

April 22, 2025

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and any necessary documents, including any amendments, between the City of Long Beach and West Coast Credible Messengers to implement programs aimed at supporting teens at the Library. (District 1)

DISCUSSION

West Coast Credible Messengers (WCCM) is a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to fostering positive change and reducing recidivism by empowering individuals with lived experience in the prison system to become credible messengers of hope, inspiration, and transformation. Their vision is to create a West Coast community where individuals with justice-involved backgrounds are valued for their potential and contributions. WCCM seeks to replace the stigma of incarceration with opportunities for growth and to inspire others through stories of transformation. WCCM provides services and insight into working with at-risk teens that Library, Arts and Culture (Library) staff is unable to provide. Their unique perspective as former gang members and formerly justice-involved individuals informs their work from a lived experience perspective that resonates with the teens that the Library serves.

WCCM's Teens and Emerging Adults department aims to develop impactful programs that address the needs of at-risk teens and young adults, many of whom already frequent the library. WCCM provides a specialized curriculum that emphasizes the value of education and guides youth toward higher learning while connecting them to essential resources. Their programming focuses on life skills such as personal motivation, effective communication, self-control, and conflict management. Sessions include presentations, guest speakers, reading and writing exercises, and interactive group activities.

At Billie Jean King Main Library, staff have encountered various challenges with at-risk teens, sometimes resulting in temporary exclusions from the library. The goal of this proposal is to help teens successfully use the library as a safe space while highlighting its role as a resource for skill development, personal interests, and lifelong learning. The library is committed to making a positive impact on teens from all backgrounds. WCCM has already utilized the library's teen lounge for programming, with strong attendance reflecting both interest and relevance. Library staff have observed a decrease in serious behavioral issues and anticipate further improvements as WCCM expands its collaboration. The Memorandum of Understanding will support the continuation of this collaborative effort between the City of Long Beach and WCCM to implement programs designed to support teens. WCCM programming at Billie Jean King Main Library is

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made possible through a grant from the University of California, Irvine.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Atoy Wilson on April 7, 2025, and by Revenue Management Officer Geraldine Alejo on April 4, 2025.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

Upon MOU approval, WCCM will offer programs this spring, summer, and fall to engage and support local youth. Programs will range from 4 to 10 weeks in length to maintain flexibility, ensuring participants stay engaged without burnout. WCCM will meet with youth on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the teen lounge for the duration of each program.

The WCCM team will meet monthly with Library, Arts, and Culture Department to assess program impact, review data, and make necessary adjustments. Library staff and WCCM will also collaborate regularly to address concerns and evaluate program effectiveness in real time.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Long Beach and WCCM will allow WCCM to use space at Billie Jean King Main Library for programs aimed at supporting teens. Library facility use will be provided by the City to WCCM at no charge. There will be no cost to the Library, Arts, and Culture Department. WCCM will be responsible for all costs associated with its programs, including staffing and materials. This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Cathy De Leon

Director

Library, Arts, And Culture

APPROVED:



THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER