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November 29, 2018

To: Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Sachi A. Hamai 
Chief Executive Officer

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STATUS REPORT: COUNTYWIDE CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAM (ITEM NO. 2, AGENDA OF JUNE 6, 2018)

On June 6, 2018, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a Motion (Motion) by Supervisors Kuehl and Solis, instructing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), working with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and other County departments, to determine the most feasible ways to establish County and department goals to recruit, hire, and train individuals from targeted populations, with a special focus on County clients receiving safety net services. Further, the Motion directed the CEO and DHR to expand upon the June 2018 Worker Education and Resource Center (WERC) report on high road training partnerships for entry-level County job classifications by working with County departments to develop a plan for a countywide career pathways program that places participants in permanent County employment. This plan is to include identification of key partners, necessary resources, and coordination across County departments.

The Motion directed the CEO to provide a summary analysis of the above items, as well as recommended next steps, within 120 days. On October 18, 2018, the CEO requested additional time to respond to the Motion. This report back provides a status update on efforts to implement a countywide career pathways program and highlights the next steps in this process.

PROGRESS TO DATE

During the period when WERC was preparing its June 2018 report, the CEO and WERC conducted a series of meetings with stakeholders to lay the groundwork for the high road training pilot projects recommended in the report. When the Motion was adopted by the Board, the CEO and WERC were immediately able to address some requirements of the Motion, such as coordinating with departments that serve County clients, and identifying specific numbers of entry-level positions in County departments.

WERC has since named the countywide career pathways program as Preparing Los Angeles for County Employment (PLACE). Since the Motion passed, the CEO and WERC have continued to coordinate with several County departments, including DHR, Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Probation, and the Department of Health Services (DHS), in order to establish the basic process and framework for the PLACE program. Working with these partners, the CEO and WERC have addressed streamlining the hiring process, recruiting from County client populations, and identifying potential funding sources to support PLACE participants.

With the PLACE program, the County is creating a model of workforce development services that is "high road" in that it is customized for the specific occupational competencies required by the employer partners, which in this case are County departments. PLACE includes pre-employment education customized for the employing department, intensive case management, and classroom support aligned to the principles of a trauma-informed approach.

The CEO and WERC are working with DHS, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Beaches and Harbors (DBH), Department of Public Works (DPW), and the Internal Services Department (ISD) as partner departments that will hire PLACE participants. These departments are critical to the success of PLACE, and will play an important role in identifying entry-level candidates for hire, helping WERC to customize its pre-employment curriculum, identifying on-the-job mentors for PLACE participants, and ultimately employing successful PLACE participants. The CEO, DHR, and WERC established a Working Group to coordinate efforts, as suggested in the Motion. This group meets weekly, with a rotating set of participants from County departments based on the program's needs any given week.

WERC's Recommended Pilot Projects

In its June 2018 report, WERC recommended initial pilot projects for PLACE, in the following job classifications:

- Clerical and Typist-Clerical - Various Departments
- Public Works Laborer - DPW
- Grounds Maintenance Worker I - DPR, DBH
- Building Trades Apprenticeships and Crafts Classifications - ISD, DPW, DHS
- Custodian - Various Departments
- Fire Fighter Trainee - Fire Department

The CEO and WERC have been in discussion with the partner departments for each of the PLACE pilot programs, and have identified approximately 60 items that could employ people who successfully complete the first phase of PLACE pre-employment training and preparation. These pilot programs are described below:

1. Clerical and Typist-Clerical - 15 items

LAC+USC Medical Center has a specific need for Intermediate Clerk candidates who are prepared to work in hospital in-patient wards. One of DHS' challenges in clerical and typist-clerical hiring is finding people banded on promulgated exam lists who are also suited to work in hospitals and clinics. Plainly stated, most candidates for a clerical job do not picture themselves working in a hospital, for a nursing unit, when they first apply. WERC has targeted its recruitment to ensure that participants are interested in working at LAC+USC on night and "graveyard" shifts, and that they understand what supporting the nursing units entails. In this way, PLACE can provide added value to the recruitment and hiring process for DHS.

On October 15, 2018, WERC launched the first PLACE cohort, a four-week pre-employment training to prepare participants for 15 positions at LAC+USC. WERC recruited for this cohort from three sources: 1) DPSS GAIN and GROW offices, 2) local Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and 3) DHR's TempLA program. Because participating in PLACE would require TempLA participants to leave their current County placement and lose their salary, the final list of participants ultimately did not include TempLA workers.

DHR opened an Intermediate Clerk application filing on November 8, 2018, with the special requirement of a certificate from WERC indicating successful completion of this training program. Eighteen successful participants applied on November 8, 2018, and all 18 took DHR's standard written examination for Intermediate Clerk on November 15, 2018. Sixteen participants passed the exam, and DHS scheduled interviews beginning the week of December 3, 2018.

2. Public Works Laborer, Grounds Maintenance Worker I - 20 items

DPW has identified five Public Works Laborer items, and DPR and DBH have identified a total of 15 Grounds Maintenance Worker items, all of which have been set aside to potentially hire successful PLACE participants in early 2019. WERC's second cohort will enroll in a three-week pre-employment and preparation program for both job classifications. DPW, DBH, and DPR generally do "hard skills" training on the job, and all three departments have asked PLACE to focus instead on training for skills such as professionalism, time management, customer service, effective teamwork, and promotability.

PLACE continues to recruit for this cohort from GAIN and GROW offices, and in order to expand recruitment into additional populations with barriers to employment,

WERC is partnering with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) including the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership (LARRP), the Center for Living and Learning, Chrysalis, Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System (HOPICS), and Youth Opportunity Movement, Watts. PLACE is also developing a partnership with Conservation Corps organizations that serve the South Los Angeles area, where the DPR Grounds Maintenance Worker I items are likely to be located. Nearly 40 members of the California, Long Beach, and Los Angeles Conservation Corps have applied to PLACE, and all three Conservation Corps organizations are working to identify funding to support members during the training (Conservation Corps members may otherwise be unable to participate due to the loss of income from leaving their current assignment, as was the case with TempLA participants who considered the Intermediate Clerk training). This partnership with the Conservation Corps has been actively supported by DPR.

In addition, PLACE Working Group meetings have devoted considerable time and effort to understanding how to best recruit from the reentry population, and whether these participants might benefit from SB 678-funded stipends. CEO, WERC, Probation, Office of Diversion and Reentry, WDACS, and the hiring departments are currently discussing the details of how this effort might work. As a result, the Probation Department may recruit potential candidates for this cohort from their INVEST program, which is a program designed to match adult felony probationers with living wage employment. The key consideration will be the job nexus matching of the re-entry candidates with the job needs of the participating departments.

3. Building Trades Apprenticeships and Crafts Classifications - 10 items

The CEO and WERC have been in discussions with ISD and DPW in an effort to identify 10 crafts classification items that could be used to employ apprentices on their way to become journey level workers. As these items are identified, PLACE will work with the local non-profit Women in Non-Traditional Employment Roles (WINTER) to identify successful graduates of their ten-week pre-apprenticeship curriculum who may successfully compete for placement in the items we have identified. The June 12, 2018 Motion by Supervisors Solis and Kuehl, which is related to this Motion, directed the CEO to enter into a memorandum of understanding with WINTER for this purpose. Other County departments that may also participate in future apprenticeship trainings include DHS, DPR, and DBH.

4. Custodian - 15 items

The LAC+USC Medical Center and Martin Luther King, Jr. Outpatient Center (MLK) have an ongoing need to hire Custodians, and WERC is in conversations with DHS, including LAC+USC and MLK management to establish a program to prepare County clients and other individuals with barriers to employment for these jobs. DHS and WERC are also in discussions with the East Los Angeles Skills Center, a part of the Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Adult and Career Education, to

determine whether this project could involve career technical education in custodial skills, customized for the hospital setting. The majority of the initial custodial items are expected to be located at the LAC+USC Medical Center.

5. Fire Fighter Trainee - 45 participants, Summer 2017 to Winter 2019

The Fire Fighter Trainee program differs from the other four on this list, in that it does not directly place participants in County employment. Instead, the goal is to prepare participants for entry-level positions as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) working for local ambulance companies.

WERC's EMT program, called "LA EMT," is a 20 week-long program that prepares individuals to take required academic coursework and the exam for national certification as EMTs. WERC recruits participants from gender and ethnic groups that are underrepresented in the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Since Fiscal Year 2017-18, WERC has carried out two LA EMT cohorts, and is training a third, entirely female, cohort. Of the 51 participants in the first two cohorts:

- 28 successfully completed the program
- 26 passed the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam and were certified as EMTs
- 23 are working for ambulance companies
- 6 have applied to the Los Angeles City Fire Department's Fire Academy

It is a goal that numerous future graduates of LA EMT will also apply for the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Fire Academy when the opportunity opens.

RECRUITMENT FOR THE PLACE PROGRAM

County Clients

As noted above, the initial recruitment model for PLACE relies in large part on finding participants enrolled in DPSS' GAIN and GROW programs. For example, WERC contacted approximately 100 GAIN and GROW participants in recruiting for the Intermediate Clerk program in November. Seventy of these contacts came from presentations WERC made to GAIN and GROW participants in DPSS regional offices. While the majority of the remaining 30 resulted from contacts with individual CBOs, numerous individuals from those CBO recruitment efforts were also CalWORKS/GAIN participants. All 18 participants in the final Intermediate Clerk cohort were enrolled in at least one County program, including CalFRESH (17), CalWORKS/GAIN (12), and GROW/General Relief (2).

In addition to targeting recruitment to populations receiving County services, the intake procedure for individuals who are interested in the PLACE program asks applicants to self-report whether they are enrolled in any of the following safety net programs or other social services:

- CalWORKS/GAIN
- CalFresh
- General Relief (GROW)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Disability Pay (SSDI)
- Section 8 / Income-Based Housing
- Child Support
- Veterans Benefits
- Medi-Cal
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food support

This process allows PLACE to track all of the safety net programs in which its participants have been enrolled. The CEO will report this data to the Board in future reports on the Motion.

Economically Disadvantaged Areas

The June 12, 2018 Motion by Supervisors Solis and Kuehl, related to this Motion, directed the CEO to structure the current PLACE program to include “a geographic criterion centered on economically disadvantaged areas that takes into consideration a combination of the following factors: census tracts, zip codes, unemployment and underemployment rates, and median household incomes relative to the County of Los Angeles’ median annual income, and to the extent possible, federal poverty levels.”

WERC used the list of 94 Qualifying ZIP Codes under the County’s Local and Targeted Worker Hire Policy for County contracts as an initial framework for addressing the June 12, 2018 Motion. Under that policy, a Qualifying ZIP Code is one where either: 1) the average percentage of households living below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for that individual’s primary residency’s ZIP Code is greater than the County average for such households; or 2) the ZIP Code is one of 11 additional ZIP Codes determined by the Board on September 6, 2011, to be a ZIP Code where at least 30 percent of the population is living in poverty, and with an unemployment rate of at least 150 percent of the national average. Thirteen of the 18 participants from the initial Intermediate Clerk cohort reside within one of these qualifying ZIP Codes.

NEXT STEPS

In order to fully respond to the Motion, including designing a more comprehensive plan to bring targeted workers into County careers, the CEO will require additional time. This will allow the CEO, DHR, other involved departments, and WERC to: 1) assess best practices

from the initial PLACE cohorts, 2) identify obstacles to achieving the goals set out in the Motion, and 3) make adjustments to specific recruitment, application, and exam practices. The additional time will result in a more comprehensive report that addresses the following:

- An ongoing process to create a pipeline of vacant entry-level items large enough to accommodate PLACE cohorts of 15-20 participants at a time.
- A process to create a pipeline of PLACE participants from County safety net programs and geographic criteria centered on economically disadvantaged areas.
- The resources, support, and best practices needed to ensure the success of PLACE participants during training and on the job, including case management, mentorship, and possible funding for stipends, whether from existing County sources or other sources.

With respect to future updates on the PLACE program, the CEO intends to deliver semi-annual reports to the Board that address both the directives from this Motion, as well as those from the related June 12, 2018 Motion. The next update will be provided to the Board in January 2019.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Doug Baron at (213) 974-8355, or dbaron@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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