



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0805, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to receive and file a presentation from the Long Beach Center for Economic Inclusion on their progress and activities in their first year of operation; and

Direct City Manager and Economic Development to prepare a memo on the implementation status of the city's Everyone in Economic Inclusion Plan and present to council within 90 days.

In June 2019, the Council unanimously approved the 'Everyone In' Implementation Plan, which concluded a two-year community outreach process that created the plan as an outline for addressing the economic disparities between neighborhoods in our city. The plan included a set of key recommendations in the areas of:

- Small Business and Diverse Entrepreneurship
- Procurement
- Workforce and Youth Development
- Connectedness (Economic Resiliency)
- Housing and Homeownership
- The establishment of a Community Development Corporation (CDC)

Since then, the Long Beach Center for Economic Inclusion has assumed its role as Long Beach's first CDC during the COVID-19 pandemic, a situation which posed unique challenges to the Center's mission, as the pandemic's impacts fell disproportionately on the very neighborhoods LBCEI was mandated to uplift.

Thankfully, the project was able to hit the ground running, quickly developing a strong local board of directors; engaging with more than 25 community partners including Wells Fargo, LISC Los Angeles, and the Long Beach Community Action Partnership; and establishing the Long Beach Food Support Network which currently operates nine free food pantries across the city and has distributed 450,000 pounds of free food to the community over the past fifteen months, in addition to PPE and hygiene products. LBCEI has thus far deployed over \$750,000 dollars of resources into the community and serves approximately 1,500 Long Beach families every single week. The Center also hosted a Small Business Resiliency Forum to assist over 200 minority and women-owned businesses struggling during the pandemic, by offering interest free loans, business navigation, and technical assistance.

Future projects include the development of a HUD Certified Counseling Center, developing affordable housing, a partnership with Long Beach City College, providing administrative support to Business Improvement Districts, hosting workforce development programs and

black wealth building initiatives, and offering free multilingual financial literacy classes for residents of all ages, among many others.

Recently, after a national search conducted by The Hawkins Company, Byron Reed was chosen as the Center's new Executive Director. Mr. Reed has a long history of community involvement, with specific expertise in economic inclusion. At CIT/One West Bank, Reed oversaw a multi-million-dollar annual philanthropic grant budget and partnered with key regional elected officials, civic leaders, the faith community, and other nonprofit partners by hosting community forums on the multitude of products & services offered by the bank. Reed also currently serves as the Board Chairman of West Angeles CDC, is an active board member of the Los Angeles Urban League, and volunteers his executive expertise to several other nonprofit organizations locally.

Equity Statement

Like many cities across the country, Long Beach suffers from deep inequalities between neighborhoods. Our city is home to both census tracts with zero poverty and census tracts with poverty rates in higher than 60%.¹ 88% of the more than 100,000 Long Beach residents who live in neighborhoods with above a 30% poverty rate are people of color. These regional inequalities are caused by historic neglect and mistreatment of communities of color and still serve as a cause of racial inequities going forward. Addressing these issues requires concerted and targeted investment in areas of our city that suffer from poverty and blight in order to give their residents full access to the opportunities our city can provide.

As the City recovers from the pandemic, council must keep in mind that the equity lens it used to address COVID-19 applies equally to all crises this city faces, whether it be housing and homelessness, climate change, or underinvestment in our North, Central, and West Long Beach neighborhoods. Entrenched regional inequality within our city directly put residents at risk during this pandemic and should be treated as the public health issue it is going forward. Council should continue support LBCEI in its mission to fight these inequities and seize the opportunity we have to build a better, more equitable city in the aftermath of such a difficult year.

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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