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**Title:** Actions pertaining to Commercial Cannabis Activity:  
1. \*\*\*RESOLUTION - Creating The Equity Assistance Program Fund (Subject to Mayor's Veto)

**Sponsors:** Office of Mayor & City Manager

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. Resolution

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/28/2021	1	City Council	adopted	Pass

**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**January 28, 2021**

**FROM:** THOMAS ESQUEDA, City Manager  
Office of the Mayor & City Manager

**THROUGH:** TIM ORMAN, Chief of Staff to the Mayor  
Office of the Mayor & City Manager

**BY:** JENNIFER RUIZ, Project Manager  
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**SUBJECT**

Actions pertaining to Commercial Cannabis Activity:  
1. \*\*\*RESOLUTION - Creating The Equity Assistance Program Fund (Subject to Mayor's Veto)

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that City Council approve the resolution to establish the Equity Assistance Fund, as referenced by Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) section 9-3316(b)(6)(vii) to benefit local cannabis social equity businesses operating in the City under FMC section 9-3316(b)(6).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) section 9-3316(b)(6)(vii) requires the establishment of an equity

assistance program and identifies a number of elements of the program. This resolution establishes the Equity Assistance Fund, which will administer the necessary funding for the services described by the equity assistance program. The fund will receive monetary donations from commercial cannabis businesses within the City, as well as contributions approved from other sources, such as grants, or allocations approved by the City Council. The fund will benefit eligible cannabis social equity businesses operating in the City of Fresno.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) section 9-3316(b)(6)(vii) requires the City Manager to establish an equity assistance program which includes, but is not limited to, the following elements:

1. Assistance in paying state regulatory and licensing fees;
2. Assistance securing business locations prior to or during the application process;
3. Assistance securing capital investments (excluding loans and grants from the city);
4. Assistance in recruiting, training, and retention of a qualified/diverse workforce; and
5. Business loans and/or grants to equity applicants.

The program specifically benefits cannabis equity businesses, which are businesses that successfully qualify for the City of Fresno cannabis social equity permit application process. The business owner qualifications are described in FMC 9-3316(b)(6) and the applicants are required to follow additional application timelines and procedures published by the City Manager's Office.

Also known as the "Fresno Community Reinvestment Fund", this resolution will establish the Equity Assistance Fund described in the FMC. The "Application Procedures & Guidelines for a Commercial Cannabis Business Permit" published by the City Manager's Office dated October 19, 2020 describes this fund and invites local cannabis businesses to consider contributing to the fund as part of their community benefits and investments plan. Funds donated or allocated to this fund will support the program services described in FMC 9-3316(b)(6)(vii).

Per section 4 of the attached Resolution, the City Manager's Office will create an application process and procedures to guide the use and administration of the fund to support eligible social equity businesses in the City of Fresno.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS**

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378, this item is not a project for the purposes of CEQA.

## **LOCAL PREFERENCE**

Local preference was not considered because this is not a competitive bid.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal appropriation associated with the establishment of the Equity Assistance Program Fund.

Attachments:

1. Resolution

