

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

April 1, 2009

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ALARCÓN INTRODUCES MOTION TO HELP MAKE IT EASIER FOR FAMILIES TO APPLY FOR SOCIAL SERVICE ASSISTANCE

Los Angeles, CA – The City of Los Angeles has a number of program for which local residents can apply to receive subsidies, rebates or additional assistance if they match qualification criteria. These programs include the Section 8 program, CalWORKS, low-income and lifeline water and power rates and transportation subsidies. Currently, a resident must apply for most of these needs-based programs separately, with no centralized mechanism available to allow for easy enrollment and/or application to all programs for which a person may be eligible.

Today, Los Angeles City Councilmember Richard Alarcón introduced a motion instructing the Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Administrative Officer to work with relevant departments to prepare a report for the City Council on the feasibility of implementing a citywide web-based service enrollment system where a person can apply for any number of programs. The motion also requests that the report, which is due in 30 days, include cost estimates and staff associated with the operation of a web-based service enrollment system.

“The technology is available to make it easier for families and individuals to apply for the assistance and to ensure that they are receiving all the benefits for which they qualify, and it’s time for the City to explore these opportunities” said Councilmember Richard Alarcón. “Receiving the benefits that they qualify for could mean the difference between putting food on the table or having a family go hungry, and during these tough economic times, it’s more important than ever that we are efficient ways to bring much needed resources to our local children and families.”

Councilmember Alarcón’s motion highlights one of the options that is available for the delivery of this service, *One-E-App*. This program is an innovative web-based system allows a person or family to provide information about their household one time and it can be screened simultaneously for multiple social service programs and other support services. Applications and documentation are routed (in many cases electronically) to programs for which they are determined eligible and assistants provide better support to families using sophisticated case management, reporting and tracking tools.

Councilmember Alarcón is a longtime advocate for increasing access to and efficiency in providing for social services. For many years he has advocated for an update of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, which would allow for a more targeted and efficient use of resources and help target those in most need of assistance.

These initiatives are just part of a greater focus that the Councilmember has on issues of poverty in the community. In the spring of 2007, Alarcón introduced a motion to create the Ad Hoc Committee on Ending Poverty in Los Angeles. Since then, he has been working with a coalition of activists, service providers, academics and staff to create the Master Plan to End Poverty in Los Angeles. To date, he has held eight hearings of this committee, with topic ranging from the city’s low income water and power programs to the impact of education and job training on poverty to the opportunities to decrease poverty through homeownership. The work of this Ad Hoc Committee follows several years of work at the State Senate where Alarcón was the Chair of the Select Committee to Create a Master Plan to End Poverty in California.