



Legislation Text

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**AGENDA REPORT
REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL**

DATE: July 17, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Council Member Casillas

SUBJECT:

City Council Consideration of Administrative Policy approving City Council Volunteer Internship Program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve attached Administrative Policy #07400.008 authorizing the creation of the City Council Volunteer Internship Program.

ANALYSIS:

During the last City Council meeting, I raised the idea of developing a City Council Volunteer Internship Program ("Internship Program"), which would authorize, but not require, individual Council Members to take-on the responsibility of mentoring college students who are interested in local municipal government. Following a bit of dialogue, I was asked to return with additional detail and a framework for the proposed Internship Program.

My idea has been formulated into the attached proposed Administrative Policy #07400.008. As stated in Section 1.1 (General Purpose), the goal of the Internship Program would be to provide a unique volunteer opportunity for hands-on experiential learning for some of the region's best and brightest vocational, undergraduate and graduate students. As provided in Subsection (A) (Goal) of Section 3.1 (Position Description), the positions should be specifically designed to provide students with a work opportunity and learning experience in the day-to-day operations of a City Council office. The training they receive should thus include practical experience, similar to that which would be given in a clinical or other hands-on educational environment.

The major components of the Internship Program are as follows:

POSITION

- ✓ Volunteers: These would be unpaid, volunteer positions. Thus, there would be no expectation of compensation on the part of the volunteers.
- ✓ Policy Level Duties: *Interns will work on policy level efforts within the responsibilities of their Council Member.* While each Council Member and their interns can design a training opportunity best suited for the individual volunteer, examples of duties may include:
 - Communications and social media activities
 - Researching policy issues and analyzing data
 - Drafting memoranda
 - Legislative and public outreach and education efforts
 - Attending meetings with key stakeholders
 - Administrative tasks
- ✓ Temporary: Although the positions do not have to strictly correspond with an educational semester or other academic period, they may do so, but they shall always be short-term in nature (generally about 6 to 9 months in length).
- ✓ Hours: Although an intern certainly can volunteer more if desired by them and the Council Member, they would generally be expected to volunteer about 8-10 hours per week.
- ✓ Capstone Project: Interns will be expected to plan and execute one significant event or other activity which is mutually acceptable to the intern and Council Member.

INTERN QUALIFICATIONS & ACADEMIC CREDIT

- ✓ Qualifications: Applicants must be at least 18 years old and must either be: (1) a current undergraduate or graduate student at a 2 or 4 year school; or (2) a graduate of such a school within the past 24 months prior to the date of their application.
- ✓ Applicant Abilities: Successful applicants will be expected to communicate well, have a satisfactory academic record, demonstrate a commitment to public service, have an ability to work in a fast-paced environment, and maintain a high standard of ethics and integrity. As provided in Section 3.2(B), they will also be expected to have abilities common in a professional office environment.

- ✓ Academic Credit: If an intern wishes to receive available service hours or academic credit from their school, they shall be solely responsible for providing all needed qualification and other information to their Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Choosing to Have an Intern: Each Council Member can choose to have one or more interns at any given time. In electing to do so, they are committing to put in the time necessary to provide their intern(s) with adequate training and mentorship to meet the goal for the position.
- ✓ Rules & Regulations: Council Members will be required to work with the Management Services Department, as well as the Human Resources and Risk Management Divisions, to properly recruit, bring on-board and train their interns. They shall also be responsible for ensuring that all public records associated with their interns are maintained in accordance with applicable law.
- ✓ Assignments: Each Council Member shall ensure that their interns are assigned work which meets the following:
 - Policy level focus
 - Related to City business
 - Not related to personal, campaign or other endeavors
 - Complements, rather than displaces, work of paid City employees
- ✓ Public Reporting: At the end of each internship, the Council Member shall make a public report at a Regular City Council meeting on the accomplishments of the intern, including the nature and result of the Internship Capstone Project. The intern shall be encouraged to participate in the report, if possible.
- ✓ Letters of Recommendation: If a Council Member chooses to do so, they can write a letter of recommendation for their intern on City Council letterhead. However, the letter shall be clear that it is written on behalf of the Council Member, rather than the City or City Council as a whole.

It should also be noted that while the laws applicable to when an intern is considered to be a “volunteer” do not apply to volunteers for state or local governments (29 U.S.C. § 203(e)(4)(a)), this Internship Program is nonetheless modeled after the FLSA’s “primary beneficiary test” to be sensitive to this issue. In addition, Administrative Policy #07400.008 does not apply to paid intern positions listed in the City’s Position Library and Compensation Plan. Accordingly, since the unpaid interns are not employees of the City, as provided for in Corona Municipal Code (“CMC”) Section 2.04.060(B), they are consistent with the City Manager form of government in reporting directly to their Council Members.

COMMITTEE ACTION:
Not applicable.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item supports the City's Strategic Plan Goal 6: Improve Communications with Our Community; Objective a: Commit transparency in all City actions. The report includes a description of the proposed City Council Volunteer Internship Program, and the Internship Program requires a public disclosure of the work performed by each intern.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost to on-board a volunteer is about \$150, which covers the physical, background check and live scan fingerprinting. There are sufficient funds in the FY 2019-20 General Government operating budget to cover the cost of up to 10 interns per year, though that many is not anticipated.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

No environmental review is required because the proposed action is not a project governed by the California Environmental Quality Act.

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REVIEWED BY: MICHELE NISSEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: MITCHELL LANSDELL, ACTING CITY MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JACQUE CASILLAS, COUNCIL MEMBER

Attachments:

1. DRAFT AP #07400.008 (City Council Volunteer Internship Program)