



Date: April 12th, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, 9th District
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, 7th District
Councilmember Sueley Saro, 6th District

Subject: Long Beach Center for Economic Inclusion 2-Year Anniversary Presentation

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file a presentation from the Long Beach Center for Economic Inclusion on their progress and activities in their first two years of operation.

Discussion

In June 2019, the Council unanimously approved the 'Everyone In' Implementation Plan, which concluded a two-year community outreach process that created the plan as an outline for addressing the economic disparities between neighborhoods in our city. The plan included a set of key recommendations in the areas of:

- Small Business and Diverse Entrepreneurship
- Procurement
- Workforce and Youth Development
- Connectedness (Economic Resiliency)
- Housing and Homeownership
- The establishment of a Community Development Corporation (CDC)

Since then, the Long Beach Center for Economic Inclusion has assumed its role as Long Beach's first CDC during the COVID-19 pandemic, a situation which posed unique challenges to the Center's mission, as the pandemic's impacts fell disproportionately on the very neighborhoods LBCEI was mandated to uplift.

Thankfully, the project was able to hit the ground running, quickly developing a strong local board of directors; engaging with more than 25 community partners including Wells Fargo, LISC Los Angeles, and the Long Beach Community Action Partnership; and establishing the Long Beach Food Support Network which currently operates nine free food pantries across the city and has distributed more than 650,000 pounds of free food to the community over the past two years, in addition to PPE and hygiene products. LBCEI has thus far deployed over \$1 million dollars of resources into the community and serves



approximately 1,500 Long Beach families every single week. The Center also hosted a Small Business Resiliency Forum to assist over 200 minority and women-owned businesses struggling during the pandemic, by offering interest free loans, business navigation, and technical assistance. The Center has also operated a free housing call center featuring HUD certified counseling.

Future projects include developing affordable housing, a partnership with Long Beach City College, providing administrative support to Business Improvement Districts, hosting workforce development programs and black wealth building initiatives, and offering free multilingual financial literacy classes for residents of all ages, among many others.

Recently, after a nationwide search, current board member Tunua Thrash-Ntuk was chosen as the Center's new Executive Director. Mrs. Thrash-Ntuk is a seasoned community and economic development practitioner of more than 15-years with both non-profit and private sector experiences. Thrash-Ntuk was most recently the Senior Executive Director of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC LA). Her strengths range from community advocacy to asset and real estate development around neighborhood revitalization. She has already led several important urban initiatives in Los Angeles County focused on affordable housing and commercial development as well as transit-oriented projects. Prior to joining LISC, Tunua served as Executive Director of West Angeles Community Development Corporation, during her tenure she was responsible for the asset management and oversight of the WACDC real estate portfolio valued at \$150 million. Tunua led the growth of WACDC's real estate portfolio, in part by brokering a breakthrough in the development, construction and opening of West Angeles Plaza, a 24,000 square foot commercial office project.

Tunua was named LA's 2021 Impact Makers to Watch by Stratiscope and received the Wells Fargo Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Award by Los Angeles Business Journal. She serves as a board member or advisory board member to many entities, including Federal Home Loan Bank San Francisco's Affordable Housing Council, Housing California, City of LA Measure HHH Citizens Oversight Commission, Southern California Edison's Consumer Advisory Panel, Greenlining Institute, Union Bank's Community Advisory Board, Frontier Communications Community Advisory Board and the Los Angeles Development Fund, which is the City of Los Angeles' New Market Tax Credit implementation group. Tunua is a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where she earned her Master's in City Planning as well as an alumna of UC Berkeley where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies.



Equity Statement

Like many cities across the country, Long Beach suffers from deep inequalities between neighborhoods. Our city is home to both census tracts with zero poverty and census tracts with poverty rates in higher than 60%.¹ 88% of the more than 100,000 Long Beach residents who live in neighborhoods with above a 30% poverty rate are people of color. These regional inequalities are caused by historic neglect and mistreatment of communities of color and still serve as a cause of racial inequities going forward. Addressing these issues requires concerted and targeted investment in areas of our city that suffer from poverty and blight in order to give their residents full access to the opportunities our city can provide.

As the City recovers from the pandemic, council must keep in mind that the equity lens it used to address COVID-19 applies equally to all crises this city faces, whether it be housing and homelessness, climate change, or underinvestment in our North, Central, and West Long Beach neighborhoods. Entrenched regional inequality within our city directly put residents at risk during this pandemic and should be treated as the public health issue it is going forward. Council should continue support LBCEI in its mission to fight these inequities and seize the opportunity we have to build a better, more equitable city in the aftermath of such a difficult year.

Fiscal Impact

No Financial Management review was able to be conducted due to the urgency and time sensitivity of this item.

Suggested Action

Approve recommendation.

¹ "CensusTracts ACSPOV." June 2018.

data.longbeach.gov/datasets/0cb553417e514b5d87d391ec3b751e2f_1?geometry=-118.322%2C33.764%2C-117.995%2C33.813&selectedAttribute=ACS_POV2016.