

CIC Meeting 3/12/2023

Staff Present: Harmonee, Marco, Rheanna

Commission Members Present: Brian, Susan, Hannah, Jim, Calvin, Diana, Janette

Presentation: Low Income Pricing for Garbage/Recycling

Presenters: Eben, Quintin

Committee Member: How are these organizations determining what income level participants have?

Eben: Most of them will look at data that already exists like SNAP, but some will look at the median income in your area or ask you to submit pay stubs

CM: Was commercial considered at all in this process, or just residential?

Eben: No, just residential

CM: What about recycling needs? How are they different, if they are, and any implications for the pricing structure?

Eben: Everything is tangled together, trash/recycling/compost, so it doesn't really have any implications

CM: Asking to have the garbage bill put in the renter's name would take a lot more input from the city because it's a whole extra step.

Eben: One option we're looking into with the renters is to get an additional discount on things if you work for a city bureau – i.e. if you work for the water bureau you can get a discount on water, etc.

CM: The community groups that you interviewed, did any of them express concern about whether any groups had NOT been considered?

Eben: No, though that wasn't really the focus of the questions posed towards community members so it's possible that there could be a group we missed since they weren't prompted to share

CM: What I'm thinking of is are there CG that deal with the "lifestyle" of low income families to know that if you do cut their bills by 50%, what impact does that make on their lives, etc?

Harmonee: It's also worth considering that time = money, that the time it takes to register for a program like this might be a barrier to getting access

Harmonee: Maybe worth considering just cutting a check to renters for half of what their landlords are charging them for trash

Quintin: We've considered all of these options, I can't remember specifics but we found that it wasn't viable

CM: If there's any way for these systems to talk to each other, that would be amazing

CM: Yes, it's often difficult to sign up for one social service over another

Harmonee: We've been debating how to set the metric for who qualifies, since there is no standard and different social services have different low-income thresholds

Eben/Harmonee: If you had to choose between helping less people with a bigger discount, or helping more people with a smaller discount, which would be preferable?

CM: overall positive response to helping more people with a smaller discount

CM: Though it could get a higher percentage of folks enrolled if you gave a higher discount to a smaller group

CM: Also a vote for doing a sort of ranked, tiered sort of benefits so that people that REALLY needed it could get a higher discount

Quintin: If we teamed up with the water bureau it would make it a lot easier to apply for both discounts, but we wouldn't be able to have flexibility (like having tiers)

Harmonee: What would be the easiest way to remove barriers to this program?

CM: Being able to just check a box when you sign up to pay your water bill would be great

CM: How do we make this applicable? Because some people won't know what goes in the recycling bin or just don't care.

Harmonee: I think it's on us to educate and inform on the relevance and why it is applicable and important.

Harmonee: Any parting thoughts on this topic before we move on?

CM: Over all importance of including renters in the system and ensuring entry to the program is as easy as possible.

CM: Regarding garbage fees. I would guess that renters make up the largest percentage of low income residents. Include them in the reduced fee structure from the beginning. I know it is a complex issue with commercial rules and landlord rules, on top of the necessity to assure that everyone's trash is picked up regularly. How about just an annual check or tax rebate to all low income residents, maybe based on food stamp eligibility.

Harmonee: Announcements – Director Donnie Oliveira has asked to speak at next month's CIC meeting so he will be in attendance. This is the last meeting as the staff person for the committee. Please welcome Marco as the new lead to this space. We were approached by our Community Tech / Smart Cities team about having them come talk to the committee about data privacy and the work that they do. This team does work with the Planners but it's a totally different area than we have heard from before. Is this something the committee would be interested in learning about?

CM: Absolutely.

Marco: Excited to be leading the CIC and will reach out to members to set up optional chats to learn their vision and needs for the future of the committee. Open to feedback on how the committee operates moving into the future.

Adjourn