



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JANUARY 24, 2023**

**FROM: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A COMMISSION OF THE DEAF TO SERVE IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY TO CITY COUNCIL**

**ISSUE:**

Adopt an Ordinance of the City of Riverside, California establishing a Commission of the Deaf by amending Title 2 of the Riverside Municipal Code by adding Chapter 2.100 to advise the City Council on matters affecting members of the deaf community.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council:

1. Introduce and subsequently adopt an Ordinance of the City of Riverside, California establishing a Commission of the Deaf by amending Title 2 of the Riverside Municipal Code by adding Chapter 2.100 to advise the City Council on matters affecting members of the deaf community; and
2. For inaugural appointments only, assign one youth ex officio seat to a one-year term through March 1, 2024; assign Ward seats 1, 5, and 7, one Ward 3 seat, one Citywide seat, and one youth ex officio seat to a two-year term through March 1, 2025; and assign Ward seats 2, 4, and 6, one Ward 3 seat, and two Citywide seats to a four-year term through March 1, 2027.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

At its meeting on September 2, 2022, with Chair Cervantes, Vice Chair Perry, and Member Conder present, the Inclusiveness, Community Engagement and Governmental Processes Committee (ICGC) received and discussed the establishment of a Commission of the Deaf. The ICGC requested staff bring forth an Ordinance to City Council for discussion and adoption.

**BACKGROUND:**

On January 5, 2022, ICGC began the review and revision of Resolution No. 23618, City Council Rules of Procedure and Order of Business.

On July 6, 2022, ICGC received and discussed City Council Rules of Procedure and Order of Business related to the number and roll of Boards and Commissions. Through discussion the Committee requested the item be continued for further review and discussion.

On September 7, 2022, ICGC continued the review and discussion of the number and roll of Boards and Commissions. Recommendations included bringing a separate resolution addressing the purview and reporting structure of Boards and Commissions and introduction of a Commission of the Deaf.

The Model Deaf Community Committee (MDCC) was created in April 1998 to promote unity between Riverside's deaf and hard of hearing communities. Although assigned as a Regional Organization to a designated Councilmember after an election year, traditionally monthly meetings were coordinated by the Mayor's Office. Coordination consisted of securing a meeting location and interpreter. In alignment with Regional Organization assignments, the budget allocation for interpreter services was moved from the Mayor's Office to the City Council Office effective July 1, 2022.

## **DISCUSSION:**

On August 11, 2022, a meeting was held with the City Manager's Office, Mayor's Office, City Clerk's Office, City Councilmembers assigned as Regional Organization representatives to the MDCC, and current members of the MDCC. Through discussion, it was recommended the MDCC be formalized as a City Council recognized commission. As a recognized commission, agenda items would be subject to Brown Act/Sunshine Ordinance requirements and the commission would follow a similar reporting structure to existing Boards and Commissions. Membership composition and duties or functions of the commission are proposed as follows:

According to the California Department of Education, there are two regionally established schools in the state that provide a comprehensive residential and non-residential education program to deaf and hard of hearing students ages 3 – 22. The California School for the Deaf Fremont (CSDF) serves the deaf community of Northern California and the California School for the Deaf Riverside (CSDR), located in Ward 3, serves the deaf community of Southern California. The US Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey identifies an estimated 156,176 individuals with hearing difficulty live in the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area.

### *Membership*

- Pursuant to Sections 800 and 803 of the Riverside City Charter, the Commission of the Deaf shall be comprised of thirteen members appointed by the Mayor and City Council.
- Membership composition shall include one representative from Wards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, & 7, two representatives from Ward 3, two youth ex officio members, and three Citywide members.
- Youth ex officio members shall be under eighteen years of age and a current high school student attending a high school within the City of Riverside. For a youth ex officio member that becomes eighteen years of age during their term, the term will end the March preceding their birthday or the end of the school year, whichever occurs first.
- The term of each member of the Commission shall be four years with the exception of the youth ex officio members. The term for each ex officio member shall be two years.

- Initial appointments of youth ex officio, Ward 3, and Citywide members shall be determined by a drawing at the Commission's first meeting to decide which members shall serve one, two, or four-year terms.
- Inaugural appointments of the thirteen members will adhere to staggered terms as follows:
  - Assignment of a one-year term through March 1, 2024, will be assigned to one youth ex officio.
  - Assignment of a two-year term through March 1, 2025, will be assigned to Ward seats 1, 5, and 7, one Ward 3 seat, one Citywide seat, and one youth ex officio.
  - Assignment of a four-year term through March 1, 2027, will be assigned to Ward seats 2, 4, and 6, one Ward 3 seats, and two Citywide seats.

### *Powers, Duties, and Functions*

- Serve in an advisory capacity to help create an integrated community that promotes full participation in society, education and employment, effective communication, and cultural awareness.
- Review community policies, programs, and actions which affect persons within the deaf community and make appropriate recommendations to City Council.
- Render advice and assistance as requested to other City boards, commissions, and City departments on matters affecting members of the deaf community.
- Perform other functions, community outreach, and duties as may be directed by the City.

Through the establishment of a City Council recognized Commission of the Deaf (Commission), a standard level of support including publication of agendas, public meetings, and formalized meeting processes would be provided. A possible disadvantage of establishing the Commission could be the proposed outlined powers, duties, and functions of the new commission could be considered the purview of an existing Board or Commission. Another possible disadvantage could be transitioning the existing MDCC members into the proposed membership composition pursuant to Sections 800 and 803 of the Riverside City Charter.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item contributes to Strategic Priority No. 5 *High Performing Government* and Goal 5.2 – Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City.

The item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – This item builds community trust by identifying City Council process and procedure and providing transparency in municipal operations.
2. **Equity** – Regular review or Board and Commission purviews ensure resources are equitably distributed to all City of Riverside residents.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – This item ensures fiscal responsibility of City resources by outlining and reviewing processes to be used when conducting City Council business.
4. **Innovation** – Riverside is committed to meeting community needs in a changing environment including the addition of a Commission to meet the needs of the deaf

community.

- 5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – This item ensures sustainability through the development of a City Council recognized Commission of the Deaf, allowing the City the capacity to persevere, adapt and grow.


**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The estimated fiscal impact of this action, if approved, is \$30,000. The addition of a new commission would require administrative staff support from the City Clerk, City Attorney and City Manager’s office. Currently, the City budget contains minimal funding for the model deaf community program. Should City Council authorize via Ordinance the establishment of the Commission of the Deaf, a request for administrative funding will be brought to City Council for approval via the mid cycle budget update process. It is anticipated that the funding required annually is less than \$30,000 which includes staff time and would have a minor budgetary impact.

Prepared by: Megan Stoye, Principal Management Analyst  
 Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer  
 Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
 Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachment: Ordinance

Concurs with:

  
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 Clarissa Cervantes, Chair  
 Inclusiveness, Community Engagement and Governmental Processes Committee