

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: February 9, 2021

To: The Mayor
The City Council

From: Richard H. Llewellyn, Jr., City Administrative Officer 

Subject: **INNOVATION FUND RECOMMENDATION – LISTEN4GOOD GRANT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. Establish and appropriate a new appropriation account entitled Department of Neighborhood Empowerment – Listen4Good Grant in the amount of \$15,000 within the Innovation Fund No. 105/10 from the available cash balance of the Innovation Fund.
2. Transfer \$15,000 from the Innovation Fund No. 105/10, Account to be Established, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment – Listen4Good Grant to Fund No. 44B/47 as follows:

<u>Fund/Dept.</u>	<u>Account No.</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
44B/47	47T265	Listen4Good Grant	\$15,000

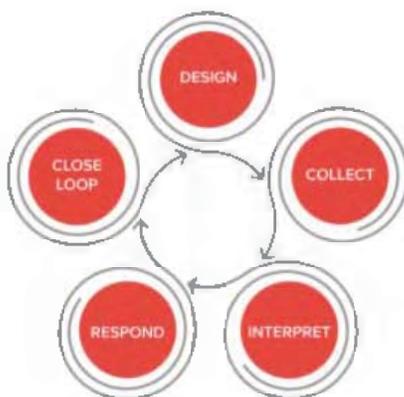
3. Instruct the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to:
 - a. Separately track all encumbrances and expenditures of Innovation Fund monies so that unspent funds can be returned to the Innovation Fund at the end of the fiscal year;
 - b. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission with an accounting of the funds, the lessons learned, and any obstacles faced; and,
 - c. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission if, after the receipt of funds, the scope of the funded item differs from the scope approved for funding by the Mayor and the City Council.
4. Authorize the City Administrative Officer to make technical corrections as necessary to those transactions included in this report to implement Mayor and Council intentions.

SUMMARY

The City Administrative Officer herewith transmits the recommendation of the Innovation and Performance Commission (IPC) to approve funding in the amount of \$15,000 from the Innovation Fund (IF) for the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (EmpowerLA) – Listen4Good Grant. This funding would be provided by funds set aside in the IF specifically for Performance Evaluation. Please note, as with all IPC recommendations, this report presents the idea as submitted by the Department and approved by the IPC along with the necessary recommendations to implement the idea as presented. If the scope of the Innovation Fund item changes after the Department receives funding, the Department must return to the IPC to present the revised scope to the Commission to determine whether alternative recommendations are required.

In early 2020, EmpowerLA representatives attended several IPC meetings to discuss the work of the Department and the needs of its 99 Neighborhood Councils (NCs). The Department suggested that the COVID-19 Pandemic had severely impacted how the Department held its meetings, outreached to NCs, and performed its operational functions. As a result of these discussions, in August 2020 the IPC nominated EmpowerLA for the Listen4Good (L4G) grant, an initiative of Fund for Shared Insight designed to help organizations build sustainable, high-quality, client-focused feedback loops that lead to meaningful change. L4G offers specially designed tools, including an interactive web app, webinar series, and one-on-one coaching to guide direct-service organizations implementing a simple, yet systematic way to listen, elevate, and respond to client opinions and preferences. Through the tools provided through L4G, EmpowerLA will strengthen communication between the Department, the NCs, and City residents, creating a feedback loop that will allow for more data-driven decisions in order to ensure the needs of all parties are being met.

What does a high-quality feedback loop look like?



We believe that for feedback systems to thrive, they need to:

- ▶ Be **simple yet flexible**
- ▶ Support **repeated data collection**
- ▶ Provide **actionable insights** that inform decision making
- ▶ Leverage **benchmarks** so that feedback can be put into context, and
- ▶ Include a **closing-the-loop** process where feedback is shared back with clients.

According to EmpowerLA, of the 99 NCs, about 10 percent suffer from severe board dysfunction, 10 percent are high-functioning, and the remaining 80 percent are challenged to meet their monthly obligations. EmpowerLA states that many of its board members live in communities of color which have long-held feelings of neglect from City government and City decision-makers. Through L4G, EmpowerLA can assist NCs create a useful, high-quality

feedback loop amongst themselves, which can improve their internal operations, as well as stakeholders' participation. Through the tools provided through L4G, NCs will have access to online resources to build understanding and proficiency in parliamentary governance, running virtual meetings, and the use of data to improve their recommendations to City Hall.

Through this grant, organizations nominated by a funder receive a \$30,000 capacity-building grant over 18 months and unlimited access to a dedicated coach, along with a premium SurveyMonkey account and all of L4G's online tools and resources. Benchmarks, access to an online peer community, and facilitated interaction with co-funders are included. Of the \$30,000 award, \$15,000 are grant funds provided by L4G. The remaining \$15,000 is provided through matching funds provided by the nominator. This \$15,000 Innovation Fund request would provide these matching funds. The IPC has stipulated that EmpowerLA provide quarterly progress updates to the Commission.

In September 2020, the IPC was informed that EmpowerLA was awarded the L4G grant. Since then, the Department has already received orientation and onboarding. The IPC is therefore recommending the use of \$15,000 of IPC Performance Evaluation Funds as part of a matching grant for EmpowerLA to utilize the tools provided by L4G to improve functionality within its Department, NC, and residents, during these trying times.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of these recommendations will allocate \$15,000 of the remaining \$140,000 Performance Evaluation Funds 2020-21 available balance. The \$15,000 will be transferred to EmpowerLA to begin implementation of the project that has been approved by the Innovation and Performance Commission. In some cases, departments will incur ongoing costs.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendations of this report are in compliance with the City's Financial Policies as Innovation Fund monies are being utilized for an eligible project which will improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of City service through innovation, productivity, and performance measurement.