

October 15, 2024

To: Cleveland Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)

From: MHRAC Youth Subcommittee Chair members Bree Easterling and Habeebah Grimes,  
MHRAC Youth Subcommittee general body members

Pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreement between United States of America v. City of Cleveland, No. 1:15-cv-01046, and the bylaws of the Mental Health Response Advisory Committee, MHRAC Youth Subcommittee Chair members Bree Easterling and Habeebah Grimes submit the following recommendation to the MHRAC full committee.

The purpose of the MHRAC is to foster relationships and build support between the Cleveland Division of Police, the community, and mental health providers to help identify problems and develop solutions designed to improve the experience for individuals in crisis. In light of the committee's ongoing activities, goals, and strategic initiatives, establishing a sustainable financial framework is critical to ensuring the successful continuation of our work.

To advance the work of developing solutions designed to improve outcomes for individuals in crisis, and to invite the community and mental health providers into the process, we submit this request for MHRAC to make a formal recommendation to the City of Cleveland to establish an annual budget allocation to MHRAC for the strategic planning, implementation and evaluation phases of the MHRAC committee.

As we expand our efforts to address the goals of the committee, it is essential to secure the necessary resources to support these objectives. Without a formal funding structure, the committee risks limited capacity in executing projects, planning events, conducting research, and fulfilling our mandate effectively.

As the expansion of our efforts involves engaging and collaborating with community stakeholders and impacted individuals, funding is critical to also meet the ethical obligation of the committee. Implementing a structured budget for the committee to cover engagement and collaboration efforts, ensures fairness that is grounded in the recognition of the expertise, time and labor of community members equitably.

### **Proposal Overview**

To address this need, we propose the following funding structure:

#### **1. Annual Budget Allocation**

Establish a fixed annual budget for the committee that aligns with MHRAC's broader financial planning and operational needs. This budget should be subject to review and approval at the start of each fiscal year.

## 2. Funding Sources:

Internal Funding: Allocation from the MHRAC's general fund based on the committee's priorities and strategic contributions.

External Grants and Donations: Identify and apply for external funding opportunities, including grants, sponsorships, or donations from public and private entities, as needed.

## 3. Expense Guidelines:

Establish specific guidelines for how funds are to be allocated across subcommittees and key committee activities - such as research, meeting participation, administrative costs, and community engagement.

## 4. Financial Oversight:

- Assign Senior Strategist for Public Safety and Health responsible to monitor expenses, report on financial status, and ensure funds are used efficiently.

- Require **\*\*annual financial reporting\*\*** to provide transparency and accountability to the committee and the broader organization.

## **Expected Outcomes**

Implementing this funding structure will provide the committee with:

Stability in planning and executing long-term goals of the committee.

Flexibility to adapt to new opportunities or unforeseen challenges by having access to pre-allocated resources.

Accountability through clear financial oversight, ensuring that all funds are managed responsibly.

## **Next Steps**

I recommend that the committee begin by reviewing potential internal budget allocations and external funding sources.

## **Supporting Documents for a committee budget recommendation**

[Equitable Compensation for Community Engagement Guidebook](#) - Urban Institute