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## **FY 2018-19 Budget Equity Assessment Tool**

### **Bureau of Development Services**

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#### **SECTION ONE: BASE BUDGET**

##### **1. In what areas did you consider the impacts on underserved communities in the development of your base budget?**

The Bureau of Development Services' (BDS's) functions can be grouped into two categories: the administration of the building code program (on behalf of the State) and the enforcement of local City Codes. Building code administration includes construction plan review, inspections, and related permitting services. These services are generally provided citywide as requested by customers, and require multilayer strategies and practices to target specific populations. Local City Code programs include the enforcement of the Property Maintenance Code (Title 29) and the Zoning Code (Title 33). These services are also provided citywide, with some specific programs targeted to underserved communities.

BDS's base budget reflects the bureau's commitment to the needs of underserved communities in a variety of ways:

- Equity & Policy Development Section (EPD) – The Equity & Policy Development Section has an overarching role working with all BDS employees to institutionalize equity principles in the bureau. This section is also responsible for implementing the BDS Five-Year Racial Equity Plan. Section staff works to ensure that bureau projects and services are addressed through an equity lens, by providing relevant equity trainings on an ongoing basis. This section coordinates and delivers an optional monthly equity speaker and dialogue series, “Equity in Motion”, which has seen dramatic increases in staff attendance. Staff also acts as liaisons and provides technical assistance for the rest of the bureau on both inward- and outward-facing equity issues.

These services increase BDS employees' understanding of equity and inclusion issues, the equity lens, and their application to BDS's work. BDS employees are thus more aware of and capable to respond to the needs of customers and community members from underserved populations. Raising individual equity awareness also is helping to collectively begin transforming the workplace, so all employees can flourish.

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The BDS Bureau Equity Committee (BEC), made up of staff from all BDS sections, receives additional training and support to work with their colleagues and to make recommendations to the BDS Management Team as appropriate. They also provide guidance and coordination of the bureau's Affirmative Action report.

- Enforcement Program – This program administers Title 29, the City's Property Maintenance Code. Two specific Enforcement programs provide focused services to support low-income, underrepresented, and/or marginalized communities: The Extremely Distressed Properties Enforcement Program (EDPEP) and the Enhanced Rental Inspections Program.

EDPEP focuses on poorly maintained properties (often caused by abandonment due to foreclosures) with chronic nuisance and housing conditions that create public health hazards and encourage criminal activity such as trespass, vandalism, graffiti, drug use and sale, and prostitution. EDPEP uses the abatement, vacation, and demolition of property as a key tool, and relieves pressure on the Police Bureau and other City agencies.

The Enhanced Rental Inspections Program identifies rental properties that are chronically out of compliance with City Code and where cited repairs are not made in a timely manner. The program focuses resources on conducting inspections of additional rental units with potential violations. The program motivates landlords to provide and maintain safe and healthy rental housing while offering protection to vulnerable tenants who might fear retaliation for reporting substandard housing conditions. The program helps create equitable housing options for community members and provide safe, healthy housing conditions for low-income renters.

The Enforcement Program has the potential to do much good for Portland's disinvested communities, but it has been losing funding every year through mandated cuts in General Fund support. For equity to be realized, stable General Fund support must be provided. Additional General Fund support would allow BDS to enhance and expand this program with additional inspectors and a community liaison to work with inspectors, landlord and tenants, benefitting home owners, renters and the community.

- Recruitment & Hiring Section – This section manages recruitment and hiring processes for the entire bureau, and prioritizes improving employment outreach to minority and underrepresented communities.

There have been continuous improvements in BDS's hiring process in addressing biases (implicit and explicit). The BEC has offered training on implicit bias with a focus on hiring practices. Also, several approaches are in place to ensure the equitable treatment of applicants. The Equity and Engagement Coordinator is working closely with BDS managers and Recruitment & Hiring Section staff to develop equitable strategies for the recruitment of applicants from marginalized communities.

**2. In what ways have your base budget been realigned and in what ways will these realignments impact communities of color?**

In 2017, BDS realigned its base budget to support the implementation of Residential Permit Night and the creation of a new Communications Team.

- Residential Permit Night – Since spring 2017, BDS has been opening the Development Services Center (permit center) each Thursday evening, specifically to provide services to homeowners and other residential customers and community members who may face challenges in accessing bureau services during regular business hours. Enhanced services are provided to assist anyone who may be less familiar with permit processes and requirements. Permit Night has been evaluated very highly by community members, who are able to access services after regular working hours. Permit Night will be refined after data is analyzed to ensure that homeowners of color are being served.
- Communications Team – In 2017, BDS added staff positions to create a new Communications Team. Part of the team’s responsibilities includes increasing the visibility of BDS’s programs and services in the community, particularly with communities of color and underserved populations. This team will work closely with all communities using culturally appropriate messaging to reinforce a commitment to communities of color.

In 2018, BDS will reinstate two programs designed to assist homeowners and small business owners, prioritizing people of color and historically underserved populations:

- Get Legal Program – The Get Legal Program will provide an enhanced level of services to customers who need to legalize work done in the past without the required permits. Often, customers either didn’t realize they needed a permit, or are immigrants and may be reluctant to trust the government and/or lack the language or technical skills to pursue permitting a project without additional assistance.
- Small Business Liaison – This position will work with small business owners to ensure that they understand BDS services and to support them against unintended negative impacts. The liaison will serve as a single point of contact, build relationships and trust with business owners of color and from historically underserved populations, and help them ensure their work is permitted appropriately to ensure safety and livability. This work will complement and integrate the work that the BDS Community Engagement Coordinator is doing.

**3. Are there specific realignments in your base budget that would advance or inhibit your achievement of equity goals outlined in your bureau's Racial Equity Plan?**

The realignments referenced above (Residential Permit Night, Communications Team, Get Legal Program, and Small Business Liaison) contribute to the achievement of two long-term objectives of our Racial Equity Plan:

- People of color feel welcomed, receive quality customer service, and are provided required services with clear expectations.
- Increase access and community engagement with communities of color to fully infuse equity into decision making and form partnerships between community partners, equity advocates, and BDS.

**4. What funding have you allocated for translation, interpretation and ADA (American's with Disability Act) accommodation including ASL (American Sign Language) interpretation and video captioning? What are the impacts of these allocations?**

Funds are budgeted and available for training, the development of additional materials, and resources for translation, interpretation, and video captioning. Allocations for translation and interpretation services make these services available, however they are utilized infrequently and so with a danger of inconsistently. In 2017, BDS hired an Outreach and Community Engagement Coordinator that works on enhancing and standardizing all the bureau's ADA-related efforts. The BDS website is impacted by these allocations and has been designed to prioritize the availability of these services.

**5. Are there deficiencies in the ongoing funding of your base budget that inhibit your bureau's achievement of equity or the goals outlined in your Racial Equity Plan?**

98.6% of BDS's total revenues come from permit fees and assessments, which support bureau services and programs related to the administration of the State building code program. These funds support the Equity & Policy Development Section and the Recruitment & Hiring Section mentioned above.

However, State statutes prohibit the use of building permit revenues to support programs and services related to the administration of local City Code, including the Enforcement Program. Enforcement is funded from a combination of fines, fees, and support from the City's General Fund. For FY 2018-19, all City bureaus are required to submit 5% reductions in their General Fund appropriations; BDS is meeting this requirement by cutting \$49,126 from nuisance abatement funds administered by the Enforcement Program.

This reduction in funds will lead to approximately 27 fewer nuisance abatements completed in FY 2018-2019 (21% of the total abatements performed in FY 17-18), potentially resulting in serious health and sanitation concerns at those properties not being addressed and removed. Reducing this critical basic service for the community will impact services that are vital to communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities and/or people living with a disability. Nuisance abatements are often completed in non-affluent neighborhoods where responsible parties are unable or unwilling to maintain their properties in compliance with the City's minimum nuisance standards. If left unabated, these health/sanitation violations will remain, impacting other properties and general neighborhood livability.

**6. Identify impacts on workforce demographics in the development of the base budget and relevant decision packages.**

The development of BDS's base budget and decision packages did not have any impacts on workforce demographics.

## **SECTION TWO: EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT AND ACCESS (Racial Equity Goal #2)**

### **1. How has community engaged with your requested budget, including this tool?**

The community engaged with BDS's requested budget primarily through two advisory groups: the BDS Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) and the Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC).

BDS's BAC is composed of representatives from community organizations, the development industry, the DRAC, and BDS employees. The BAC evaluated BDS's budget request in light of the City's budget directions, the bureau's budget goals, and the needs of BDS customers and the community. The BAC met three times during the budget preparation process (November 2017 – January 2018) and is submitting a report accompanying BDS's Requested Budget.

The DRAC is a citizen advisory body representing those with interests in the outcome of policies, budgets, regulations, and procedures that affect the development review process. The 17 member positions on the DRAC are appointed by the City Council and include representatives from neighborhood associations and land use coalitions. The Committee advocates for and supports consistent and fair application and implementation of regulations.

The DRAC reviewed BDS's budget at a more global level during its regular monthly meetings, and is submitting a letter accompanying BDS's Requested Budget.

Both the BAC and the DRAC supported the bureau's FY 2018-19 Requested Budget.

### **2. How does this budget build the bureau's capacity to engage with and include communities most impacted by inequities? (e.g., improved leadership opportunities, advisory committees, commissions, targeted community meetings, stakeholder groups, increased outreach, etc.)**

BDS's budget includes funding to support its two primary stakeholder/community advisory bodies (referenced above): the BDS BAC and the DRAC. These bodies provide opportunities for community representatives to engage with the bureau regarding BDS programs, services, and budget. The Equity and Policy Development section is coordinating facilitation and equity lens training for employees and members of the public serving on these boards to build capacity to engage and include communities of color.

In addition, BDS's budget includes funding for staff actively involved in targeted community outreach:

- The Recruitment & Hiring Section targets outreach regarding employment opportunities to communities of color, minorities, and underrepresented groups and areas.
- The Customer Service & Communications Section regularly sends staff to community events (such as "Fix-it-Fairs" and cultural celebrations) to provide opportunities for community members to engage with BDS.
- The BDS Equity and Community Engagement Coordinator helps build our capacity by building relationships in the community through implementation of the Community Engagement and Outreach Plan. This position also recruits community members of color to serve on BDS advisory boards.

**3. How does this budget build community capacity and power in communities most impacted by inequities? (e.g., improved leadership opportunities within BAC, community meetings, stakeholder groups, increased outreach, etc.)**

BDS's two advisory bodies (BAC and DRAC) provide opportunities for community representatives to engage with the bureau regarding programs, services, and budget decisions. BDS staff devoted to community outreach regarding employment opportunities and BDS services and programs (mentioned above) focus on disadvantaged populations.

In 2017 BDS re-introduced Residential Permit Night, absent since 2010. Permit Night is a popular weekly event where the Development Services Center (permit center) opens in the evening with services and resources geared toward residential customers and the community.

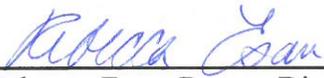
In 2018, BDS will restore the "Get Legal" program, which provides assistance to low-income or special-needs property owners who want to legalize work that was done previously without required permits. The bureau is also developing a new Small Business Liaison Program to provide building permit assistance to small business owners. The program will provide a single point of contact to provide resources and help walk small business customers through the permitting process.

In addition, BDS's Enforcement Program operates EDPEP and the Enhanced Rental Inspection Program (described in Section One), which provide direct benefits to disadvantaged communities. The Oregon Public Health Institute's Health Impact Assessment of 2012 found that the Enhanced Rental Inspection Program had great potential "to contribute to improved health and health equity" of rental housing residents (<http://www.healthimpactproject.org/resources/rental-housing-and-health-equity-in-portland-oregon-a-health-impact-assessment-of-the-citys-rental-housing-inspections-program>).

**Identifying Impacts Worksheet**

Once you have identified the populations/communities impacted by both base budget decisions and decision packages with notable impacts on specific populations, use the following chart to name the potential burdens and benefits.

Populations Impacted	Potential Positive Impacts	Potential Negative Impacts
Citywide; see narrative above.		

  
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 Rebecca Esau, Bureau Director

1-29-18  
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 Date

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