

City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: AUGUST 25, 2026**

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT **WARDS: ALL**
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE, INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS & EMERGING TECHNOLOGY SKILLS (iVETS), AND STEMWORX, INC. FOR TECHNOLOGY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE:

Receive report and authorize Mayor Lock Dawson, or her designee, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Riverside, the Institute for Veterans & Emerging Technology Skills (iVETS) and StemWorx, Inc.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Receive the report about the Institute for Veterans & Emerging Technology Skills (iVETS) and StemWorx, Inc.; and
2. Authorize Mayor Lock Dawson, or her designee, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding, including making minor and non-substantive changes.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 18, 2026, the Economic Development Committee received the staff report regarding the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Riverside and the Institute for Veterans & Emerging Technology Skills (iVETS), and StemWorx, Inc.; and recommended that the City Council authorize Mayor Lock Dawson, or her designee, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding, including making minor and non-substantive changes.

BACKGROUND:

The ETA Group is seeking to partner with the City of Riverside to establish the Institute for Veterans & Emerging Technology Skills (iVETS) in Riverside.

The Institute for Veterans & Emerging Technology Skills (iVETS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on workforce development, education, and career pathways in emerging technologies. iVETS specializes in establishing applied technology labs and providing training with a priority on veterans and underserved populations.

In collaboration with elite academic institutions, including UC Riverside, California Baptist University, La Sierra University, Riverside Community College, CSUSB, and the Riverside/Alvord School Districts, iVETS will provide a multi-tier AI education and workforce development pipeline. This institute is designed to empower the community with priority access to AI technology and accelerate job readiness for military veterans in high-priority sectors:

- Emerging Tech: Quantum Computing, AI/LLMs, Robotics, and Semiconductors.
- Infrastructure: Smart Cities and Fusion Energy.
- Defense & Aerospace: Drones, Autonomous Systems, and Advanced Manufacturing.

The proposed collaboration seeks to position Riverside as a regional hub for applied technology, artificial intelligence, and digital infrastructure while expanding equitable access to high-quality technology careers.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed collaboration between the City, iVETS, and StemWorx aligns with the City's economic and workforce development priorities and regional initiatives to support innovation and sustainability. The partnership is structured to include a focus on iVETS Workforce & Program Operations which includes launching iVETS' nonprofit operations in Riverside for workforce training programs and the establishment of an applied technology lab.

Overview of Memorandum of Understanding

The proposed MOU serves as a non-binding framework for strategic collaboration and does not obligate the expenditure of funds or obligate the City to any future approvals. It does not create any entitlements, commit the City to any course of action, or obligate the expenditure of public funds. The document establishes shared principles and a phased, exploratory approach to technology-driven economic development, with all future actions remaining subject to the City's sole discretion and standard review and approval processes.

The MOU was amended following its presentation to the Economic Development Committee on June 18, 2026 to remove any reference to proposed future considerations regarding data centers.

Workforce and Economic Development Impact

The collaboration is expected to create high-quality career pipelines in emerging sectors like AI and digital infrastructure. iVETS will partner with public agencies and educational institutions to prioritize recruitment from veteran and underserved communities. StemWorx will provide infrastructure access for applied learning, ensuring that Riverside's workforce is trained on modern, large-scale technology systems.

This partnership represents a leap to secure the City's future by providing the operational framework and identify the coming era of Artificial Intelligence.

- The Workforce Reality: The pace of industry and defense technology is outstripping traditional academic cycles. Employers need "mission-ready" talent now.
- The Veteran Advantage: With 203,000+ veterans in the Inland Empire, the region possesses an unmatched talent pool. Veterans bring disciplined execution, situational awareness, and experience in controlled environments, desirable skills to be competitive

in the technology industry.

- Applied Pedagogy: iVETS shifts away from legacy teaching toward infrastructure-driven, systems-based learning. Students learn prospectively by anticipating frontier capabilities, and retrospectively by learning from real-world deployments and post-incident lessons.

City Role and Scope of Collaboration

Under the proposed MOU, the City's role is proposed to include coordination and facilitation activities, such as:

- Exploring suitable office or commercial space for iVETS operations,
- Facilitating introductions with relevant departments and partners, and
- Supporting site selection, permitting navigation, and workforce alignment.

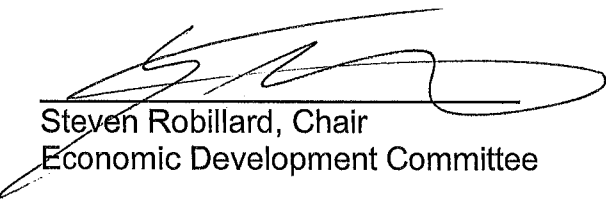
The parties will work together to identify and track key performance indicators and provide periodic updates to the City's Economic Development Committee to ensure progress and transparency.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the approval of this Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU is non-binding and does not create a financial obligation for the City.

Prepared by:	Miranda Evans, Community & Economic Development Director
Approved by:	Thomas R. Hatch, Interim City Manager
Certified as to availability of funds:	Julie Nemes, Finance Director
Approved as to form:	James Johnson, City Attorney

Concurs with:


Steven Robillard, Chair
Economic Development Committee

Attachments:

1. Memorandum of Understanding
2. Presentation