

# Social Services Commission Meeting Agenda Announcement

On March 12, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order No. N-25-20, which allows Brown Act Body members to attend meetings telephonically. Please be advised that some, or all, Whittier Social Services Commissioners may attend this meeting telephonically.

Consistent with mandates of Executive Order No. N-29-20, a physical location from which members of the public may observe the meeting or offer public comment will not be made available. City Hall will not be open to the public for this meeting; however public comments can be submitted below as instructed.

To submit Public Comments/Questions:

- Email: [vsantana@cityofwhittier.org](mailto:vsantana@cityofwhittier.org)
- Voicemail: (562) 567-9400

To view live meetings remotely:

- Video and audio: <https://zoom.us/j/96391049442>
- Audio only: Dial (669) 900-9128 (Meeting ID: 963 9104 9442)

Please submit email comments by 5:30 p.m. on the date of the meeting to ensure Social Service Commissioners receive and have time to review them. All emails received by 5:30 p.m. are forwarded to the Commission. Emails received after 5:30 p.m. but before the conclusion of public comments will be entered into the record.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Disability-related services are available to enable persons with a disability to participate in this meeting, consistent with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Spanish interpreters are also available. For information or to request services, please contact the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting at (562) 567-9400.

**AGENDA  
CITY OF WHITTIER  
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
CITY OF WHITTIER, 13230 PENN STREET  
JUNE 1, 2021, 6:30 PM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

Commissioner Marisol Enriquez-Santos  
Commissioner Jose Luevano  
Commissioner Kathleen McDonnell  
Vice Chair Loletta Barrett  
Chair Carlos Illingworth

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public is invited to address the Social Services Commission regarding any item of business, or any matter within the body's subject matter jurisdiction. Consistent with Executive Order No. N-29-20 public comments can be made via:

- Email: [vsantana@cityofwhittier.org](mailto:vsantana@cityofwhittier.org)
- Voicemail: (562) 567-9400

Please submit email and voicemail public comments by 5:30 p.m. on the date of the meeting to ensure Commissioners receive and have time to review them. All emails and voicemails received by 5:30 p.m. are forwarded to the Commission. Emails and voicemails received after 5:30 p.m. but before the conclusion of public comments will be entered into the record.

Pursuant to State law, the Commission cannot take action or express a consensus of approval or disapproval on any communications which do not appear on the printed agenda.

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

**5.A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Recommendation: Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 6, 2021 and the Special Meeting of May 18, 2021.

**5.B. INFORMATION AND REFERRAL REPORT**

Recommendation: Receive and file the February to April 2021 Information and Referral Report.

**5.C. 2021 WHITTIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Recommendation: Award nine scholarships for the 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program including five recipients from the Athens Services' region and four recipients from the Republic Services' region.

**6. SECRETARY COMMENTS**

**7. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS/CONFERENCE REPORTS**

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Disability-related services are available to enable persons with a disability to participate in this meeting, consistent with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Spanish interpreters are also available. For information or to request services, please contact the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting at (562) 567-9400.

The agenda packet is available three days before the meeting in the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department at City Hall (13230 Penn Street), Whittier Central Library (7344 Washington Avenue) and the East Whittier Branch Library (10537 Santa Gertrudes Avenue). Additionally, the agenda packet can be viewed on the City's website. Materials distributed to the Commission within 72 hours of the Social Services Commission meeting are available for public inspection in the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department Office.

Los servicios relacionados con la discapacidad están disponibles para permitir que las personas con discapacidad participen en esta reunión, de conformidad con la Ley Federal de Estadounidenses con Discapacidades de 1990. También hay intérpretes en español disponibles. Para obtener información o para solicitar servicios, comuníquese con el Departamento de recreación y Parques al Servicio a la Comunidad de la reunión al (562) 567-9400.

El paquete de la agenda está disponible tres días antes de la reunión el Departamento Parques Recreación y Servicio a la Comunidad en el Ayuntamiento (13230 Penn Street), Whittier Central Library (7344 Washington Avenue) y Biblioteca sucursal del este de Whittier (10537 Santa Gertrudes Avenue). Además, el paquete de la agenda se puede ver en el sitio web de la Ciudad. Los materiales distribuidos al Concejo Municipal dentro de las 72 horas de la reunión del Comisión de Servicios Sociales están disponibles para inspección pública en el Departamento de Recreación y Parques al Servicio a la Comunidad.

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing agenda was posted in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. Regular and Adjourned Regular meeting agendas may be amended up to 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Dated this 24th day of May 2021.

/s/ Virginia Santana

Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department

**MINUTES  
CITY OF WHITTIER  
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 13230 PENN STREET  
April 6, 2021 – 6:30 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Illingworth, consistent with Executive Order No. N-25-20, called the regular meeting of the Social Services Commission to order at 6:32 p.m. via telephone conference on April 6, 2021.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Carlos Illingworth, Chair  
Loletta Barrett, Vice Chair  
Marisol Enriquez-Santos, Commissioner  
Jose Luevano, Commissioner  
Kathleen McDonnell, Commissioner

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Virginia Santana, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services  
Martin Browne, Community Services Manager  
Alex Rodriguez, Office Specialist III

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Secretary Santana led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Richard Parnell with LA CADA stated that 2021 is the agency's fifteenth anniversary. They explained that their mission is to save lives, unite families, and protect the community by providing access to evidence-based behavioral health services. In FY19-20, LA CADA served 172 Whittier residents. LA CADA is requesting \$15,000 to expand programs and services throughout the City, including outreach, education, homeless and substance use referrals. Also, to expand service coordination to schools, police, businesses, neighborhoods, and agencies.

Cynthia Nickell with the Boys and Girls Club submitted an email that was read into the record by Office Specialist III Rodriguez. The email provided an overview of the

request for support for an ADA elevator and additional modifications to improve accessibility to the second floor of their Main Clubhouse.

## **5. STAFF REPORTS:**

### **5.A. Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Commissioner Luevano, seconded by Commissioner McDonnell, and carried 5-0 by roll call vote, to approve the Minutes of the February 2, 2021 Regular Meeting.

### **5.B. Information and Referral Report**

Manager Browne presented the Information and Referral report for January 2021 and informed the Commission that numerical data for the calls for service was added to the report, as requested. He also explained that in January, 86 calls for service were received.

Commissioners thanked staff for the detailed summary and appreciated the report's new format.

It was moved by Commissioner Luevano, seconded by Commissioner McDonnell, and carried 5-0 by roll call vote, to receive and file the January 2021 Information and Referral Report.

### **5.C. 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program-Sponsored by Athens Services and Republic Services**

Secretary Santana presented five additional questions for the Commission's consideration for the 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program-Sponsored by Athens Services and Republic Services.

1. How would you balance the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, through SB 1383, with the desire to help residents and businesses that are already suffering financially?
2. Pretend you are the new Director of Sustainability, City of Whittier and it's your job to educate 86,000 residents on how to compost their food waste. Discuss how you would encourage residents to participate in your proposed new program(s) by describing your marketing plan, goals, and measures of success.
3. Contamination in recycling is a big problem. Review the recycling policy of Athens or Republic Services to learn more about contamination. Explain why contamination in recycling is a problem and discuss how residents and businesses could improve their local recycling to reduce contamination.

4. Research recycling programs in Japan, Germany, and the United States and compare and contrast what differences are used in their respective recycling programs. Which country do you think is most successful at recycling and why? Apply your findings to Whittier.
5. We would be interested to learn more about plastic waste and recycling programs on school campuses. Please research plastic waste and recycling programs from around the world that could be used at your school to reduce plastic and other environmental waste.

Following a brief discussion, Commissioners reached a consensus on Question No. 5, "Please research plastic waste and recycling programs from around the world that could be used at your school to reduce plastic and other environmental waste;" and suggested students use MLA formatting for the essay.

It was moved by Commissioner Luevano, seconded by Commissioner McDonnell, and carried 5-0 by roll call vote, to approve the 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program criteria using Question No. 5 with MLA formatting.

#### **5.D. 2020 Whittier Volunteer Recognition Program**

Secretary Santana reported that ten volunteer nominations were received for the 2020 Whittier Volunteer Recognition Program for the Commissions review and discuss.

Commissioners discussed nominee's volunteer work focusing on those with a record of volunteering during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Commissioners requested staff celebrate self-nominee Bill Henley at the Senior Volunteer Recognition event and approved the other nine nominees for awards for their service to the community.

Secretary Santana confirmed the Senior Volunteer Recognition Event would be an appropriate venue to honor nominee Henley.

It was moved by Commissioner McDonnell, seconded by Commissioner Enriquez-Santos, and carried 5-0 by roll call vote, to approve the following recipients for the 2020 Whittier Volunteer Recognition award: Rita Holmes, Violetta Shepard, Geneva Crawford, Ruri "Peanuts" Pierre, Roxanne Torrosian, Gil Rodriguez, Sandra Hahn, Yadi Lemus, and Luis Carrion.

#### **5.E. Social Services Grant Funding Application FY 2020-21**

Secretary Santana stated that 15 grant applications were received from different agencies. She presented an excel sheet with the average funding allocations recommended by the Commissioners. She explained that this report would be used to discuss how to allocate \$176,516 in general funds for the FY 2020-21 Social Services Grant Funding.

Commissioner McDonnell recused herself from any decision concerning the Boys and Girls Club due to a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Luevano elected to keep some of his allocated funds in case there was a possibility to provide a reserve for Council to use at their discretion.

Discussions between Commissioners were focused on funding agencies that serve a good number of Whittier residents, and that proposed a project focused on helping the homeless community or individuals on the verge of homelessness. They also were looking for agencies that focused on meeting the basic needs of an individual by providing food or shelter and projects that are self-sustaining with records of using funding towards projects instead of paying executives.

Following their discussion, Commissioners agreed that the applications from CAPC, Whittier Hearing Angel Foundation, and Whittier Pregnancy Clinic (ranked 13-15) should not receive funding as their projects did not meet the criteria. They explained that CAPC has already received a discounted rental rate for their office located in the city-owned Special Activity building and recommended the other twelve projects receive funding based upon a consensus of the average scores.

Commissioners recommended City Council review the allocation of \$176,516 from the general fund to 12 of the 15 agencies:

- \$42,700 The Whole Child – Mental Health & Healing Services;
- \$24,000 Whittier Area First Day Coalition;
- \$23,000 Volunteers of America;
- \$21,000 Salvation Army – Transitional Living Center;
- \$16,000 Interfaith Food Center;
- \$11,800 L.A. CADA;
- \$10,750 Boys & Girls Club;
- \$10,000 Women’s and Children’s Crisis Shelter;
- \$5,000 Jovenes, Inc.;
- \$4,166 Community Legal Aid SoCal;
- \$4,100 Whittier Meals on Wheels;
- \$4,000 SPIRITT Family Services;
- \$0 CAPC, Inc.
- \$0 Whittier Hearing Angel Foundation; and
- \$0 Whittier Pregnancy Clinic, dba Obria Medical Clinics.

It was moved by Commissioner McDonnell, seconded by Commissioner Enriquez-Santos, and carried 5-0 by roll call vote with Commissioner McDonnell recusing on the Boys and Girls Club submission, to recommend the above allocations to City Council for the FY 20-21 Social Service grant funding.

**6. SECRETARY COMMENTS:**

Secretary Santana highlighted a successful ribbon cutting for the Newly Completed Parking Structure on April 6, 2021; and stated the City looks forward to opening the parking structure to the public soon.

**7. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**

None.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Illingworth adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Approved and adopted by the Social Services Commission on \_\_\_\_\_.

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Virginia Santana, Secretary



**MINUTES  
CITY OF WHITTIER  
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
CITY OF WHITTIER  
MAY 18, 2021 – 6:30 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Illingworth called the regular meeting of the Social Services Commission to order at 6:38 p.m. as a virtual meeting, in the City of Whittier, California.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Jose Luevano, Commissioner  
Kathleen McDonnell, Commissioner  
Marisol Enriquez-Santos, Commissioner  
Carlos Illingworth, Chair  
Loletta Barrett, Vice Chair

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Virginia Santana, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services  
Martin Browne, Community Services Manager  
Alex Rodriguez, Office Specialist III  
Julissa Romero, Office Specialist II

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Luevano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Constanza Pachon, CEO, The Whole Child, thanked the City and the Commission for the increase in funding available to support their work in mental health services, homeless prevention, rehousing, nutrition, and parenting services. She informed the Commission they have an access center facility in construction in Downey and invited the Commission for a tour. She went on to inform the Commission that an interim shelter is going to be built in Santa Fe Springs for families in 2023.

Jeanette Kuiphof, President/CEO, Obria Medical Clinics, thanked the Commission for reconsidering their request. She explained Obria Medical Clinics serves the low-income, marginalized population base with basic pregnancy confirmation services, wellness examinations and STD testing and treatment. She stated funds would be used to hold health fairs focusing on Whittier residents and they plan to partner with local churches to promote their work with homeless and low-income individuals. They continue to seek funds for lab fees and testing and grant funds will cover all the patient's fees for their low-income/homeless patients. She stated she had emailed a comment for the Commission to view.

Arles Benavides, Program Coordinator, SPIRITT Family Services, commented that SPIRITT Family Services has been offering substance abuse and mental health services throughout the pandemic and stated he had emailed a comment for the Commission to view.

Cynthia Nickell, Grants and Contracts Manager, Boys and Girls Club of Whittier, explained their organization partners with five school districts to provide before-school and after-school enrichment programs that provides services to 3,500 local children with an emphasis on services for homeless families. She stated she had emailed a comment for the Commission to view.

Julia Scalise, Senior Director of Development, The Whole Child, thanked the Commission for their continued partnership and support. She stated she had emailed a comment for the Commission to view.

Natalie Saenz, Business Development Coordinator, CAPC, Inc., explained they are a non-profit agency who assists developmentally disabled individuals to live extraordinary lives with a focus on getting them employed. She stated COVID-19 has affected access to their online resources because of a lack of internet service or computer device and explained funding will be used to purchase this equipment to help their clients.

Norma Yoguez, Program Manager, SPIRITT Family Services, stated they are a nonprofit organization that has been in the community since 1972 providing help with substance abuse, child abuse prevention and provides services that help people overcome their current situation by providing hot meals. She stated they are now open for face-to-face meetings for in-person substance abuse programs and will start to work closely with the Boys and Girls Club, and Rio Hondo College. She stated she had emailed a comment for the Commission to view.

Perla Peloyo, Chief Operating Officer, SPIRITT Family Services, explained they provide support to families through prevention and after-care services like food assistance and clothing assistance.

Emailed public comments are attached.

## **5. STAFF REPORTS**

### **5.A. SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING GRANT**

Secretary Santana explained that City Council agreed with the Commission that the agencies' need for funding was greater than the approved budget of \$176,516 and unanimously approved the allocation of a one-time \$100,000 increase to the social services grant funds, bringing the total funding to \$276,516 and requested the Social Services Commission re-allocate 75% of the total funding to agencies that met the homeless criteria focus and 25% to the other social services projects that serve the Whittier Community.

Secretary Santana asked the Commission to begin the process by confirming the agencies that met the criteria focus and then allocate the 75% allotment

following the confirmation and then continue with the allocation of the remaining 25%.

Commissioner McDonnell thanked Secretary Santana for presenting the grant fund item to City Council and asked if other criteria was given by City Council for the distribution of the funds.

Secretary Santana responded that although City Council agreed on the need for the additional funds the also wanted to express their desire for the Commission to stay focused on the criteria to ensure the applicants were meeting the requirements.

Following discussion, the Commissioner's determined the Salvation Army - Transitional Living Center Day Care Project; L.A. CADA; Whittier Area First Day Coalition; Jovenes, Inc.; Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter; The Whole Child - Mental Health and Housing Services; Interfaith Food Center; Volunteers of America; and Community Legal Aid So Cal should be placed in the homeless service group that would be receiving funds from the larger portion of the budget.

Commissioner McDonnell commented that she was hesitant about Volunteers of America due to their \$80,000 requested amount and because they were a first-time applicant, but after discussion, she agreed this agency did meet the homeless focus.

Chair Illingworth, Commissioner Barrett, Commissioner McDonnell, and Commissioner Enrique-Santos stated the application from SPIRITT Family Services was not geared towards homelessness and moved their project to the non-focused group. Commissioner Luevano felt this application should remain within the homeless focused group.

Following discussion, Whittier Meals on Wheels, Whittier Hearing Aid, CAPC, Whittier Pregnancy Clinic, and Boys and Girls Club were moved to the non-homeless focused group with Commissioner McDonnell abstaining on the Boys and Girls Club decision.

Vice Chair Barrett asked if the 75% - 25% split was a clear direction from City Council and Secretary Santana confirmed that it was.

Following discussion, the Commissioners agreed to fully fund all the agencies in the homeless services section except for the Volunteers of America, which was partially funded in the amount of \$41,387 and fully fund all the other social service agencies except for the Whittier Pregnancy Clinic, which was partially funded in the amount of \$7,129, as it was ranked 15 out of 15. Commissioner McDonnell recused herself from voting on the Boys and Girls club.

Chair Illingworth expressed a wish to provide language to the organizations with their award letter requesting they focus on the vulnerable and homeless community, but Commissioner McDonnell stated they should not request this

change since these agencies have already applied and the funds will be used to serve a great need in our community, apart from homeless.

It was moved by Commissioner McDonnell, seconded by Commissioner Enriquez-Santos and carried 5-0 by roll call, with Commissioner McDonnell recusing from voting on the Boys and Girls club, to recommend City Council approve the FY 2020-21 allocation of Social Services funding in the amount of \$276,516, which includes a one-time additional amount of \$100,000.

## **6. SECRETARY'S COMMENTS**

None.

## **7. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner McDonnell thanked City Council for providing additional funding.

Commissioner Luevano thanked staff for making the process smooth and explained he felt good being able to allocate funds to the 15 agencies.

Chair Illingworth and Commissioner Enriquez-Santos thanked the Commissioners for their teamwork.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Approved and adopted by the Social Services Commission on \_\_\_\_\_.

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Virginia Santana, Secretary

Encs.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED BY EMAIL:**

Email from Arles Benavides, SPIRITT Family Services:

Dear City of Whittier Social Services Commission,

SPIRITT's Comprehensive Prevention Services (CPS) is one of many programs serving Whittier and surrounding communities. The focus of this program is to work on Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Prevention in the community. Efforts include: Support and encourage responsible alcoholic beverage retailer practices for off-sale alcohol retailers in Whittier and provide recognition to retailers that maintain the standards and best practices set by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. Some of the strategies implemented by this program include:

1. Virtual Red Ribbon Week Pledge to be Drug-Free 24/7 on Instagram @spiritt\_inspirechange.
2. Community Education, we host weekly SUD prevention workshops through the Whittier Wellness Community's (LACPH Whittier Health Center's) WebEx platform. Topics include Alcohol Abuse and Underage Drinking Prevention, Marijuana/Vaping Facts and Prevention, and Prescription and Over-The-Counter Drugs & Opioids Misuse/Abuse Prevention and Safe Disposal workshops.
3. Facilitate the WINDOWS/Ventanas family communication program, focused on enhancing family bonding as a method to prevent youth substance abuse.
4. Facilitate SUD Prevention Workshops in collaboration with the Whittier City School District's Reach for The Stars Parent Coffee Club groups.
5. Collaborate with community partners and other stakeholders on projects to educate and prevent substance abuse including youth conferences such as The CHOICES Youth Conference which was held on March 12, 2021 and the Spring Student Youth Summit (three-day conference) which was held on April 14, 21, and 28, 2021.
6. Collaborated on virtual events for National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week (March 22-26, 2021) Alcohol Prevention Month (April), and National Prevention Week (May 9-14, 2021).
7. Freedom from Drugs Art Contest for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students in all the Whittier and Unincorporated Whittier School Districts (April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – May 16, 2021).
8. Continue to promote and support the bi-annual National Drug Take-Back Day (Safe Medication Disposal Events) hosted by the Whittier Police Department. Including making and posting promotional banners, distributing flyers, and informing the community about the event and safe medication disposal.
9. Hosted a booth at both NDTBD events this fiscal year (October 2020 and April 2021 events).
10. Advocate for prevention policies including making public comment at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor's Meetings regarding issues or items that pertain to substance abuse in the Whittier Area.
11. Promoted signage campaign to reduce smoking and/or vaping in public places including parks and local colleges.
12. Maintain a social media campaign to educate the community about S.U.D. Prevention and share important resources, upcoming events, and information.

13. In addition, we continue to outreach to local schools and community to offer SUD prevention workshops and resources to reduce the risks of substance abuse.

Email from Norma Yoguez, Program Manager, SPIRITT Family Services:

Since 1972, SPIRITT Family Services (SPIRITT) – a community-based 501(c)(3), non-profit social service organization has served the City of Whittier – providing a critical range of programs that advance the mental and emotional well-being of children, youth, and families. SPIRITT has utilized a strength-based family-centered model to meet the needs of each individual in the family unit to further promote SPIRITT’s mission to *empower families, improve health and well-being, and strengthen communities* and DCFS’s vision in *ensuring all children thrive in safe families and supportive communities*.

We are asking for your continued support to help residents struggling with mental health issues which has increased since the pandemic.

SPIRITT has experience being actively involved in the following local and community neighborhood activities: Walk for Violence Prevention; National Night Out; and Make-a-Difference Day. In addition, SPIRITT has experience working with local community stakeholders to improve neighborhood conditions, such as through our partnerships with the Whittier Police Department, Boys and Girls Club of Whittier, Rio Hondo College, Whittier City School District, the Hispanic Outreach Taskforce, the Los Angeles County Public Health’s Whittier Wellness Community, among others.

**Family and Resident Activities:** Since 1972, SPIRITT implemented the Windows/Ventas is multi-family class for parents, adolescents, and their siblings (ages 10+ years) increases protective factors by having parents connect with their own family members and other families. Together families resolve family conflicts in a manner that promotes respect for all family members.

**Family Support Activities:** SPIRITT offers support groups and parenting classes designed to help parents gain concrete information on research-based parenting approaches for raising both young children and teenagers, such as: Fatherhood engages fathers, exploring resiliency, social interaction, parenting and fatherhood support.

**Community Activities:** We continue having structured family activities to foster community engagement and networking through community activities that focus on strengthening bonds between families, neighbors, school systems, and other community stakeholders. During this last year we were able to have our CHOICES Youth Conference, Día del Niño celebration and other engagement activities including several Drive-Through events and disseminated over 300 food baskets, cleaning supplies, diaper distribution and over 200 hot meals. In collaboration with Boys and Girls club and the Service Planning Area 7 Child Abuse Prevention Council we are organizing the annual parent conference scheduled for June 9, 2021 (expecting minimum of 100 parents).

**Concrete Support to Whittier Families:** Additionally, SPIRITT provides community support to families by offering concrete support services including: rental assistance, food, furniture like beds and refrigerators, as well as clothing and infant/toddler car seats, etc. Next month SPIRITT will also host a community event, where caregivers will receive

education on child and care safety. During this event we will distribute car seats/boosters for families enrolled in one of our programs funded by DCFS, Relative Support Services.

Statement from Jeanette Kuiphof, President/CEO, Whittier Pregnancy Clinic, dba Obria Medical Clinics.

Thank you, members, for the opportunity to submit a grant request.

The Whittier Pregnancy Clinic primarily serves the low-income, marginalized population base with basic pregnancy confirmation services, Wellness Examinations and STD testing and treatment. In the first quarter of this year, 67% of our patient base had Medi-Cal, 24% had no-insurance. 68% self-identify as Hispanic/Latino and about 20% self-identify as African American/Black. 19% were high school/college age and 47% are 25-30 years.

Our project seeks to help the marginalized further, by hosting a series of small health fairs focusing on Whittier residents. We are partnering with local churches to promote these health fairs to organizations that work with the homeless and low-income population base.

We'll be offering generalized health screenings (blood pressure, cholesterol and consultations with an Advanced medical practitioner) for all attendees, but with a focus on promoting event to low-income female residents of Whittier.

For this target group we'll offer vouchers for a full Wellness examination at our Whittier clinic. Often, basic Wellness exams incur additional lab fees that can run hundreds of dollars, depending on the bloodwork ordered by our provider. For our target population, low-income/homeless, we will cover all the patient's fees: our co-pays, lab co-pays and lab costs.

There is a huge disparity by ethnicity and poverty-level in Los Angeles County in women's health. Women living in poverty are four times more likely to report a fair or poor health status compared to women living at the highest income level.

One of the challenges these women face are caregiving responsibilities. By partnering with local churches to host the events, we can utilize church volunteers to provide childcare, so childcare does not have to be a detriment to women seeking health care.

Another detriment is faced by low-income families who do not qualify for Medi-Cal, because Medi-Cal recipients do not have to pay co-pay fees.

A \$25 office visit co-pay, plus a \$25 lab co-pay can be a financial hardship to a family who does not qualify for Medi-Cal but are facing financial struggles. Such individuals are likely to ignore their own health, especially if they have children, because they will put family needs before their own.

Therefore, we respectfully request that Whittier consider partnering with us to help low-income Whittier residents, particularly women, in this project. Thank you, for allowing me to share.

Statement from Julia Scalise, Senior Director of Development, The Whole Child:

Good afternoon,

The Whole Child (TWC) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments to the Social Service Commission members. On behalf of the disadvantaged children and families we serve, we thank the City of Whittier City Council and Social Service Commission for believing in our mission and being a partner to serve children and families. We are grateful for the funding recommendation.

We also would be grateful for the Commissioners' consideration of additional funding toward reaching the full amount of our request and to the City Council for its allocation of additional social/homeless services funds.

TWC requests support for our core work as we seek to enhance services across our practice to meet the growing mental health, homeless prevention/rehousing, parenting, and nutrition needs of disadvantaged children and their families in our Whittier community. COVID has disproportionately affected the lives of low-income families, and we find there is an increasing mental health impact on children and youth, food insecurity among low-income families and housing instability for families at risk of homelessness.

In the coming year, TWC will provide a greater and deeper range of health and housing services to address these needs. Safer-at-home restrictions meant that families have been together longer and with heightened tensions; parents are needing and looking for expert help with added anxiety and behavioral issues faced by their young children. As schools continued remote learning, children with behavioral issues remained distanced; now as schools begin to open up, we will serve those who need the intervention of our school-based program and the connection to a caring therapist to provide an emotional outlet and therapy toward recovery of mental health issues. Those families already at-risk are facing greater danger of child abuse, making visits with our parenting team more urgent.

With economic disparities of the pandemic, we expect an increase in households experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This requires an increase in prevention services to help low-income families living paycheck to paycheck and at most risk of homelessness and food insecurity. For families already experiencing homelessness, many for the first time, we will provide a range of rapid-rehousing, navigation to permanent supportive housing and case management to help them achieve and maintain stability.

TWC has called the Whittier community our home for 63 years. Everything we do is to create healthier, safer and more stable lives for the neediest among our neighbors. The additional funding to reach our full request would make it possible to reach more children and families with our housing, mental health, parenting, and nutrition services.

We look forward to attending this evening's Zoom meeting.



A statement from Cynthia Nickell, Grants and Contracts Manager, Boys and Girls Club of Whittier:

My name is Cynthia Nickell. I am with the Boys & Girls Club of Whittier. We work to bridge the equity gap, one child at a time. At the Boys & Girls Club, we work toward every child's success, especially those who need us most. We help young people overcome disadvantages through programs promoting academic success, healthy lifestyles, and good character. Our work is important because young people who are successful in these three areas will grow up to be contributing citizens of the community.

Some of the children who need us most are those who are homeless. We gratefully provide services to homeless families, and never turn them away due to an inability to pay. When homeless parents know their children are in a stable, supportive environment, they can better focus on finding housing and employment. We have partnered with other agencies to help secure housing assistance for families in need.

Please know that your support of our ADA-Compliant elevator project will indeed serve the needs of homeless families, as well as many others in our community. Thank you for your consideration today.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Nickell



# Agenda Report

Social Services Commission

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**Date:** June 1, 2021

**To:** Social Services Commission

**From:** Virginia Santana, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services

**Subject:** Information and Referral Report

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and file the February to April 2021 Information and Referral Report.

## **BACKGROUND**

None.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff prepared the Information and Referral report and hereby submits the report for Commission's review. The report will provide a summary of the calls for service, the information presented, and a summary of any local events or trainings offered to residents.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL**

Goal 3: Maintain & Enhance Quality of Life

Goal 4: Transparent & Open Government

## **ATTACHMENT**

A. I & R Report, February to April 2021

**I & R Report**  
**February 2021**

*The month of February has been our most popular month with tax inquiries and COVID vaccination information. We still had our regular calls regarding Senior Housing, Senior Transportation, and Food programs. The month of February brought in a total of 166 calls for service.*

*Senior Taxes (60.84% of calls):*

- AARP
- Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
- SASSFA
- Vita
- Liberty Plaza

*Senior Transportation (3.61% of calls):*

- Individual's health insurance plan
- Dial-A-Ride (City and County)
- ACCESS

*COVID Information (29.52% of calls):*

- Primary Care Physician
- Vaccinate LA County

*Food programs for Seniors and Families (4.22% of calls):*

- SASSFA (Home Delivered Meals)
- Meals on Wheels (Home Delivered Meals)
- Great Meals (Home Delivered Meals)
- Community Action Partnership Program (Food Bank)

*Senior Housing Referrals (1.81% of calls):*

- Community Development Commission County of L.A.
- Housing Rights Rental Directory from Housing Right Center
- TSA Properties
- LINC Properties

**I & R Report**  
**March 2021**

*The month of March was bursting with Tax inquiries and COVID vaccination information. March, we started signing up seniors 50+ for their COVID vaccination. We still had our regular calls regarding City and County Service, Senior Transportation, and Senior Benefits. The month of March brought in a total of 144 calls for service.*

*Senior Taxes (39.58% of calls):*

- AARP
- Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
- SASSFA
- Vita
- Liberty Plaza

*Senior Transportation (13.18% of calls):*

- Individual's health insurance plan
- Dial-A-Ride (City and County)
- ACCESS

*COVID Information (43.06% of calls):*

- LA County Department of Health at Parnell
- Primary Care Physician
- Vaccinate LA County

*Sr. Benefits (0.69% of calls):*

- SASSFA

*City & County Services (3.47% of calls):*

- SCRS-LACDPH
- SASSFA

**I & R Report**  
**April 2021**

*The month of April we experienced a surge of calls regarding COVID vaccination information and registration. We started signing up seniors 50+ for their COVID vaccination. We still had our regular calls regarding City and County Service, Senior Transportation, Legal services, Senior Benefits and Utilities as well as housing resources. The month of April brought in a total of 185 calls for service.*

*Senior Taxes (9.73% of calls):*

- AARP
- Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
- SASSFA
- Vita
- Liberty Plaza

*Senior Transportation (4.32% of calls):*

- Individual's health insurance plan
- Dial-A-Ride (City and County)
- ACCESS

*COVID Information & Registration (66.49% of calls):*

- LA County Department of Health at Parnell
- Primary Care Physician
- Vaccinate LA County
- COW Covid Vaccine Clinic

*Sr. Benefits (7.03% of calls):*

- SASSFA

*Utilities (4.32% of calls):*

- Gas Company
- Southern California Edison
- LIHEAP

*Housing (2.16% of calls):*

- HUD.org
- TSAhousing.com
- LACDA



# Agenda Report

Social Services Commission

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**Date:** June 1, 2021

**To:** Social Services Commission

**From:** Virginia Santana, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services

**Subject:** 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Award nine scholarships for the 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program including five recipients from the Athens Services' region and four recipients from the Republic Services' region.

## **BACKGROUND**

On September 26, 2017, the City Council approved solid waste collection and recycling franchise agreements with Athens Services and Republic Services. Both agreements included annual funding of a Community Scholarship Program for City residents. Athens Services is to provide five \$500 scholarships and Republic Services is to provide four \$500 scholarships.

## **DISCUSSION**

The 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program was advertised by the City and both franchise haulers through their respective social media and all the local High Schools in the surrounding area were also contacted to share with their students. Scholarship applicants wrote a 400 to 500-word essay on the theme of environmental sustainability. This year's theme asked students to research plastic waste and recycling programs from around the world that could be used at their school to reduce plastic and other environmental waste. The essay contest is open to college-bound graduating high school seniors who are residents of the City.

Essays will be judged anonymously with no identifying information available to the judges and evaluated based upon creativity, demonstrated passion for the environment, and a vision for the future. Submissions will also be judged based upon Modern Language Association (MLA) writing standards set forth in *A Writer's Reference* required by most colleges and universities. Decisions made by the judges are final.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact. Funding for the Whittier Scholarship Program is provided by Athens Services and Republic Services specifically for this purpose.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL**

Goal 3: Maintain & Enhance Quality of Life

**ATTACHMENT**

A. Entries for the 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program



## 2021 WHITTIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

SPONSORED BY ATHENS SERVICES AND REPUBLIC SERVICES

ATHENS SERVICES:

REPUBLIC SERVICES:

A#1  
A#2  
A#3  
A#4  
A#5  
A#6

R#1  
R#2  
R#3  
R#4

### Scholarship Awards:

- Five (5) \$500 individual scholarships will be awarded to five recipients living in Athens' service area, and the City of Whittier city limits.
- Four (4) \$500 individual scholarships will be awarded to four recipients living in Republic's service area, and the City of Whittier city limits.

### Writing Guidelines:

- Essays must be 400 to 500 words in length, typewritten and double-spaced in 12-point font. Facts and quotations should be appropriately cited either in the body of the essay or in footnotes. Entries must be original, unpublished essays written by the contestants.

### Essay Topic:

*Please research plastic waste and recycling programs from around the world that could be used at your school to reduce plastic and other environmental waste and write an informative essay between 400 and 500 words (500-words max, including citations using MLA citing format).*



# **ATHENS SERVICES ENTRIES:**

A#1

A#2

A#3

A#4

A#5

A#6

### Suggestions for Building a More Sustainable Whittier

In 2020, Los Angeles County produced a total of 6,262,364.63 tons of trash, with the city of Whittier contributing 54,693.34 tons (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, 2020). While the amount of trash disposed of by Whittier is not the highest of all the cities in LA County, it is still a significant number and one that can easily be decreased by a series of individual and organizational actions.

Living in Whittier, I have noticed that we can take our beautiful elementary, middle, and high school campuses for granted and allow them to become tainted with litter and plastic waste. Academic institutions are major factors in the development of children's brains, and if they are able to nourish passion and practice for protecting the environment while in school, it is highly likely that their dedication will continue as they grow older (*Greater Good*, 2019). In order to invoke the most change and impact, recycling and waste-reducing initiatives need to start at the school districts.

Several school districts in California have already enacted policies to adhere to the plastic waste issue. By setting up disposal cans designated for different types of waste, the Alameda Unified School District raised their average recycling and composting rates from 30% to nearly 64% (Green Schools National Network, 2015). Additionally, the Oakland Unified School District engaged in a partnership with the Green Gloves Symposium to educate their custodians, students, and staff on waste reduction and recycling. Because of their efforts, the district was able to divert an average of 50% of their food waste with individual schools within the district diverting over 70% of their food waste (Green Schools National Network, 2015).

These school districts exemplify the simple but impactful actions that the Whittier Union High School District can be taking to combat the amount of waste that is disposed of in our community and promote recycling and reducing plastic waste. In addition to these actions, the district can enforce the use of sustainable, compostable paper products instead of single-use plastic and styrofoam products, which would reduce the amount of plastic waste in schools. To expand on the initiative from the Oakland Unified School District, the Whittier Union High School District could establish a similar program by working with local environmental protection organizations. This type of partnership could operate similar to the partnership between the OUSD and the Green Gloves Symposium, where the two parties work together to develop projects that help the school become more sustainable and educate the community about plastic waste and the importance of recycling and composting. An initiative like this would take an immense amount of dedication, but it is necessary to protect the environment and contribute as much effort as possible to reduce the amount of waste and build a more sustainable Whittier.

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## Environmental Sustainability on School Campuses

Sustainability is defined as the ability to be maintained at a specific rate or level. When applied to a school environment, whether a high school or university, the priority set is to make sure that campuses are eco-friendly and healthy. The question of how sustainability is being achieved is asked on almost, if not every campus. Methods of maintaining a healthy environment differ from school to school and even from country to country. Universities and high schools take pride in the fact that they do everything they can to establish a healthy environment. Some develop small community gardens and recycling programs. The reason why this is so important should not come as a surprise to anyone. Information from the UNT Health and Science center states, “To have healthy communities, we need clean air, natural resources, and a nontoxic environment.” (Office of Sustainability). A method of achieving this goal of a healthy community, is increasing the ease of recycling and an incentive-based system for students on campus. A similar approach is common in elementary schools, where competitions are held between classes to see who recycles more. Methods from foreign countries can be adopted here in our school systems. In Switzerland, a strategy titled “Waste Reduction” is practiced. According to Pablo Garcia Rubio of the BBVA, “The Alpine country is an example of how citizen awareness can be increased through training and national policies. In this case, efforts have focused on reducing non-recyclable waste with measures such as the single bag. To get rid of this type of waste, you must buy “official” garbage bags with a higher price, while recycling is

free.” (Rubio-Pablo). Record data from this recycling method has shown that 91-93% of glass bottles and aluminum cans have been recycled. If national policies and public awareness of this method are increased in the states, then the same results may also be found. The approach that is more likely to be used on a school campus is active policy and education. In the country of Wales, the recycling rate is the highest of any country in Europe and is improving over time. “In just 20 years, the British country household recycling rate has increased from 5% to 64% and expects to keep improving to become one of the world’s leading nations in this field.”

(Rubio-Pablo). The range of the programs in place reaches beyond education. Waste management in Wales involves citizens, businesses, and public administrations. If a system of this measure is implemented that consists of the education system, then it would reinforce the mindset of a younger generation. Following that path, it would allow more people to become involved in environmental sustainability. There are always methods to achieve the goal of healthy communities through sustainability. It all comes down to which approach will be the most effective.

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Feb. 2020, [www.bbva.com/en/5-best-recycling-practices-from-around-the-world/](http://www.bbva.com/en/5-best-recycling-practices-from-around-the-world/).

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Athens #3

### Athens Service Scholarship Essay

Twenty-seven million tons. There were twenty-seven million tons in the United States of America alone in 2018. In 2018, twenty-seven million tons of plastic were sent to landfills in the United States (“Plastics”). The plastic pollution crisis does not only affect the United States, but the entire world. Plastic that makes its way into the ocean breaks down into smaller pieces and is ingested by marine life, which poisons and wounds these animals. The chemicals found in plastic are shown to be taken into the human body and negatively change its hormones (“Environmental”). How does so much plastic waste, which can be harmful to people and the environment, end up sitting in landfills? To combat plastic pollution, countries around the world are coming up with creative recycling programs to prevent further damage to humans and the environment. Although plastic pollution seems to be an overwhelming problem, countries such as Japan and Wales in the United Kingdom have managed to create recycling programs that reduce waste effectively. The same programs used in these countries can also be implemented in



our schools. Enforcing the reduction of waste and recycling in schools is crucial because it establishes a future generation that will value recycling and the reduction of waste.

Countries around the world have formed their own recycling programs in an attempt to combat pollution. One of these countries is Japan. The recycling system in Japan consists of people being responsible for sorting and cleaning all of the plastic waste in their household before recycling (García-Rubio). Sorting and cleaning all waste properly is important in order for recycling plants to be able to properly process the waste. As a result of Japan's recycling process, there are not many trash cans on the streets of Japan because each person is responsible for the waste that they create (García-Rubio). A similar form of thorough sorting of waste can be implemented in my school as well. There can be several bins placed around the school campus to separate waste such as paper, cardboard, aluminium cans, and plastic. Through this sorting of waste, all students will be able to participate in the local recycling process.

In Britain, Wales is also doing its part in the recycling process. Wales has been able to increase its rate of recycling from 5% to 64% in only twenty years. The recycling rate of Wales is "one of the highest in Europe". The country has been able to provide its citizens with accessible recycling systems. The public of Wales were educated in waste management through awareness campaigns. The public is also encouraged to recycle through "incentives and taxation measures" (García-Rubio). The same process used in Wales can be used on my campus as well. Students can volunteer to focus on educating the community around the school. The students would educate the community on where people can go to properly dispose of different types of waste. Both careful sorting and education can be implemented in my school to recycle plastic and reduce waste.

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#### Athens #4

In the world today there is a constant problem we face daily within all our communities and that is the issue of waste. Waste affects everyone and has become a major problem for people around the world and in our schools and school communities.

Since I was young I have encouraged all members of my family to part take in going green. My family and I regularly separate our trash into waste, recyclables, and green waste. From the time I able it understand how recycling helped make a positive impact on the environment, I have collected glass, plastic, and aluminum bottles to turn into my local recycling center. For 8 years, I have taken part in the annual Coastal Clean-up events, and individual community park clean-ups within my local community.

Within my school community, the idea of implementing a Going Green club along with “smart” recycling bins could not only change the environment but, others’ outlook on recycling. The start-up of an environmental club within the school to bring awareness to the problem at hand. Additionally, this club would host and take part in community events. We can set up community park clean-ups and invite others within our community to help. Then, utilize doing service with service clubs along with honor societies to incorporate local schools to encourage recycling for younger students. With the ultimate goal of creating recycling chapters in the elementary and intermediate schools.

In researching ways to improve recycling I came across ways other countries have been able to increase recycling and implementing new ways to gather recyclable waste. In turkey, they have “Smart Recycling Boxes which are recycling units which when collecting recyclables dispenses food for stray dogs to help feed them, it also has a dish to empty your water for the dogs” (Locker n.d). This opens the door to the idea of incentives for recycling moreover it was able to tackle two issues Turkey was having at once. Then I would want to incorporate this into my school and local community but altered it a little. I would want to particularly follow China’s “Reverse Vending Machines, for example, the INCOM vending machines created by Chnag Tao which pays for exchanging empty plastic bottles” (Vending Machines Turn Trash into Treasure). This would revolutionize the idea of recycling at school. This gives incentive to that the students to recycle and is able to help reduce the amount of plastic waste which is the most prominent waste found within high schools. Not only does this help high schoolers to bring awareness to the idea of recycling for money, but the realization that what they are doing is for the good of the environment and overall their community.

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### Plastic Waste and Recycling Programs on School Campuses

On average, schools and universities in California generate about 562,442 tons of waste each year. The statistic is drastically higher across the United States. This waste could be divided into different groups such as water waste, plastic waste, garbage waste, food waste, etc. Many schools worldwide deal with waste issues, causing them to implement new recycling programs to limit the waste each school produces. These programs and technological advancements can and should be distributed to public and private schools around the world to help the cause. Two notable advancements or programs that efficiently recycle and limit waste include the Elkay EZH2O Enhanced Bottle Filling Station, and a built in water catchment system beneath a turf field or track.

The Elkay EZH2O Enhanced Bottle Filling Station is a station that has a water fountain and a fill up portion which promotes the reuse of plastic bottles. This station also has a counter above the fill up portion that goes up by one every 500ml, or 16.9floz, which is the size of a plastic water bottle. In schools, each filling station can save from 100-500 bottles daily, depending on the size of the school and the events going on around the school. This amounts to anywhere from 20 to 60 thousand bottles saved each school year. Drake University released a study in which their 50 bottle filling stations across campus save a total of 400,000 plastic bottles each year, with some

individual stations amounting to 4,000 per month. This bottle filling station can save billions of plastic bottles each year if it were available to more schools.

On a larger scale, a water catchment system is a simple yet very efficient way to collect water through the ground. A water catchment system can be implemented practically anywhere where there is runoff, but this water catchment system in particular collects water that seeps through a turf field and/or a track. The water is collected and funnelled underground to be used in bathrooms, landscaping, or any other water system. This collection system on turf can collect rain water, water spilled by athletes, and even morning dew. The amount of water that can be saved and recycled by this system heavily depends on location and size of the school itself, but undoubtedly is a great source of reclaimed water. This can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000 depending on the size of the field complex.

While schools across the world and country continue to build more and more waste annually, it is important to create plans and possible technologies to slow down the production of waste. Two great plastic waste and water recycling programs are the water filling station and water catchment system. These somewhat new systems allow for schools to reduce plastic waste by the ten thousands annually and recycle water at a much more efficient rate.

## Improving The World Starts With Us

The demand to reduce pollution and recycle more has become increasingly imperative as the drastic effects of pollution have been occurring worldwide. Although it may be impossible to decrease the amount of waste produced globally, we can begin within our own community and schools. The thorough implementation of recycling education and programs within schools can aid in reducing the waste produced each year by them. Providing more resources such as biodegradable bags to put waste and compost in, and a variety of bins for different kinds of recyclable waste can also aid in improving the environment within our own schools.

Schools in California alone produce about 562,442 tons of waste each year, almost half of which “is comprised of organic materials like paper, cardboard, and uneaten cafeteria food,” according to “School Waste Reduction Programs” (*CalRecycle*). The waste produced by these schools can be recyclable but are not. Implementing recycling education within our schools’ learning curriculum throughout every grade level can help develop habits for students to continue recycling, even as adults, and limit the waste produced. This in turn can reduce the amount of waste they produce even as adults, which can benefit our community for years and years. Students spend most of their time within schools which is critical to their development in life. Teaching students the importance of recycling with on-hand recycling practices can help benefit our schools and communities for generations to come.

Our community can look to other countries for inspiration for recycling practices, such as Wales. According to Pablo Garcia-Rubio, within 20 years, Wales’ “recycling rate has increased from 5% to 64%,” due to providing an accessible and simple recycling system while implementing policies that help incentivize people to continue recycling through a pervasive



campaign (“5 best recycling practices”). This includes passing policies for schools to practice as well, which can set a precedence for Whittier to rigorously implement recycling education and resources within their schools, which can benefit the community tremendously and raise the recycling rate of the city. By providing more accessible resources, such as a variety of recyclable bins on campuses, can aid in reducing the amount of waste produced by students, and thus, within our entire community.

Thorough implementation of recycling education and resources within our community’s school systems can help make a difference for years to come, and our community will reap the benefits from it. Recycling can save the world, and it can start with us.

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# **REPUBLIC SERVICES ENTRIES:**

**R#1**

**R#2**

**R#3**

**R#4**

Republic #1

### Plastic Waste and Recycling Programs on School Campuses

In today's world, people refuse to prioritize the environment because they don't understand the significance of the issue. I believe that the best way to change public opinion regarding environmental health is to implement eco-friendly practices into schools. To grow waste and recycling programs, schools could implement environmental education, transition from plastic bottles to water bottle refilling stations, and switch from disposable utensils to using eco-friendly ones.

By implementing environmental education in schools, students will grow up learning about the importance of sustainability, but also understanding why we must take care of the environment. For example, Taiwan created the Environmental Education Act in 2011. The act helped implement environmental education throughout schools, teaching students to care for the environment. For instance, "Environmental education shall be executed by providing environmental protection related courses, lectures, discussions, online learning, experience activities, experiment, outdoor learning, film viewing, practice, and other activities" (The Environmental Education). By making slight changes to curriculum, schools could incorporate environmental education into student schedules. The U.S. and other countries could adopt similar school programs to educate students on the importance of caring for the environment.

Furthermore, schools can transition from plastic bottles to reusable water bottle refilling stations to encourage less plastic waste. Most schools have vending machines with plastic bottled drinks; however, by switching to water bottle refilling stations, students can reuse their water bottles instead of discarding them. One company from Colorado, FloWater, is expanding their water refilling stations into local schools, saying, “[FloWater] eliminates the need for plastic bottles and reduces the total amount of plastic waste found on campuses. In order to spark change in schools, there must be a way for students to easily jump on board... Educating students creates more opportunities for them to share with their families and in their communities” (Increasing Sustainability). In this way, students learn to incorporate sustainability in their everyday lives, while reducing plastic waste on campus.

Moreover, schools can transition to using eco-friendly cutlery and dishes in school cafeterias. At California State University, Northridge, dining facilities have switched to environmentally friendly products, saying, “... CSUN Dining units transitioned to using compostable cutlery made from plant starch, biodegradable plates and to-go boxes and napkins made from recycled products” (Eco-Friendly). If this was implemented at the university level, it is possible to do at high school and primary school levels as well; schools can begin to use biodegradable or compostable cutlery instead of disposable ones. Students using these eco-friendly items would be able to learn through their own actions how small details can make a difference in helping the environment.

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Accessed 20 May 2021.

### **Plastic Waste and Recycling Programs on School Campuses**

Growing up I have been acutely aware of the importance of recycling and trash diversion programs. Whittier Christian High School should and could be a leader in this endeavor. Walking through campus, we have the ability to capture recycling products and even place collection bins to segregate the different recyclable goods. The vision of the program and implementation would be easy to develop and roll out. I would get buy-in from both the administration and our Associated Student Body (ASB) team. We could have collection containers strategically placed throughout our campus for the collection of paper, cardboard, plastics, and even organics. We have on-campus maintenance workers that could compile all of the different commodities and transport them back to where our 3-yard bins are located. These 3-yard bins then would be labeled by grades so when the Republic services front loaders come by they can dump the correct bin into the correct truck. By having the commodities already segregated by grade, it will make the process easier. The key to a robust recycling and waste diversion program is to make it simple and easy to understand. This is where having both the administration and student body buy-in would be key. The containers that we would place throughout the campus would be easily identifiable with what commodity could be placed within the receptacle. We would also take it a step further and place the appropriate bin as close to recycling source as possible. For instance, where we sell our bottled water we could have a plastic bottle receptacle. Where we have our copy machines and inside classrooms, we

could place containers to capture the mixed paper. Lastly, on our loading dock, we could have 3-yard bins to hold all of our boxes that have cardboard. To make sure that this program is successful and sustainably we would cover the program during freshman orientation. Once everyone understood the program we than could implement. To monitor the success of the program we could see how many pounds or tons we have recycled after a certain portion of time. This would give us an idea of how much of a difference we are making in pulling recyclables out of the waste stream and in turn, the lessening of waste going to landfills. With our campus layout, student buy-in, ease of implementation, and a concentrated effort, this recycling program would be robust and sustainable for years to come! Whittier Christian High School would also be a fantastic partner in being Respectful, Responsible, Reliable, Resourceful and Relentless!



Whittier Scholarship Program Essay

Plastic waste and pollution are issues that has been exponentially growing. Many schools have become involved in creating new ways to teach students the importance of reducing our carbon footprint and promoting recycling. One way they have done this is by creating classes and clubs that focus on preserving our environment. Classes like AP Environmental Science, that are newer to the curriculum, inform students about the environment and teach them ways that they can lower the amount of waste they produce. Other clubs like green clubs promote recycling projects and activities like cleaning up the schools or collecting plastic bottles and other plastic items to recycle. Bringing attention to these classes and clubs and promoting them to the students is crucial in teaching them ways that they can lower their carbon footprint and save the environment. Another way that schools can inform students about the importance of recycling is holding assemblies where guest speakers can talk about different recycling topics. The Environmental Defenders is a group that visits elementary schools in the Los Angeles area and gives high energy assemblies to promote recycling to young children. This has been proven to be effective and is something that should be adopted in many schools. These assemblies can be adapted to be more age appropriate and engaging for high school students. The last method that has been proven to be effective is holding contests that promote recycling. Holding a school wide contest that rewards classes for recycling can be a very interactive way to get students involved. Having a prize to motivate students will increase the number of students participating. A higher level of participation will lead to the desired result of getting as many students as possible to recycle. The main idea of recycling programs in schools is to draw the attention of the students

and teach them the benefits of recycling, how easy it can be, and ways to produce less waste.

This generation is the future of the planet. Without the proper education or correct information, the environment will continue to suffer, and no progress will be made. The only way to bring upon change is to expose young students to the proper methods of waste management and recycling. Implementing these programs into schools is one way that will teach students how to properly care for the environment.

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## Republic #4

In my sophomore year of highschool, my peers and I started an Environmental Activists Club to fundraise for a schoolwide recycling program that we previously didn't have. In most schools, it is the sad reality that an emphasis on sustainability is low due to a lack of funding or other resources. However, even the smallest changes can make a difference, and actions like starting a campus garden or compost site, creating a community food box, and encouraging reusables can help to greatly reduce plastic and environmental waste.

First of all, a campus garden can help a school in many ways. As well as encouraging the growth of plants that would produce Oxygen to enrich the air, it would also provide an opportunity for students to compost food waste and reuse plastic containers and utensils as garden tools. By composting leftover lunch food, students would avoid wasting food and would also be contributing to the growth of new life within their own school community. This is incredibly impactful, seeing as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) cited that "90 billion pounds of edible food goes uneaten each year, which is about \$372 per person." ("Food Waste in Schools...") Even if just a fraction of that wasted food is converted into a compost site or campus garden, that one school's effort to reduce their waste would be quite impactful.

Another way to reduce the amount of food waste at school would be to initiate a community food box. Most of the food that is carelessly thrown away is a result of either the students' dislike of a certain taste or a lack of appetite to continue eating. However, there are still many other students that have raging appetites due to involvement in afterschool sports or

extracurricular or don't have enough food at home. A food box in the cafeteria where students could leave unopened, unwanted items, would be incredibly helpful in distributing the unwanted food that is usually thrown away. The aforementioned students would be able to pick up extra items at their leisure, thus reducing the amount of food that gets thrown away.

Finally, it is imperative for the school administrations to take part in the betterment of a school community as well, and this can be easily done with a focus on increasing reusable materials and reducing one time use plastics. This initiative can be done in many ways: eliminating straws, installing water bottle refill stations, or combining individual forks and spoon packages into multipurpose sporks. According to CalRecycle.gov, "Schools and universities generate about 562,442 tons of waste each year in California." (*School Waste Reduction Programs*) Most of the time, this wasted plastic seems to come from plastic utensils--by eliminating straws and slimming down 2 utensils into a multi-use spork, much more plastic can be saved. For students who can afford to bring their own lunches, encouragement to invest in reusable lunch containers or refillable water bottles would also be helpful.

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Jennifer Folliard

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