

January 7, 2025

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute all necessary documents and any subsequent amendments, including amendments to the award amount or terms, with the California Public Utilities Commission to accept and expend grant funding in the amount of \$23,613 for the California Advanced Services Fund for Broadband Access grant, for the term January 2025 through January 2027.

Recommendation to authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute all necessary documents and any subsequent amendments, including amendments to the award amount or terms, with the California Public Utilities Commission to accept and expend grant funding in the amount of \$36,498 for the California Advanced Services Fund for Digital Literacy grant, for the term January 2025 through January 2027.

Increase appropriations in the General Services Fund Group in the Technology and Innovation Department by \$60,111 offset by grant revenue. (Districts 3, 6)

DISCUSSION

City Council approval is requested to approve the appropriation of funds to expand broadband access and provide digital skills training led by the Office of Digital Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) in the Technology and Innovation Department.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) aims to bridge the digital divide through various initiatives and grant programs. One of their key efforts is the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF), a grant program administered by the CPUC to expand broadband infrastructure and adoption across the State. CASF grants support projects that provide high-speed internet access to underserved and unserved areas. The program aims to bridge the digital divide by funding infrastructure projects, digital literacy training and public education initiatives. The City of Long Beach (City) applied for and was awarded the following grants:

California Advanced Services Fund for Broadband Access

The City has expanded public Wi-Fi access at twenty-four parks citywide. Currently, there are no public Wi-Fi access points at Recreation Park. The Office of Digital Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) applied to the CPUC CASF Grant to fund free public Wi-Fi at Recreation Park, to further expand residents' access to free public Wi-Fi, prioritizing broadband availability. Under this

grant, the City will work to expand public Wi-Fi access at Recreation Park community center by installing equipment for three access points, a switch and other equipment needed inside the community center, allowing residents to access free public Wi-Fi. All equipment will connect to the City's network. The total amount awarded for this project is \$23,613. A complete list of all the City parks and libraries with free public Wi-Fi is available here:

<https://www.longbeach.gov/digitalinclusion/resources/city-provided-digital-inclusion-resources/>

California Advanced Services Fund for Digital Literacy

The Cambodia Town Digital Skills Learn and Earn Program will provide Cambodia Town residents with 10 hours of basic digital skills training in a culturally relevant and language accessible format at Mark Twain Library. Outreach for this program will be conducted by a trusted community partner and ODEI, who will pop up at Mark Twain Library and at MacArthur Park as well as local community events, such as the Night Market in Cambodia Town. The City will bring on contractors to provide digital skills training in English with translation services available in Spanish, Tagalog and Khmer. During this multi-week training, residents will complete 10 hours of digital skills training that will leave them with the skills to operate their smartphone, turn on/charge their computer, create an email address, and other relevant digital skills. At the end of their training, residents will earn a certificate of achievement and eligible residents will receive a computing device. The project will aim to serve 50 residents by offering four cohorts consisting of 10 to 15 participants per cohort. The class structure will consist of 5 digital skills sessions with each session lasting 2 hours. This program will be a pilot, and the data will inform future grant applications to expand digital literacy courses at other City libraries or parks. The total awarded amount for this project is \$36,498.

The CPUC is administering the funds for the grant. In November 2024, the City received grant agreements from the CPUC. City Council action is required to execute the agreement and appropriate the funds to implement digital inclusion activities.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Adam Jacobs on December 9, 2024, and by Budget Management Officer Nader Kaamoush on December 16, 2024.

EQUITY LENS

The recommended action is aligned with the Digital Inclusion Roadmap (Roadmap) and 2030 Strategic Vision. Specifically, Objective 3.2 of the Strategic Vision is to ensure low-cost technology devices and high-speed internet are available in communities with the least access. The objective aims to ensure access to reliable, secure and supported internet-enabled technology devices as well as promote and expand free and low-cost, high speed, quality in-home internet services for all communities. Additionally, the Digital Inclusion Roadmap (Roadmap) outlines three key digital inclusion focus areas including connectivity, capacity, and technology. Within the Roadmap, connectivity strategies include creating partnerships with city, county, state and federal government entities, community-based organizations, for-profit companies and foundations to invest and allocate funding to free and low-cost, high-speed, and quality in-home internet services.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on January 7, 2025, to proceed with the grant agreements expeditiously.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City will receive grant funding in the amount of \$60,111, for the period of January 2025 through January 2027, from the California Public Utilities Commission. The grants have a 15 percent match mandate, amounting to \$10,632, which will be covered by existing budget in the department. An appropriation increase in the amount of \$60,111 is requested in the General Services Fund Group in the Technology and Innovation Department for programs aimed to bridge the digital divide.

This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. City staff will use As-Needed Digital Inclusion service vendors to complete the grant work. These vendors include local community-based organizations and digital inclusion-specific nonprofits.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Lea D. Eriksen
Director
Technology and Innovation

APPROVED:



THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER