



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0494, Version: 1

Recommendation to request City Manager to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Civic Innovation to create a Citywide Basic Needs Security initiative, known as “BAND Together Long Beach,” to enhance the coordination and delivery of food and housing security programs.

The Initiative should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- an online dashboard that quantifies the City’s food & housing needs and capacity to meet the need,
- a Basic Needs hotline that connects residents to food and/or shelter services,
- establish a Basic Needs Working Group within the city,
- and create a “Basic Needs” fund to support program continuity.

The Problem

While the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic leaves no household unaffected, municipalities are reprioritizing and repurposing local resources to ensure public health and safety. The coronavirus significantly exacerbates need as people stay home: workers are facing reduced hours, or worse, they are losing their jobs. Restrictions have altered retail and closed major economic sectors, and small businesses and non-profits are changing their services to meet the community's most essential needs.

Basic Needs are the resources fundamental to our survival - air to breathe, water to drink, sleep, food to eat, and shelter. “Food Security” refers to the ability to access adequate nutrition to sustain a healthy and active life. And at a basic level, housing is a secure place where one can eat, sleep, and bathe.

Studies show that in times of crisis, low-income households will sacrifice their food budget first.[1] According to the Urban Institute's Health Reform Monitoring Survey (conducted in late March, early April 2020), low-income, Hispanic, and Black adults were most likely to report that their families reduced spending on food.[2] Additionally, the coronavirus reinforces the critical role housing plays in protecting our well-being, as sheltering in place is proven crucial to "flattening the curve." Job disruptions are causing housing instability, and more households are experiencing difficulties in making their monthly rent and mortgage payments.

Across multi-agency, public, private, and non-profit sector lines, the City of Long Beach has more capacity to meet the hunger and shelter needs than at any other point in our city’s history. However, these resources have no central coordination and may be difficult to quantify and/or navigate. Public agencies, private institutions, non-profit partners, faith groups, and philanthropies are leveraging resources to feed and house Long Beach

residents.

Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an unprecedented community response to meeting the basic needs of the city, including major food distributions serving thousands of families as well the establishment of new Senior food delivery programs and food pantry programs in partnership with churches across the city. The Long Beach City Council has also demonstrated significant leadership on basic needs response, by enacting an eviction moratorium, expanding more shelter capacity for people experiencing homelessness than any point in history, and organizing emergency meal programs. Here is a partial outline of existing activities related to food and housing security within the city:

The Opportunity

While the role of local government has expanded beyond traditional services throughout the years, it is now apparent and necessary that the City of Long Beach make a meaningful commitment to ensure the resources to meet the basic needs, housing and hunger, are easily accessible to any resident of the city.

Basic Needs initiatives are common in university settings, like Long Beach City College, CSU Long Beach, UCLA, UC Berkeley, and UCSF. According to National League of Cities, Basic Needs and Basic Income programs are also emerging in cities across the

US, including: Stockton, CA, Chicago, IL, New York, Jackson, MS, Santa Monica, CA, Omaha, NE, Twin Cities, MN, Merced, CA.

Read more about these initiatives here:

<https://www.nlc.org/universal-basic-income-whos-piloting-it>

BAND Together Long Beach is a Basic Needs Initiative that enhances the coordination and delivery of food and housing security programs through data collection, central coordination to maximize collective impact, and resource allocation. To ensure the collective impact of Citywide basic needs programming, BAND Together Long Beach will employ a centralized, online portal that aggregates data on food and housing needs, and the quantifies Citywide response capacity to meet those needs by public and private programs. A working group will identify and leverage resources to support the continuity of these basic needs programs; furthermore, filling any gaps in service. By approving this Initiative, the City is committing to include Basic Needs Response as part of its long-term recovery plan.

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

Approve recommendation.

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