



Date: November 8, 2019

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, Acting City Manager 

Subject: **City of Long Beach Homeless Employment Pilot Program**

At its meeting on January 16, 2018, the City Council requested that the City Manager's Office, Health and Human Services Department (Health 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. As a result, the Health Department has been actively working in partnership with Pacific Gateway Workforce Network (Pacific Gateway) on the development, implementation, and evaluation of a Homeless Employment pilot program to employ residents who are currently experiencing homelessness (Program).

The goal of the Program is to engage both sheltered (living in homeless shelters or precariously housed) and unsheltered residents in steady, subsidized employment that provides them with base earnings, and equips them with skills needed to secure competitive employment. Participants in the pilot Program will also have an opportunity for competitive City employment opportunities, as well as be assisted in applying for available City jobs. Funding for this pilot Program comes from the one-time funds under the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP).

The pilot Program seeks to serve 30 residents who are experiencing homelessness. At a minimum, half of those participating will be connected to 320 hours of subsidized employment, described as a City-Subsidized Work Activity. These participants are likely those with the most significant barriers, preventing them from accessing unsubsidized employment. City-Subsidized Work Activities are outlined below:

- The pilot Program will serve individuals in three cohorts of five to seven participants each.
- Participants are recruited from shelters, the Multi-Service Center, eligible Pacific Gateway clients, area walk-and-talks with unsheltered individuals, and from community-based partners.
- Individuals will be assessed for suitability to ensure participants are able to complete employment requirements and meet basic background screening.
- After assessment, each cohort will be picked up from one of three pick-up locations and transported to/from a worksite to work a shift of four or five hours.

- The work shift will be completed on a City/public property, such as a park site, Public Works project, or other City worksite to complete a variety of short-term tasks.
- Participants will be supervised by an onsite Employment Liaison. This position will be held by a formerly homeless resident partially funded through a grant with Mental Health America.
- Two best practices will be implemented: same-day (or same-week) payment for work completed; and offering a snack and full meal with every workday.
- A work assignment is four months. Over this time, participants will access various work readiness and job search opportunities, provided on-site, to help them prepare for an employment transition.
- Pacific Gateway will also aggregate entry level positions from area employers to offer participants at the conclusion of their subsidized work period.

The other half of the participants of the pilot Program will be served through supportive work readiness, job search, and job placement to help them transition existing skills into a new job, or access training scholarships of up to \$7,500. These services are described as Supportive Employment Activities. Activities are outlined below:

- Participants will be recruited from area housing shelters, eligible Pacific Gateway clients, and from other community-based partners.
- Individuals will be assessed for suitability to ensure participants are able to complete employment requirements and meet basic background screening.
- A suitable candidate for this pilot would include individuals who are job-ready, or face a singular primary barrier, such as a criminal background, past substance abuse, training or certifications, or gaps in employment.
- Participants will receive a tailored suite of services to help them utilize existing employment skills to directly gain employment, or to enter into vocational training at no cost to them.
- To serve these customers more directly, Pacific Gateway will meet customers at a shelter or community-based site of their choice, a coffee shop or other accessible location. Each will receive individualized support, child care support, and other supports as needed.
- Mock interviews, interview workshops, and resume development offered by outside expert facilitators will be made available.
- Hiring incentives in the form of 'On-the-Job' training funds for employers will include a 50 percent reimbursement of wages for an initial hiring period.

The pilot Program is in the final stages of development, and will begin recruitment of the Homeless Peer Liaison and participants for the cohorts by November 15, 2019.

For further information, please contact Interim Deputy City Manager Teresa Chandler at (562) 570-5116, or Teresa.chandler@longbeach.gov.

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