

Agenda Report

TO: City Council

DATE: March 17, 2008

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF SUMMER ROSE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM TO PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS WORKPLACES

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council approve expansion of the Summer ROSE Youth employment program to include placement of eligible youth workers in private business work settings, including payment of up to 100% of personnel costs for youth workers in small businesses (less than 10 employees) and 50% for mid- and large-size employers. It is anticipated that this will result in an increase in the number of jobs from 237 to 287 and position the City to reach the goal of 400 jobs.

BACKGROUND

During deliberations on the Fiscal Year 2008 operating budget last June, the City Council discussed the need for additional youth employment opportunities including the concept of expanding the City's Summer ROSE youth jobs program to include partnerships with local private sector employers. Funding in the amount of \$92,600 was included in the FY08 Operating Budget to expand the number of job opportunities from 185 to 237 and staff was asked to explore how to obtain participation from the local business community.

The need for job opportunities for local youth and young adults has increased over the past year, as local unemployment rates have risen and various economic conditions have limited job growth. Further, Council has identified the value of summer youth employment in the prevention of delinquency and the development of positive skills that lead to long-term success and careers in the paid labor market.

Historically the City's Summer ROSE program has placed Pasadena youth, ages 16 to 21 (with a limited number of 14 and 15 year olds) from low- and moderate-income households in local public and private non-profit work settings, with the youth wages (and such required benefits as Social Security, Workers' Compensation, etc.) paid 100% by the City ROSE program allocation. This system has successfully placed thousands of teens and young adults over the past 15 years in summer jobs, and in Summer 2007 resulted in the successful

employment of 218 young people, ages 14 to 21, in city, county, state, federal and non-profit work places. Summer ROSE workers not only earn wages but acquire valuable work skills and experience in such settings as Water and Power, Police, Public Works, health clinics, legal and financial offices, parks, day camps, community and recreation centers, schools and more. At the end of the Summer 2007 ROSE program, 88% of the youth workers either continued on to advance their education or transitioned into ongoing employment.

To expand both the number and the range of job opportunities for Summer 2008, staff recommends partnering with local private sector businesses to provide jobs for eligible Summer ROSE youth. The existing Summer ROSE program pays 100% of the personnel costs for eligible youth placed in public and non-profit settings. It is recommended that the same policy apply to small employers (defined as less than 10 employees), and those private sector employers with 10 or more employees receive a match of personnel costs such that 50% of the costs would be paid by the business and 50% from the Summer ROSE funds. Partnering with local businesses offers youth job opportunities in a wide range of fields not currently available in the public and non-profit sectors, potentially including retail, entertainment, medical, construction, communication and other industries.

This summer youth employment expansion and match concept has been preliminarily discussed with representatives of local business associations as well as sample individual employers, with very positive response. Key to the successful preliminary response has been such elements of the Summer ROSE program as:

- opportunity to hire *local* youth and promote their development as essential members of tomorrow's workforce
- screening of eligible applicants and job matching (i.e. matching available jobs to interests, skills, abilities, location/transportation, and work schedule availability of youth applicants)
- orientation and training to supervisors of youth workers, including guidance in training youth to meet workforce needs
- ongoing confidential support throughout the program, including visits to the work sites as needed, to promote successful employee and employer experiences, resolve concerns during the youth employment period, etc.
- availability of program funds to subsidize at least 50% of the youth worker's personnel costs
- youth assistance in transitioning to higher education and/or ongoing employment, as appropriate, at the conclusion of the summer jobs program

The eligibility criteria and wages for Summer ROSE workers would remain as currently established, and staff would continue to provide the same range of services to all youth workers and employers, from outreach, recruitment, eligibility screening, job matching, orientation, training and job placement to support services throughout the employment period and assistance to ROSE participants at the end of the summer work period to transition into continued

education and/or ongoing employment. Eligible businesses would include those with:

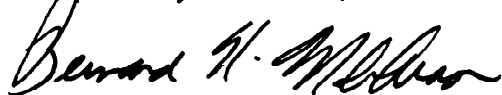
- at least one year of local operation in a commercial or industrial setting; home-based businesses do not qualify
- a commitment to provide adult supervision and a supportive work environment
- observance of applicable work permit and other state and federal regulations, governing the type of activities to be performed by the youth, hourly/daily work schedule, etc.
- commitment that the Summer ROSE youth position will not displace, reduce or otherwise affect the position or work hours of any existing employee

Following approval of this expansion of the Summer ROSE program to local businesses, staff will conduct an extensive outreach and recruitment effort to secure youth job placements for Summer 2008. While it is projected that the number of new summer jobs for youth identified through this effort may be limited in this pilot year, the findings from this experience (including feedback and input from the participating employers) will be utilized to develop a more comprehensive program for Summer 2009 with the goal of reaching a total of 400 job placements.

FISCAL IMPACT

Pre-summer job development, screening and matching activities through June 30, 2008 would be performed within existing budget resources for FY2008. It is projected that an additional appropriation of \$60,000 in FY2009 will be needed to support the increased personnel costs for 50 more Summer ROSE youth worker positions, added to the 237 positions funded in the base budget and yielding a grand total of 287 Summer ROSE jobs in Summer 2008. The increase is due in part to the change in minimum wage from \$7.50 to \$8.00 per hour, as well as additional workplace orientation, supervisor training and on-site support services for youth job placements in new work settings, and to expand job development efforts in Spring 2009 to secure more such positions for Summer 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

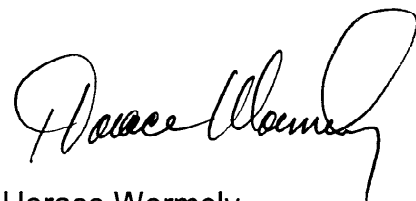


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