



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

PROGRAM ALLOCATION FOR BUDGETED FY 2022 EQUITY AND INCLUSION SPECIAL PURPOSE FUNDS

WHEREAS, in October 2021, the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed Resolution No. 21-5542 creating a special purpose fund for Equity and Inclusion (“Equity Fund”) dedicated to addressing historical disparities and disinvestment communities that are marginalized or have experienced other social and economic disparities; and

WHEREAS, seeding money for equity investment in fixed charges as well as directly to the Cook County Health and Hospitals System was an important step taken by Cook County to address racial disparities and build on the Cook County Policy Roadmap commitment to advancing equitable policies and addressing systemic disparities; and

WHEREAS, Cook County incorporated the initial FY 2021 \$40M Equity Fund investment into the FY 2022 Budget and an additional \$10M from the County’s surplus fund balance from the end of FY21 has been allocated in the County’s fixed charges for transfer into the Equity Fund; and

WHEREAS, the remaining Equity Funds are budgeted and allocated in the FY 2022 Budget; and

WHEREAS, through the Equity Fund, intentional investments from government resources are allocated to address historical and continued disparities and disinvestment, particularly in Black and Latine (as defined in the Equity Report) communities, and to bring advocates, service providers, and other partners to the table as thought partners and decision-makers; and

WHEREAS, the vision behind the Equity Fund was to create safe, healthy, and thriving communities in Cook County by reimagining and transforming systems around justice, public safety, health, housing, economic opportunity, community development, and social services to benefit Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities and proactively invest resources in solutions and supports to achieve equitable outcomes; and

WHEREAS, efforts have been undertaken with various Cook County departments to determine the spending and program allocation for \$50M of the budgeted FY 2022 Equity Funds addressed herein; and

WHEREAS, guiding principles to determine allocation of funding included aligning programs with the *Cook County Policy Roadmap* to promote coordination and ease of implementation; center equity to address the structural barriers, systems, policies, and practices that harm Cook County’s most marginalized residents; advancing a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to government resource allocation; avoiding duplication of resources and leverage existing efforts and infrastructure where possible; and allocating future savings generated from policy changes and operational reforms back to community investments.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOVLED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners supports the spending plan and use of \$50M in Equity Funds for the following programs and in the following amounts:

1. The Bureau of Economic Development (“BED”) led program “Transforming Places” (Place-Based Pilot) will identify high vulnerability communities and co-design a process to meet community-defined needs for economic development, community building, community safety, public health, education or social services. Cook County will

support participating communities over a sustained period to ensure implementation and capacity-building and help attract additional public, private, and philanthropic resources. The Equity Fund allocation of up to \$15M will support partnering with United Way of Metro Chicago as a grant recipient and program administrator to work with BED identified Community areas.

2. Equity in Grantmaking/Capacity Building let by BED and the Office of the President will allow for the development of a comprehensive equity-centered grantmaking strategy to promote equitable access to resources for community-based organizations and provides for increased capacity to deliver services in partnership with smaller, grassroots, emerging, and BIPOC-led organizations anchored in marginalized communities. Up to \$10M in Equity funds will be allocated to cover consultancy for planning and implementing best practices. The primary use of funds will be administered through a competitive grant process for eligible community-based organizations.

3. Up to \$2M in Equity Funds will be allocated for Cannabis Business development under the leadership of BED. The Equity Funds will support cannabis-related businesses owned and operated by Social Equity applicants, in Cook County. BED will use the funds to promote, facilitate, and assist social equity programs related to the cannabis industry, economic development, and restorative programs aimed at improving disproportionately impacted areas throughout Cook County. The allocated funds will support the administrative costs associated with establishing the Cannabis Business Development Program. The remaining allocated funds will be distributed by BED through a competitive grant process for eligible social equity applicants.

4. The Cook County Landbank Authority will be allocated up to \$5M in Equity Funds to support the administrative and operational costs of their work to increase affordable housing stock and economic opportunity in systematically disadvantaged communities.

5. Up to \$10M in Equity Funds will be allocated to BED to support the development of a Community Information Exchange (CIE) for suburban Cook County and the City of Chicago to enhance the 211 system already being collaboratively developed by Cook County, the City of Chicago and a range of partners. The allocation will support the selection of a Program Administrator and the development of the selected technology platform.

6. The remaining \$3M reserve in the Equity Fund of the \$50M addressed herein may be used to support other priorities identified above or further addressed in the Equity Fund Taskforce Report. The Offices Under the President will provide advance notice to the Cook County Board of Commissioners regarding any allocation of the \$3M reserve.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Budget Director and Comptroller shall be authorized to execute the \$10M transfer from the County's fixed charges account to the Equity Fund which originated from the County's surplus fund balance from the end of FY21; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Budget Director and Comptroller shall be authorized to execute any additional budgetary transfers or chargebacks to effectuate these programs and the spending plan provided herein; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Budget Director and Comptroller shall provide financial updates on the Equity Fund as part of the monthly Revenue and Expense report provided to the Cook County Board of Commissioners Finance Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board will hold a hearing annually to get an update on the progress of the programs authorized under this resolution. An Equity Fund report will also be published in December of each year and made available to the Commissioners and members of the public.