

**CITY OF ALBANY  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: April 19, 2021  
Reviewed by: NA

**SUBJECT:** CivicSpark Program

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**SUMMARY**

This agenda item provides the Council an opportunity to authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with the Local Government Commission to place a CivicSpark Fellow with the City of Albany for the period of eleven months to work on implementation of the City’s Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2021-33, authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract with the Local Government Commission for the 2020-2021 CivicSpark Program.

**BACKGROUND**

Starting in the fall of 2016, the City of Albany has partnered with the Local Government Commission (LGC) to host CivicSpark fellows. Since then, the Sustainability Division has hosted four fellows, who have each worked on a variety of climate action projects.

The City’s Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, adopted in December 2019, outlines a course of action for the City and the Albany community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 70% by 2035, and reach carbon neutrality by 2045 to combat global climate change.

**DISCUSSION**

The Local Government Commission (LGC)

The Local Government Commission (LGC) is the nonprofit organization that administers the CivicSpark Program in California. LGC’s mission includes assistance to local governments in developing and implementing policies and programs that foster innovation in environmental sustainability, economic prosperity, and social equity.

The CivicSpark Program

CivicSpark is a Governor’s Initiative AmeriCorps program dedicated to building capacity for local governments to address climate change in California. The program is administered by

the Local Government Commission in partnership with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. Through the program, a CivicSpark fellow – an emerging professional who has recently graduated from college – will be assigned to work with the City of Albany for a period of eleven months, beginning in September 2020. Under the guidance of Albany staff, the CivicSpark fellow will implement climate action projects, while also building long-term capacity to ensure the work is sustained after the project is completed.

#### Service Agreement

Resolution No. 2021-33 (Attachment 1), if adopted by the Council, will authorize the City Manager to execute the 2021-2022 Service Agreement between LGC and the City of Albany. The service agreement stipulates that LGC will place a CivicSpark fellow with the City of Albany to complete climate action, resilience, and community engagement projects related to the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. LGC's oversight of the program and the CivicSpark fellows it places in local governments includes a strongly defined program structure, supervision by regional coordinators and clearly documented performance expectations. The program is designed to successfully deliver results tailored to local needs. The CivicSpark fellow is an employee of LGC, not the City of Albany. LGC provides training and professional development opportunities, health insurance, and general support for the fellows.

The fellow's placement with the City will begin in September 2021 and last for a period of 11 months, with the fellow working regular work hours, five days a week. City staff participate in the selection of the candidate. The agreement requires the City to keep LGC apprised of the projects the CivicSpark fellow is working on and any challenges that arise, updating project scopes and goals as necessary.

#### Benefits to the City

CivicSpark fellows have been instrumental in moving key sustainability projects forward in Albany, including implementation and tracking of the City's first Climate Action Plan and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, development of the new Climate Action & Adaptation Plan, and community outreach related to a variety of sustainability initiatives. The program also fosters a new generation of talented public servants.

The City receives the service of a college graduate eager to start their career in public service and sustainability for a period of 11 months, or more than 1,300 project hours. The CivicSpark fellow will be embedded with Community Development Department staff. The objective is to make progress in the implementation of the City's climate action goals and related measures.

Fellows focus the majority of their time on capacity building projects for local government beneficiaries to address their needs related to climate action and resilience. They also spend up to 20% of their time in training and professional development activities, and they are required to manage a volunteer engagement project during their service term.

Overall project goals include capacity building through supporting Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP) implementation, planning, and outreach. Specific projects may include climate adaptation and disaster resilience, clean energy, active and clean transportation, materials management and waste reduction, green infrastructure, and

community outreach. Duties are likely to evolve and expand as the Fellow's skills and knowledge of Albany increase, and as additional measures and projects are identified.

Benefits for CivicSpark Fellow

AmeriCorps was created to address community need through service. AmeriCorps members have the opportunity to make an impact in their community while gaining valuable career and life experience. All CivicSpark fellows/AmeriCorps fellows should leave the service year with an understanding of work within local governments, experience working with key climate change mitigation and adaptation tools, the ability to analyze data, and the ability to work successfully in a team office environment.

**SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATION**

The CivicSpark Program has expanded the City's Sustainability Division's capacity to address climate change and other environmental projects and programs through additional staff time and through improved connections with nearby cities. Fellow projects have increased CAAP implementation, resulting in reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and a more engaged community.

**CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE**

City Council Strategic Plan Initiative Goal 1, Objective 1 to "Advance Climate Action."

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION**

The total cost of an 11-month CivicSpark term is \$29,000, which is budgeted within the Community Development Department.

**Attachments**

1. Resolution No. 2021-33

