

## **A.18 COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH, AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING BUDGET (5/2025) (pending update)**

The City Council District Communication, Outreach and Community-Building budget is available to each Council Member for use for their District. The City Council intends that the fund will support and assist City Council Members in fulfilling their duties.

### **a. Policy Basis for the Council's District Communication, Outreach and Community Building Approach:**

1. The City Council finds that it is essential to good governance that Council Members be accessible to and in direct contact with constituents in the District they each represent.
2. The City Council finds that empowering constituents to share their ideas, concerns and expectations is a fundamental role of local government.
3. The Legislative Branch of Salt Lake City, with Council Members elected based upon District boundaries, is the level of government closest to the public.
4. The communication needs of, and the Council's outreach to, each City Council District, each segment of the community, and each resident are unique and cannot be met by a 'one size fits all' approach. These diverse needs require flexibility in how funds are used.
5. Salt Lake City Government prides itself on being open, transparent and accountable, which is carried out through robust community engagement and participation.

### **b. Purpose, Limitations and Standards:**

1. There are legal and ethical limitations on the use of the funds because they are tax dollars, allocated by vote of the City Council from the City's general fund budget and subject to accounting standards and reporting for transparency.
2. Funds from the Communication and Outreach Budget must serve a valid public purpose. **Public purposes for the funds** could include, but not be limited to, enabling Council Members to:
  - A. share information about the City
  - B. reach out to historically underrepresented communities
  - C. provide opportunities for constituents to interact with City government, the City Council Member who represents them, and one another

- D. gather information that can be shared with the full City Council to better inform decision-making
  - E. build a better understanding of community needs, assets and interests
  - F. help community members overcome barriers to participation in City government
  - G. help build identity, pride, and connection that will sustain long-term community capacity and resiliency.
3. Council Members may not supplement their communication budget balances through personal contributions nor through independent fundraising so that the amount available to each Council Member remains equal.
  4. *(Waiting for legal advice on this issue.)* The District Communications, Outreach and Community Building budget is not set up to provide donations, grants, contributions, aid or charitable offerings to individuals or organizations. Elected Officials are precluded from using government funds to make donations.
  5. The City has a number of grant and loan programs to which individuals and organizations may apply. Those programs promote the efficient use of public funds and have adequate structure in place to meet the legal fiscal procedure requirements for grants, including equitable access to the opportunity to apply, and appropriate accountability to the taxpayers through formal contracting, monitoring and reporting structures.
  6. [The U.S. House of Representatives Communications Manual](#) is traditionally the source that the City Council Office consults when questions related to the purpose, limitations and standards of the Council's policy arise.

**c. Annual Budget & Uses**

1. Budget Information
  - A. Each district's communication budget will total \$16,200 per calendar year to coincide with terms of office as new Council Members are elected.
  - B. This amount can be amended annually by a vote of the full Council.
  - C. Funds in the district communication budget will be expended at the Council Member's discretion and are subject to the standards listed above.

*2. Uses – Placeholder – see chart for straw poll items*

**d. Procedures for accounting and carryover of the annual budgets**

1. General

- A. All events, mailings, and activities that are specific to a Council District will be paid for out of these funds.
- B. If an event, mailing or activity affects multiple districts, the cost can be split between multiple budgets.
- C. Any citywide event, mailing, or activity will be paid for out of the Council Office budget and not the Communication funds. This will be placed on the Chair / Vice Chair agenda for coordination first, and on announcements for the full body to discuss, if needed.

2. Tracking

- A. Liaisons will track all district expenses during the calendar year and update Council Members' budgets accordingly.
- B. Council staff will provide a quarterly accounting to each Council Member on the status of funds in the district's communication budget.
- C. If a district's communication budget is fully expended prior to the end of the calendar year, it will remain at a zero balance until the beginning of the next calendar year.
- D. For Council Members going out of office, all use of the district communication budget should be completed entirely by December 31. Any remaining funds in the communication budgets at the end of a Council Member's term will not be carried over to the incoming Council Member since the new communication budget starts in January of each year. To help assure a smooth transition and to recognize the degree to which staff resources need to be focused on the Induction, under no circumstances should a mailing or distribution of materials take place after January 1 of the year end for an outgoing Council Member unless the City Council grants an exception in advance and the incoming Council Member is notified as a courtesy.

3. Carryover funds

- A. If a district's communication budget is not fully expended by the end of the calendar year, and the Council Member is continuing in office, the remaining budget amount will automatically be carried over and available to the Council Member in the first six months of the next calendar year.
- B. If the Council Member is not able to utilize the amount carried over by June 30 and has a project in mind or started, the Council Member may include a request on Budget Amendment

No. 1 to re-allocate that funding to the Council Office for intended use.

- i. Staff will work with Council Members well in advance of June 30 to plan for the use of carried over funds.
- ii. The budget amendment request should provide information to the Council on how and when the funds will be used.
- iii. The reallocated funds will expire at the end of the calendar year.
- iv. The funds to be re-allocated should be related to the cost of the pending project and shall not exceed one typical year's district communication budget.
- v. The Council may elect to give preliminary approval informally in the Announcements section of a Council Meeting, and follow-up with formal Budget Amendment approval. The project may move ahead once preliminary approval is granted.

## DO NOT PRINT

- A. Communication: Newsletters, postcards, mass mailings, flyers
    - i. District mailings of 25 pieces or more will be tracked, with one exception: mailings relating to citywide issues which are distributed to all Council districts will not be counted as a district expense.
  - B. Informative or promotional printing (neighborhood signs, magnets, etc).
  - C. District meetings (rental spaces, advertising, refreshments, etc).
  - D. Social, Fun, Events - For events organized and hosted by the Council Member, there would be no limit other than the funds available in the communication budget. Funds can be used for refreshments, activities, invitations, etc. The event should be free and open to the public.
  - E. Advertising, such as sponsored space in local newspapers or paid social media promotion for District-specific
  - F. Promotional branded items to pass out to the public, "SWAG" (past examples include, but are not limited to: T shirts, pins, fans, pet bowls/leashes/waste bags, challenge coins, tote bags, hats, socks etc)
  - G. Rental costs for a booth or presence at another organization's event, where the Council Member or staff will attend and 'staff' the booth.
  - H. Local sports team support, such as sponsorship, banners, etc.
    - i. Should not be used directly for expenses the team pays to the City for city services (field rentals, waste pick-up, etc.)
    - ii. Up to \$\_\_\_\_\_ could be spent on this per year
  - I. Refreshments for City events, networking, community events, lunch meetings with constituents, etc.
  - J. Expressions of goodwill or sympathy to community-builders, such as sending flowers for a community council chair or member who is in the hospital, family member death, or other significant life events.
    - i. Up to \$\_\_\_\_\_ could be spent on this per event
- 4. Uses – Requests by outside organizations or individuals**
- A. General Guidelines:
    - i. Outside requests should be made in writing to the Council Member.

- ii. If a Council Member chooses to contribute funds, it will be on a reimbursement basis once receipts and documentation have been submitted.

**i. POLICY QUESTIONS:**

1. If money is available in other City offices, should the funding be combined and consistent process be established? i.e. ACE funds, Mayor's office funds for mailings / zoom licenses, etc.
  2. Should there be some limit to the amount available to each organization or per year?
  3. How should the availability of funds (wherever they're located) be broadcast to all eligible applicants?
- B. Events: For fun or informational events organized or hosted outside the Council Office, contributions should support basic costs of the event, such as refreshments, rentals, etc., and the event should meet the Council's goals of providing open participation by the community, be consistent with City priorities, and should encourage community building.
- i. In exchange for the contribution, the Salt Lake City logo should be used on sponsor-related material and an opportunity available for the Council Member to participate or attend at the Council Member's discretion.
  - ii. Up to \$\_\_\_\_\_ could be spent on these per year and/or limited to X number of events per year.
- C. Communication: Newsletters, postcards, mass mailings, flyers
- D. Informative or promotional printing (neighborhood signs, other misc. informational items).
- i. Up to \$\_\_\_\_\_ could be spent on these per year
- E. Community building activities: activities sponsored by city-associated agencies including community councils, county government, non-profit agencies, or community organizers working within the community to provide a non-political event open and free to the residents of the specified council district.
5. If a project, which is usually funded from these communication budgets, such as a district-wide mailing, is more expensive than the available funds (such as booklets, multi-part mailing, etc.), the Council Member may either use carryover funds (as described below) or may

petition the full Council to consider the project for each Council District and identify alternate funding. (An example may be a City-wide Emergency Booklet mailing.)

6. For fundraising efforts related to community projects, please see Policy Manual Section A31. Solicitation of Funding from Private Parties