

January 4, 2022

**R-33**

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
City of Long Beach  
California

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt Specifications No. RFP ED21-068 and award a contract to Geocko, Inc., of Seattle, WA, for Long Beach Recovery Act small business and non-profit grant administration support services, in a total amount not to exceed \$690,000, for a period of one year, with the option to renew for one additional one-year period, at the discretion of the City Manager; and, authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute all documents necessary to enter into the contract, including any necessary amendments. (Citywide)

**DISCUSSION**

**Long Beach Recovery Act**

On March 16, 2021, the City Council adopted the Long Beach Recovery Act (LBRA) becoming one of the first major cities to approve COVID-19 recovery programs made possible through federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and other federal and State funding sources. Additional adjustments to the LBRA were made as part of the Adopted FY 22 Budget and periodic adjustments will be brought to the City Council as needed. Additional information about the LBRA is available at [longbeach.gov/recovery](http://longbeach.gov/recovery).

As part of the Long Beach Recovery Act, under the Economic Recovery category, approximately \$20.3 million was allocated for Direct Business Support to address financial hardship that has been created by COVID-19 and State and local Health Orders on small business and non-profits through various grants, including:

- Restaurant, Brewery, and Bar Grants
- Fitness and Personal Services Sector Grants
- Small Business Relief Grants
- Non-Profit Relief Grants
- Business License Taxes and Fees Grants

These grant programs were developed with input received by small business owners and non-profits that participated in Community Roundtables that informed the development of the LBRA. Over 30 Community Roundtables were hosted in February 2021.

### **Recommended Contract Approval**

City Council approval is requested to enter into a contract with Geocko, Inc., for providing LBRA small business and non-profit grant administration support services. This contract will enable the programs listed above to be launched by Winter of 2022. Geocko, Inc., will administer multiple small business and non-profit grant programs that will provide direct financial relief to small businesses and non-profits impacted by COVID-19 and State and local Health Orders. Geocko, Inc., shall make available an online grant application software system, provide training on the application process to City staff and City partners, intake grant applications, review applications to determine eligibility, provide case management, administer grant payments, and deliver other related services.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) was advertised in the Long Beach Press-Telegram on July 14, 2021, and 1,359 potential proposers specializing in grants administration and professional services were notified of the RFP opportunity. Of those potential proposers, 68 downloaded the RFP via the City's electronic bid system. The RFP document was made available from the Purchasing Division, located on the 6th floor of City Hall, and the Division's website at [www.longbeach.gov/purchasing](http://www.longbeach.gov/purchasing). An RFP announcement was also included in the Purchasing Division's weekly update of Open Bid Opportunities, which was sent to 38 local, minority-owned, and women-owned business groups. There were three proposals received by August 3, 2021. Of those three proposers, none were Minority-owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), none were Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBEs), none were certified Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), and none were Long Beach vendors (Local). The selection committee determined that Geocko, Inc., of Seattle, Washington, was the most qualified firm to provide the services.

Geocko, Inc., was selected due to its organizational capacity and experience delivering similar programs, the quality of its grants application software system, its commitment to advancing the equitable distribution of resources, its willingness to partner with local community-based organizations, and the reasonableness of cost.

### **Local Business Outreach**

To align with the City's outreach goal, Long Beach businesses are encouraged to submit proposals for City contracts. The Purchasing Division also assists businesses with registering on the PlanetBids database to download RFP specifications. Through outreach, 159 Long Beach vendors were notified to submit proposals, of which 11 downloaded and none submitted a proposal. The Purchasing Division is committed to continuing to perform outreach to local vendors to expand the bidder pool.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Lauren Misajon on December 6, 2021, Business Services Bureau Manager Tara Mortensen on December 7, 2021, and by Special Projects Officer Dee Dorband on December 8, 2021.

### **Equity Lens**

The LBRA small business and non-profit grants that will be administered by Geocko, Inc., will embed an equity lens to address the unique needs of diverse business owners and ensure the

equitable distribution of resources. To accomplish this, the vendor will work with City staff to create marketing materials in digital and print format, translate materials into multiple languages, distribute materials, coordinate outreach and application assistance with community-based organizations, and operate a Call Center that can respond to inquiries in multiple languages. The City will leverage its existing BizCare Program, which includes pop-ups equipped with internet, computers, printers and scanners and an outreach team that canvasses commercial corridors to educate and help business owners apply for grant programs. Finally, the City will be contracting with community-based organizations to prioritize outreach to diverse business owners that operate businesses in low-and-moderate income areas. These best practices will enable the City to advance its equity goals for LBRA programs.

### TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action to adopt Specifications No. RFP ED21-068 and award a contract concurrently is requested on January 4, 2022, to ensure the contract is in place expeditiously.

### FISCAL IMPACT

The Long Beach Recovery Act, made possible through American Rescue Plan Act funding, has identified \$20.3 million for the Direct Business Support program. The total amount of this contract will not exceed \$690,000, and will be funded through the Direct Business Support program of the Long Beach Recovery Act. Sufficient funding for the contract is currently budgeted in the General Fund Group in the Economic Development Department. For administration efficiency and reporting and auditing purposes, these are technically General Fund funds. This recommendation has a moderate staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. The award of this contract will provide continued support to our local economy by helping small businesses and non-profits recover from the financial hardship created by COVID-19, which may assist in retaining and creating local private sector jobs.

### SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



JOHN KEISLER

DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

APPROVED:



THOMAS B. MODICA  
CITY MANAGER