



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members

**FROM:** Brion Oaks, Chief Equity Officer

**DATE:** April 5, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Response to Ordinance 20170913-001, Budget Rider to Create a Process Advancing the Community's Voices through the Quality of Life Commissions (Equity Office Mini-Grants)

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The purpose of this memo is to provide a response Ordinance 20170913-001 directing the Equity Office, in the form of a Budget Rider, to develop a funding framework for quality of life initiatives by allocating \$75,000 to an Equity Mini Grant Fund.

In response, the Equity Office sought to design a new concept for a Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) that could be utilized to fund equity mini-grants geared towards equity and improving overall quality of life. The RFGA was intentionally designed to remove barriers for local community organizations with an accessible application submittal process, waived insurance requirements, and up-front award delivery.

The awardees were selected by a community review panel composed of one representative from each of our four Quality of Life Commissions: African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic/Latino, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer. Interest, and participation, in the Equity Mini-Grant Fund exceeded expectations. Over 120 applications were received and the review panel logged over 100 hours of volunteer time in the review and decision-making process.

The Equity Office is proud to announce the first recipients of the Equity Mini-Grants and excited to see the impact these projects can have on advancing equity in the community. The 10 awardees, and project descriptions, are listed below:

- **NAMI Austin.** Mental health competency training for families of incarcerated people and APD Officers
- **Black Mama's Community Collective.** Doula Certification, training, and organizing for maternal post-partem care
- **Texas Legal Services/People's Community Clinic.** Legal training and advice for transgender individuals seeking care
- **Hand to Hold.** Neo-natal Intensive Care Graduate Parent Program to provide support and care beyond the NICU

- **Book Boosters.** Lunch and Learn sessions at the Carver Museum to build historical competency and community
- **Austin Community Design and Development Center.** Montopolis neighborhood center in model of the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation to provide gathering/event space for the neighborhood, along with area to learn about City programs/services
- **Youth Unlimited.** After-school mentoring and programming for Del Valle ISD children to build community, self-esteem, and skills
- **Educators in Solidarity.** AISD teacher conference to build cultural proficiency and anti-racist competency
- **Perez Elementary.** Spanish-language book club to facilitate parent reading with children
- **North Shoal Creek Community Garden.** Accessibility improvements for community garden located on Pillow Elementary school grounds

The Equity Office, in partnership with Mayor Steve Adler, will be recognizing the awardees and reviewers in a ceremony to be held April 24, 2019 at City Hall. An invitation is included as an attachment to the memo.

The Office would also like to give special thanks to the Quality of Life Commissioners that served on the review panel, as well as staff from Austin Public Health, Economic Development Department, and the Purchasing Office that played critical roles in this opportunity. For convenience, a project report is attached.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
CMO Executive Team

Organization	Project Description	Impact on Equity	Outcome Areas Impacted	Funding Amount
NAMI Austin	NAMI Austin developed Partners in Crisis, a combination of two free programs designed to help incarcerated people with mental illness and event prevent some of the incarcerations. The first element, Family & Friends, is an ongoing pilot that provides mental health education and information to the loved ones of the incarcerated and is paired with face-to-face visits between incarcerated person and family members. The second element, Law Enforcement Training and Education, helps to educate Austin Police Department Officers and AISD Resource Officers and helps humanize people with mental illness, with the goal of better outcomes in interactions with people in the midst of a mental health crisis.	In Travis County, 30% of inmates live with a mental illness. In 10 years, the number of inmates in Travis County with mental illness has increased from 250/month to 650/month, but this only includes the inmates that have mental health conditions obvious to or reported to jailers. As a snapshot, 2398 people reside in Travis County jail system. 33% are African American, 34% Hispanic and 1% Asian-Pacific Islander. While women make up only 23% of Travis County inmates, 30% of inmates with mental illness are female. As many mental illnesses first manifest in the teen years, the inclusion of AISD resource Officers is ground-breaking	Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Health and Environment, Safety, Government that Works for All	\$10,000
Black Mama's Community Collective	The Black Mamas Community Collective seeks to improve postpartum access and outcomes, from unpacking the systematic, groundwater analysis of institutional racism in our healthcare system, facilitating community-wide discussions to elicit input, ideas and strategies on a community, health, organizational and policy level to keep Black women from dying, cultivating a pipeline of Black healthcare professionals, to providing an afro-centric home visiting program and Sister Circles from Dona Certified Sister Doulas.	Black women bear the burden of disparate partpartum access and underutilization of healthcare and as a consequence experience pregnancy-related death rates 2.3 times as often compared to Non-Hispanic White Women. Poor maternal health, can result from social determinants of health intimating a cumulative impact on Black women's bodies before, during, and after pregnancy.	Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Mobility, Health and Environment, Culture and Lifelong Learning, Safety, Government that Works for All	\$10,000
Texas Legal Services and People's Community Clinic	This project will address health-related legal needs of transgender (trans) Central Texasns, building upon the success and complementing the structure of the Austin Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP). The project will involve: 1) creating a patient-friendly booklet with guidance on healthcare issues affecting the trans community, 2) recruiting a paid legal intern to assist with policy research, and 3) creating guidance videos to synchronize with medical appointments related to gender-affirming care.	Nearly one in three transgender persons lives in poverty. Almost seventy percent do not have their preferred name and gender on any form of identification, and of those with an ID, one-third have been adversely affected by inaccuracies. A quarter of trans persons experiences insurance problems, with more than half denied coverage for gender-affirming surgery. Further, discrimination in all sectors of society makes transgender people disproportionately vulnerable to depression, suicidality, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse disorders, physical and sexual victimization, and HIV infection.	Health and Environment, Government that Works for All	\$10,000

Hand to Hold	<p>Hand to Hold seeks funding to establish a NICU Graduate Parent Program serving three Austin-area hospitals to transform the delivery of mental health service by providing a continuum of care for NICU families beyond the hospital doors. This new program will empower NICU families to be confident caregivers in order to ensure best outcomes for their children.</p>	<p>The preterm birth rate in Texas among Black women is 41% higher than the rate among all other women. Mothers of preterm babies are 40 percent more likely to develop PPD and are at risk for long-lasting mental health challenges including anxiety disorders, depression, and PTSD. Texas also has the highest maternal mortality rate in the nation with Black women representing 29 percent of maternal deaths. Of the NICU parents Hand to Hold served in 2017, approximately 350 were women of color, 67% were on Medicaid, 49.3% graduated high school or had some high school education, and 59.7% spoke a language other than English at home</p>	Health and Environment	\$10,000
The Kitchen Diva Health Outreach	<p>Since 2010, the Kitchen Diva team has hosted Lunch and Learn events at the Carver Museum and Cultural Center to promote the Museum, present culinary-history themed events centered around the exhibits at the Museum, celebrate African-American and Texas cultural holidays using food as a bridge to unite our guests, provide employment to the parents who live in City of Austin/HUD/Booker T. Washington housing units who graduate the culinary training program, and unite a community that has become divided by race, economic status, entitlement, and gentrification.</p>	<p>There are many inequalities and a lot of ignorance about non-whites and East Austin. Some of these challenges are a reflection of the inherent racism in our society, others are because there's a lack of knowledge about the history of our community, and the final factor is because of the explosive population growth in our City that brings with it a land grab and new residents that have little understanding or respect for our culture and history. Our purpose in the programs is to use food, history, and culture to dispel some of the inherent racist views held by long-time Austin residents and those who are new to the Community.</p>	Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Health and Environment, Culture and Lifelong Learning, Government that Works for All	\$10,000
Austin Community Design and Development Center	<p>The ACDDC proposes the formation of a Right to Remain Resource Center that provides a solutions-driven space to bridge the gap between resident-identified community needs and resources available that can address them. The center will provide a connecting space where community members, infrastructure managers, researcher, and public and private institutions can co-create targeted action plans and services that directly address community-identified needs. The seeds of the solutions-driven community center have already taken hold in the Montopolis neighborhood. Montopolis is widely recognized as an Austin neighborhood at high risk for displacement of long-time, low-income residents. It was identified by both the Urban Institute's "Austin and the State of Low-and-Middle-Income Housing, report, and the University of Texas' "Uprooted" study as being at highest risk in the City of Austin.</p>	<p>Most presume that all neighborhoods in a city receive equal distribution of services. In reality, patterns of infrastructure distribution reflect municipal income generated through taxation and sociopolitical power: rich neighborhoods get more parks, better schools, and smoother streets while poor ones get more garbage, bad schools, and police scrutiny. These patterns are defined through racial lines, with people of color generally experiencing greater vulnerability and lower quality of life. This holds true for Montopolis, a predominantly LatinX and low-income neighborhood.</p>	Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Health and Environment, Safety, Government that Works for All	\$10,000

Youth Unlimited	Youth Unlimited will empower and provide primarily At-Risk Students via a Group Motivational Mentoring program the necessary tools to build esteem and confidence, develop positive peer relationships, and incorporate team concepts in every aspect of their lives, to include but not limited to: improved grades, decreased behavioral issues, and increased positive force in society.	Almost one-fourth of Travis County children live in poverty (24%), and for children under the age of 5, the rate is even higher (27%). The local poverty rates for LatinX (27%) and African-American (22%) residents are also higher than the rate overall. The percentage of Black and LatinX people living in poverty is also higher in the eastern Travis County area, particularly in Del Valle.	Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Culture and Lifelong Learning	\$10,000
Educators in Solidarity	Educators in Solidarity is hosting an UnConference, organized by members volunteering their expertise rather than a traditional conference where we determine who the keynote speaker is and the content of the breakout sessions. This UnConference will focus on cultural proficiency in our schools and districts. We will look at data in Austin ISD schools showing a need for ongoing professional development and training for teachers that address implicit bias, racial identity, culturally responsive teaching, and family engagement.	This project will use data to look at inequitable systems and practices that currently exist in schools. At our UnConference, Educators in Solidarity will look at test scores, graduation rates, college readiness and hiring practices through an equity lens. Speakers at the UnConference will share their own experiences with culturally responsive teaching and equity focused practices with a larger audience.	Culture and Lifelong Learning	\$2,000
Perez Elementary	The purpose of this project is to create a reading group for Spanish-speaking parents of school-aged children during the school day at L.Cpl. Nicholas S. Perez Elementary in Southeast Austin. During the previous school year, using my own funds, I implemented a reading group for parents in which we would read and annotate a book together that parents would then take home and read with their children. I am seeking to be able to expand this program at Perez Elementary to include up to 20 parents, provide all participants several books, and develop a plan that could potentially be shared with other elementary sites to implement a similar program.	There is a significant issue of underrepresentation of Latinos in children's literature. By providing only books that focus on the diverse experience of Latinos and Spanish-speaking families, these parents were able to show their children that they can find themselves in literature and connect deeply to characters. By providing the materials in Spanish, Spanish-speaking parents were able to fully engage with their children's literary experiences. Several themes we found in the literature helped the parents share aspects of their own lived experiences with their children.	Culture and Lifelong Learning	\$1,755
North Shoal Creek Community Garden	The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association recently completed construction of the North Shoal Creek Community Garden. The garden currently has 22 raised garden beds, 19 are available to any resident while 3 are reserved for engagement with Pillow Elementary students. The garden has been successful in bringing neighbors together. However, our garden is lacking in accessibility. We propose building two or three new garden beds to ensure the garden is accessible to any and every one who wants to be a part of our community garden.	Our garden already embodies the idea that any person in our community should have the opportunity to engage in the neighborhood in ways that are positive, encouraging, healthy, and friendly. We partner with Pillow Elementary so students from all different backgrounds can learn about all the benefits gardens provide. Further, our garden provides accessibility in many ways- we have successfully partnered neighbors to assist each other in caring for a plot, and the walkway leading up to the garden, perimeter of around the beds, and front and back gates create accessibility.	Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Health and Environment, Culture and Lifelong Learning, Government that Works for All	\$745



THE CITY OF AUSTIN  
EQUITY OFFICE  
AND  
MAYOR STEVE ADLER  
CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO THE

*Equity Grant Awards  
&  
Recognition Ceremony*

**Wednesday, April 24, 2019**

**10:00 am to Noon**

**City Hall Boards & Commissions Room, #1101**

**301 West 2nd Street**

**Austin, Texas 78701**

