

April 9, 2024

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to adopt Specification No. RFP HE23-364 and award a contract to Aqua Crop LLC, of Sherman Oaks, CA, to implement and operate the Mobile Healthy Food Market Program and procure or modify an existing self-contained vehicle, manage staff, and procure produce and supplies in partnership with the Health Department's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention's Nutrition Security Initiatives Section, in a total amount not to exceed \$630,000 for a period of one year, with the option to renew for three additional one-year periods in an annual amount not to exceed \$595,000, at the discretion of the City Manager; and, authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute all documents necessary to enter into the contract, including any necessary subsequent amendments. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

Long Beach Recovery Act

On March 16, 2021, the City Council adopted the Long Beach Recovery Act (LB Recovery Act), becoming one of the first major cities to approve COVID-19 recovery programs made possible through the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and other federal and state funding sources. Additional funding adjustments to the LB Recovery Act have been made and have been brought to the City Council as needed. Additional information about the LB Recovery Act is available at www.longbeach.gov/recovery. As part of the LB Recovery Act, under the Healthy and Safe Community category, approximately \$1.3 million has been allocated for the Nutrition Security Initiatives' Mobile Healthy Food Market program to increase access to affordable fresh produce in neighborhoods defined as having poor food access and increase opportunities for residents to be connected to other services and resources to address the social determinants of health and improve health outcomes.

Mobile Healthy Food Market

City Council approval is requested to enter into a contract with Aqua Crop LLC to launch a Mobile Healthy Food Market in partnership with the Health Department's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, and to expand access to affordable and culturally-relevant produce in neighborhoods identified as having limited access to healthy food options. To achieve the goals outlined in the Request for Proposal (RFP), Aqua Crop LLC will acquire an "eco-friendly" golfcart-style vehicle modified to support food storage and display that will serve as a Mobile Healthy Food Market. Partnering with Calibbean Farm and a network of local distributors, vendors, and

food producers, the electric Mobile Healthy Food Market will create an environmentally and economically sustainable system designed to offer a diverse range of fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables in neighborhoods identified as having limited access to healthy foods.

The market will operate four days a week at two sites per day in West, Central, and North LB, to increase access to healthy and affordable foods. It is anticipated that the markets will operate for two hours at each site, with a morning and afternoon set up (example, 9am-11am and then 1pm-3pm). Actual hours will be developed based on the highest potential utilization at selected sites.

The RFP was advertised in the Long Beach Press-Telegram on December 23, 2023, and 354 potential proposers specializing in food management services were notified of the RFP opportunity. Of those potential proposers, twelve downloaded the RFP via the City's electronic bid system. The RFP document was made available from the Purchasing Division, located on the sixth floor of City Hall, and the Division's website at www.longbeach.gov/purchasing. An RFP announcement was also included in the Purchasing Division's weekly update of Open Bid Opportunities, which is sent to 39 local, minority-owned, and women-owned business groups. There were four proposals received on February 8, 2024. Of those four proposers, one is a Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE), none are Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBEs), one is a certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE), and two are Long Beach vendors (Local). The selection committee determined that Aqua Crop LLC, of Sherman Oaks, CA (MBE, SBE) was the most qualified vendor to provide the services.

Aqua Crop LLC was chosen because of the conformance of their proposal with the RFP, the services it proposed to implement for the Mobile Healthy Food Market Program, the reasonableness of cost in providing those services, and its experience and expertise in conducting its operations in reaching the targeted population prioritized in the RFP.

Local Business Outreach

To align with the City's outreach goal, Long Beach businesses are encouraged to submit proposals for City contracts. The Purchasing Division also assists businesses with registering on the Long Beach Buys platform to download RFP specifications. Through outreach, 129 Long Beach vendors were notified to submit bids, of which 12 downloaded and 2 submitted bids. The Purchasing Division is committed to continuing to perform outreach to local vendors to expand the bidder pool.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Marsha Yasuda on March 22, 2024, and by Purchasing Agent Michelle Wilson and Recovery Budget Officer Dee Okam on March 25, 2024.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action to adopt Specification No. RFP HE23-364 and award a contract is requested on April 9, 2024, to ensure the contracts are in place expeditiously and can be administered before the conclusion of the Long Beach Recovery Act.

EQUITY LENS

The City has incorporated the Equity Toolkit in this recommendation, as requested by the City Council on April 21, 2020. The services derived from this contract were completed in accordance with procurement procedures.

The Mobile Healthy Food Market Program will strengthen the City's food system and contribute to the City's strategic vision to support and engage in efforts to increase access to affordable, healthy, and culturally specific food.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Long Beach Recovery Act has identified \$1.3 million for the Mobile Healthy Food Market program. The total amount of the contract with Aqua Crop LLC will not exceed \$630,000 and will be funded through the Mobile Healthy Food Market program of the Long Beach Recovery Act. Sufficient funding for the contract is budgeted in the General Fund Group in the Health and Human Services Department. For administration efficiency and for reporting and auditing purposes, the funding source for this program is the General Fund based on funds made available as a result of the City's approach to using the majority of federal APRA funds to maintain existing City services in compliance with the U.S. Department of Treasury's Final Rule, thereby freeing up General Fund monies for the LB Recovery Act programs.

This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. Approval of this recommendation is anticipated to result in a positive impact on local jobs.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. B. Modica', is written over a horizontal line.

Thomas B. Modica
City Manager