilient, healthy and equitable future for Long Beach youth. If you have any questions, please contact Nick Schultz, Executive Director of the Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network, at (562) 570-3701.

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