

**Budget Rider for Budget Concept Menu Item E-17, Increased Capacity in the Equity Office**

Item	Description	General Fund	One-Time Funds
E-17	Additional staff for Equity Office for execution and implementation of Equity Office goals and community organizing	\$100,000	

A budget rider providing additional staff for Equity office for execution and implementation of Equity Office Goals and community organizing with instructions to create a new and different process for the City Manager’s budget that advances and incorporates into the Budget Process the community’s voices as expressed through the QofL Commissions.

**Challenge:** Once again, equity budget requests from the Quality of Life (QoL) Commissions are absent from the base budget (which contains other equity elements). Council is forced to make tough decisions on equity and priorities at the very end of the Budget Process. Many of us have expressed a desire that:

- a) our departments do even more to align their spending and programs with equity goals in mind, even before and without the need for QofL Commission suggestions or recommendations
- b) the QofL recommendation reach the City Manager and her staff early enough in the process to be considered for incorporation into the Manager’s Proposed Budget;
- c) these recommendations are considered for recurring dollars, rather than as one-time expenditures;
- d) our equity and QoL funding recognize that our current budget process must do better in giving greater opportunity to ideas, priorities, vendors and organizations that have faced (or are facing) barriers to entry and access to City funding; and,
- e) we want a new and different QofL Commission budget process that recognizes the potential service to the City that comes from large and small ideas and organizations, including those that do not as yet have the capacity to compete in the present system.

An equity lens should be part of every City decision and process. The Equity Officer is helping the City move to this place with the creation and testing of new equity tools. We support that work.

We are allocating additional monies to this office with the direction that it increases its capacity to do more and more quickly and to add greater diversity into the Office itself.

This budget direction further expresses the Council’s expectation that among the outcomes that will be achieved with increased funding to the Equity Office will be that, over this next year, it will work with the QofL Commissions and the City’s Public Health Department to review spending, programs, vendors and partners with an eye to finding opportunities to maximize and increase equity. This should lead to changes in next year’s base budget or recommendations that would come to Council as part of next year’s Manager’s base budget or Council’s budget process. This year’s recurring quality of life items as contained in the approved budget will seed a standalone Quality of Life Fund.

This budget direction is to express the Council’s expectation that among the outcomes that will be achieved with increased funding to the Equity Office will be the creation of a new and different

## Appendix H

process that advances and incorporates into the Budget Process the community's voices as expressed through the QofL Commissions.

The QofL Commissions have sent to the Council a recommendation that the Council consider establishing a recurring standalone Quality of Life Fund. It parallels several Council funds and grant programs like the Economic Development Department's Cultural Arts Fund, the Public Health Department's Chronic Disease Prevention Mini-Grant Program, and others. Each of these could serve as models.

One such idea is expressed below for illustration only as one possible process.

Several "buckets" could be created within this fund to address initiatives and priorities as expressed by the QoL Commissions.

- 1) Capacity Building - Funds to be used to support developing organizational infrastructure such as management, governance, financial resources, strategic planning, metric identification and measurement, and administrative systems.
- 2) Mini-grants - Grants under \$2,500 that have a focus on equity issues and topics but could not compete in the standard procurement process, for programs such as youth services, Housing and Community Development, Cultural Arts, Education, Health, and others.
- 3) Core Programs - Funding categories established organizations with a track record and that can meet the City's vendor requirements. Levels can include for example:
  - a. Requests of \$2,500 to \$25,000;
  - b. Requests of \$25,000 to \$75,000; and
  - c. Requests over \$75,000.

This funding framework allows small or large, new or well-established community-based organizations to participate in working on equity concerns.

Management and administration of the Quality of Life Commissions and the Quality of Life Fund will reside in the Equity Office and in the Economic Development Department. This department has experience working with similar funding mechanisms such as the Cultural Art Funding Program.

The QofL Commissions' role would be primarily to identify community needs related to equity concerns and disparities where gaps need to be closed. The City's Equity Officer would provide technical assistance to the QofL Commissions to align these issues to key equity goals and objectives as well as the Council's new strategic plan. The funding procurement process would be mixed. The mini-grant program grants could be awarded by QofL Chairs, the Equity Officer, Economic Development, and other relevant City department representatives. Larger grants would include similar review participants joined by review panels of experts in various fields, all applying established funding criteria. Establishing funding requirements and criteria up-front similar to the Cultural Contract funding process allows an efficient and effective process to make funding decisions.