



Legislation Text

File #: 18-0039, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request that the City Manager's office; Health and Human Services Department; Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department; and/or Public Works Department engage nonprofits regarding the feasibility of establishing a pilot Day Work Program focused on people suffering from homelessness based on successful programs implemented by other cities. The City will look into the fiscal impact of such a program, possible partners, as well as the potential benefits to the efforts being made to help individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as a public education campaign to encourage donations to this program and other opportunities to support addressing homelessness. The intent of this item is to offer new opportunities to those experiencing homelessness not to replace workers already employed by the city.

Should include but is not limited to:

1. Community partners to serve as fiscal agents, to provide housing for participants, and to provide other necessary components to success of the program;
2. Various forms of payment and daily wage for participants in the program, taking into consideration challenges posed when participants do not have identification;
3. Pick-up locations;
4. Screening process for interested participants;
5. Category of work in which participants will engage;
6. Department in charge of supervision of participants;
7. Implementation costs;
8. Fundraising opportunities for continued funding of the program after implementation;
9. Outreach efforts to ensure maximum participation and community education;
10. Develop a public information campaign that encourages donations

to support this program and other programs that provide services to assist homeless people.

INTRODUCTION:

With over 1,800 individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Long Beach, it is time we look again to the examples set by other cities for new and innovative approaches to focus on homelessness. Long Beach has expanded permanent housing availability, led a highly successful Continuum of Care program, and established a street outreach network comprised of various departments including the Health and Human Services Department, Long Beach Police Department, and Long Beach Fire Department, but more still needs to be done. One promising program seen in many cities is a day work program where those suffering from homelessness are given an opportunity to work with city departments.

Cities around the country have begun providing paths for individuals to overcome homelessness including access to services and work. One of the many promising examples began in 2015 when the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico established a program called "There's a Better Way." The program offers work on a day-today basis twice a week to homeless people by working with the Public Works Department. After work the individuals are taken to a nonprofit where they are connected with services. This is meant to reach those that typically refuse the services offered to them that made a public awareness campaign essential to the program's success. The campaign focused on known high volume locations and had signage encouraging those experiencing homelessness to reach out for services and urged those who want to give money to do so online by donating to the program.

The program has led to nearly 3,500 daily jobs that have been given to almost 900 participants, with over 350 participants connected with additional work opportunities, and nearly 50 of those participants finding permanent jobs. All of which is on top of the over 550 city blocks that have been cleaned, over 165,000 pounds of litter removed, over 20 people received stable housing, and over 200 participants have been engaged with mental health and substance abuse services." These successes all began with an initial budget of \$50,000 from the City of Albuquerque while the program's online donation platform also collected \$63,8074

Albuquerque is similar in size to Long Beach, and its recent homeless count indicated that there are a similar number of individuals experiencing homelessness with 1,318 making their model an appropriate one to consider.

But Albuquerque is not alone in developing programs like this. The City of Tucson, Arizona developed a work program by partnering with Pima County, Arizona in June 2017. It is offered three days a week, and operates two pick-up locations at shelters in the City. In Tucson's model a small number of individuals per day are able to work and each individual has a maximum of 12 days each year they can work," as well as being required to clear a medical screening. The program is funded by the City of Tucson and the County of Pima, but it is

administered by the nonprofit, Old Pueblo Community Services. The initial funding for the program was a combination of: \$25,000 from the City of Tucson, \$25,000 from the County of Pima, and a \$50,000 private donation.

Recent homeless counts in Tucson indicating that there are 1,762 individuals experiencing homelessness. and the first months of the program have had 166 participants, leading to more than 37,000 pounds of trash getting picked up, 17 people finding housing, and 20 people finding stable employment.

However, Albuquerque and Tucson are just two models that have been developed to offer work for those suffering from homelessness. On December 18, 2017 the Long Beach Health and Human Services Department released a thorough memo in response to a May 23, 2017 agenda item approved by City Council requesting a comprehensive strategy for homelessness and related quality of life issues. This memo included an assessment that developing a program to allow willing homeless individuals to participate in day work projects with city departments would be feasible. It explains that a pilot day work program could best be implemented in partnership with a nonprofit, and lists a range of Public Works, and Parks, Recreation and Marine Department projects that would be appropriate to conduct in Long Beach including; litter abatement, spreading mulch, undeveloped alley and park site cleanups, and other maintenance and beautification related projects. The memo further includes information on a number of specific cities across the country with day work programs addressing homelessness including Albuquerque's program as well as programs operated in Anaheim, Bakersfield, Denver, New York City, Hayward, Marin, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz.

With a breadth of successful case studies to look at across the country, now is a perfect time for Long Beach to work with our local nonprofits to develop a program that continues the commitments we have made to aiding the homeless. This should also include a public education campaign that encourages donations to this program as well as other programs that have the biggest impact and benefit for our homeless population. Those people struggling to support themselves in Long Beach need to know that they can work to better themselves, and that the city wants to give them an opportunity to make our city a better place. Offering work becomes a hand up, not a hand out by building self-respect and pride in work while improving, beautifying, and maintaining the wonderful city we all share. For those in need a simple opportunity can be life changing.

There is not a significant financial impact as a result of the recommended engagement and feasibility study.

Approve recommendation.

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