



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

# C-10

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

333 WEST OCEAN BOULEVARD • LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90802

October 9, 2007

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
City of Long Beach  
California

## RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with Veterans in Community Service, Inc., for the use of the Neighborhood Resource Center to provide the Home Energy Assistance Program for up to five years, with an option to renew for two additional two-year periods, based on satisfactory performance and availability of State funding. (Citywide)

## DISCUSSION

The State of California offers free utility payment assistance for low-income residents through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). Currently, the only agency the State contracts with to provide services for Long Beach residents is Veterans in Community Service, Inc. (VICS), which serves clients out of its Whittier offices. The Whittier location is difficult for low-income Long Beach residents to utilize the program, especially seniors and those who rely on public transportation.

Since 2001, the City Council has approved agreements with VICS to provide field office space two days per month at the Neighborhood Resource Center (Center) to facilitate HEAP services for Long Beach residents. The Center is centrally located, easily accessible by public transportation, and is open to all Long Beach residents. The Department of Community Development, Neighborhood Services Bureau, is responsible for the management of the Center, located at 425 Atlantic Avenue. The current agreement with VICS expired on August 31, 2007.

From September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, VICS provided assistance to 630 Long Beach households at the Center. Per VICS, the average amount of financial assistance they provided to each household is \$237.

The attached Program Plan for 2007/2008 outlines the free utility payment assistance provided by VICS to low-income residents, with priority given to those residents who have received a utility shut off notice. A Program Plan will be submitted each year to the Neighborhood Resource Center prior to the start of the program year. Funded by the State of California, Department of Community Services and Development, VICS staff will be responsible for scheduling appointments for HEAP services at the Center at no cost to the City or to the residents.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

October 9, 2007

Page 2

The City will assist VICS staff in the marketing and outreach necessary to inform Long Beach residents of this free service, provide free office space at the Center, and make bilingual translators available during appointment times, as needed. In exchange, VICS staff will provide services two days per month and provide workshops and presentations to the Long Beach community about their services.

The term of the agreement will be from September 1, 2007 up to August 31, 2012 based on a satisfactory annual performance review and State funding availability.

This letter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Cristyl Meyers on September 25, 2007, and Budget Management Officer David Wodynski on September 28, 2007.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on October 9, 2007 to ensure continued mediation services at the Center.

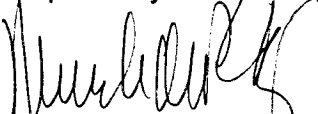
FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of these services will be borne by the State of California, Department of Community Services and Development. There will be no impact on the General Fund.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



MICHAEL P. CONWAY  
ACTING DIRECTOR  
OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

APPROVED:



PATRICK H. WEST  
CITY MANAGER

DJT:MM;jf  
VICS Council Letter-10-07--ver4.doc

Attachment

## 2007-2008 Program Plan

Agency: Veterans In Community Service, Inc. (VICS)

Program: Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)  
Energy Conservation Education

Period: September 1, 2007 – August 31, 2008  
(Contingent on continued program funding from the state)

### **Program Summary:**

Veterans In Community Service, Inc. (VICS), funded by the State of California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD), provides the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) for eligible low-income residents of the Long Beach area.

The service consists of two days per month and will be available at the City of Long Beach, Neighborhood Resource Center.

Current on-going services continue to be available in the Whittier office. The services will provide the processing and assistance to credit payment of utility bills for low-income ratepayers.

All required processing assistance is performed by a VICS staff person. The staff person may be assisted by a trained community volunteer.

Services will be provided by appointment only. Emergency assistance situations are acted upon on an as needed basis. The center facilities/functions listed below are utilized for program services: Office space (desk/chair), client waiting/seating area for approximately 6 clients, marketing/community outreach assistance including volunteer recruitment, use of telephones, copy machine, FAX and incidentals. The goal of the HEAP is to serve 50-70 clients monthly.

Also, presentations for consumer energy education conservation will be conducted at the Neighborhood Resource Center. These presentations will be scheduled on the activities calendar of the Center. The Neighborhood Resource Center office will monitor both program services to assure proper usage of the facility. Additional hours of service may be provided based on mutual agreement of both parties.

### **HEAP Goal**

The goal of this program is to provide needed utility payment assistance to eligible ratepayers of the Long Beach low-income community. Eligibility is established by submitting a current proof of income that is acceptable under state low-income guidelines, proof of residency and a current unpaid utility bill. This office will serve only residents of the Long Beach community. The telephone service will be utilized for out-going calls only.

Quarterly and annual reports will be provided to the Neighborhood Resource Center indicating number of clients served, date served, residence (by block) and any other general program information pertinent to the service.

First priority for service will be those clients who are in danger of having their utilities shut-off. Most clients receive assistance utilizing the regular application procedures.

**Energy Education Program Goals**

The goal of this consumer education program is to inform and educate the utility ratepayer on practices and methods that can be utilized to conserve energy. The target population for this program is primarily the low-income community.

This program is funded by the California Public Utilities Commission-Electricity Education Trust. This consumer education workshop/meeting will be conducted quarterly at Neighborhood Resource Center. This program will also be available to enhance the current service programs conducted by the center. The program will be conducted at no cost to the City. A trained VICS staff person will conduct the meeting.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

The Neighborhood Resource Center will meet as needed with VICS administrative staff to assess and evaluate the progress of both programs. Adjustments and/or modifications to the service programs will be made by mutual consent of both parties.