

Update on the City of Austin's Equity Office

*Presentation to
Council Health & Human Services Committee
March 9, 2016*



Background

- **City Manager was directed to create an Equity Office**
- **\$183,000 in funding allocated from Fiscal Year 2016 budget**
- **Project team appointed to research and assess equity practices in other cities**
- **Team attended 2015 Equity Summit in Los Angeles**
- **Team developed a methodology for assessing peer city information**

Methodology

- **Surveyed top-25 populated cities in the U.S.**
- **Searched their websites, organization charts and publications.**
- **Did a broader Internet search to capture data from cities not in the top-25 in population.**
- **Selected the most promising offices and interviewed them via phone or e-mail.**

Peer City Findings

- Fully developed equity offices are rare.
- There are only about 4 top-tier, city-based equity offices: **Seattle, Portland, Washington D.C., and Toronto.**
- Equity offices are beginning to spread, with **Boston, Minneapolis, Tacoma, and San Antonio** all creating equity offices in the past year, and **Oakland** in the process of creating one.
- Existing offices tend to report directly to the City Manager.

Existing Offices/Overview

| City | Title | Date the Office Was Created | Staff | Budget | Advisory | Complaint Processing | Internal Equity | Education / Training | Community Engagement | Online Reports |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|-------|------------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Washington D.C. | Office of Human Rights | 1977 | 30-40 | \$4,100,000 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Seattle | Seattle Office for Civil Rights | 2004 | 8 | \$3,000,000 | Yes | Yes | yes | yes | yes | Yes |
| Toronto | Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division | 2010 | 15 | \$1,600,000 (Canadian) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Portland | Office of Equity and Human Rights | 2011 | 10 | \$1,200,000 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| San Antonio | Diversity and Inclusion Office | 2015 | 2 | \$109,000 | No | Yes | No | Yes | Developing strategy | No |
| Los Angeles | Human Relations Commission | 1967 | 5 | \$800,000 | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Salt Lake City | Office of Diversity & Human Rights | 2008 | 2 | | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Mesa | Diversity Office | 2000 | 2 | | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| San Francisco | Human Rights Commission | 1964 | 10 | \$1,975,878 | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |

City Consultants

The Hawkins Company

- Will work with Human Resources Dept. to conduct Chief Equity Officer recruitment.
- Extensive experience hiring talent related to diversity and equity issues in the U.S.

Government Alliance for Race & Equity (GARE)

- Is a national network of public sector entities working to advance equity at local government level.
- Represents over 100 jurisdictions in 30 states.

Creation of Equity Office

- **Current work is being done on 2 parallel tracks:**
 - **Recruitment of Chief Equity Officer**
 - **Engagement with Government Alliance for Race & Equity to perform an equity assessment of the City of Austin:**
 - ❖ Inventory the City's current equity practices and identify gaps;
 - ❖ deliverables will include collaborating with local experts on a community engagement strategy; and
 - ❖ advising on implementation of a citywide internal equity tool.

Equity Officer Recruitment

Timeline

- March** Kick-off of recruitment process; key stakeholder meetings.
- April** Town hall meeting to collect feedback on Equity Officer recruitment.
- Late April** Finalize job profile and advertise position.
- May** Pre-screening of job candidates.
- June** Candidates selected for interviews.
- Late June** Final candidate selected.

Equity Assessment

Timeline

- Early April** Create internal Equity Core Teams in each COA department.
- Early April** Equity workshops with City leaders and staff.
- Mid-April** Town hall meeting to collect feedback on Equity Office.
- May** Analyze employee understanding of equity via survey tool.
- June** Consultant will submit draft recommendations outlining “quick wins” and longer term strategies.
- Mid-June** Gather feedback and integrate into final report.

Community Engagement

- **Key to the success of the Equity Office.**
- **Identification of community stakeholders important.**
- **Multiple ways for the public to be involved.**
- **Goal is to create an office tailored for Austin.**

Equity tool?

- **Simple set of questions.**
- **Aimed at reducing inequities and improving access for all groups.**
- **Provides a structure for institutionalizing the consideration of equity.**
- **Goal is to customize a tool for Austin.**

Questions?

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Equity Tool

1. Is the policy, program or budget decision under consideration clearly defined?

- ❖ What are the intended results (in the community) and outcomes (within your organization)?
- ❖ What does this proposal have an ability to impact?

2. What does the data say?

- ❖ Will the proposal have impacts in specific geographic areas? What are the demographics of those living in the area?

Equity Tool – (cont.)

3. How have communities been engaged?

- ❖ Who are the most affected community members? Have they been involved in the development of a proposal?

4. What are the strategies for advancing equity or mitigating unintended consequences?

5. How will the proposal ensure accountability and evaluate results?

- ❖ Will the proposal have impacts in specific geographic areas? What are the demographics of those living in the area?