

2021-2022 Budget Preparation - Regular Additional Service Request

Non-Departmental

ASR # 2021- 6403	Fund 1	Cost Cente	Originator: Tawni Helms
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Expenditure Type: One-Time **Add'l FTE** **Add'l Space** **Priority 1**

Name of Request: Racial Equity Commission-Administrative Support

Costs:	Object	Object Description	2021 Requested	2021 Approved	2022 Requested	2022 Approved
	4337.0701	Bellingham	(\$65,000)	(\$65,000)	\$0	\$0
	6610	Contractual Services	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$0	\$0
	Totals		\$65,000	\$65,000	\$0	\$0

1. Description of Request:

a) Describe the proposed activity or service, and indicate whether it is a higher or lower priority than existing services in your department budget.

We are requesting budget authority to create and support the function of a new Racial Equity Commission jointly with the City of Bellingham, and community partners. This ASR includes two activities: 1) to establish a joint Racial Equity Commission composed of BIPOC and social justice movement leaders as well as local government leaders to identify sources of racial inequality and develop strategies for addressing them; 2) to provide resources for the Commission’s activities and initiatives.

b) Who are the primary customers for this service?

The primary customers of this work are current and future residents of Whatcom County who, will, because of the work of this commission, be afforded equal opportunity to achieve success.

2. Describe the problem this request addresses and why Whatcom County needs to address it.

Race-based disparities are commonplace yet often overlooked. However, racial inequities become apparent upon any examination of the representation of racial minorities in leadership, number of displaced minority children, rates of generational poverty, food insecurity, high school completion, homelessness, maternal mortality, and even COVID-19 rates of infection, right here in Whatcom County.

These socioeconomic disparities are also contributing to inequality in our criminal justice system, where BIPOC community members are vastly overrepresented among Whatcom County’s incarcerated population.

3. Options

a) What other options have you considered? Why is this the best option?

One option would be to continue business as usual and continue to address only the symptoms of systemic racial inequities rather than their causes. However, this option comes at an expense to the community in terms of bearing the costs associated with socioeconomic disparities (poor health and educational outcomes, higher crime, etc.) and general community cohesion.

Broad community discussions were held throughout the summer of 2020 and consensus developed in support of a countywide Racial Equity Commission. Supported by multiple jurisdictions and community groups, the Commission would provide the most cost-effective and coherent approach to addressing racial inequity.

b) What are the specific cost savings? (Quantify)

Participation in a collaborative effort allows for cost sharing with other partners.

More equitable access to opportunity will improve socioeconomic outcomes for BIPOC community members and reduce future costs borne community-wide, such as social services, crime impacts and criminal justice system expenses, which today make up a large share of the County budget.

4. Outcomes / Objectives

a) What outcomes will be delivered and when?

Establishment of Racial Equity Commission
Operational outcomes

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Commission framework documents developed by March 2021

Membership established by April 2021

Commission finalizes framework documents and creates scope of work, including deliverables, by July 2021

Commission will provide annual report according to schedule stipulated in framework documents

b) How will you know whether the outcomes happened?

The Racial Equity Commission will include progress benchmarks in its workplan and report on their progress in the annual reports.

5. Other Departments/Agencies

a) Will this ASR impact other departments or agencies? If so, please identify the departments and/or agencies impacted and explain what the impact(s) will be.

General Fund

b) If another department or agency is responsible for part of the implementation, name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for.

Genera Fund and intergovernmental revenue

6. What is the funding source for this request?