



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0488, Version: 1

Recommendation to authorize City Manager, or designee, to execute a contract, and any necessary documents including any necessary subsequent amendments, with the California State University, Long Beach Research Foundation, to receive and expend grant sub-award funding for the Technology and Innovation Department 'Trust, transparency and technology: Building digital equity through a civic digital commons' project, for program activities including coordination of stakeholder engagement and administrative support, in an amount not to exceed \$14,997, for a period of May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024; and

Increase appropriations in the General Services Fund Group in the Technology and Innovation Department by \$14,997, offset by grant revenue. (Citywide)

City Council approval is requested for the Technology and Innovation Department (TID) to enter into an agreement with the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) Research Foundation to accept and expend grant sub-award funding for program activities related to the Department's 'Trust, transparency and technology: Building digital equity through a civic digital commons' project developed in collaboration with CSULB.

The CSULB Research Foundation was established in 1956 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and exists to enhance and advance the educational mission of CSULB. One of the many responsibilities of the CSULB Research Foundation is to provide accounting and administrative services for programs sponsored by federal, state, local, and private funding used for faculty research projects and training programs.

In July of 2022, the CSULB Department of Journalism and Public Relations submitted a project proposal titled 'Trust, transparency and technology: Building digital equity through a civic digital commons' in response to the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Smart and Connected Communities (S&CC) Planning Grant solicitation, NSF 22-529. The TID developed the proposal with CSULB and is listed as a grant sub-recipient. The goal of the NSF S&CC program solicitation is to accelerate smart and connected communities to bring about new levels of economic opportunity and growth, safety and security, health and wellness, accessibility and inclusivity, and overall quality of life through community-informed research. Planning grants provide project support for a period of up to one year at a level not to exceed \$150,000 in total. On March 7, 2023, the NSF awarded an S&CC planning grant to this proposal (Award Number 2234081), of which \$14,977 is allocated for the City of Long Beach (City) portion of the scope of work.

As internet-enabled smart technologies become more pervasive, support for the notion of extending human rights to encompass digital rights is gaining momentum. The 'Trust,

transparency and technology: Building digital equity through a civic digital commons' project aims to research, develop, and pilot a scalable community-informed digital rights platform that will promote data privacy and transparency in relation to the City's use of technology. The proposed platform will feature visual signage strategically deployed near civic technologies (e.g. sensors, cameras, small cells) as well as a web-based platform where users can learn additional details about the civic technologies and associated data usage and provide feedback to City officials regarding the same. CSULB and TID will facilitate a series of community workshops to ensure the digital rights platform is designed and piloted in response to residents' needs and concerns. Other proposed project stakeholders include local community-based organizations, digital rights subject matter experts, and smart technology developers.

The proposed digital rights platform is a key step toward implementing the City's Data Privacy Guidelines (Guidelines), approved by the City Council in March of 2021 as part of the Smart City Initiative. The Guidelines state that the City will work to ensure that residents can access and correct their personal data and provide individuals with the ability to opt out of data collection (without jeopardizing City service quality) when it is not required for a City service. This project also aligns with the City's Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initial Report and initial outreach conducted by TID in 2020 and 2021 for the City's Smart City Initiative. TID engaged 114 residents in focus groups and over 450 respondents via a multi-lingual survey. Long Beach community members expressed wariness of surveillance technologies used by the City and urged TID to provide greater transparency and accountability regarding their use of personally identifiable data.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Erin Weesner-McKinley on April 12, 2023 and by Budget Analysis Officer Greg Sorensen on April 11, 2023.

City Council action is requested on May 9, 2023, to receive and expend grant funding.

The City will receive grant sub-award funding in the amount of \$14,997 from the California State University, Long Beach Research Foundation for the 'Trust, transparency and technology: Building digital equity through a civic digital commons' project, for a period of May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024. An appropriation increase is requested in the amount of \$14,997 in the General Services Fund Group in the Technology and Innovation Department, offset by grant revenue. The grant has no required match or in-kind service mandate and will further support the Department's existing data privacy efforts. The grant sub-award funds will be used for program activities including coordination of stakeholder engagement and administrative support to be performed by a TID Smart Cities Communications Fellow. This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. It is anticipated that there will be a positive impact on local jobs, as grant funds will be used to partially compensate the Smart Cities Communications Fellow and will also support local community-based organizations for their involvement.

Approve recommendation.

LEA D. ERIKSEN
DIRECTOR
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

APPROVED:

THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER