2017 AAPA EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS
Classification 5: Community/Education Outreach

Community Sponsorships Program – Streamlining the Process
Community Sponsorships Program – Streamlining the Process

Summary:

Each year, the Port of Long Beach budgets part of its revenues to sponsor events and activities produced by not-for-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status that enhance and promote the Port’s maritime and commercial interests – providing clear promotional, marketing and community outreach opportunities for the Port. Funds are not allocated for capital or endowment purposes.

The Port of Long Beach Communications and Community Relations team was charged with streamlining the program, which was approved on August 15, 2015, and is being implemented. Recent recipients have been awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars, and include organizations and events supporting community, neighborhood, schools, health care, the arts, sports, leadership, child welfare, shelters, the environment, equality, homelessness, parks and recreation, and more.

“As we inform and educate the community about the Port, the City’s greatest economic engine, we have a responsibility to do that in a way that is transparent and consistent. This is an opportunity to better partner with many great organizations in Long Beach that serve communities surrounding the Port.”

– Lori Ann Guzmán, President, Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners
The Port of Long Beach, Calif., is a premier U.S. gateway for trans-Pacific trade and a trailblazer in innovative goods movement, safety and environmental stewardship. As the second-busiest container seaport in the United States, the Port handles all kinds of cargo, including nearly 7 million container units in 2016, with trade valued at more than $180 billion. The Port welcomes the world's biggest ships and serves more than 175 shipping lines with connections to 217 seaports around the world. The major economic engine for the city, the Port supports 30,000 Long Beach jobs, one in every eight, and more than 300,000 Southern California jobs. More than 40 percent of America's import goods arrive through the two San Pedro Bay ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and Long Beach trade goods reach every U.S. congressional district.

The Port is helping support the economy while dramatically cutting the negative impacts of its operations. Since the Port's landmark Green Port Policy was adopted in 2005, diesel pollution at the Port has decreased by 84 percent, and native harbor wildlife is flourishing. The Port operates under the banner of the Harbor Department for the City of Long Beach and is a public agency. A five-member Board of Harbor Commissioners, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council, serves as the governing body for the Port. As a landlord operation, the Port owns its land but leases operations to terminal operators. The Port receives no taxpayer funds, relying instead on tenant revenues, so goodwill and solid partnerships with the Port's many tenants, customers and stakeholders are vital.

The Port is pursuing the most aggressive capital improvement program in the nation and creating the world's most modern, efficient and sustainable seaport. The Port is also a dedicated community partner and a strong supporter of global trade education, mitigation grants for areas negatively impacted by Port operations, and sponsorship of not-for-profit community events and activities where the Port will have significant opportunity to share the Port of Long Beach story.
The challenge for the Communications and Community Relations team, at the request of the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, was to streamline and simply the Community Sponsorship Program. The result was the Community Sponsorship Program Policy and Guidelines, approved by the Commission in August 2015. It is a living document that is reviewed periodically to benefit both those applying for funding and the Port staff who administer the program.

The Port’s Strategic Plan lists as a major goal: “Engage the community, international trade industry, elected officials and government agencies to build positive relationships that foster mutual understanding.”

One strategy for achieving this goal was: “Develop and implement a comprehensive community outreach and education program.” As a result, the Port of Long Beach has developed, updated and is implementing:

A comprehensive Education Outreach Plan including scholarships, internships, “externships” for teachers, a one-stop education website, curriculum, speakers – most recently adding in 2016 the Port of Long Beach Academy of Global Logistics, a four-year small learning community “school within a school” at a neighboring high school; The nation’s most aggressive Community Grants Program, investing $46.4 million over a 12 to 15-year period to reduce Port impacts on air quality, traffic noise, and water quality. And this Community Sponsorship Program.
Planning and Programming Components

The Goals for the Streamlined Community Sponsorship Program are to:

- Clarify the purpose of the program;
- Ensure that sponsorships are directed to supporting and promoting the Port’s defined goals and objectives, including maritime related programs and initiatives, such as the environment, water and air quality, and community engagement activities;
- Increase public transparency regarding the sponsorship review and approval process;
- Improve conformity with the approved budget; and
- Ensure compliance with the State Tidelands Trust and City Charter mandates.

Objectives set by the Communications and Community Relations team, who administer the program, to achieve the stated goals are to:

- Update the Community Sponsorship Program and Policy Guidelines;
- Update the Sponsorship Application Form to reflect the updated Program and Guidelines;
- Create a Sponsorship Advisory Committee and identify potential committee members to review applications and recommend awardees;
- Launch a marketing and outreach campaign informing the community about the new process;
- As the program is implemented by Port staff, continue to refine the process for maximum efficiency and results;
- As much as possible, track the response to the streamlined program.

Target audiences include:

- Long Beach not-for-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status;
- Organizations that can clearly demonstrate how Port funds will:
  - Support the Tidelands Trust and maritime-related initiatives, or
  - Provide the opportunity for meaningful education to the local community about the Port and international trade; or
  - Provide an opportunity for extensive Port promotion and recognition.
Actions Taken and Communication Outputs Used

The Long Beach Harbor Department provides sponsorship funds to local not-for-profit groups with 501(c)(3) status for community functions and events to help inform residents about the Port.

To better serve the community and promote the world’s greenest port, the five-member Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners requested a review of the Port’s Community Sponsorship Program and appointed a two-member Sponsorship Advisory Committee to work with the Communications and Community Relations team.

Following review by the Long Beach City Attorney, the Commission voted in August 2015 to approve Communications’ updated plan, bringing greater transparency and accessibility to the program. The Board Sponsorship Advisory Committee continues to review the implementation of the new process, review staff evaluations of applications and present final recommendations to the full Board of Harbor Commissioners for discussion and approval at a regular public meeting. The Committee also reviews the process to determine whether any refinements should be made, based on their observations and those of the Communications staff.

The new policy places greater focus on funding the groups that make Long Beach a better place to live and work, and provides applicants with a clear, consistent process to follow and helps with their planning. It also provides the Port a better opportunity to determine where funding will have the greatest impact – for both the community and the Port.

Applications
Rather than a rolling application process that may inadvertently disadvantage organizations seeking funding later in the fiscal year when less funding is available, the new process accepts sponsorship requests only twice each fiscal year: September 1-30 and March 1-31.

This aids in budgeting and planning, for both the applicants and the staff who administer the program. Also, rather than written applications that are mailed in, the application is now completed and submitted online. Besides making the document easier for the staff to store and share, applications are electronically time-stamped, eliminating the guesswork about whether or not an application was received, and whether it was received before the deadline.

The application was modified to seek additional information:

- What population, community and/or geographic area does your event or program serve?
- Please describe your activity and how it relates to our requirements, bearing in mind that all requests for sponsorship must be programs, events and activities that:
  - Support the Tidelands Trust and other maritime-related initiatives;
  - Provides meaningful education to the local community about the Port and international trade; or
  - Provides an opportunity for extensive Port promotion and recognition

The application also was modified to provide further clarification about funding:

- Funds will be awarded by the Board of Harbor Commissioners after reviewing recommendations from Port staff and the Sponsorship Advisory Committee.
- Funds will be disbursed to applicants upon presentation of appropriate supporting documentation including an invoice, however 20 percent of the approved amount will be withheld until the completion of the event, project or program.
The following criteria restriction, which prohibited certain groups from receiving sponsorship funds, was removed:

- Organizations that have opposed or endorsed candidates or measures in any Long Beach municipal election within the last two years, except for sponsorships or fundraisers for 501(c)(3) charitable purposes.
- Representatives from the Commission office and the Government Relations Division assist Communications with the ranking, once the first review is completed.

Application Review
First, Communications staff reviews all applications, rejecting those that do not qualify or do not provide sufficient or accurate information. Staff review may also include a legal review by the Long Beach City Attorney. Communications does not determine which applications receive funding. Next, applications are reviewed and ranked by the Sponsorship Advisory Committee, which includes the Commissioners, the Director of Communications, and representatives from the Commission office, Administration and Government Relations, each with a particular perspective.

Applications will be evaluated based on a number of factors consistent with California State Lands Commission guidelines, as well as:
- The connection to Port-related maritime industry;
- Port promotional and Port marketing impacts in the local community;
- Effectiveness of Port dollars being spent for Port purposes and the impact of those dollars, and
- The strength of the application, the type of event and target audiences for Port marketing purposes.

Committee members complete a Sponsorship Scoring Form answering both Yes/No questions and evaluating aspects of the application with a point-allocation system.

The Sponsorship Advisory Committee makes the final recommendations to the full Board of Harbor Commissioners for consideration at a regular public meeting.

Recipients
A congratulatory notification letter is emailed to sponsorship recipients from the program administrator, detailing the sponsorship award including:
- The amount awarded
- Benefits promised to the Port, including but not limited to a speaking opportunity, registrations to a conference, an exhibit booth, advertising in the event program, premier logo listing on all promotional material, inclusion in a PowerPoint presentation, verbal recognition at the event, etc.
- Submission of an online post-event summary form at https://portoflongbeach.wufoo.com/forms/sponsored-event-summary/
- Instructions for 2 invoices
- Event Details & Invitation for Port attendees
- The Port’s logo for marketing purposes and request for advertising specifications
- Request for details about a booth or exhibit space so the Port can plan personnel and display materials for the event
- Request for a return email confirming receipt of the letter
- A form W-9 – Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification is attached to the letter for completion.
Marketing and Outreach Campaign
Following approval of the streamlined Community Sponsorship Program, the Communications and Community Relations team launched a marketing and outreach campaign informing the community about the new process, including:

Letters
Sending letters to all previous applicants the week prior to each application period, reminding them of two calls for application periods, rather than continuously accepting applications, and the change to online applications. The most recent letter, distributed in February 27 before the March 1-31 application period reads, in part:

• Applicants are advised to plan ahead for events for which they wish to seek sponsorship funding from the Port. After the application period closes, it will take about 45 days before recommendations will be reviewed by the Board of Harbor Commissioners for approval.

• Frequently asked questions about the program;

• Sponsorship policy and guidelines;

• Sponsorship application; and a

• List of organizations funded in the most recent call for sponsorships.

News Releases
News releases are emailed to local media the week prior to the two application periods inviting applications.

News releases are also distributed when sponsorships are awarded, including a complete list of sponsorship recipients.

Port of Long Beach Website
www.polb.com/community/sponsorship
Update and post information on the Port’s website about the new application process. The new application is only available online so previous applicants will see this information immediately when they visit the website. Other information linked to the Community Sponsorship page and updated includes:

• Frequently asked questions about the program;

• Sponsorship policy and guidelines;

• Sponsorship application; and a

• List of organizations funded in the most recent call for sponsorships.

Port of Long Beach Publications
The new Community Sponsorship Program was also featured in the Port of Long Beach re:port community newsletter that is delivered via U.S. Mail to every Long Beach home, reaching all 500,000 residents.


Port Supports Community Groups
Sponsorships help promote trade, improve Long Beach

The City of Long Beach Harbor Department has a long tradition of partnering with local organizations to help educate the community about Port of Long Beach operations and impacts. One of the best ways to do this is to provide sponsorships to groups that make Long Beach a great place to live.

Over the years, Port sponsorships have supported community gardens, cultural events, fundraiser charities, and other celebrations that bring people together to enjoy and improve Long Beach.

This past year, to enhance the Port’s sponsorship process, the Board of Harbor Commissioners updated the program to increase transparency and set as a requirement, giving stakeholders clear directions on what and how to apply.

“The Port of Long Beach has a social responsibility to educate the public about the maritime industry,” said Michael Caud, Director of Communications and Community Relations. “The feedback we get on our sponsorship policy helps us do that more efficiently, while continuing to partner with the organizations that makes the city a better place.”

With the update to the program, there are now two applications per year each: one in September and one in March. (See the box for more information on the first round of sponsorships last fall.) The Harbor Commission awarded 12 sponsorships totaling $85,000.

Successful sponsorship applicants must still demonstrate that the funding will go towards efforts that further goals of the Port’s marine-related programs, community building activities and initiatives aimed at improving environmental quality.

For instance, Friends of Baby Park used proceeds from its annual gala to the Museum of Latin American Art, which received a Port sponsorship to replace Notes, discolored benches at Baby Park.

“We would not have been able to host this gala to make the innovations we’re trying to make without the support of the Port,” said Friends of Baby Park member Claudia Schoe.
Social Media Platforms

Social media was favored for promoting each application period. The following example developed by the Communication team’s Social Media Specialist is for the September 1-31, 2016 application period:

Start date: August 17, 2016
End date: September 30, 2016
Facebook: 5 posts
Twitter: 2-3 tweets per week

FACEBOOK:
August 17, 2016
Is your community organization interested in a Port of Long Beach sponsorship? Community groups are asked to submit their sponsorship funding requests during two defined application periods each year. The fall cycle for applications will be September 1 through September 30. To see if your organization qualifies and to apply please visit: www.polb.com/sponsorships

September 14, 2016
Last year, the Port of Long Beach sponsored the 11th annual Khmer Health Forum, which provided health education to the local community as well as health screening and flu shots. Participation in the health forum allowed the Port to connect with our Cambodian neighbors. Learn more about POLB’s sponsorship program at http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR. Applications are due by September 30, 2016.

September 23, 2016
Have questions about applying for a Port sponsorship? Find the answers you need on our FAQ page. http://bit.ly/iWTcaiT

September 26, 2016
The spring cycle for POLB sponsorship funding will close this Friday, September 30. To learn more about the sponsorship program and how to apply visit: http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

TWEETS:
August 15-21
Learn more about the #POLB sponsorship policy. Apply for sponsorships Sept. 1 -30. http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR #community #LongBeach
#POLB has some new guidelines this year for Port sponsored events, find out more and apply in September: http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

August 22-31
#POLB’s sponsorship application cycle is open September 1-30. Learn more about the program and how to apply: http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

September 12-18
#ICYMI POLB’s sponsorship policy has changed; we are now accepting fall applications until September 30. Learn about the program & how to apply: http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

POLB’s sponsorship program is open twice a year, the fall cycle is now open until September 30. Learn more & find out how to apply: http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

September 19-25
#POLB’s sponsorship program focuses on social responsibility & promoting the Port’s message. Find out if you qualify & how to apply: http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

September 26-30
It’s the last week to apply for POLB funding as part of our sponsorship program. Applications are due September 30. http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

Applications for the fall cycle of #POLB sponsorship funding are due this Friday, September 30. http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR

Thank you for applying for a POLB sponsorship, the application is now closed. Look for information about the spring cycle opening in March 2017 on our website. http://bit.ly/1i2NXPR
Three application periods have been completed and sponsorships awarded since the streamlined Community Sponsorship Program was approved in August 2015. Recipients from the fourth application period, completing two fiscal years, will be awarded in May 2017, outside the parameter of consideration for inclusion for this entry, but are included to give a complete picture.

Old habits die hard, and organizations that have been requesting sponsorships for many years whenever it was convenient for them are struggling somewhat with the limited application windows. It is a slow process encouraging applicants to plan ahead to allow Port staff the necessary time to process their applications.

However, applications – and Port awards – have remained strong during the two years the new process has been in place.

Post-surveys completed by sponsorship recipients indicate that the majority of them are providing exposure for the Port of Long Beach as promised. More formal evaluation of the surveys is being considered as a future project. Continuing to repeat the new system in all communications with applicants should resolve these issues over time.

**Previous Community Sponsorship Program**
Fiscal year 2013/14 – Total of $645,000
Fiscal year 2014/15 – Total of $677,000

**Streamlined Community Sponsorship Program**
Fiscal year 2015/16 – Total of $743,000
October 2015 – 112 applications and 78 awards totaling $383,200
May 2016 – 161 applications and 83 awards totaling $359,795
Fiscal year 2016/17 – Projected Total of $1,000,000
October 2016 – 181 applications and 136 awards totaling $538,750
May 2017 – 199 applications pending at AAPA entry deadline

The Marketing and Outreach Campaign has been successful with news releases inviting groups to apply and post-releases congratulating winning applicants have been carried by most local media, both print and online.

Port of Long Beach Announces More Than $380,000 In Sponsorships/ Grunion Gazette, Nov. 5, 2015

Long Beach Port Awards Nearly $360K To Community Groups, Capping Off Record Year of Sponsorships/ Long Beach Post, May 13, 2016

Why the Port of Long Beach is looking to sponsor local events/ Long Beach Press Telegram March 5, 2017

The campaigns on social media platforms prior to each application period have achieved the following results:

**Facebook:**
Reach: 18,000
Likes: 145

**Twitter:**
19 tweets
Engagements: 65

Followers on Port of Long Beach social media sites include 23,191 Facebook friends, 10,144 on Instagram, 17,902 Twitter fans, and 1,352 subscribers to the Port’s YouTube page.
News Coverage — Online

**Everything Long Beach**

Port Of Long Beach: Accepting Applications For Sponsorship Program

**MarineLink**

Long Beach's Record Port Community Sponsorships

**PHILANTHROPY**

Why the Port of Long Beach is looking to sponsor local events

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By Ashleigh Ruhl

Contributor  Nov 5, 2015

The Port of Long Beach awarded more than $380,000 in sponsorships last week to support various events in the city. Helping a wide range of community causes, the awards ranged from $500 to support Long Beach Junior Crew's annual regatta event to $50,000 to help cover the cost of Municipal Band concerts.

Of the 76 selected winners, some of the largest awards — besides the Muni Band sponsorship — included:

- $25,000 for the Long Beach Symphony Association to pay for Port POPS! and five other concerts;
- $20,000 to pay for advertising and education gallery promotions at the Museum of Latin American Art;
- $18,000 granted to Children Today, which will help support the non-profit's holiday fundraising event and a grand opening event;
- $18,000 to VerdeXchange for a Green Marketmakers Conference;
- $12,500 for Future Ports to host a VIP reception and conference;
- $11,500 to the Sixth City Council District's Unity Parade and Juneteenth Celebration;
- $11,000 for the Belmont Shore Business Association's holiday parade and annual car show; and
- $10,000 each was granted to support events hosted by or in partnership with the Andy St. Community Association, Aquarium of the Pacific, First City Council District, Ninth City Council District, Long Beach Yacht Club and Musica Angelica.

All other awards were less than $10,000, and two awards are still awaiting a final decision.

The Port of Long Beach has been a longtime supporter of community organizations such as The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, which was awarded $350 for its film festival and another $5,000 for its Black & White Ball fundraiser this year.
Community Sponsorship Program Policy and Guidelines

All applications will be reviewed by the Communications Division and fund will be awarded by the Board of Harbor Commissioners. Applications must be completed in full. This required information applies in all funds. All applications will be considered by the Port.

Eligibility Criteria
The Port may award sponsorships for events, activities, and projects that:
- Support the Findache, Trust, and marine-related initiatives;
- Provide meaningful education to the local community about the port and international trade;
- Provide an opportunity for extensive Port promotion and recognition.

Restrictions
Sponsorship will not be awarded to:
- Charitable organizations that have no direct relationship to the Port/industries industry;
- Charities, schools, and religious organizations where funds may be used for religious purposes;
- For profit entities;
- Individuals;
- Groups that discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, sexual orientation or national origin;
- Groups with which the Harbor Department is currently in litigation;
- Political campaign entities;
- Entities representing City of Long Beach employees.

Additional Application Information
Requests for sponsorships cannot be initiated or submitted by a Port employee, board member, or City employee if the act in decision-making capacity for the requesting organization.

Multiple requests from one organization within the same fiscal year will be considered for approval at the sole discretion of the Board of Harbor Commissioners.

Approved
Sponsorship will be approved by the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners and applicants will be notified within 45 days of the application closing date.

Port of Long Beach - Classification 5: Community/Education Outreach

2017 AAPA Excellence in Communications Awards

2017 AAPA Excellence in Communications Awards

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Recap

Quick Facts:
• The Port of Long Beach provides hundreds of thousands of dollars sponsoring community events each year, and has recently streamlined the Community Sponsorships Program to better serve both applicants and the Port.
• Sponsorships provide valuable opportunities to share the Port story with the local Long Beach community it serves.
• More than $700,000 was awarded to 161 groups during the 2015/2016 fiscal year, the first year the new program was in effect.
• It’s easy to apply online!

Links:
• Sponsorship Page on the Port of Long Beach Website http://polb.com/community/sponsorship/default.asp
• For a list of most recent Community Sponsorship recipients and amounts awarded (click link) https://portoflongbeach.wufoo.com/forms/sponsored-event-summary/

“Your staff and interns staff the booths at a variety of community events sponsored by the Port of Long Beach, providing a great opportunity to tell the community about new construction projects, jobs, scholarships, internships and other opportunities the Port provides. It’s always interesting to hear about the wide variety of activities in our great city.”

– Maria Pangelinan, Port of Long Beach Social and Corporate Responsibility Specialist and Administrator for the Community Sponsorship Program

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[Social media icons]