

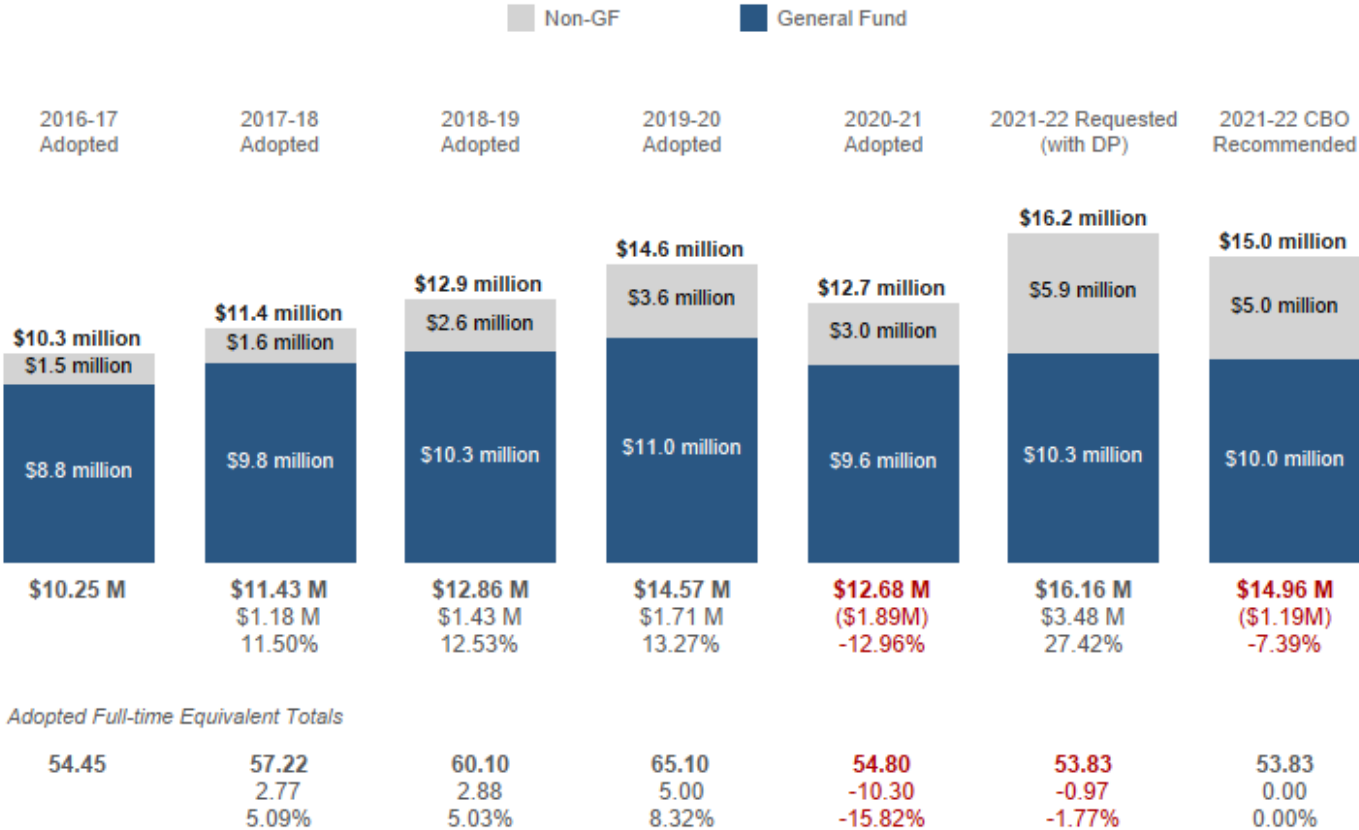


City Budget Office

Office of Community and Civic Life

Analysis by Angela Butel

Adopted Budget Revenues | 5-Year Lookback



INTRODUCTION

The Office of Community and Civic Life (Civic Life) seeks to promote a culture of civic engagement by connecting and supporting all Portlanders working together and with government to build inclusive, safe and livable neighborhoods and communities. In recent years, the bureau has made budgetary realignments in pursuit of this mission, working to expand the range of community groups with which the bureau interfaces and building out bureau capacity in areas such as data and technology. Civic Life’s FY 2021-22 Requested Budget includes a number of requests that aim to continue moving Civic Life in this strategic direction. CBO’s review:

- Recognizes the 5% General Fund reduction as required by the Mayor’s budget guidance.

- Partially recommends adding back General Fund resources in anticipation of increasing rent costs for the East Portland Community Office.
- Does not recommend \$251,681 in ongoing General Fund resources to support the Constructing Civic Dialogues program.
- Recommends \$530,240 in General Fund one-time support for the Graffiti Program in light of a dramatic increase in demand for these services over the past year.

BASE BUDGET & KEY ISSUES

Budgeting to Bureau Strategic Priorities

Beginning with the FY 2018-19 budget, along with the transition from “Office of Neighborhood Involvement” to “Office of Community and Civic Life,” Civic Life introduced a new set of long-term bureau goals. Whereas the previous goals focused largely on helping communities more easily engage with government—by increasing volunteer involvement in communities and neighborhoods, focusing community and neighborhood engagement through traditional public involvement, and providing accurate information to community members—the new goals focus more on transforming government to be more accountable to the civic leadership and priorities of communities.

Over the past several years, Civic Life has taken steps to align the bureau’s budget with this strategic vision, successfully reprioritizing resources within their existing budget. The bureau has realigned existing positions to re-establish a management structure in the bureau, add capacity for bureau-wide administrative and technology needs, and increase support for the Multnomah Youth Commission and the Immigrant & Refugee Program. Other steps have included grouping four one-person programs into the Adapt to Impact program and establishing Communications as a stand-alone program offer with the goal of broadening the bureau’s reach and impact.

Select Civic Life Program Areas as Percent of Total Ongoing Budget			
Program Area	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
Administration*	7.7%	8.6%	7.6%
Communications	N/A	N/A	2.4%
Community Safety	13.3%	13.7%	14.1%
Livability Programs	14.8%	14.1%	15.5%
Constructing Civic Dialogues	2.4%	2.0%	2.1%
Community & Neighborhood Involvement	26.7%	25.2%	26.0%
Diversity in Civic Leadership	8.7%	7.6%	7.9%
Immigrant & Refugee	2.4%	1.8%	1.9%
Youth	1.2%	1.3%	2.0%
Adapt to Impact**	5.0%	5.8%	6.6%

Note: Includes ongoing General Fund resources, license/permit fees, annual interagency revenues. Does not include one-time general fund resources, carryover amounts, or cannabis tax resources. Percentages will not add up to 100% because this table does not reflect every program that existed in each fiscal year.

*Included Communications for FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20 **Existed as parts of other programs in FY 2018-19.

A look at the proportional size of different program areas within the bureau's base budget over time, as summarized in the table above, helps illustrate the results thus far of these efforts.¹ Some program areas, including Community Safety, Youth, and Adapt to Impact, have clearly represented an increasing percentage of the bureau's base budget over time. In other program areas, including Community & Neighborhood Involvement, grant programs such as Constructing Civic Dialogues and Diversity in Civic Leadership, and the Immigrant & Refugee Program, the proportion of the budget over the last three years has been more variable.

As Civic Life continues this work to align its budget with bureau priorities, CBO sees important opportunities related to the bureau's strategic goal of transforming government to be more inclusive, adaptive, and engaged with the communities it serves. As noted in several places in CBO's analysis below, the community-engaged perspective and expertise that Civic Life develops through its work has an important role to play in key Citywide conversations such as those around technology and civic engagement as well as around reimagining community safety.

Civic Life continues seeking opportunities to broaden its network of relationships with community-based organizations, as through the request for Constructing Civic Dialogues analyzed below. As it does, CBO encourages the bureau to also consider how the ongoing process of aligning budget to priorities can support drawing on those relationships of trust and reciprocity to ensure that decisions across the City are made with community needs and priorities in mind.

Bureau-Wide Data and Technology Investments

To fully realize the strategic vision discussed above, Civic Life has identified expanded bureau-wide data and technology capabilities as a key area for investment. In FY 2020-21 the bureau has begun the process of acquiring an updated software platform that will enable more streamlined licensing and compliance tracking, reporting, and data analysis, initially for the bureau's Cannabis Program and eventually across many of the bureau's programs. This software acquisition is in review with the Procurement Division and the Bureau of Technology Services, and Civic Life is currently recruiting for a Business Systems Analyst III position to lead the rollout of the platform. This project is currently on track and expected to be within budget.

The bureau has also identified data and technology needs in several other areas, including performance management. Civic Life is working on a comprehensive overhaul of its suite of performance measures, using the lens of Results-Based Accountability (RBA) to better align metrics to goals and seeking out new sources of data that allow for disaggregation by population, place, age, disability, immigrant/refugee status, income, and more. The bureau plans to fill two additional vacant positions in FY 2021-22 to increase capacity for this work. CBO has previously noted the need for greater consistency in data tracking and collection methodology for Civic Life's performance measures,² and is encouraged by this effort.

¹ Data in this table is based on a Civic Life base budget analysis that excludes one-time and carryover resources in order to consider trends in just the base budget funding for the bureau's different program areas.

² City Budget Office, FY 2020-21 Civic Life Budget Development Review, page 6.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/article/754853>

Civic Life has also been exploring opportunities at the intersection of technology and community engagement. Although a planned pilot with Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) of CitizenLab, a platform for digital community engagement, is not moving forward at this time due to PBOT capacity concerns, Civic Life is continuing to look for future opportunities to test this or other platforms. As it does, CBO recommends that the bureau continue to seek out opportunities for cross-bureau collaboration around data and technology. Many teams across the City are searching for, and seeking resources for, new ways of engaging the community—particularly under the challenging circumstances created by the pandemic. Similarly, many bureaus are seeking new solutions for tracking and analyzing performance data and might have things to share with and learn from Civic Life in this area. PBOT, for example, has recently created a bureau-wide data catalogue which could potentially be adapted to some of Civic Life’s needs. Collaboration on these sorts of efforts can help infuse Civic Life’s community-centered expertise into the systems the City builds for soliciting community input and tracking impacts of our work.

DECISION PACKAGES

Civic Life 5% Reduction Package

11369, (\$495,985), (1.00) FTE

Request Summary

Civic Life’s 5% reduction package is made up of a variety of reductions across the bureau, primarily to administrative operations, the Community Safety program, bureau support of District Coalition Offices, and Community Service Aide hours for several programs. The bureau anticipates most of these reductions having minimal or manageable impacts to bureau operations and service levels. Civic Life is requesting add-back realignments in two areas, discussed further in the decision package analyses below.

CBO Analysis

The components of Civic Life’s reduction package are:

- Community Safety Program position reduction (\$130,961) – This would eliminate 1.0 FTE vacant Supervisor I position in the Community Safety program.
- 5% reduction to District Coalition Offices (\$118,821) – Civic Life proposes to pass the 5% reduction on to each of the nonprofit and City-staffed District Coalition Offices.
- Elimination of Small Grants Program (\$103,384) – The Small Grants Program has historically provided a small pool of resources to each of the District Coalition Offices to grant out to neighborhood groups. Civic Life suspended the program on a one-time basis in FY 2020-21 and proposes to eliminate it as part of this reduction.
- Expense reductions (\$62,052) – The bureau proposes several cost-reduction measures, including redesigning Liquor Licensing mailings to reduce mailing and postage costs and eliminating second phone lines for 13 employees. This also includes reducing the overtime allocations for the Community Safety and Noise programs, which have generally not been

fully expended, and eliminating the bureau’s Special Projects budget line.

- Reduction of communications expenses (\$54,285) – The bureau proposes to reduce contracted services and outreach expenses for the bureau-wide Communications program as well as similar resources dedicated to the Community Safety program.
- Reduction of Community Service Aide (CSA) hours (\$25,485) – Civic Life proposes to reduce CSA hours in the Graffiti Program (for which there is a separate decision package that includes dedicated resources for a CSA position) and Adapt to Impact program.

When identifying these reduction options, the bureau sought to avoid reductions to programs focused on BIPOC, disability communities, youth, and immigrants and refugees, and prioritized reductions by program size—making larger reductions to larger programs.

Though the bureau has sought to minimize service-level impacts of this reduction, there are some potential service tradeoffs. The reduction of a vacant position in the Community Safety program reduces the program’s capacity at a time when it is undergoing significant transition. However, the bureau anticipates that as the program evolves, an existing Coordinator position could likely serve the supervisory needs of the program. The Small Grants Program has provided support to very small community organizations and initiatives that often have limited other sources of funding. However, as discussed in CBO’s [FY 2020-21 Fall BMP review](#), this program requires an outsize amount of administrative effort compared to the total amount of resources distributed.³ The bureau is evaluating more efficient models for providing this type of support. Reductions to District Coalition Offices will require the organizations to prioritize highest-impact activities and to increase collaboration with other Civic Life programs and with community partners.

For the reductions to communications efforts, the bureau notes that lack of investment in professional communications has negatively impacted the bureau’s effectiveness by limiting the reach of the bureau’s programs to communities already highly connected to the City. To expand the bureau’s relationships and impact in the ways outlined by the bureau’s strategic vision, Civic Life has identified investment in communications capacity as a key need. Managing this reduction will require Civic Life to eliminate some of the expanded outreach tactics it had planned to adopt.

Overall, the bureau has demonstrated thoughtful consideration of how it will manage these reductions, all of which seem viable.

Total Constraint: (\$495,985 ongoing) | (1.00) FTE

East Portland Community Office Add-Back Request

11416, \$66,400, 0.00 FTE

Request Summary

This request would add back the \$23,248 reduction to East Portland Community Office (EPCO) and also realign an additional \$43,152 from the bureau’s required reduction for a total add of

³ City Budget Office, FY 2020-21 Civic Life Fall BMP Review, page 2. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/article/767289>

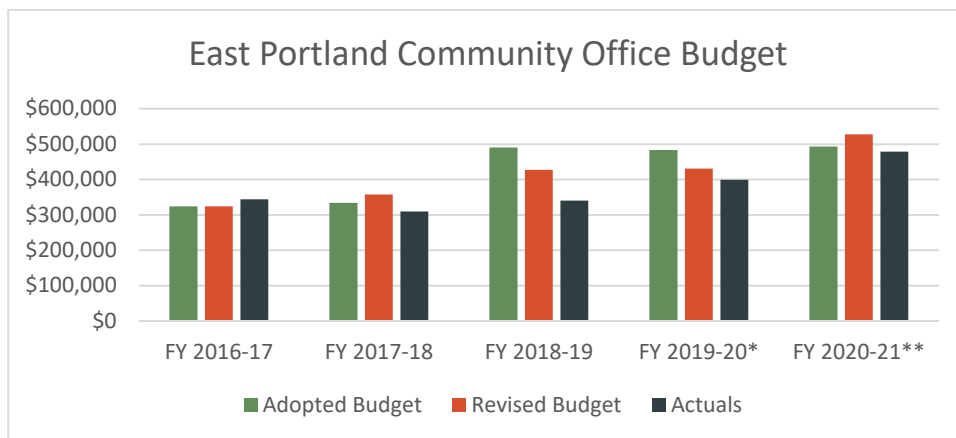
\$66,400 for EPCO. These resources would allow the organization to pursue opportunities to secure alternative office space in East Portland, as they need to move out of their current space at the Hazelwood Water Facility in the near future.

CBO Analysis

The East Portland Community Office is one of seven District Coalition Offices (DCOs), and one of the two DCOs which are City-staffed. EPCO supports neighborhood associations and other community groups in East Portland through community organizing and outreach, providing information about City and other services, providing technical assistance and capacity building, serving as a fiscal sponsor and providing liability insurance coverage, and providing access to free meeting space and event equipment.

In recent years, EPCO has rented office space at the Hazelwood Water Facility, a facility in East Portland owned and managed by the Portland Water Bureau. This facility requires significant maintenance to ensure safety and usability, and the Water Bureau needs EPCO to vacate the space so that it can make decisions about the long-term use of the facility. EPCO’s lease at the Hazelwood facility ends on June 30, 2021.

While located at Hazelwood, EPCO has paid less than the current market rental rates, at present covering only the cost of maintaining the facility. Though Civic Life has tried to identify another City-owned facility to which EPCO could relocate, options in East Portland are limited. Due to the likely need for EPCO to take on a commercial lease, this request represents the best current estimate of increased rent costs, based on a recently-identified potential opportunity with Plaza 122, a Community Investment Trust developed and launched by MercyCorps Northwest.⁴ This request does not include one-time costs for moving and tenant improvements, for which the bureau anticipates bringing forward a FY 2020-21 Spring BMP request for carryover resources.



*FY 2019-20 actuals include \$54,596 in grants encumbered and carried over into FY 2020-21.

**FY 2020-21 actuals are a CBO projection for current-year spending.

In FY 2018-19, Civic Life changed the funding model for District Coalitions, which resulted in an increase of more than \$150,000 to EPCO’s personnel budget compared to previous years, reducing the funding gap to East Portland from 3:1 to 2:1 among the district coalition offices. For

⁴ To learn more about Community Investment Trusts, see <http://www.investcit.com/Home/About>

the first two years after the change, the program had significant personnel savings due to staff vacancies during the recruitment process; for FY 2020-21, the office is fully staffed and projected actuals are much closer to budget. EPCO has tended to almost fully expend its discretionary external materials and services resources in each of the past five years.⁵ The extent to which a portion of the rent increase could be absorbed within the program's resources depends on the final difference in costs; however, it does seem likely that the cost increase would exceed any flexibility in EPCO's budget, particularly factoring in the 5% reduction.

CBO considered whether adding back the 5% reduction to only EPCO would create issues of imbalance between the DCOs. However, the FY 2018-19 change to the DCO funding model aimed to correct for historic disparities—stretching back at least 20 years—that left EPCO significantly underfunded compared to the other DCOs.⁶ Given these historic dynamics and that EPCO supports communities that are increasing both in total population and in concentration of communities of color,⁷ adding resources for increased rent costs (thus preserving more resources for EPCO's programming) seems in keeping with the spirit of the updated funding model.

Based on both financial and equity considerations, CBO recommends restoring the program's 5% reduction. CBO does not recommend allocating additional resources at this time as the actual rent cost difference is not yet known. CBO recommends that Civic Life continue moving forward with negotiations with Plaza 122 and keep Council apprised of this process as more information becomes available. CBO further recommends that the need for additional resources be revisited in a Fall BMP request as at that point the final cost difference will be confirmed.

CBO Recommendation: \$23,248 ongoing | \$0 one-time | 0.00 FTE

Expanding Support for Constructing Civic Dialogues

11391, \$251,681, 0.00 FTE

Request Summary

This request adds back \$251,681 from Civic Life's 5% reduction and realigns it to expand support for Constructing Civic Dialogues, a program that supports community partner organizations in providing training, education, and facilitation to community members on conflict resolution, problem solving, and nonviolent communication. These resources would allow community partners to deliver more of these services in FY 2021-22.

CBO Analysis

Civic Dialogues seeks to build community members' capacity for engaging in generative public

⁵ The one exception is FY 2018-19, when Civic Life restricted EMS spending to cover costs of some East Portland Action Plan contracts that were not encumbered in time to carry funding over from FY 2017-18.

⁶ Portland City Auditor, "Community and Neighborhood Involvement: Accountability limited, rules and funding model outdated." November 2016; page 17. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/auditservices/article/597834>

⁷ For more detail on demographic change in Portland, see: Portland Housing Bureau, "State of Housing in Portland: Part 1." December 2019. <https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/phb-soh-2019-web-part-01.pdf>

dialogue and constructive conflict with people of differing perspectives. The bureau envisions this as an upstream community-building and community safety effort, fostering the ability to engage in difficult conversations and resolve conflicts before the need for public safety intervention.

Community partners receive funding from Civic Life through a competitive grant process to carry out this work, which includes training, community mediation services, facilitated conversations, and other events. Services are offered free of charge to community members and City employees through City networks such as bureaus, advisory boards and commissions, neighborhood coalitions, and other Civic Life partners. Currently, six organizations receive funding through the program and reached 1,412 participants during the first six months of 2020. This request would approximately double the program's budget, and Civic Life anticipates being able to fund six to eight additional organizations with this level of additional resources.

While this is clearly important and needed work, CBO has questions about the intended scope and outcomes of the program. In terms of demand for this program, Civic Life states that every Portlander could benefit from these services, which is undoubtedly true. However, without a more targeted population or specific goal, it is challenging to evaluate the marginal impact of this request against competing priorities Citywide or against the magnitude of the problems of bias and conflict Civic Life aims for this program to address Citywide.

The kinds of skills and tools that Civic Life promotes through this program should certainly play a role in the conversation around reimagining public safety. Incorporating this type of training and skill-building into the City's logic model for upstream solutions could help build out the definition of scope and impact described above. Additionally, involving Civic Life's community-centered perspectives in these Citywide planning conversations presents an opportunity for Civic Life to create the sort of transformative change in government's interface with communities that Civic Life outlines in their strategic goals.

Given the City's current financial situation and the limited data on the impacts of this additional investment compared to other needs, CBO does not recommend this request.

CBO Recommendation: \$0 ongoing | \$0 one-time | 0.00 FTE

One-Time Additional Graffiti Funds

11392, \$530,240, 0.00 FTE

Request Summary

This request is for \$530,240 in new one-time General Fund resources to support the Graffiti Removal program. These resources would double the program's capacity to respond to need for graffiti removal, would allow the program to invest in contracts with M/W/ESB vendors, and would allow the Graffiti Removal Program Coordinator additional time to convene a conversation with other City leaders to explore the right service model for this work moving forward.

CBO Analysis

Graffiti activity across Portland has been significantly elevated over the past year due in part to

reduced levels of activity in public spaces during the pandemic and due to continued protest activity related to uprisings around racial justice. Over the first half of FY 2020-21, Civic Life's Graffiti Program received 460% more graffiti reports than during the same period in FY 2019-20, and the program depleted nearly its entire current-year on-call removal budget within the first five months of the year.

Responding to the steeply elevated levels of graffiti over the past year, particularly protest-related graffiti, is in many ways an expansion of scope for the Graffiti Program. Prior to this spike in activity, the program focused on managing a contract for a proactive monthly graffiti removal route; another contract for on-call graffiti removal typically reserved for small businesses, nonprofits, and residences; and on providing graffiti removal supplies and training to community volunteers to remove graffiti in their own neighborhoods. These activities have tended to be relatively consistent and predictable. By contrast, in a single week of July 2020, graffiti removal for protest-related cleanup totaled \$45,886, roughly 25% of the program's annual on-call budget.

Civic Life is not the sole provider of graffiti removal services in the City. Property-owning City bureaus, including the Portland Bureau of Transportation, Facilities, and Portland Water Bureau are responsible for graffiti removal on their own property, and either handle removal in-house or contract separately for removal services. Civic Life plays a Citywide coordinating role, processing graffiti reports submitted by community members and directing them to the appropriate property owner for removal. Over the past year, the Graffiti Program coordinator has convened regular meetings with other bureaus engaged in graffiti removal to coordinate response.

This request would essentially double the program's budget for graffiti removal services in FY 2021-22. The bureau notes, however, that these additional resources would not be enough to fully remove all graffiti across the City; in fact, the program's current contractor has estimated that, if the current level of graffiti activity remained constant, it would require \$1 million beyond current funding levels to remove all existing graffiti Citywide within the next year.

On one hand, this means that—should this request be approved—the full amount of resources could be meaningfully expended toward graffiti removal in the next year even if graffiti activity slows as civic areas and businesses begin to reopen. On the other hand, it indicates significant need for Citywide agreement on desired service levels for graffiti removal. Is the goal fully addressing any instance of graffiti anywhere in the city? The Graffiti Program coordinator has begun outlining a project plan for a revision of the current Graffiti Program codes, including a cross-bureau assessment of the current Citywide graffiti removal system and development of recommendations about coordination methods and sustainable funding levels. This request includes \$30,240 to support a Community Service Aide position to give the coordinator more time to focus on this Citywide conversation.

Given the core role of the City in public space management and the backlog of graffiti removal needs, CBO recommends additional one-time General Fund resources to boost the Graffiti Program's services in FY 2021-22, with the understanding that a Citywide process will define minimum service levels and a more sustainable service model for the program moving forward.

CBO Recommendation: \$0 ongoing | \$530,240 one-time | 0.00 FTE

Cannabis Emergency Relief Fund

11393, \$900,000, 0.00 FTE

Request Summary

This request is for \$900,000 in one-time Cannabis Tax Fund resources to create a Cannabis Emergency Relief Fund. This fund would support small- and medium-sized cannabis businesses with emergency relief grants for challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, recent wildfires, and increased instances of theft. Civic Life would create the fund in partnership with Prosper Portland and with nonprofit partners that would administer the funds and provide technical assistance.

CBO Analysis

The Cannabis Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) would provide cannabis businesses relief for emergencies that arise. Cannabis businesses are facing a range of challenges related to COVID-19, recent wildfires in the region, and a recent surge in thefts and burglaries of cannabis businesses that was documented in an [October 12, 2020 letter](#) from the Cannabis Policy Team to City Council.⁸ Because the cannabis industry remains under a federal Schedule I designation, cannabis businesses are unable to access secure banking services, federal emergency relief, or financing. This amplifies the negative impacts of these emergencies, particularly for smaller companies.

Civic Life proposes that licensed cannabis businesses would be eligible to apply to the fund if their ownership is Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Women, or Veteran, or if their annual revenue is under \$2 million and their annual net income is less than \$250,000. The fund would provide up to \$25,000 in relief funding, meaning that this request for one-time resources could support up to 30 businesses (with \$150,000 going to the nonprofit partners for administration). Civic Life estimates that about 75% of licensed cannabis businesses in Portland would be eligible to apply.

Prosper Portland has submitted a related request, for \$420,000 to continue support for its Cannabis Business Development Program, which provides business technical assistance and strategic grants to minority-owned cannabis businesses. Prosper's program received a one-time expansion of \$210,000 in FY 2020-21 to administer emergency relief grants up to \$15,000 for BIPOC cannabis entrepreneurs affected by COVID-19 and the recent wildfires.

While Prosper proposes to continue providing business technical assistance, access to capital, and COVID-19 relief grants in FY 2021-22, Civic Life's CERF would expand relief to cannabis businesses facing any type of emergency (not solely COVID-related), increase the level of support compared to Prosper's grants, and add up to two additional nonprofit community partners administering funds, expanding the reach to a broader segment of the cannabis industry.

Recreational Cannabis Funds are managed separately from the General Fund and allocations must adhere to [eligible expense guidelines](#) as approved by voters.⁹ Allocation options of Cannabis Fund resources will be discussed by the Council at a budget work session on April 1st.

⁸ See the letter and supporting attachments at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/civic/article/780567>

⁹ These eligible expense guidelines are outlined in City Council Resolution 37217, adopted in June 2016: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/article/581607>

SUMMARY OF REQUESTS & RECOMMENDATIONS (ALL FUNDS)

Office of Community and Civic Life

		2020-21 Adopted Budget	2021-22 Requested Base (A)	Bureau Decision Packages (B)	CBO Recommended Adjustments (C)	Total Recommended Budget (A+B+C)
Revenue	Miscellaneous Fund Allocation	\$1,000,000	\$2,987,000	\$900,000	(\$900,000)	\$2,987,000
	Interagency Revenue	\$85,164	\$11,600	\$0	\$0	\$11,600
	General Fund Overhead	\$129,238	\$293,728	(\$14,686)	\$0	\$279,042
	General Fund Discretionary	\$9,508,648	\$9,625,989	\$367,022	(\$294,833)	\$9,698,178
	Charges for Services	\$1,959,202	\$1,988,918	\$0	\$0	\$1,988,918
Revenue	Sum:	\$12,682,252	\$14,907,235	\$1,252,336	(\$1,194,833)	\$14,964,738
Expense	Personnel	\$6,560,539	\$6,643,440	(\$126,759)	\$0	\$6,516,681
	Internal Materials and Services	\$918,885	\$1,180,673	(\$15,685)	\$0	\$1,164,988
	Fund Transfers - Expense	\$16,507	\$31,773	\$0	\$0	\$31,773
	External Materials and Services	\$5,186,321	\$7,051,349	\$1,394,780	(\$1,194,833)	\$7,251,296
Expense	Sum:	\$12,682,252	\$14,907,235	\$1,252,336	(\$1,194,833)	\$14,964,738