

# CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

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MEETING DATE: March 27, 2025  
PREPARED BY: Amy Lawrence, Deputy Director of Economic Development  
SUBJECT: AUTISM CERTIFIED CITY SIGNAGE

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive and file an update on Autism Certified City signage.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

In response to a City Council request to explore the possibility of installing "Autism Certified City" signage at the city limits, similar to the "Purple Heart City" designation signage, staff has determined that this proposal is not feasible at this time for the following reasons:

- Palm Desert was the first municipality in California whose employees completed the training to become a Certified Autism Center (CAC) through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES).
- Currently, the only other CACs in Palm Desert are The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens, the JW Marriott Resort and Spa, and the Joslyn Center.
- The City offers an Autism Certification Reimbursement Program to Palm Desert hospitality and tourist attraction businesses. To date, two businesses have applied for reimbursement (i.e. Variety of the Desert and Hampton Inn and Suites).

Finally, it's important to note that Palm Desert as a whole is not certified as an "Autism Certified City" by IBCCES, as no such designation exists. Staff will continue to highlight the City's CAC designation on the City website.

## **Legal Review:**

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact associated with this request.