



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION **DATE: February 27, 2019**

FROM: OFFICE OF THE MAYOR **WARD: ALL**

SUBJECT: TRAUMA INFORMED CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TRAINING FOR CITY COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE CITY STAFF AND SELECTED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

ISSUE:

To consider a recommendation to the City Council to mandate Trauma Informed Cultural Sensitivity Training for City Council members, executive level city staff and selected boards and commissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Human Relations Commission (HRC):

1. Receive a report on Trauma Informed Cultural Sensitivity Training
2. Direct staff to prepare a recommendation on behalf of HRC to City Council to implement mandatory Trauma Informed Cultural Sensitivity Training for City Council members, executive level city staff and selected boards and commissions
3. Direct staff on any other considerations in preparing the recommendation

BACKGROUND:

Riverside's founder, John W. North, was an abolitionist who came to this area to create a colony of like-minded people committed to justice and equality. This commitment to inclusiveness and celebrating diversity remains a priority for our city, and when you come to City Hall, you will see our Inclusive Community Statement posted in prominent places.

Twenty years ago, Riverside's Mayor's Multicultural Forum was created at the behest of community members, to serve as a safe public space where candid conversations can take place between city leadership and members of the community. The discussions cover everything from candid advice to discussions of community members' personal experiences with discrimination and how city officials can work with community leaders to address inequity and create a more inclusive environment in public spaces, at city events, and in staffing City Hall.

In August, many members of the forum expressed the desire for the conversations that were taking place to be translated into action. A small working group was formed and met several times to discuss how to best carry out initiatives that promote inclusion in Riverside.

Various ideas were explored, many event based, and it was decided that Riverside's community organizations are doing an excellent job of creating events that bring people together. The Multicultural Forum as a whole had often discussed topics related to racial equity, trauma stemming from discrimination, and a disconnect between decisions made at the leadership level in our community and their impact on traditionally underserved and disconnected communities. The group decided that building cross cultural understanding while acknowledging trauma and its effects on our community would be an appropriate first step in bringing the forum's discussions to those that make decisions but weren't at the table to hear the diverse perspectives offered.

DISCUSSION:

The small group created a recommended day-long interactive training that could be offered to people in positions of leadership within the city so that they could better understand the cultural perspectives of the constituents they serve. A draft of the recommended training, to be provided by highly qualified professionals from within our community that are already working and training in trauma, equity and inclusion, is attached (Attachment A). Also listed in the document are recommendations for the first groups of people that are in positions of leadership and would benefit the most from attending the training.

In light of recent inflammatory social media posts by Riverside students that included symbols of white nationalism, the group is submitting this recommendation, with urgency, to the HRC, so that the city can mirror their denouncements of hate speech with action.

There are several items for consideration that are presented to the HRC for discussion and action:

1. Should the HRC take the lead in bringing this training to the City Council as a recommendation?
2. If so, which groups would the HRC like to recommend for training?
3. Would this training be mandatory, and what are the implications if it is not?
 - a. If it is recommended as mandatory, there would need to be varying structures based on the trainee's status as staff, elected or appointed official.
 - b. If it is not mandatory, will the people that most need to broaden their cultural understanding miss the opportunity?
4. Would the HRC commit any portion of their budget to host a preview of the training to Human Relations Commissioners in advance of potential recommendations to the City Council?

Staff recommends that decisions about the location timing of the training are made by city officials with input from the trainers and with consideration for scheduling issues.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact of this item if approved is undetermined.

Submitted by: Liz Pinney-Muglia, Policy and Program Coordinator, Office of the Mayor