PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER

February 12, 2008

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement and any amendments with The California Conference for Equality and Justice to provide Human Dignity Program services for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed $93,000. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

In September 1999, the City Council authorized resources to develop a Human Dignity Program (Program). On December 13, 1999, a Human Dignity Program Officer was hired to implement the Program. Key elements of the Program include a Hate Crime Response Team, an Inter-group Conflict Resolution Team, and diversity training to promote community harmony and mutual acceptance.

Since February 2000, the City of Long Beach has had an agreement with The California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ), formerly known as The National Conference for Community and Justice, to provide training for the Hate Crime Response Team members and conduct community awareness events and other outreach activities to promote the Program. CCEJ's accomplishments have included training 15 new Hate Crime Response Team members, facilitating dialogue with the City's Jewish-Christian-Muslim Leadership Forum, providing valuable assistance with the City's Youth and Gang Violence Prevention Task Force, coordinating elements of the Season for Nonviolence, and assisting with community forums after the Halloween incident in the Bixby Knolls area. The agreement with the CCEJ expired on January 31, 2008. City Council approval is requested to authorize another one-year agreement from February 1, 2008, to January 31, 2009.

Through the contributions of CCEJ, the Program has conducted extensive community human relations outreach and education, resulting in increased cultural understanding and awareness. Presentations have been made throughout the City and surrounding areas. As a result, law enforcement, governmental institutions, the religious community, the educational community, grass roots organizations, and community and neighborhood associations are networked to share resources and send a citywide message that goes beyond tolerance.

With a well-deserved reputation as a leader in the human relations field, CCEJ has been vital to the Program's success. The effectiveness of the Program is monitored through participant surveys, completed calls for service, and by an increased awareness of what constitutes a hate crime. Individuals and organizations report that the Program has proven to be a valuable resource for the citizens of Long Beach in the ongoing efforts to eliminate hate crimes and ensure that visitors and residents are treated with dignity and respect. The Program is especially proud of its precedent-setting partnership with the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD). The Program and the LBPD work closely to identify, report, and provide resources to victims of hate crimes and bias incidents. In an effort to coordinate information, the LBPD has revised their standard forms and developed support documents that include the Program components. The City has gained local, state and national recognition for the Program. The proposed agreement will continue to allow the Program to benefit from the value that the CCEJ adds.

This letter was reviewed by Principal Deputy City Attorney J. Charles Parkin and Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on January 31, 2008.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on February 12, 2008, to ensure the continuity of CCEJ services.

FISCAL IMPACT

The agreement with CCEJ is $93,000 for a one-year period. This represents the same level of funding as the previous agreement. Funds are budgeted in the General Fund (GP) in the City Manager Department (CM).

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER

PHW:RH:MM

CCEJ council letter 2008