



Legislation Text

File #: 11547, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

Funding of \$14,225 is available in a segregated fund, SG55. This Resolution proposes the expenditure of \$9,700 of this funding. Expenditures from this fund must be approved by the Common Council.

Title

Authorizing the Equal Opportunities Division of the Department of Civil Rights to expend funds held in reserve from unspent funds from previous contracts with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Body

WHEREAS, the Equal Opportunities Division of the Department of Civil Rights contracts annually with the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and previously accrued unspent revenue from these contracts; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council adopted a resolution directing that the Division must receive Common Council authorization to expend these funds; and

WHEREAS, said resolution requires that these funds be utilized for agency outreach efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Equal Opportunities Division is authorized to expend \$9,700 of the \$14,000 in the EEOC reserved fund for the following:

\$1,200 for brochure reproduction, additional outreach boxes, and other materials used for outreach efforts;

\$1,500 to financially support the upcoming Racial Justice Summit sponsored by the YWCA and Seeking Truth and Justice Over Hate;

\$6,000 for additional training of Division investigative staff;

\$1,000 for postal costs in 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that these funds must be expended by December 31, 2009 and any unspent funds will be retained in the reserve account for future outreach efforts of the Equal Opportunities Division as authorized by the Common Council via resolution.

DRAFTER'S EXPLANATORY NOTES:

BROCHURE REPRODUCTION: Over the past two years, the Equal Opportunities Division of the Department of Civil Rights has increased its education and outreach to individuals, organizations and businesses. This has increased use of training materials and brochures. The Division currently has brochures that deal with the Equal Opportunities Ordinance and related DCR ordinances, the protected classes and its processes. The Division believes in trying to educate before regulating. As a result of these outreach efforts, individuals who file complaints with the Division are better educated and understand the differences between bad management and discrimination; agencies are better prepared to refer individuals with discrimination complaints; and more complainants and respondents understand their rights and responsibilities. Currently, the agency has outreach boxes in 75 locations in the city. Replenishing these boxes, as well as, providing targeted outreach to direct service providers has increased the demand for printed resources. With the increased emphasis on education and outreach, costs for reproduction have increased significantly.

HATE CRIMES SUMMIT: Hate crimes have become more prominent in our community. Local newspapers have had numerous articles on hate crimes, which included anti-Semitic and race-related crimes, crimes against teens and crimes targeting the gay/lesbian community. Equal Opportunities Division staff members are active members on the local task force, Seeking Truth and Justice Over Hate (STAJOH), which aims to combat hate crimes in Madison and Wisconsin. This involvement is important because hate crimes are often confronted from a law enforcement perspective only with an emphasis on solving and prosecuting a particular crime. However, hate crimes in a community usually indicate an underlying tension that may manifest itself through forms of discrimination in the areas of employment, housing or the use and enjoyment of public places of accommodation. On October 16-17, 2008, the YWCA and STAJOH will be hosting a Racial Summit to address race disparities in the criminal justice system. Financial support is needed to carry out this summit.

TRAINING FOR INVESTIGATIVE STAFF: Federal laws in the Equal and Civil Rights areas are frequently changing. In an effort to become familiar with the changes and how they affect Madison residents, organizations and businesses, the staff needs to attend various trainings both locally and nationally. The amount requested would include training costs and related travel expenses. Examples of training that the staff needs to have range from "Understanding Coded Prejudices" to "Understanding the New ADA" to "Recent Developments on Race and National Origin Discrimination".

2008 has been a year filled with many ADA changes. Congress has been working on and is expected to pass, vast changes to the ADA; which will expand the scope of the ADA's coverage and have new requirements of respondents. As you are perhaps aware, the courts have significantly defined, redefined and provided new interpretations on ADA law. In order for the staff to be most effective, they must know and understand the laws.

POSTAGE: Postal costs have risen. To allow us to continue to mail documents and other materials that we are required to send via the postal system, we are asking for \$1,000 to be used in 2009 for our postal cost increases. Some documents are required to be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested and our costs have risen to \$6.10 for these documents.