

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: February 11, 2021

To: The Mayor
The City Council

From: Richard H. Llewellyn, Jr., City Administrative Officer

Subject: **INNOVATION FUND RECOMMENDATION – CONNECTING NEIGHBORHOOD JUSTICE PROGRAM**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. Establish and appropriate a new appropriation account entitled Office of the City Attorney – Connecting Neighborhood Justice Program in the amount of \$170,000 within the Innovation Fund No. 105/10 from the available cash balance of the Innovation Fund.
2. Instruct the City Clerk to place on the agenda for the first regular meeting on or after July 1, 2021, the following item:

Transfer \$170,000 from the Innovation Fund No. 105/10, Account to be Established, Office of the City Attorney – Connecting Neighborhood Justice Program to Fund No. 100/12 as follows:

| Fund/Dept. | Account No. | Account Name | Amount |
|------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 100/12 | 003040 | Contractual Services | \$170,000 |

3. Request the Office of the City Attorney to:
 - a. Separately track all encumbrances and expenditures of Innovation Fund monies so that unspent funds can be returned to the Innovation Fund at the end of the fiscal year;
 - b. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission with an accounting of the funds, the lessons learned, and any obstacles faced; and,
 - c. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission if, after the receipt of funds, the scope of the funded item differs from the scope approved for funding by the Mayor and the City Council.
4. Authorize the City Administrative Officer to make technical corrections as necessary to those transactions included in this report to implement Mayor and Council intentions.

SUMMARY

The City Administrative Officer herewith transmits the recommendation of the Innovation and Performance Commission (IPC) to approve funding in the amount of \$170,000 from the Innovation Fund (IF) for Office of the City Attorney (City Attorney) – Connecting Neighborhood Justice Program. Please note, as with all IPC recommendations, this report presents the idea as submitted by the Department and approved by the IPC along with the necessary recommendations to implement the idea as presented. If the scope of the Innovation Fund item changes after the Department receives funding, the Department must return to the IPC to present the revised scope to the Commission to determine whether alternative recommendations are required.

The City Attorney's Neighborhood Justice Program (NJP) is a neighborhood-focused restorative justice initiative. Through the NJP, first-time offenders (Participants) are given an opportunity to repair the harm they caused through a community-based process, instead of in a courtroom. Community members play an active role as volunteer panelists (Panelists), where they meet with the Participant and the NJP case manager to discuss the crime through a restorative justice process. The Participant and Panelists work together to determine appropriate consequences for the Participant, which can include community service, a letter of apology, financial restitution, and classes. The goal of the NJP is to address root causes of criminal behavior, reduce recidivism, enhance community relationships, and promote public safety and quality of life. Currently, City Attorney uses a system that requires the Participants and Panelists to call, text, or email with the NJP case managers until an amenable schedule can be agreed upon to meet for the panel. Through this pilot, City Attorney would like to create a consolidated system for Participant and Panelist scheduling, as well as create a gamified mobile phone app that would allow Participants to keep track of their obligations, enhance engagement, and link Participants to services. This pilot would provide the NJP dynamic multi-event and multi-person capabilities.

According to City Attorney, the current scheduling process is outdated, time-consuming, and causes unnecessary delays, due to the manual nature of the process and one-on-one approach to Participant management. City Attorney states that since 2014, there have been over 5,600 referrals to the NJP with only 3,600 successfully completed due to no contact or lack of communication from the Participant. Currently, the NJP program director emails the community volunteers (about 200 active volunteers) a list of available dates to sign up to participate in panel(s) and coordinates scheduling between the 12 sites, with the goal of conducting a minimum of one to two panels a month. The program director then sifts through the responses and hundreds of selections to ensure that each panel has three Panelists and one facilitator, as well as ensures that all the Panelists are appropriately scheduled and notified. The NJP case managers also reach out to the Participants and Panelists the day before the panel to send out reminders. Through this pilot, staff time can be saved in order to provide more support to the Participants. With a consolidated system and mobile phone app, Participants could sign up directly to quickly connect with their case manager, panel date, and/or classes. Panelists would use this system to submit availability, and the system could track responses, limit the maximum number of Panelists for each panel, and ensure every Panelist participates at least once. The system will also alert both Participants and Panelists to upcoming events and provide the Participant's progress.

City Attorney states that it is seeking the most cost effective approach to develop a system that fulfills its needs. City Attorney is reaching out to see if the City's Information Technology Agency can develop the system and app or if a new Request for Proposals process will need to be conducted to solicit a contractor to perform this work. City Attorney is looking for a one-time, fixed cost, ownership option with a minimal yearly update. Due to the anticipated timeline to determine how and by whom the system will be developed, City Attorney requests the funds be transferred in the 2021-22 Fiscal Year.

The Commission recommends funding of \$170,000 for the Office of the City Attorney – Connecting Neighborhood Justice Program. Of this amount, \$140,000 will be used to create a dynamic scheduling system. The remaining \$30,000 will be used to create and maintain the phone app.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of these recommendations will allocate \$170,000 of the remaining \$1,111,112 Innovation Fund 2020-21 available balance. The \$170,000 will be transferred to City Attorney to begin implementation of the pilot project that has been approved by the Innovation and Performance Commission. In some cases, departments will incur ongoing costs.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendations of this report are in compliance with the City's Financial Policies as Innovation Fund monies are being utilized for an eligible project which will improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of City service through innovation, productivity, and performance measurement.

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