



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 20-6999

Type: Staff Briefing - Without Ordinance

In control: City Council B Session

On agenda: 12/2/2020

Title: Briefing on the SA Ready to Work initiative funded through a 1/8 cent sales tax to provide for workforce development and higher education under Chapter 379A of the Texas Local Government Code. [Carlos Contreras; Assistant City Manager; Alejandra Lopez, Director, Economic Development]

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Staff Presentation, 2. Return on Investment Analysis by Department

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Alejandra Lopez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on the SA Ready to Work initiative funded through a 1/8 cent sales tax to provide for workforce development and higher education under Chapter 379A of the Texas Local Government Code.

SUMMARY:

This item provides a briefing on the SA Ready to Work initiative to include a discussion of the proposed contractual agreement between the City and the San Antonio Early Childhood Education Municipal Corporation, the development of the SA Ready to Work Advisory Board, potential organization structures, and an implementation plan.

This initiative would build on the COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan workforce development pillar that served as the immediate response to the substantial and urgent need to assist San Antonio residents unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on this short-term intervention, the ballot initiative will continue the path to a strong, resilient economic recovery by investing in a combination of training and education programs that leads to a robust talent pipeline for high demand careers with family sustaining wages.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus San Antonio experienced a relatively low unemployment rate, yet poverty rates in our community were among the highest in the country. Low post secondary educational attainment rates in San Antonio have resulted in a lack of skilled workers and an abundance of lower wage, low skill jobs. The unprecedented economic impacts of COVID-19 on the economy have resulted in the employment displacement of an estimated 184,000 San Antonio residents, further compounding the various financial burdens faced by residents.

In July 2020, Mayor Nirenberg appointed a Workforce and Education Leadership Taskforce to reassess community workforce development priorities and identify the most effective strategies beyond the immediate crisis. This taskforce included leaders from education, workforce development, asset-building, business, economic development, and philanthropy, with two Council liaisons. On August 13, 2020, City Council ordered an election to be held on November 3, 2020 to authorize a 1/8th of a cent sales and use tax for a period of four years to provide for SA Ready to Work initiative, in accordance with Chapter 379A of the Texas Local Government Code. On November 3, voters approved the SA Ready to Work ballot initiative.

ISSUE:

During the December 2 City Council “B” Session, City Staff will provide an overview of the SA Ready to Work program, which will include a two-pronged effort of workforce training certificates and higher education degree completion. Various levels of wraparound support will also be incorporated into the program, as will emergency financial assistance. The implementation options and corresponding financial forecasts included in this briefing incorporate experiences gained through the Train for Jobs workforce recovery program regarding participant intake processing and short-term workforce training programs. Implementation options include collaborations with nonprofit organizations to provide participant wraparound support, along with internal City staffing needs to support and monitor the program.

This briefing will also include preliminary details and a timeline for the proposed contractual agreement between the City and the San Antonio Early Childhood Education Municipal Corporation. Through this agreement, the corporation will maintain implementation and oversight responsibilities for the Pre-K for SA program and will delegate SA Ready to Work program implementation to the City Manager with governance oversight performed by the City Council. Budget approval processes and fiscal management for the SA Ready to Work program will follow processes currently in place for the Pre-K for SA program.

Staff will also discuss recommendations for the composition of a proposed SA Ready to Work Advisory Board, which will provide input on demand occupations and the balance between workforce training and the degree program from year to year. This Advisory Board may include City Council liaisons and representatives from local employers, community organizations, trade and labor organizations and residents.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only