



Legislation Text

File #: 07-1167, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to authorize 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)

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.

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.

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

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.

Approve recommendation.

MICHAEL P. CONWAY
ACTING DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NAME
TITLE

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER