

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 Whittier Social Services Commissioners may attend this meeting telephonically.

Speakers must limit their comments to three minutes. Please note, by order of the presiding officer, public comments minutes may be reduced if at their discretion a surplus of public speakers is present at the meeting.

To submit Public Comments/Questions:

- Email: gonzalezr@cityofwhittier.org
- Voicemail: (562) 567-9400
- Live Audio via Zoom: Only those members of the public who have 'raised their hand' on Zoom will be in the queue for speaking.
- In person at City Hall 13230 Penn St., Whittier, CA 90602, City Council Chamber

To view live meetings remotely:

- Video and audio: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81856830791>
Use 'Raise Hand' feature
- Audio only: Dial (669) 900-9128 (Meeting ID: 818 5683 0791)
Press *9 to 'Raise Hand' and then *6 to unmute yourself when prompted

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
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 13230 PENN STREET
MARCH 4, 2025, 6:30 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Jessica Alva
Commissioner Marisol Enriquez-Santos
Commissioner Alejandro Mendoza
Vice Chair Jeff Brauckmann
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: gonzalezr@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 Special Meeting of September 17, 2024, and the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 1, 2024.

5.B. INFORMATION AND REFERRAL REPORTS

Recommendation: Receive and file the Information and Referral Report for September 2024 – February 2025.

5.C. 2025 WHITTIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM-SPONSORED BY ATHENS AND REPUBLIC SERVICES

Recommendation: Discuss and select the 2025 Whittier Scholarship Program recipients.

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 28th day of February 2025.

/s/ Roxanne Gonzalez

Roxanne Gonzalez, Administrative Secretary



Agenda Report

Social Services Commission

Date: March 4, 2025

To: Social Services Commission

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

Subject: Approval of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of September 17, 2024, and the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 1, 2024.

BACKGROUND

None.

DISCUSSION

Staff prepared draft minutes and hereby submits the September 17, 2024, and October 1, 2024, Minutes for Commission approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL

Goal 4: Transparent & Open Government

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Minutes of the Special Meeting of September 17, 2024
- B. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 1, 2024

**MINUTES
CITY OF WHITTIER
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
WHITTIER CITY HALL, 13230 PENN STREET
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Social Services Commission's special meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. on September 17, 2024.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Jeff Brauckmann, Commissioner
Carlos Illingworth, Commissioner
Jose Luevano, Vice Chair

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT:

Virginia Santana, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services
Erin Hamilton, Community Services Manager
Stacey Arismendez, Management Analyst
Roxanne Gonzalez, Administrative Secretary
Teresa Maruffo, Office Specialist III

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Illingworth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments received.

5. STAFF REPORTS

5. A. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Brauckmann stated that on page 5, paragraph 2 needed to be corrected from 4-0 to 3-0.

It was moved by Commissioner Illingworth, and seconded by Commissioner Brauckmann, and carried by 3-0 to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 2, 2024, with edits.

5. B. Election of Officers

Commissioner Brauckmann nominated Commissioner Illingworth for Commission Chair. Commissioner Illingworth accepted the nomination.

It was moved by Commissioner Brauckmann, and seconded by Chair Luevano, and carried by 3-0 to approve the nomination of Carlos Illingworth as Social Services Commission Chair.

Vice Chair Luevano nominated Commissioner Brauckmann as Vice Chair. Commissioner Brauckmann accepted the nomination.

It was moved by Commissioner Luevano, and seconded by Chair Illingworth, and carried by 3-0 to approve the nomination of Jeff Brauckmann as Social Services Commission Vice Chair.

5. C. Information and Referral Reports

Secretary Santana presented the Information and Referral report for April – August 2024. She highlighted that staff continues to receive calls pertaining to taxes, City and County services, other social services benefits, SASSFA, health plans, and Senior transportation.

It was moved by Vice Chair Brauckmann, seconded by Commissioner Luevano, and carried by a 3-0 vote to receive and file the Information and Referral Reports for April – August 2024.

5. D. Social Services Grant Funding Application Review FY 2024-25

Secretary Santana thanked the Commission for taking the time to review the applications received. She continued that we took Commissioner scores which created an average that was entered into a spreadsheet. She highlighted the requested amount, and the amount agencies will receive.

In band one, PIH Health Foundation requested \$15,000 and will receive \$15,000. The Whole Child requested \$20,000 and will receive \$20,000. SPIRITT Family Services requested \$20,000 and will receive \$20,000.

In band two the Boys and Girls Club of Whittier requested \$15,000 and will receive \$15,000. The YMCA of Greater Whittier requested \$20,000 and will receive \$15,000. Whittier Meals on Wheels requested \$14,956 and will receive \$14,956. LA CADA requested \$20,000 and will receive \$15,000.

In band three the Whittier Area Interfaith Council requested \$10,000 and will receive \$10,000. Community Legal Aid SoCal requested \$5,000 and will receive \$5,000. Nehemiah Project LA requested \$20,000 and will receive \$10,000. Third Step Ministry requested \$20,000 and will receive \$10,000. Jovenes requested \$15,000 and will receive \$10,000.

In band four REACH requested \$14,530 and will receive \$5,000. Interfaith Food Center requested \$20,000 and will receive \$5,000.

The total grant funds that will be awarded is \$169,956.00. Secretary Santana asked the Commission if they would like to discuss their scores where they see significant gaps. Commissioner Luevano asked if they could discuss their scores or the remaining funds. Secretary Santana responded that the Commission may discuss only their scores since the Commissioners had significant gaps. She provided the example of the Jovenes organization which was given two scores in the 50s by two Commissioners and one score of 80 by another Commissioner. In the past, the Commission discussed the gaps and reasoning for such differences. She added the Commission could also just accept the scores as they are presented.

Commissioner Luevano stated that he is inclined to submit the scores as presented but commented that it appears we are not distributing all the funding dollars. Secretary Santana stated that was correct. Chair Illingworth stated that he thought the rubric and criteria were very helpful this year. He added that he is happy with the scores as they are presented. Chair Illingworth stated we should stick to the rubric and funding as presented because it is the fairest way to allocate funds but added that he is open to other opinions. Vice Chair Brauckmann stated he is content with the report as presented.

It was moved by Vice Chair Brauckmann, seconded by Commissioner Luevano, and carried by a 3-0 vote to recommend the submitted FY 2024-25 Social Services Grant application scores to City Council for consideration.

6. SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

Secretary Santana thanked the Commission and informed them that new Commissioners would be sworn in at the next regular meeting. She added that we will have to work for the Commission to stay ahead on the Scholarship Program and Volunteer of the Year.

7. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS/CONFERENCE REPORTS

Commissioner Luevano stated that with the new process, it was easier to grade and push applications forward. He thanked the staff for making the process easy.

Chair Illingworth thanked staff for making the process, easy, efficient, and fair.

Vice Chair Brauckmann concurred with his fellow Commissioners.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Approved and adopted by the Social Services Commission on September 17, 2024.

**MINUTES
CITY OF WHITTIER
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
WHITTIER CITY HALL, 13230 PENN STREET
OCTOBER 1, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.**

1. OATH OF OFFICE

Jessica Alva was sworn into office.
Marisol Enriquez-Santos was sworn into office.
Alejandro Mendoza was sworn into office.

2. CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Social Services Commission was called to order at 6:34 p.m. on October 1, 2024.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Jessica Alva, Commissioner
Marisol Enriquez-Santos, Commissioner
Alejandro Mendoza, Commissioner
Jeff Brauckmann, Vice Chair

ABSENT: Carlos Illingworth, Chair

STAFF PRESENT:

Virginia Santana, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services
Erin Hamilton, Community Services Manager
Stacey Arismendez, Management Analyst
Roxanne Gonzalez, Administrative Secretary

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Alva led the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments received.

6. STAFF REPORTS

6. A. Approval of Minutes

The Commission unanimously decided to table the agenda item to the next regular meeting.

6. B. VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Secretary Santana provided background on the Volunteer of the Year program. Volunteer of the Year applications are submitted to the Social Services Commission annually for review. We typically hand out ten to twelve awards to recipients. The award reception is held in front of City Hall during Volunteer Week to acknowledge selected individuals.

Vice Chair Brauckmann asked if the application presented to the Commission is the same one as last year. Secretary Santana responded yes. Commissioner Alva asked where we send the applications. Secretary Santana stated we send out applications to non-profit agencies and advertise the program on social media platforms and on the City website.

Commissioner Mendoza asked if we require any documentation from agencies. Secretary Santana responded that we usually receive documentation from agencies. Agencies will submit information such as the number of hours or years served. The applications submitted are thorough and complete.

It was moved by Commissioner Enriquez-Santos, seconded by Commissioner Mendoza, and carried by a 4-0 vote to approve the Volunteer of the Year schedule and application as presented. (Absent: Chair Illingworth)

6. C. 2024-2025 WHITTIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM-SPONSORED BY ATHENS AND REPUBLIC SERVICES

Secretary Santana provided background on the Whittier Scholarship program. High school seniors must live in areas that Republic and Athens service within the Whittier city limits to be eligible to apply for the scholarship. Athens Services awards \$500 individual scholarships to five recipients and Republic awards \$500 individual scholarships to four recipients.

Vice Chair Brauckmann asked if the Commission needs to select a prompt from the list provided. Secretary Santana responded yes, but the Commission may suggest a prompt of their own or combine prompts.

Commissioner Enriquez-Santos stated that she liked the following prompt: Everyone produces some waste, but you don't have to be a "super consumer." One way to help the issue is to think about the goods, services, and activities you buy or support. In what ways do they contribute to the solid waste problem? How could you purchase and dispose of items in other ways that would generate less trash? Commissioner Brauckmann stated that he liked the prompt selected by Commissioner Enriquez-Santos.

Commissioner Mendoza stated that he liked the following prompt: Recycling saves natural resources, contributes to improved air and water quality, and reduces the need for landfill expansion. Describe a strong and successful residential recycling program to "save" landfill space, which discusses ways to recycle, reduce, and reuse our residential waste. Commissioner Mendoza

asked if we could offer both suggested prompts allowing students to select a prompt to answer. Secretary Santana stated that we have allowed students to select one of two prompts in the past, but the Commission felt it was difficult to compare essays when there were multiple prompts for students to select. Therefore, it was decided that only one prompt should be selected.

Commissioner Alva stated she liked both prompts and suggested combining both prompts. Commissioner Mendoza stated he is open to selecting the prompt chosen by Commissioner Enriquez-Santos.

It was moved by Commissioner Illingworth, seconded by Commissioner Brauckmann, and carried by a 3-0 vote to approve the prompt -Everyone produces some waste, but you don't have to be a "super consumer." One way to help the issue is to think about the goods, services, and activities you buy or support. In what ways do they contribute to the solid waste problem? How could you purchase and dispose of items in other ways that would generate less trash? (Absent: Chair Illingworth)

7. SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

Secretary Santana stated that we may need to reschedule the meeting for next month due to elections. She stated we may get together in December instead. We will bring the finalized Trash Haulers Scholarship application and Volunteer of the Year application to the Commission to show what has gone out to the public. We will begin discussing Social Services Funding for FY 2025-2026. The Social Services Funding recommendations will go before Council at the October 22, 2024, meeting, and we hope to get the agenda item on Consent.

8. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS/CONFERENCE REPORTS

Commissioner Enriquez-Santos thanked everyone.

Commissioner Alva asked if students are allowed to utilize scholarship funds toward their tuition. Secretary Santana confirmed. She also thanked staff.

Commissioner Mendoza thanked staff for making the process of onboarding easy.

Vice Chair Brauckmann thanked staff and the new Commissioners.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Approved and adopted by the Social Services Commission on April 2, 2024.



Agenda Report

Social Services Commission

Date: March 4, 2025

To: Social Services Commission

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

Subject: Information and Referral Reports

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the Information and Referral Report for September 2024 – February 2025.

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 (Attachment A).

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL

Goal 4: Transparent & Open Government

ATTACHMENTS

A. I & R Report – September 2024 – February 2025

I & R Summary Report September 2024

In the month of September 2024, we received a total of 246 calls. Calls for transportation, and services provided by the city and county continued. New calls for Legal services and homeless.

City/County Services: (17.48%)

- City of Whittier (Home Modification Program and Veterans)
- Southeast Area Social Services Funding Authority (SASSFA) (Senior Services)
- Whittier Senior Center (Lunch program, activities, and human services)
- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) –In-Home-Supportive-Services (IHSS)
- Adult Protective Services (APS) – Homeless and Self Neglect

Benefits: (22.76%)

- Dept of Public Social Services (DPSS) – Medical, CalFresh, & IHSS
- Social Security Office (SSA & SSI)
- Whittier Senior Center – CalFresh and SASSFA
- Center for Health Care Rights (Medical)

Senior Transportation: (33.33%)

- City Dial-A-Ride
- County Dial-A-Ride
- ACCESS
- Health Plan (Transportation for medical appointments only)

Housing: (10.57%)

- TSA Housing (Seniors)
- Los Angeles Community Development Authority (Seniors and Families)
- LINC Housing (Seniors and Families)
- Housing Rights Center (Rental Directory)
- Salvation Army (Homeless)
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) - Homeless

Veterans: (3.25%)

- City of Whittier Library
- Community Liberty Plaza
- American Legion

Legal: (4.47%)

- Community Resource Center (Government Benefits & Trust & Wills)
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (Government Benefits & Medical)
- Center for Health Care Rights (Medical)
- Housing Rights Center (Landlord & Tenants)

I & R Summary Report October 2024

In the month of October 2024, we received a total of 325 calls. Calls for transportation, and services provided by the city and county continued. New calls for Legal services (Immigration and government benefits).

City/County Services: (20.62%)

- City of Whittier (Senior centers & family events)
- Southeast Area Social Services Funding Authority (SASSFA) (Senior Services & Employment)
- Whittier Senior Center (Lunch program, activities, and human services)
- Adult Protective Services (APS) – Self Neglect

Benefits: (23.08%)

- Dept of Public Social Services (DPSS) – Medi-Cal & Housing
- Whittier Senior Center – CalFresh and SASSFA
- Center for Health Care Rights (Medi-Cal & Medicare)

Senior Transportation: (36.92%)

- City Dial-A-Ride
- County Dial-A-Ride
- ACCESS
- Health Plan (Transportation for medical appointments only)
- Freedom Transportation

Housing: (6.15%)

- TSA Housing (Seniors)
- Los Angeles Community Development Authority (Seniors)
- LINC Housing (Seniors)
- Housing Rights Center (Rental Directory)
- Dept of Public Social Services (DPSS) - Housing

Veterans: (3.08%)

- City of Whittier Library
- Community Liberty Plaza
- Whittier Senior Center (American Legion)

Legal: (4.47%)

- Community Resource Center (Government Benefits & Immigration)
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (Government Benefits & Immigration)
- Center for Health Care Rights (Medi-Cal & Medicare)
- Housing Rights Center (Landlord & Tenants)

I & R Summary Report November 2024

In the month of November 2024, we received a total of 302 calls. Calls for transportation, and services provided by the city and county continued. New calls for Taxes and Veterans services.

City/County Services: (17.06%)

- City of Whittier (Veterans events and Thanksgiving)
- Southeast Area Social Services Funding Authority (SASSFA) (Senior Services)
- Whittier Senior Center (Lunch program & Activities)
- Home Repair Grants (Los Angeles Community Development Authority & Habitat for Humanities)

Benefits: (23.08%)

- Dept of Public Social Services (DPSS) – Medi-Cal & Housing
- Whittier Senior Center – CalFresh & SASSFA
- Social Security Administration – SSI & SSA

Senior Transportation: (36.92%)

- City Dial-A-Ride
- County Dial-A-Ride
- ACCESS
- Health Plan (Transportation for medical appointments only)

Housing: (6.15%)

- TSA Housing (Seniors)
- Los Angeles Community Development Authority (Seniors)
- LINC Housing (Seniors)
- Housing Rights Center (Rental Directory)

Veterans: (3.08%)

- City of Whittier (Veterans Day & Senior Center)
- Liberty Community Plaza

Taxes: (1.99%)

- Whittier Senior Center
- Tax Assistance (El Monte office)
- SASSFAS
- AARP Website

I & R Summary Report December 2024

In the month of December 2024, we received a total of 332 calls. Calls for transportation, and services provided by the city and county for the Holidays.

City/County Services: (21.08%)

- City of Whittier (Holiday events)
- Liberty Community Plaza (Holiday events)
- L.A. County Consumer & Business Affairs/Community Resource Center (Holiday events and legal)
- L.A. County Aging & Disabilities Dept. (Adult Protective Services-APS)
- County of Orange Social Services Agency (Adult Protective Services-APS)

Benefits: (24.10%)

- Dept of Public Social Services (DPSS) – Medi-Cal & Housing
- Whittier Senior Center – CalFresh & SASSFA
- L.A. County Consumer & Business Affairs/Community Resource Center - CalFresh

Senior Transportation: (29.82%)

- City Dial-A-Ride
- County Dial-A-Ride
- ACCESS
- Health Plan (Transportation for medical appointments only)

Housing: (14.76%)

- TSA Housing (Seniors)
- Los Angeles Community Development Authority (Seniors)
- LINC Housing (Seniors)
- Housing Rights Center (Rental Directory)
- Southern California Rehabilitation Services (Disabled)

Legal: (2.41%)

- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (Government Benefits & Housing)
- L.A. County Consumer & Business Affairs/Community Resource Center (Family Law & Trust & Wills)
- Housing Rights Center (Landlord & Tenant)
- Christian Legal Aid of Los Angeles (Legal Citizenship)

I & R Summary Report January 2025

In the month of January 2025, we received a total of 539 calls. High incoming calls for tax preparation and callers seeking legal help for fraud. Continued to get calls for senior housing, transportation, and services for all special populations.

Taxes: (28.76%)

- City of Whittier
- Rio Hondo
- SASSFA

City/County Services: (15.58%)

- City of Whittier (Senior services)
- Dept of Mental Health (Counseling)
- Southeast Area Social Services Funding Authority (SASSFA) Senior Services

Legal: (2.41%)

- L.A. County Consumer & Business Affairs (Identify theft & Fraud)
- Annual Credit Report (Identify theft & Fraud)
- Identity Theft Government website (Identify theft & Fraud)
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (Government Benefits & Immigration)

Housing: (6.86%)

- TSA Properties (Seniors & Disabled)
- Los Angeles Community Development Authority (LACDA) Seniors & Disabled
- LINC Housing (Seniors and Disabled)
- SCRS (Disabled)
- Housing Rights Center Rental Directory

Senior Transportation: (26.35%)

- City Dial-A-Ride
- County Dial-A-Ride
- ACCESS
- Freedom Transportation
- Health Plans (Transportation for medical appointments only)

Benefits: (14.10%)

- Whittier Senior Center – CalFresh & SASSFA
- L.A. County Consumer & Business Affairs/Community Resource Center - CalFresh

I & R Summary Report February 2025

In the month of February 2025, we received a total of 472 calls. High incoming calls for tax preparation and callers seeking legal help for fraud. Continued to get calls for senior housing, transportation, and services for all special populations.

Taxes: (25.85%)

- Liberty Community Plaza
- Rio Hondo
- SASSFA

City/County Services: (16.53%)

- City of Whittier (Senior Services, Adaptive Program, Veterans)
- Social Security Administration (Retirement and Disability)
- Southeast Area Social Services Funding Authority (SASSFA) Senior Services
- Dept of Public Social Services (CalFresh and In-Home-Support-Services)
- L.A County Public Health-Whittier (Food Distribution)
- Interfaith Food (Food Distribution)
- L.A. Found (Tracking Device)

Legal: (3.18%)

- Housing Rights Center (Rental Contracts)
- Bet Tzedek (Trust & Wills)
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (Government Benefits)
- L.A. County Consumer & Business Affairs/Community Resource Center – (SCAMS & Utility Assistance)
- Center for Health Care Rights (Medi-Cal/Medicare)
- Long Term Care Ombudsman Services (Hospital)

Housing: (7.63%)

- TSA Properties (Seniors & Disabled)
- Los Angeles Community Development Authority (LACDA) Seniors
- LINC Housing (Seniors and Disabled)
- Housing Rights Center Rental Directory
- First Day (Shelter)
- Los Angeles Homeless Authority (Shelter)
- Salvation Army (Shelter)

Senior Transportation: (25.64%)

- City Dial-A-Ride
- County Dial-A-Ride
- ACCESS
- Freedom Transportation
- Health Plans (Transportation for medical appointments only)

Benefits: (13.98%)

- Whittier Senior Center – CalFresh, SASSFA, & Medi-Cal
- Whittier Library – Veterans Benefits



Agenda Report

Social Services Commission

Date: March 4, 2025

To: Social Services Commission

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

Subject: 2025 Whittier Scholarship Program - Sponsored by Athens and Republic Services

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and select the 2025 Whittier Scholarship Program recipients.

BACKGROUND

The City service agreements with Athens Services and Republic Services require the provision of a scholarship program for Whittier residents.

Annually, five \$500 scholarships are awarded to college-bound students residing in the Athens Services area, while four \$500 scholarships are available to students in the Republic Services area.

The Social Services Commission is tasked with reviewing and selecting the award recipients.

DISCUSSION

The 2025 Whittier Scholarship Program was promoted by the City and both service providers through social media channels, Whittier Union High School district, and private High Schools in the Whittier area. Applicants were required to write an essay utilizing the Commission-approved prompt, Sustainability and Waste Reduction. This year's prompt challenged students to reflect on the idea that while everyone produces some waste, it is possible to avoid being a "super consumer." Applicants were asked to consider how the goods, services, and activities they purchase or support contribute to the solid waste problem and to propose alternative purchasing and disposal methods that could lower the levels of trash we are currently experiencing.

Nine eligible essays were submitted as follows:

- Seven students in the Athens Services area
- Two students in the Republic Services area.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOAL

Goal 3: Maintain & Enhance Quality of Life

ATTACHMENTS

A. Entries for the 2025 Whittier Scholarship Program



Athens Services & Republic Services

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

High School Seniors in Whittier

HOW TO ENTER:

- Submit application with one short essay responding to the essay prompt
- Must live within Whittier city limits
- Follow MLA Formatting
- Share a photo of yourself!



ESSAY PROMPT:

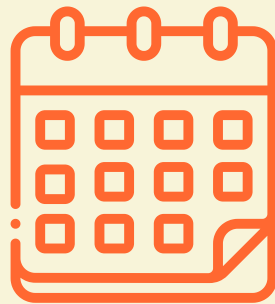
Everyone produces some waste, but you don't have to be a "super consumer." One way to help the issue is to think about the goods, services, and activities you buy or support. In what ways do they contribute to the solid waste problem? How could you purchase and dispose of items in other ways that would generate less trash?

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Feb. 12, 2025

by 5:00 PM to

gonzalezr@cityofwhittier.org



Multiple winners will be selected!

Be sure to visit WhittierPRCS.com for full submission guidelines & award details or call (562) 567-9400.



REPUBLIC of 34
SERVICES



**Athens
Services**



**Athens
Services**



**REPUBLIC
SERVICES**

2024-2025 WHITTIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM SPONSORED BY **ATHENS SERVICES AND **REPUBLIC SERVICES****

Scholarship Criteria and Essay Writing Details:

Theme:

Sustainability and Waste Reduction

Essay Topic:

Everyone produces some waste, but you don't have to be a "super consumer." One way to help the issue is to think about the goods, services, and activities you buy or support. In what ways do they contribute to the solid waste problem? How could you purchase and dispose of items in other ways that would generate less trash?

Deadline:

The due date for submission is **Wednesday, February 12, 2025, by 5:00 PM** and must be submitted online or emailed. See Submission Guidelines for details on how to submit.

Eligibility:

The essay contest is open to college-bound graduating high school seniors. Applicants must be a resident of the City of Whittier; location of high school is not used as an eligibility factor. Students living in the **unincorporated Los Angeles County areas of Whittier or outside the City of Whittier City limits are ineligible.**

Scholarship Awards:

- \$500 individual scholarships will be awarded to five (5) recipients living in **Athens Services'** area.
- \$500 individual scholarships will be awarded to four (4) recipients living in **Republic Services'** area.
- Winners will be notified by Monday, March 10, 2024
- Selected winners must submit a W-9 by Monday, March 24, 2025, at 5:00 PM
- Winners will be invited to a reception at City Hall, 13230 Penn St. for the presentation of scholarship funds.

Writing Guidelines:

Essays must be 400 to 500 words in length, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, and facts and quotations should be appropriately cited following MLA formatting. If outside

sources are used, you must cite appropriately. Entries must be original, unpublished essays written by the contestant.

Submission Guidelines:

Please submit only one essay per student. If selected to receive a scholarship, a picture will be requested as part of our media campaign. By submitting a photo, the applicant grants permission to the City of Whittier to use the photograph for advertising purposes.

Please submit your entry via the Google Forms: <https://forms.gle/XWs7e8anZvM9Xoaa7>
OR email with the subject "Scholarship Essay" as an attached document to gonzalezr@cityofwhittier.org

Following MLA formatting, heading needs to include the following information:

- Student's Full Name and Name of Legal Guardian
- Email Address and Contact Number
- Home Address
- School Name and Grade Level
- Name of the Trash Hauling Service Provider (either **Athens Services** or **RepublicServices**)

Selection of Scholarship Recipients:

The City of Whittier's Social Services Commission will evaluate the essays. Essays will be judged with no identifying information available to the judges. Decisions by the judges are final.

Essays will be evaluated based on:

- Creativity
- Relevance, social and environmental impact
- Inclusion of local sustainability ideas
- Use of sources and correct citations
- A vision for the future

If you have any question, contact the
Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department at (562)567-9400.

ATHENS SERVICES #1

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You don't have to be a "super consumer"!

Every day, the choices we make as consumers impact the environment. From the products we buy to the way we dispose of them, our consumption habits contribute significantly to the solid waste problem. While waste production is inevitable, we can adopt more sustainable practices to minimize our environmental footprint. By examining the goods, services, and activities we support, we can uncover opportunities to make meaningful changes in how we purchase and dispose of items.

One major contributor to solid waste is single-use products. Items like plastic bags, disposable utensils, and excessive packaging dominate landfills and pollute ecosystems. These items are often designed for convenience rather than sustainability, leading to a culture of wastefulness. Additionally, consumer habits such as frequently upgrading electronic devices exacerbate the problem. Many of these goods are not biodegradable and take years, even centuries, to decompose, contributing to the growing solid waste crisis.

To combat this issue, individuals can adopt several strategies. One way is by supporting businesses that prioritize sustainable practices, such as those that use recyclable packaging or offer reusable alternatives. For instance, bringing a reusable

water bottle or coffee cup reduces reliance on single use plastics. Similarly, opting for secondhand clothing instead of discarding them can extend the life cycle of products and prevent unnecessary waste.

Proper disposal methods also play a crucial role in waste reduction. Recycling and composting are effective ways to divert waste from landfills. Understanding what materials can be recycled and ensuring they are disposed of correctly helps maintain the integrity of recycling systems. Additionally, composting organic waste, such as food scraps, not only reduces landfill contributions but also creates nutrient rich soil that can be used for gardening.

Finally, adopting a minimalist mindset can significantly impact waste reduction. By focusing on quality over quantity and avoiding impulse purchases, consumers can reduce the amount of waste they generate. Thoughtful purchasing decisions, such as choosing durable products and buying in bulk, can also decrease packaging waste and promote long-term sustainability.

Reducing solid waste requires a collective effort, starting with individual actions. By rethinking our consumption habits, supporting sustainable businesses, and practicing responsible disposal, we can work toward a cleaner, healthier planet. Small changes in our daily lives can make a big difference, proving that we don't have to be "super consumers" to meet our needs.

ATHENS SERVICES #2

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Waste or Goods

Waste comes in different forms, such as plastic, human and dog waste, and so on. However, some of the waste that we produce can be harmful to the environment, which is a huge issue that is still trying to be solved to this day. In my opinion, plastic is the most harmful waste because it could destroy wildlife and sea animals in the ocean. Every day we throw out millions of plastic containers to the environment which could get lost throughout our planet. That is why by finding alternative ways to reduce our usage of plastic, we can begin a process of longevity recycling.

The first step in reducing single-use plastics is to make a travel kit with reusable tools. Reusable water bottles, tumblers, bags, straws, and utensils which are all popular reusable options. Some local shops even offer discounts when you spare them the cost of providing these items. Another alternative is keeping a few bags near your front door for easy access, or stash them in your car in case you leave home without them. Avoid paying for bags at the grocery stores.



Additionally, plastic can be hard to recycle depending on the municipality regulations. Residents should make sure to check your local recycling guidelines to see what can or can't be recycled. For many municipalities, numbers 1 and 2 could be recycled except 3-7 which are generally not recyclable. You just can't put non-recyclable items in a recycling bin because it could be more harmful than throwing them away. This is why it is important to work with your local communities to eliminate plastic where you live in.

Another way to reduce waste is staying away from buying fast fashion. Fast fashion relies heavily on the rapid production of clothing, demands vast amounts of natural resources, and is often made from synthetic materials like polyester, which releases microplastics. Microplastics are invisible to the naked eye, they are also toxic which poses a major threat to the environment. To avoid fast fashion is to think before you buy the

clothing. Consider buying from local artisans who often create garments by hand, that uses fewer resources than large manufacturers companies. In addition, help support companies that practice sustainable manufacturing because their primary focus is creating durable, long-lasting clothes while ensuring fair labor practices and minimizing environmental impact.

Lastly, reducing food waste can be essential to the environment because when waste ends up in landfills, it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions that accelerate climate change. Plan your meals ahead of time to purchase exactly what you need. Make a list of meals and recipes you'd like to prepare and buy only the necessary ingredients for each item. Any items that you purchased or prepare more than needed, put them in the freezer for later. Frozen meals make great time-saving options during busy days. Overall, by making these changes to your daily lives, our environment will continue to improve and help our planet grow healthier than it is now!


ATHENS SERVICES #3



A Second Chance to Shine: From Waste to the Stage


All throughout our lives, we struggle to discover our true identities. We go through phases, experimenting with countless aesthetics and trends hoping that one of them will finally stick. But the reality is that we never stop evolving; and the clothing we buy does not grow with us. Instead, the clothes we no longer care for remain forgotten and ignored in the bottoms of our closets and in piles at a landfill. Every year, the average U.S. consumer throws away 81.5 pounds of clothing. (Earth.Org). Meaning that 85% of all textiles get sent to landfills and never get a second chance to be worn by someone new or serve a new purpose. Donating to thrift stores and thrifting has become an increasingly popular way to sustainably clean out one's closet, but how can we be sure that there won't be yet another build up of clothes forgotten and out of the public eye? As a generation committed to change, Gen Z has a responsibility to make our consumerist world more sustainable. And that starts with the clothing that we buy.

Fast fashion is rapidly and constantly contributing to the increase of carbon emissions and unsustainable waste. Our unquenchable desire for more, and as quickly as possible, is becoming entirely detrimental to our planet. The cost of clothing includes more than just the monetary resources used to make and buy them. It includes the labor, organic materials and environmental impact of the waste once it is inevitably disposed of. Big fashion retailers like *Shein* and *Temu* are producing and adding between 2,000 and 10,000 individual new styles to



their website every single day (TIME Magazine). These low-prices and trending pieces are bait for impressionable teenagers who are just looking to fit in while using the least of their resources. The incessant support of unethical companies like these will only allow them to keep growing, keep producing, and keep sending millions of tons of textiles to landfills. The limited lifespans of these garments in our closets and the seemingly unlimited lifespan of them in the landfill cause them to be an incredibly significant contributor to climate change. The Fast Fashion Industry alone is responsible for as much as 10% of the global carbon dioxide emissions (Center for Biological Diversity). Additionally, the synthetic fibers in these clothing items like acrylic, nylon, and polyester take hundreds of years to biodegrade. But we don't just have to sit back and watch as our Earth keeps being polluted with unsustainable solid waste. We can help to end this vicious cycle of environmental harm by finding innovative ways to dispose of our unwanted clothing and other goods. Everything from couches to baby clothes to kitchen ware can be repurposed in creative ways and given a chance to live a second life. And at a school with a rich 125 years of history, Whittier High School finds artistic ways to reuse items of all kinds one production at a time.


For all of my four years of high school, I have been heavily involved in the Whittier High School Theatre Company. I have starred in multiple incredible shows, and in each one, our beautiful Vic Lopez Auditorium is entirely transformed into another world in another era. Our stage has been decorated with elaborate sets time and time again, and yet, the furniture we use remains the same. Each piece we own has been donated and collected over time, and each one has served a new purpose on our stage. Furniture pieces that could have been waste, or left out on the street, or donated to a thrift store where it is never guaranteed to be reused. As theatre students, we see the value in repetition. We understand that we don't need new things to be



successful or professional; it's the way we use our old, well-known, and well-loved things that matters. Along with furniture, I've donated my unwanted clothing to the Whittier High School Theatre Company's costume closet. Not only does this way of recycling diminish the solid waste problem that would be perpetuated if I would have thrown the clothing away, it saves time and resources to overall benefit everyone involved. As an underfunded program on campus, the Theatre Company saves money and does a service to the community by taking donations; allowing for students, community members and contributors of Whittier High School to watch a finished production that was made successful because of people who got creative with their consumption. By thoughtfully disposing of unwanted clothing, furniture, and more by sending them to theaters throughout the Whittier community, citizens give their potential waste a new life. One where they will be mindfully and imaginatively repurposed to create a show that adds to our city's artistic legacy, and creates less trash along the way.

Shopping and disposing of the things we consume sustainably is never going to be an easy feat. But by disposing of them in creative ways, it *can* be rewarding. When our clothing no longer brings us joy, we can play a part in limiting our landfills by focusing not on what to buy next, but on what other purposes our clothing may have. The solid waste problem will not begin to shrink if we do not remain the most environmentally conscious generation. So why make it difficult for ourselves? By donating our worn and unwanted clothing and other goods to our school, we do our part to generate less trash conveniently, consciously, and creatively. By properly giving our goods a second chance to shine, we get to shine too.

ATHENS SERVICES #4




Become the Solution, Not the Problem:

Reducing Waste Through Sustainable Fashion Choices

The majority of people on a daily basis contribute to solid waste without even realizing it. While consumption is unavoidable, we do not have to be “super consumers”. One of the biggest contributors to solid waste is the fast fashion industry. Large companies manufacture cheap disposable clothing and encourage consumers to purchase at a low price. But at what cost? In 2018, the average American was buying 68 new items of clothing each year, contributing to the estimated 93 million tons going to landfill or getting burned. To combat overconsumption, consumers need to develop new shopping habits and more sustainable practices such as shopping secondhand, supporting eco-friendly brands, and responsibly disposing of clothing.

Fast fashion brands such as H&M and Shein provide consumers with thousands of new styles at low prices and while this may seem great, it’s promoting overconsumption. While prices are low and convenient for us, clothing is made at a fast rate with cheap materials causing it to be discarded after a few uses. In addition, social media influencers showcasing clothing and shopping hauls have made overconsumption the norm and to some, desirable. As a result of this, we impulsively buy cheap products that we do not need. I also enjoy shopping and I occasionally shop at big companies, but ultimately our purchases only benefit them. This cycle harms the environment, as mass production of clothing pollutes water, depletes natural resources, and generates textile waste. Additionally, consumers often overlook ethical issues such as unsafe working conditions in garment factories and exploitative labor practices. However, by changing

our shopping habits and becoming more mindful, we can reduce waste and lessen the harmful impact of the fashion industry on the planet.

Clothing should be something that we treasure for years to come, not something that you dispose of easily. That's why it's important to make the right choice when deciding whether or not you should buy the item. When buying a piece of clothing, you should envision yourself wearing it many times with different outfit combinations. It's also important to make sure that it is made of organic cotton and/or recycled material to ensure it's gone through a sustainable process.

When decluttering our closet it's understandable that we want to throw away our clothes that we don't want anymore but this should never be an option since this does not help the waste problem. Instead of just throwing away our clothes, we can upcycle, sell them, or donate them to a local thrift store. Shopping secondhand is one of your best options when looking for unique pieces for your closet. By thrifting and shopping locally we can also support small businesses. Shopping at thrift stores gives a piece of clothing a second chance, essentially avoiding it from going to a landfill. Upcycling or repurposing, another way of minimizing waste, allows you to express your creativity and extends the lifespan of your clothing. Selling them on platforms like Depop or Poshmark allows consumers to make money while reducing waste. Donating clothes to your local thrift store or charity ensures that your garments will be given to people in need, rather than ending up in landfills.

Being eco friendly is extremely important to me. Being aware of fast fashion and its harmful effects on the environment has motivated me to be the change. I avoid buying from big companies and instead shop at local thrift stores or purchase second hand items online, finding

unique pieces. Thrifting and shopping secondhand is eco-friendly, significantly reducing waste in the ocean, impacting sea life and ultimately, the environment.

Consumers have all the power to make a difference in the fashion industry. While these small changes may seem insignificant, they collectively make a difference to protect the environment. Fast fashion thrives on overconsumers, but by making conscious choices when shopping, supporting sustainable brands, and disposing of clothes properly, waste will reduce significantly. We as consumers should reuse our clothes as many times as possible. Our habits and choices shape the future of our planet– so let's make the difference by choosing sustainability over convenience and impulse buying.

ATHENS SERVICES #5

Everyone produces some waste, but you don't have to be a "super consumer." One way to help the issue is to think about the goods, services, and activities you buy or support. In what ways do they contribute to the solid waste problem? How could you purchase and dispose of items in other ways that would generate less trash?

Over the last couple of decades, the mass production of certain clothing items has been significantly increasing due to the rise of social media, which brings in new "trends" every couple of months. The cyclical and fast seasonal production of garments already brings on unethical practices regarding who, where, and how they are being made. However, a majority of society also fails to understand the environmental impact and how it's highly unsustainable due to the heavy use of energy and water needed, along with its growing contribution to our solid waste.

Recycling clothing and reducing the negative impact of fast fashion is not an unfamiliar concept. My love for thrifting and upcycling inspired me to work with some peers to start my school's Thrifting and Sustainability Club, where I have been the co-president for the past 2 years. With about sixty-five percent of my school being boarding students from around the world, we wanted to use our club not only to raise awareness for our world's and local communities' environmental issues but to create "runs" to local thrift stores so sustainable fashion can be more accessible for students. We have also teamed up with our school's fashion club, putting donation bins around campus to take to local Goodwills and thrift stores. In addition, we've pushed discussions surrounding buying and selling clothing on online platforms such as eBay, Depop, or Poshmark. Inspiring to make a more global impact, we also realized that we could donate our collected items to Planet Aid to help benefit different communities in

developing countries. By having this as our next goal, we will be able to help create jobs and provide a source of affordable clothing while being environmentally conscious.

Decreasing our consumption of goods and recycling clothes is a great start, but I know there are everyday things others and myself can do in addition. When it comes to the meals we eat or our weekly grocery shopping, we can start by reversing our society's culture of convenience by staying away from single-use items such as plastic utensils and bags. Instead, remembering to bring reusable bags and silverware will reduce the overall production rate of these companies because of the supply and demand process. While it may be minor, the small things count. Even at home, having a composting bin that you fill with food scraps can help promote healthier plant growth due to its nutrients enriching the soil while keeping them away from landfills. I plan to continue my passion in college and the future by spreading awareness, studying the complexities of our environmental challenges in combination with government policy, and working with local community projects. We are already at a point where the ability to reverse climate change is slipping through our fingers. Sustainability and recycling are not options at this point as they are a matter of saving our planet.

ATHENS SERVICES #6

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The Never Ending Boxes

In our modern world, where online shopping has become a permanent resident on people's shopping lists, the simple cardboard box has become both a symbol of convenience and a challenge for sustainability. As numerous discarded boxes pile up, the mass cardboard box consumption can lead us to rethink our consumption habits, ultimately facilitating a greener and cleaner community. Cardboard boxes accompany almost every item we purchase online. Whether that be grocery products, entertainment, or even toys for children, there is most likely a cardboard box. This can significantly contribute to the solid waste problem as there are numerous citizens worldwide who purchase most, if not all of their groceries and products online, leading to a mass amount of wasteful cardboard boxes. Although they are convenient for shipping products as well as moderately biodegradable, they can often be discarded on the streets which can contribute significantly to the short-term and even long-term solid waste problem. To add on, cardboard boxes should be broken down to take up less space, however, this often isn't the case. When cardboard boxes are thrown out, they are oftentimes not broken down which can lead to more space being taken up in trash cans as well as trash trucks. This then restricts the amount of other trash that can be thrown away at a single time and even limits the amount of space available. There are numerous eco-friendly ways to effectively reduce and dispose of cardboard boxes. For instance, many people have overlooked the idea of utilizing these cardboard boxes past their original purpose. Many people will throw away these boxes after they

get their purchased item, however personally, I like to reuse these cardboard boxes as storage. These boxes have replaced my old plastic boxes as the cardboard ones work just as well. Cardboard boxes are extremely easy to recycle as they can be used for numerous purposes including storage, art, or even for building playhouses, sometimes you just need to think outside the box to find a purpose for it. To add on, with online shopping becoming a social norm, cardboard box consumption can also be lowered by changing buying habits. This includes buying items online in bulk. Instead of buying items individually and at different times, people can buy items all at once, causing them to be shipped in one box, rather than multiple smaller boxes. Another way in which we can decrease the consumption of cardboard boxes is to try to purchase things online less, and more in stores. By lowering the amount of products purchased online, we can directly decrease the amount of cardboard boxes being used. Overall, cardboard boxes have significantly made online shopping convenient, however, they have also caused mass consumption of them. There is no doubt that there is a struggle to reduce the amount of cardboard boxes with the increase in online shopping. However, if citizens can consistently recycle, and change there shopping habits by online shoping less, or at the bare minimum, break them down, I am confident we can see a positive impact on the solid waste problem.

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Preluding back to the days where even spelling the word “recycle” was out of my reach, I have still been fortunate enough to have its practice instilled in me, nonetheless. I never asked or thought about why we were always going to the recycling place or collecting my neighbors’ bottles. All I knew was that I wouldn't get in trouble if I helped out and how what we were doing was “good for plants”.

Soon enough I was able to comprehend the true importance of what my family was preaching. Granted it wasn't an entire operation, but it was what we could do with our time and resources. Our steady stream of soda cans and water bottles always kept us busy one weekend a month sorting and taking them to our local recycling center. We were doing our part in reducing pollution. This early introduction to recycling, inspired me to want to contribute in my own ways. This led to me adopting the habit of purchasing secondhand clothes. I realized that by purchasing secondhand clothes, I could diminish my pollution footprint and at the same time give these clothes a “new” life.

Unfortunately, our neighborhood recycling center has recently closed down permanently. The reason is unknown, but what is known is that its closure will now

leave a void for my community. Although it was not a “cool” hamburger place or even an ever popular Starbucks, it served a very important purpose. It provided my neighborhood a place where we could take our recyclables and feel like we were contributing in making our environment a cleaner and healthier place. It helped us feel like we were part of something bigger and in the process having a positive impact on our community. Without this local recycling center, we will now need to go farther away to recycle. Fortunately, my family’s and I’s commitment to recycling will not be deterred, but that may not be the case for others. The distance may now serve as a barrier for others to continue recycling.

It is my hope that every city could have multiple recycling centers available to their residents. Having these centers scattered throughout, will make it easier and convenient for people to recycle and cut down on their waste. I believe there also needs to be a consistent campaign to encourage more participation. When people recycle, they’re not only helping their environment, but they’re also providing revenue to businesses. The money they receive when they recycle goes back to the economy as they shop and eat at local businesses. It’s really a win -win situation for everyone.

REPUBLIC SERVICES #1

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The Waste Created by Everyday Choices

Everyone contributes to the growing problem of solid waste, it just depends on how much a given person does so. Whether it's from the food or clothes that are purchased, trash generates from a variety of ways. Disposable items which are created for short lifespans accumulate in landfills and oceans. Harmless activities such as getting an extra straw or throwing away unfinished food all add to the problem. Understanding how everyday actions contribute to the problem is the first step to fixing it.


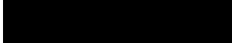
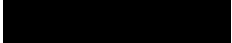
The first way to help solve the solid waste problem is to change the ways in which items are purchased. This is prevalent mostly in grocery stores and restaurants. First of all, grocery stores charge a miniscule fee for plastic bags which are extremely bad for the environment. One way consumers could easily mitigate this is to bring their own reusable bags. Some people may not have these reusable bags which is why stores should also market and sell them. Secondly, restaurants use excessive plastics whether it's for to-go food or simply just straws. As a consumer it would be best to politely ask for cardboard boxes and for paper straws. Metal reusable straws could also be purchased and taken to a restaurant.

Aside from changing purchasing habits to generate less trash, it is also possible to change the way items are disposed of in order to produce less trash. One area in which people are able to easily change the ways items are disposed of is in their clothing. Instead of just throwing away old clothes that don't fit it would be a much better idea to donate them. Also to reduce trash is buy used clothes through thrifting instead of buying brand-new from fast fashion brands which

are bad for the environment. Another benefit is clothes will be much cheaper this way. Another idea is to get together with friends and have a clothing swap. Most people have never done this but it is a lot fun, a great bonding experience, plus everyone will get new clothes.


In short, we all play a part in the trash problem. But, by making small changes, like bringing reusable bags and refusing extra plastic, we can make a big difference. Changing how we shop and how we get rid of things, like donating old clothes instead of throwing them away, helps even more. If everyone does their part, we can start to shrink the mountains of trash.

REPUBLIC SERVICES #2

Athens Services & Republic Services Scholarship

“Overall, the U.S. produces 268 million tons of trash annually. The average U.S. resident produces about 4.5 pounds per day, and most of it is recyclable items.” The majority of the solid waste that Americans produce each day goes unnoticed. Most Americans have the privilege of not having to think about where their waste goes after disposing of it, while waste is piling up at a faster rate than being repurposed in a sanitary landfill, or in a waste-to-energy plant in an ideal situation. However, the majority of waste ends up in a landfill where pollutants can seep into groundwater or to incineration that creates air pollution. A majority contributor to the waste problem in the 21st century is due to the wave of technological advancement. People all over the world are able to purchase goods and services, such as clothing and food, with the click of a button. While it is easy to buy goods and services online, this system has also created an abundance of the amount of waste produced from excess plastic packaging and boxes. From buying food products, home decor, and clothing, each item typically comes individually wrapped with excess plastic that people do not properly recycle. A way that myself and the rest of the world can improve our reduced waste habits is purchasing goods in person. If you purchase goods in person, you are more likely to purchase only what you need and items that are in their own packaging without excess plastic and boxes. Stores are transitioning from buying plastic bags at stores that are used once, to reusable bags that are appealing to consumers to use over and over again. I have bought a couple reusable bags made of natural and synthetic materials that I use regularly and I see many other people using reusable bags. Another example of purchasing goods that reduce waste is reusable water bottles such as Stanleys. Using a singular reusable cup



for daily consumption of liquids reduces the amount of plastic water bottles that pile up at a fast pace. Not only is reusable water a great alternative to plastic water bottles, people are motivated to get these from the variety of colors and patterns that represent them. A way to dispose of items that would generate less trash stems from the idea of reduce, reuse, and recycle. I was introduced to this idea in my environmental science class as I learned about waste management. I have grown to love fashion, however, I have also learned the importance of simplifying my closet to purchasing specific pieces of clothing that will get the most use from them. Recently, I have donated my clothes to a younger girl that I know will get a great use of these clothes in perfect condition. Not only does this practice of reducing and reusing goods reduce waste, it is a step into creating a chain reaction of more people being a part of decreasing the solid waste problem.