



County of Los Angeles
INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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ADOPTED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

July 11, 2023

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

31 July 11, 2023

CELIA ZAVALA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Supervisors:

**2023 TECH EMPOWERMENT DAY AND
COMPUTER DEVICES FOR CONSTITUENTS IN NEED
ALL DISTRICTS
(3-VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Request authorization to negotiate agreements and seek funding opportunities to cover the costs of hosting the 2023 Tech Empowerment Day for middle and high school students in Los Angeles County during National Digital Inclusion Week in October 2023. Additionally, authorization to procure and distribute computer devices to constituents based on a needs assessment.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Authorize the Director of Internal Services Department (ISD), or his designee, to negotiate and execute agreements, including sole source agreements, approved as to form by County Counsel, and to amend and terminate such agreements, with a venue to host the 2023 Tech Empowerment Day in October 2023.
2. Authorize the Director of ISD, or his designee, in consultation with the Chief Executive Office and County Counsel, to take any actions necessary and appropriate to facilitate and identify funding for the 2023 Tech Empowerment Day, not to exceed \$400,000.
3. Authorize the Director of ISD, or his designee, as an agent of the County of Los Angeles, to solicit and receive sponsorships, donations, or in-kind gifts in any amount, subject to County budgetary guidelines and practices, on behalf of the Delete the Divide Initiative to support the

2023 Tech Empowerment Day in order to benefit schools, students, and educators who participate in the event.

4. Authorize the Director of ISD, or his designee, through the Delete The Divide Initiative to procure and distribute computer devices to constituents in Los Angeles County, subject to a needs assessment.
5. Find that these actions are deemed necessary to meet the social needs of the population of the County and serve a public purpose consistent with Government Code Section 26227.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The digital divide is the economic, educational, and social inequalities between those who have computers and internet access and those who do not. In Los Angeles County, it is estimated that 416,000 households lack internet service and 265,000 households are without a home computer. The most impacted areas are low-income communities and among populations that are predominantly Black and Latino. Also, nearly 300 middle and high schools are located within these communities.

Tech Empowerment Day

On September 27, 2022, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion titled Recognizing Digital Inclusion Week. The motion acknowledged Digital Inclusion Week from October 3 – 7, 2022. Additionally, the motion authorized ISD to take several actions that facilitated the inaugural 2022 Tech Empowerment Day.

On October 6, 2022, the 2022 Tech Empowerment Day was held for middle and high school students at SoFi Stadium in the City of Inglewood. More than 3,200 students participated from schools throughout Los Angeles County. The event provided hands-on experience and behind-the-scenes exposure to a wide range of modern technologies. Dozens of corporations and organizations hosted activity stations, demonstrations, and information booths. The types of interactive experiences available to the students included coding, robotics, gaming, augmented reality, 3D printing, space exploration, drone technology, internship/career programs, County services, and more. There were also laptop giveaways, photo stations, appearances by media personalities, a visit by the Los Angeles Rams mascot and cheerleaders, and access to the football field and team locker rooms with attention to various technology features. Additionally, school educators were able to network with corporate partners to obtain information about potential collaborations on academic enrichment opportunities.

The 2022 Tech Empowerment Day was planned and coordinated in less than three months with successful results. Based on feedback from participants and interest among numerous schools that would like to attend the next event, it is anticipated that participation will double for the 2023 Tech Empowerment Day. Thus, ISD is allotting more time for planning and implementation.

In identifying a host venue, the following are essential criteria:

- Venue is located in or near underserved communities impacted by the digital divide.
- Availability to accommodate a private event during the first week of October 2023.
- Capacity for 6,000 or more students, teachers, chaperones, and guests
- Adequate parking for 120 to 150 school buses.
- Event space for 50 or more activity booths/stations staffed by tech companies and organizations.
- Meeting space to facilitate networking among educators, administrators, and tech companies.
- Areas for vehicle displays (e.g., gaming trailers, autonomous vehicles).
- Reliable power and internet connectivity for multiple tech activity booths/stations.
- Security personnel.
- Medical services.
- Food and beverage service offerings.
- Access to tables, chairs, and audio/visual equipment.

ISD has researched and toured venues capable of accommodating the 2023 Tech Empowerment Day. A competitive solicitation is currently being administered based on the above-mentioned criteria.

Computer Devices

A home computer and reliable internet service are essential to accessing education, employment opportunities, healthcare services, financial resources, support networks, and commerce. A common concern and well-documented issue which prevents thousands of households from accessing the internet at home is the basic lack of a computer device.

In the above-mentioned motion titled Recognizing Digital Inclusion Week, the Board authorized ISD to distribute computer devices to households that enroll in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) for the first time, subject to a needs assessment. The ACP is a federal program that provides qualifying households with a monthly subsidy of up to \$30 for broadband internet service. The monthly broadband discount for eligible households on Tribal land is a maximum of \$75.

In December 2022, ISD began deploying free laptops to ACP-eligible households through community outreach events. The laptops are designated for first time enrollees, but ISD staff frequently encounters constituents in need of a computer device who are already enrolled in the ACP, or who do not qualify for the ACP, yet experience computer access and affordability challenges. In the interest of dismantling the digital divide, the County can better support residents by expanding the deployment of computer devices to households in need regardless of ACP enrollment status.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended actions support the County's Strategic Plan Goal I – Make Investments That Transform Lives, Strategy I.2 – Enhance Our Delivery of Comprehensive Interventions; and Goal II – Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities, Strategy II.1 – Drive Economic and Workforce Development in the County.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The Board has allocated \$12,050,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support the County's Delete The Divide Initiative, which is administered by ISD. Delete the Divide advances digital equity in underserved communities through partnerships, infrastructure investments, and technology resources that empower residents and small businesses.

The 2023 Tech Empowerment Day is a special event hosted by Delete The Divide. ISD intends to cover costs for the event venue and associated fees from its ARPA allocation, subject to approval by the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and County Counsel. These costs may be offset by various contributions, subject to authority from your Board allowing ISD to solicit and receive sponsorships, donations, and in-kind gifts.

The procurement and deployment of computer devices will also be funded from ISD's ARPA allocation, subject to approval by the CEO and County Counsel.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to California Government Code section 26227, these programs and services provided by the 2023 Tech Empowerment Day should be deemed necessary to meet the social needs of the population, thereby providing a benefit to the County as a whole.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

ISD is administering a competitive solicitation to select a venue that can accommodate the 2023 Tech Empowerment Day. The purpose of the solicitation is to comply with federal ARPA funding guidelines, which require State and local government agencies, such as the County, to perform competitive solicitations for services contracts which will be funded by federal ARPA funds. The solicitation will be performed pursuant to established County policy and procedures, as advised by County Counsel.

ISD will utilize existing County master agreements and purchase order solicitations to procure desktop computers, laptops, and tablets.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of the recommended actions will enable the County to build on its commitment to digital equity. The 2023 Tech Empowerment Day and distribution of computer devices to constituents in need are both proactive efforts that will enable access to greater opportunities and will also help to dismantle the digital divide.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval by the Board, it is requested that the Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors, return a copy of the approved Board Letter to the Director of ISD.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors

7/11/2023

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Selwyn Hollins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

SELWYN HOLLINS

Director

SH:sh

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel