



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0064, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to authorize City Manager, or designee, to submit a grant application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration through its Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grant program, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000, to support the Long Beach Tourism Media and Training Center Project. (District 1)

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) has \$750 million in American Rescue Plan Funds allocated to support the recovery of communities whose economies rely on travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors. The Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grant program provides funding to help communities hit hardest by challenges facing travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors to invest in infrastructure, workforce development, or other projects that support the recovery and economic resilience of the community.

The City of Long Beach (City) proposes to construct the Long Beach Tourism Media and Training Center (Project) in the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center. The Project is a digital media broadcast studio and teaching/training space that supports virtual and hybrid convention and special event programming to support the local and regional hospitality and tourism industry. The digital media broadcast studio is an innovative concept that will allow the tourism and hospitality industries to offer online and hybrid conventions and special events while creating opportunities that revive the industry to help boost the economy and create more jobs. The Project provides a space that can be utilized by educators and trainers from local higher educational institutions who will educate the next generation in the industry while simultaneously helping hospitality and tourism businesses adapt to new technologies that are required to successfully operate in today's digital environment.

This Project is needed to maximize training for a skilled hospitality, tourism, and creative workforce to be channeled into a jobs pipeline for the hospitality and tourism industry that needs skilled labor. The Project will also expand the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center's capacity for virtual and hybrid conference formats that will increase the number of conventions and result in job creation/retention opportunities and generate revenue to the tourism industry.

The City will engage Project partners to set up the workforce training curriculum and programs that will create a job pipeline for trainees, which are not funded by the EDA grant, but necessary for Project implementation. This engagement will include the following:

- Securing community benefit agreements between the City and local educational institutions, such as California State University Long Beach (CSULB) and Long Beach City College (LBCC) for the use of space in the digital media broadcast studio for

instruction/training and research symposiums, catering to enrolled students in broadcasting, art/design, communications, journalism, marketing, hospitality/tourism degree and certificate programs, and existing workers in the hospitality/tourism/outdoor recreation sectors who want to advance their skills.

- Expanding the development of creative and hospitality-related curriculum at the Project location - a satellite center for CSULB/LBCC as a part of their Broadcasting and Multimedia Arts, Communications, Journalism, Marketing, Business, Recreation, Leisure Studies and similar certificate and degree programs.

- Partnering with Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network (PGWIN), the local workforce development agency that coordinates internships, apprenticeships, and other experiential work placements, to support the digital media broadcast studio, conventions and events, restaurants and food service caterers, hospitality retail sales, and hotel operations at local private employers.

The Project addresses the economic development needs of the region by addressing worker gap and skills gap issues through the delivery of training and the development of a job placement pipeline that supports the recovery and resiliency of the hospitality/tourism industry. The Project delivers a workforce development program that supports transformative change in preparing the next generation of hospitality/tourism and creative workers, many of whom are women and BIPOC, with new skills for post-pandemic jobs. The grant performance period is from September 2022 to September 2027. If awarded, the Project will be implemented by the Economic Development and Public Works Departments.

This matter was reviewed by Principal Deputy City Attorney Richard F. Anthony on December 27, 2021 and by Budget Management Officer Nader Kaamoush on January 3, 2022.

City Council action is requested on January 18, 2022, to submit the grant application to the granting agency by the January 26, 2022 deadline.

If the grant application is successful, the City will receive grant funding in an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000 to implement the Long Beach Tourism Media and Training Center Project through 2027. The grant requires a match of 20 percent of the requested funding and the City share would not exceed \$1,000,000. The City anticipates receiving capital investment proceeds from the City's Convention Center operator and \$1,000,000 will be set aside for the EDA grant match requirement. If the anticipated match payment is not secured, the City will not accept the grant until an alternative funding source is identified. If the grant is awarded, staff will return to the City Council for approval to accept and appropriate the grant funds. The \$6,000,000 from the grant and City match will fund the design, permits, and construction of the Project and associated equipment within the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, transforming it into a state-of-the-art digital media broadcast studio where filming, editing, and production of digital content will take place. The project will create capacity for online, streaming, and hybrid conventions, special events, training and classes, and production of tourism-supporting digital content to meet the needs of post-pandemic hospitality and tourism industry to retain and create jobs and build a skilled workforce. The

ongoing operations of the Project will be funded by the City's partners.

This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. There is a significant local job impact associated with this recommendation. The Project is anticipated to create construction jobs associated with the Project's construction. The Project will maximize training for a skilled hospitality and tourism-related workforce to be channeled into a jobs pipeline for the industry that needs skilled labor. The Project will expand the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center and related local business capacity for virtual and hybrid conference formats to increase the number of conventions, generate revenue to the tourism industry, and create and retain jobs in the hospitality/tourism industry. The Project will provide a regional skilled workforce available to fill critical vacancies quickly.

Approve recommendation.

JOHN KEISLER
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

APPROVED:

THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER