

Inclusive Governance

Introduction

Through the FY 2021 Budget and Financial Plan budget, the Council continues its efforts to promote inclusive governance by increasing accountability and trust in government institutions. The Council makes investments and advances legislation that will ensure that the District government is responsive to the needs of all of our diverse communities. The Council's \$5.1 million in enhancements promote equity; celebrate D.C. music and culture; increase transparency of political campaigns; and lower barriers to voting. These investments include the enhancements highlighted in the [table](#) below.

Inclusive Governance Budget Highlights

	MAYOR'S FY21 PROPOSED BUDGET	COUNCIL'S FY21 ENHANCEMENTS	APPROVED FY21 BUDGET
GO-GO MUSIC AND CULTURE*	\$0	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
REACH ACT	\$0	\$1,416,000	\$1,416,000
CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM	\$0	\$466,000	\$466,000
PAID LEAVE TO VOTE	\$0	\$60,000	\$60,000

***AUTHORIZES EVENTS DC TO REDIRECT \$1M OF EXISTING BUDGET AUTHORITY IF FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE.**

Equity in Government Operations

All levels of U.S. government have a history of enacting and enforcing laws that directly or indirectly led to the disenfranchisement of Americans of color and create or reinforce gaping racial disparities. These bodies instituted and supported an inequitable system so they must be responsible for dismantling it from within. The Council allocates [\\$1.42 million and 10 FTEs to fund the "Racial Equity Achieves Real Change Amendment Act of 2020,"](#) which is also known as the REACH Act.¹ The enhancement includes \$978,200 and 6 FTEs to the Office of the City Administrator (OCA); \$329,475 and 3 FTEs to the Council; and \$108,075 and 1 FTE to Office of Human Rights (OHR). As introduced, the legislation requires that the District government provide racial equity training to District employees, develop a racial equity tool, and include racial equity performance measures in agencies' annual performance plans.²

The Council invests \$1.42 million and 10 FTEs to fund the "Racial Equity Achieves Real Change Amendment Act of 2020"

D.C. will join hundreds of jurisdictions in working towards racial equity in government policy and dismantling the racist structures both within and without the political system. To support the work of the REACH Act, the Council allocates [\\$500,000 in the capital budget for the development of a racial equity tool, infrastructure system, and dashboard to track racial disparities in the District.](#) The dashboard will also track and measure how program and policy decisions benefit or burden individuals based on race, sex, or ethnicity. A racial equity tool is used to integrate consideration of racial equity into decision making, including government budgets, legislation, policies, and programs.

The Council also directs \$5,000 for implicit bias training for Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and provides \$10,000 for the Racial Equity Training and Support Grant. Increasing racial equity is a tide that raises all boats, so all D.C. residents and all Americans should demand their government be responsive and accountable on this issue.

Despite growing global awareness of the struggles that individuals who are transgender or non-binary face, many workplaces are ill equipped to create policies and workplace cultures that support non-gender conforming employees. A study from 2015 found that 77 percent of trans individuals who worked in the U.S. took active steps to avoid mistreatment at work, such as hiding their gender identity, delaying their gender transition, or not asking their employers to use their correct pronouns.³ To ensure that all District employees are supported regardless of their gender identity, the Council provides \$150,000 to the D.C. Department of Human Resources (DCHR) to survey transgender and non-binary District government employees' about their workplace experiences and gather information about District government's hiring and recruitment practices as they relate to individuals who identify as transgender or non-binary.⁴

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District Cultural and Community Development

Go-Go music originated in D.C. in the mid-1970s with native son Chuck Brown. Within a decade, the District was home to dozens of Go-Go bands. The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History credits Mayor Marion Barry's role in fostering the genre's rise by supporting the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation's free Go-Go concerts and encouraging budding musicians through the Summer Youth Employment Program. However, by the late 1980s this distinctly African American music was under attack, and Go-Go was scapegoated for street violence and other social ills. Go-Go became a flashpoint again in 2019, this time in the debate over gentrification and the displacement of long-time Black residents and Black cultural institutions from the District. A dispute between a resident of a newly constructed mixed-use building and a store owner about Go-Go music sparked a protest movement that gave rise to a discussion about the place of Go-Go in the fabric and history of the District.⁵ As a result, the Council passed the "Go-Go Official Music Designation Act of 2020," which recognized the importance of Go-Go's cultural contributions.⁶ The legislation continued the Council's work of ensuring that the sounds of Go-Go continue to fill our streets, music halls, and airwaves for generations to come.⁷

Through the FY 2021 budget, the Council invests \$3 million to ensure that Go-Go's legacy is preserved, honored, and that its future is secured. These funds are more important now than ever, as musicians and music venues suffer disproportionately from COVID-19 public health closures. The Council's investment includes \$1 million to the D.C. Public Library for the creation of a Go-Go archives; \$1 million to the Office of Cable, Television, Film, Music & Entertainment (OCTFME) for a Go-Go Creative Economy and Anchor to

The Council invests \$3 million to honor and support Go-Go Music and Culture

coordinate and advance Go-Go activities across the District; and authorizes Events DC to spend \$1 million from its reserves to provide grants to support Go-Go music under the "Events DC Go-Go Grant Making Authority Amendment Act of 2020."⁸

Due to historic mistreatment by all levels of government, many persons of color distrust government entities and their associated work.⁹ About 75 percent of Black Americans do not trust their state level government to do what is considered right just about always or most of the time and around 40 percent feel that government bodies at all levels are a threat to their personal rights and freedoms.¹⁰ To help governments reach these communities and foster trust, some have developed specific government commissions or agencies. These entities go into and interact with the communities, promote their development, and become a bridge between the community and the government. The Council continues to support these communities by providing \$192,000 to establish the Mayor's Office of Caribbean Affairs and \$50,000 for competitive grants at the Mayor's Office on African American Affairs.¹¹

Elections and Ethics

The Council believes that a government that listens to all residents is more inclusive and better equipped to make just and equitable policy decisions. Trust in electoral systems has been continually tested over the past few years and the Council understands how vital it is that residents trust in their government bodies both federal and local. To continue to improve and foster that trust the Council dedicates \$466,535 and 4 FTEs to implement the "Campaign Finance Reform Amendment Act of 2020" to establish a Campaign Finance Board, allow for the issuance of Board of Elections advisory opinions, set new contribution limits and reporting requirements, and create new rules for finance committees.¹² This enhancement includes \$392,535 and 3 FTEs to the Office of Campaign Finance and \$74,000 and 1 FTE to the Board of Elections.

The Council also directs \$175,541 and 1 FTE to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to allow the agency to hire a public anti-corruption attorney to enforce the District's government ethics laws. The Council also provides \$108,612 and 1 FTE to the D.C. Board of Ethics and Government Accountability (BEGA) to enforce the "Open Meetings Act" (D.C. Official Code §§ 2-571 to 2-580).

There is a long and troubling history of disenfranchising persons of color in the U.S. low-income individuals have difficulty voting for many reasons, one of which is limited voting hours.¹³ In this year's budget, the Council supports the enfranchisement of D.C. residents by providing \$60,000 and 1 FTE to the Board of Elections to implement the "Leave to Vote Amendment Act of 2020," which requires employers to provide employees with at least two hours of paid leave so that they may vote in person.¹⁴

Endnotes

- 1 Racial Equity Achieves Real Change Amendment Act of 2020," as introduced on January 8, 2019 (Bill 23-38).
- 2 The bill received a sequential referral; it was marked up by the Committee on Government Operations on July 15, and it is expected to move through the Committee of the Whole this fall.
- 3 (Thoroughgood, Sawyer, & Webster, 2020)
- 4 "District Government Transgender and Non-Binary Employment Study Act of 2020," as approved by the Committee of the Whole on July 28, 2020 (Enrolled Version of Bill 23-760).
- 5 (Committee of the Whole, 2019; Reynolds & Zimmerman, 2015; Wartofsky, 2019)
- 6 Go-Go Official Music Designation Act of 2020, effective April 11, 2020, (D.C. Law 23-71; 67 DCR 2096)
- 7 In 2009, the Council designated part of 7th Street, NW as "Chuck Brown Way;" in 2012 it designated a section of Langdon Park as "Chuck Brown Park;" and in 2016 it designated the 2300 block of 4th Street, N.E. the Maverick Club, a historic go-go venue. "Duke Ellington Way; Chuck Brown Way, and Cathy Hughes Way at the Howard Theater Designation Act of 2008," effective March 21, 2009 (D.C. Law 17-329; 56 DCR 664); "Chuck Brown Park Designation Act of 2012," effective April 20, 2013 (D.C. Law 19-259; 60 DCR 1082); "Chuck Brown Memorial Commemorative Work Emergency Act of 2014," enacted August 15, 2014 (D.C. Act 20-414); "Maverick Room Way Designation Act of 2015," effective May 12, 2016, (D.C. Law 21-114; 63 DCR 4614).
- 8 "Events DC Go-Go Grant Making Authority Amendment Act of 2020," as approved by the Committee of the Whole on July 28, 2020 (Enrolled Version of Bill 23-760).
- 9 (Esmonde, 2020; Mangum, 2016; Nunnally, 2012)
- 10 (NPR, Kaiser Family Foundation, & Harvard University, 2013)
- 11 "Office of Caribbean Affairs Establishment Act of 2020," effective May 6, 2020 (D.C. Law 23-807; 67 DCR 3534).
- 12 "Campaign Finance Reform Amendment Act of 2018," effective March 13, 2019 (D.C. Law 22-250; 66 DCR 3229).
- 13 (Root & Kennedy, 2018)
- 14 "Leave to Vote Amendment Act of 2020," effective June 24, 2020 (D.C. Law 23-110; 67 DCR 5057).

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