

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: April 9, 2025

To: The Mayor
The City Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer *Malaiika Billups* for

Subject: **INNOVATION FUND RECOMMENDATION – OPEN DATA VISUALIZATION
TRANSPARENCY PROJECT**

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of the City Administrative Officer recommends that this committee note and file this report.

SUMMARY

The Innovation and Performance Commission (IPC) approved funding in the amount of \$250,000 from the Innovation Fund (IF) for the Office of the City Attorney (City Attorney) – Open Data and Visualization Transparency project. As with all IPC recommendations, this report presents for your consideration the proposal City Attorney submitted and the IPC approved, along with information necessary to implement the idea as presented. However, since all IPC items are discretionary expenditures, in deference to the extraordinary budget constraints outlined in the Third (Mid-Year) Financial Status Report, this Office does not recommend funding the proposal as presented at this time.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The following is a summary of City Attorney's Innovation Fund proposal, including the department's estimate of the benefits and costs of implementing the proposal:

City Attorney would like to continue its efforts to address systemic inequality across the city by providing a first-of-its-kind access to data metrics for its criminal, municipal, and civil offices. Through this program, City Attorney would host data from these offices on the City's publicly accessible open data portal, making it easier for the public to access information while also providing data transparency, a core mission of this office. This pilot would also create a public facing, regularly updated data dashboard to provide greater insights to this data for the general public.

In the past, City Attorney has maintained data for criminal case management or litigation tracking purposes with very little attention paid to long-term analysis of the data. With this pilot, City Attorney will conduct an analysis of its current data collection practices within each area of the office, identify data metrics that are of interest to the public, ensure the integrity of the data, develop partnerships with other City departments to host the data, and create/host visualizations on its Office's publicly accessible website. This would be groundbreaking for this City Attorney's Office because past administrations never achieved data publishing and

transparency. Some city and district attorney offices in other large metropolitan areas have started to publish small amounts of data, but what City Attorney is proposing would be significantly more thorough and would cover broader areas of law than what's available anywhere today. City Attorney will publicize this service through social media posts on the City Attorney's accounts, outreach materials, and through verbal communication to media representatives and/or interested parties contacting its office for this type of information.

City Attorney would measure the success of this pilot by realizing a reduction in CPRA requests that seek the release of various data sources, especially requests on its criminal branch. This would also provide its executive office the ability to make data-informed decisions in dedicating personnel and resources while increasing efficiency. In addition, City Attorney says that various departments could utilize both the open data and visualizations to gain insights into the efforts of the Office of the City Attorney. The Civil + Human Right and Equity Department could be able to evaluate any disproportionate impacts to City residents and make recommendations on how best to address any inequities identified. City Attorney also anticipate that the Mayor's Office, City Council Offices, the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, the Office of the City Administrative Officer, LAPD, and the Controller's Office would all use this data to make recommendations and policy-making decisions.

The IPC recommends \$250,000 for the Office of the City Attorney – Open Data and Visualization Transparency pilot project. City Attorney believes that this project will be historic by increasing the City's overall data transparency, which would also allow for increased accountability and lead to more data-driven decisions both in the office and by elected leaders. City Attorney also believes that this will allow its office to become a national leader in the burgeoning effort to make city attorney and prosecutorial data more accessible to the public and researchers.

City Attorney anticipates that it will take 20 months to complete the project. Data visualization uses raw data (i.e. an excel spreadsheet) and transforms the data into easily digestible pie charts, graphs, and hotspot maps. This enables the audience to easily understand the data without having to do their own data analysis. City Attorney is requesting funding for two staffing positions who will utilize software to design, clean, and publish the data visualizations for this project. City Attorney will cover the cost of these positions after the pilot funding is exhausted

If the item is approved by this Committee, City Attorney should return to the IPC, present any changes to the scope of work and provide updates to the IPC.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The recommendation to note and file this report will have no financial impact.

If the Council approves an allocation of \$250,000 to the City Attorney for the Open Data and Visualization Transparency project would reduce the remaining Innovation Fund Balance, which is currently \$2,768,922.75. Savings from the Innovation Fund Balance may be used to address the current city-wide financial crisis and the overspending in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Additionally, funding this program may incur unfunded and ongoing costs.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendation in this report complies with the City's Financial Policies.

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