Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	Recommendation to adopt Specifications No. RFP ED22-022 and award a contract to Human-I-T, of Long Beach, CA, to implement and administer the Free Internet Services & Computing Devices Program, in an amount of $1,000,000, with a 20 percent contingency in the amount of $200,000, for a total amount not to exceed of $1,200,000 for a period of two years, with the option to renew for three additional one-year periods, at the discretion of the City Manager; and, authorize City Manager, or designee, to execute all documents necessary to enter into the contract, including any necessary subsequent amendments. (Citywide)				
Sponsors:	Economic Development, Technology and Innovation				
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/14/2022	1	City Council	approve recommendation	Pass

Recommendation to adopt Specifications No. RFP ED22-022 and award a contract to Human-I-T, of Long Beach, CA, to implement and administer the Free Internet Services & Computing Devices Program, in an amount of $1,000,000, with a 20 percent contingency in the amount of $200,000, for a total amount not to exceed of $1,200,000 for a period of two years, with the option to renew for three additional one-year periods, at the discretion of the City Manager; and, authorize City Manager, or designee, to execute all documents necessary to enter into the contract, including any necessary subsequent amendments. (Citywide)

Long Beach Recovery Act

On March 16, 2021, the City Council adopted the Long Beach Recovery Act (LB Recovery Act) becoming one of the first major cities to approve COVID-19 recovery programs made possible through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and other federal and State funding sources. Additional funding adjustments to the LB Recovery Act 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 LB Recovery Act is available at longbeach.gov/recovery. As part of the LB Recovery Act, under the category of Economic Recovery, approximately $1.5 million was allocated towards advancing the City's digital equity and inclusion efforts.

Long Beach Digital Inclusion Initiative Overview

Like other cities across the country, Long Beach is experiencing a digital divide, meaning

some communities do not have access to and use of digital literacy training, the internet, and technology devices. As captured by the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates, low-income communities, Black/African-American, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous and other communities of color, and older adults are disproportionately affected by the digital divide in Long Beach. To address these digital inequities, especially for communities most in need, the City developed the Digital Inclusion Initiative (Initiative).

The Initiative is a Citywide effort that focuses on ensuring that every individual in Long Beach, regardless of background, neighborhood, or identity has high quality, accessible, technology resources and services to be civically engaged and socially and economically empowered. The Initiative and City of Long Beach (City) have received ample recognition for advancing digital equity and inclusion efforts. In 2021, the City was recognized as a Digital Inclusion Trailblazer by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA). This is a national honor roll of local government initiatives that promote digital literacy and Broadband access for underserved residents. This is the third time the City has received this national distinction. Additionally, City staff received the Charles Benton Digital Equity Champion Award, also given by the NDIA. This national award recognizes outstanding leadership and dedication in advancing digital equity. The City also received the Award of Distinction presented by the California Association of Public Information Officials (CAPIO) in 2019 for their successful implementation of the 2018 International Digital Inclusion Week (IDIW) Social Media Engagement Campaign. This award is presented annually by CAPIO to honor outstanding public agency information and communications programs.

Long Beach Free Internet Services and Computing Devices Program Overview

The City's Free Internet Services and Computing Devices Program (Program) is an effort that helps Long Beach communities most in need stay connected with critical connectivity, technology, and training resources and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Program will provide free mobile hotspots with one-year paid internet service and free Chromebooks on a first-come, first-served basis to qualified, low-income residents and small business owners with proof of income eligibility, a Long Beach address, and an active business license (for small business owners only).

The Program was originally made possible through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) in 2020. In partnership with the Long Beach Public Library, the Long Beach Housing Authority, and ten community-based organizations (CBOs), more than 1,000 free internet hotspots and 1,500 free computing devices were administered to Long Beach communities most in need in March 2021. The current Program goals include:

· Increasing free internet access and usage for low-income residents, Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and other people of color, and small business owners
· Increasing free computer access and usage for low-income residents, Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and other people of color, and small business owners

To qualify for the Program, residents will need to show proof of qualifying income at 200

percent below the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Many residents will meet the qualifications through their participation in a government benefit program. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Cal Grants/State Financial Aid
- California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE)
- Head Start
- Lifeline
- Medi-Cal/Medicaid
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Public Housing Assistance/Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/CalFresh/Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)\
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

City staff co-designed the Program in partnership with the lived experiences, expertise, and input received from residents as part of the community engagement process for the development of the City's Digital Inclusion Roadmap (Roadmap). The Roadmap is a blueprint for ensuring that everyone in Long Beach has equitable access and use of digital inclusion resources and services. The foundation of the Roadmap includes a vision statement, goals, objectives, and strategies through a Collective Impact Approach and equity lens in the focus areas of: capacity, connectivity, and technology.

The Roadmap was co-developed with cross-sector partners and the community to advance digital inclusion goals, objectives, and strategies Citywide. City staff collaborated with trusted CBOs where they collectively engaged more than 170 residents through equity-centered community pop-ups, workshops, interviews, and a survey in 2020. The top solutions uplifted by residents during the community engagement process included providing free quality internet services and computers. Hence, City staff used the input of community solutions provided directly by residents and co-developed this Program that would specifically address their connectivity and technology needs. In June 2021, the City Council approved the Roadmap.

Recommended Contract Approval

City Council approval is requested to enter into a contract with Human-I-T to administer the Program. Human-I-T shall provide management of the Program including, but not limited to: hotspots and computing devices administration and technical support, community outreach materials co-development, and virtual digital literacy training program administration.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) was advertised in the Long Beach Press-Telegram on February 10, 2022, and 756 potential proposers specializing in technology equipment

handling, and consulting were notified of the RFP opportunity. Of those potential proposers, 44 downloaded the RFP via the City's electronic bid system. The RFP document was made available from the Purchasing Division, located on the sixth floor of City Hall, and the Division's website at www.longbeach.gov/purchasing. An RFP announcement was also included in the Purchasing Division's weekly update of Open Bid Opportunities, which is sent to 39 local, minority-owned, and women-owned business groups. Robust outreach of the RFP announcement was implemented via email, press release, newsletters, and social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter). City staff hosted an Information Session on February 17, 2022, where more than 40 individuals from 17 different organizations were in attendance.

There were 11 proposals received on March 10, 2022. Of those 11 proposers, 2 were Minority-owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), 1 was a Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBEs), 2 were certified Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), and 10 were Long Beach vendors (Local). The selection committee determined that Human-I-T, of Long Beach, CA (SBE, Local), was the most qualified firm to provide the services.

Human-I-T was selected due to their demonstrated organizational capacity and local and regional experience in developing, administering, and evaluating digital inclusion resources and services. This includes administration of free and low-cost internet services, technology, digital literacy training, and technical support. Additionally, Human-I-T is equipped with the capacity to reach more than one of the outreach communities provided in the RFP and has language access capacity. They are also able to fulfill the City's reporting requirements for the LB Recovery Act and provided a program budget that was reasonable in 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, 126 Long Beach vendors were notified to submit proposals, of which 19 downloaded and 10 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, Purchasing Agent Michelle Wilson, and by Recovery Budget Officer Dee Okam on May 26, 2022.

EQUITY LENS

The City has incorporated the Equity Toolkit in this recommendation, as requested by the City Council on April 21, 2020. The services derived from this contract were completed in accordance with the City's procurement policies. An equity lens has and will continue to be used in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this Program. Examples of equity-centered best practices that will be applied to this Program include but not limited to:

· Centering the needs and voices of residents when co-designing the Program

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· Allocating LB Recovery Act funding to trusted CBOs to implement extensive community outreach activities
· Hosting community outreach activities where residents and small business owners are already gathering
· Removing cost barriers and distributing free digital inclusion resources and services to residents and small business owners most impacted by the digital divide
· Providing translation and interpretation services in Khmer, Spanish, and Tagalog

These best practices will enable the City to advance its equity goals as highlighted in the Roadmap and the Framework for Reconciliation - Initial Report.

City Council action to adopt Specifications No. RFP ED22-022 and award a contract concurrently is requested on June 14, 2022, to ensure the contract is in place expeditiously for the administration of this Program.

The LB Recovery Act has identified $1.5 million for the Program. The total amount of the contract is $1 million, with a 20 percent contingency of $200,000 for a total amount not to exceed of $1,200,000 and will be funded through the Bridge the Divide programs of the LB Recovery Act. Sufficient funding for the contract is currently budgeted in the General Fund Group in the Economic Development Department. For administrative efficiency and for reporting and auditing purposes, the funding source for this program is the General Fund based on funds made available as a result of the City's approach to using the majority of federal ARPA funds to maintain existing Parks, Recreation and Marine and Police services in compliance with the U.S. Department of Treasury's Final Rule, thereby freeing up General Fund monies for the LB Recovery Act programs.

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 to alleviate the connectivity, technology, and training challenges and barriers exacerbated by COVID-19. This contract will assist in the preservation of employment for at least 14 employees residing in Long Beach.

Approve recommendation.

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JOHNNY M. VALLEJO
ACTING DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEA D. ERIKSEN
DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

APPROVED:

THOMAS B. MODICA

CITY MANAGER