

Date: September 15, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: Employment Pilot Program for Residents Experiencing Homelessness - Update

In Fall 2019, Pacific Gateway was awarded \$300,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) to develop and implement an employment program serving high-need residents who are experiencing homelessness. The pilot program, named PACE (Pathways Advancing to City Employment) was developed to move residents through a sequence of activities to build job skills, support personal development and equip people for entry-level work within the City or private sector. The pilot was designed to serve 30 residents in two distinct groups:

1. 15 residents, in 3 cohorts, served through a new, intensive City site work program (Cohort Services); and,
2. 15 residents connected to career development and employment opportunities through traditional workforce development services (Individual Workforce Services)

Participant Objectives - each participant:

- Works, on average 310 hours, earning \$4,650 (\$15/hour);
- Gains employment skills to equip them for non-subsidized work;
- Is connected to an employment opportunity either in the City or in the general job market at completion;
- Gains access to other support to help them become job-ready; and,
- Experiences positive support from staff and fellow cohort members, further advancing their self-sufficiency.

Other benefits of the program include:

- Participating City departments benefit from the no-cost labor, enabling them to advance specific projects or backlogs of work; and,
- Meeting program needs makes Pacific Gateway even more knowledgeable, fiscally nimble, and responsive to unique needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

Program Elements for the Cohort Services model include:

1. Transportation provided daily from the Multi-Service Center to the job site (Willow Springs Park at this time);
2. Participants are initially paid out each day, then through a weekly paycheck (ADP), and then a biweekly paycheck to assist in the transition to regular earnings;

3. Lunch is provided at the end of each shift;
4. The number of hours participants work increases through the cohort;
5. A Pacific Gateway case manager works with the participants in partnership with staff from the City site (Office of Sustainability, Willow Springs); some grant funds are used to help provide for additional (Office of Sustainability) staff hours to manage cohort;
6. Pacific Gateway collaborates with the Multi-Service Center and its partner, Goodwill, to provide additional skills development; and,
7. At completion of hours, participants are placed in new employment, either at a City site (Non-Career, part-time) or in the job market in roles similar to their City site work.

The 15 engaged in the Individual Workforce Services model experience a variety of supports to complete traditional workforce programming, skills assessment, supportive services, work experience (at a nonprofit or private business), and support to transition to a new job.

Though there have been barriers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 17 participants have been enrolled in the program to date:

- 10 are enrolled in the intensive Willow Springs cohorts (2 of the 8 have been temporarily paused in the program due to personal matters); and,
- 7 have been enrolled in supportive workforce activities; of these, 5 have completed, 2 continue in, the program.

Moving forward, there are 13 available participant slots that will be filled by October 31, 2020. This will include one additional cohort for Willow Springs and eight additional non-City site participants. Pacific Gateway is exploring alternative work sites for this program and for use in the future. As participants complete the first phase of the program, those able to complete a course of study will be offered vocational training scholarships to continue with their education in this or another career field (up to \$7,500). We are excited about the opportunities this program is opening for people and are hopeful that we can continue this program going forward.

If you have any questions, please contact Deputy City Manager Teresa Chandler at (562) 570-5116.

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