



Legislation Text

File #: 24-1430, Version: 1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Quality of Life, Arts & Culture

AGENDA DATE: June 26, 2024

COUNCIL DISTRICT(S): All

DEPARTMENT: Office of Equity and Inclusion

EXECUTIVE: M. Elizabeth Cedillo-Pereira

SUBJECT

Authorize the City Manager to: **(1)** approve the People and Pets Assistance Program (Program), as shown in **Exhibit A**, to provide financial support in the form of grants to the Dallas Animal Services' People and Pets Assistance Program for eligible recipients related to animal unpaid fines and fees without compromising public safety; **(2)** accept a grant from the National League of Cities (NLC) Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably (CAFFE) Initiative in the amount of \$10,000.00 to acquire consulting services to address fines and fees review with an equity-informed lens; **(3)** accept a grant from the NLC CAFFE Initiative in the amount of \$30,000.00 to award grants for the Program for the purpose of offsetting "animal at large" fines and fees on eligible recipients for the period February 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024; **(4)** receive and deposit funds in an amount not to exceed \$40,000.00 in the NLC Cities Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably (CAFFE) Initiative Grant Fund; **(5)** establish appropriations in an amount not to exceed \$40,000.00 in the NLC Cities Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably (CAFFE) Initiative Grant Fund; and **(6)** execute a grant agreement and required documents with the NLC Cohort, each approved as to form by the City Attorney - Total not to exceed \$40,000.00 - Financing: NLC - Cities Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably (CAFFE) Initiative Grant Fund

BACKGROUND

The Office of Equity and Inclusion in collaboration with the Dallas Animal Services (DAS), and the Office of Community Care are working together with the National League of Cities (NLC) and its new CAFFE Cohort to address the negative effects and harmful economic impact that debt can have on lower-income residents. The Office of Equity and Inclusion, DAS, and the Financial Empowerment team from the Office of Community Care (OCC) are collaborating to look at pet fines and fees. Per previous reports this has demonstrated to be the third highest citation that Dallas residents receive. The City of Dallas is using the assistance of CAFFE Initiative to focus on address inequities in DAS pet fines and fees.

In May 2020, the City of Dallas was selected as one of ten jurisdictions across the country to participate in the inaugural Cities and Counties for Fine and Fee Justice Cohort (Cohort) facilitated by PolicyLink, the City of San Francisco's Financial Justice Project, and the Fines and Fees Justice Center, each nationally recognized for their work in advancing racial and economic equity through research and advocacy. Selection and participation in the Cohort included a \$50,000 grant and an 18-month program to receive technical expertise and guidance from jurisdictions and thought leaders with experience in fine and fee reform. Staff provided an overview of the City's participation to the Workforce, Education and Equity Committee at the October 12, 2020, meeting.

In 2021, the City adopted the first citywide Racial Equity Plan to address disparities that historically disadvantaged communities experience. The CAFFE initiative aims to strengthen the financial security of families who are at risk of losing income and assets. This is in alignment with Dallas Racial Equity Plan and Dallas Equity Indicators Report where there are disparities in fines and fees. Indicator 40: Fines and Fees (60) Definition Ratio between the average amounts of fines and fees paid by Black and Asian defendants for cases adjudicated guilty by the City of Dallas Municipal Courts. Rationale High fines & fees may reduce low-income defendants' ability to pay for other essential needs. Communities below 1-30 have higher instances of receiving civil citations 42% of non-payment citations are from five zip codes: 75216(5), 75217(3), 75241(4), 75212(3), and 75211 (4). Located in Council Districts numbers: 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8. Disparate impact in Historically Disadvantaged Communities (HDCs). These areas are high need, lower-income, and have high animal related service needs.

This partnership with the NLC CAFFE Initiative Grand Fund and the team collaboration contributes to the pillar work that the City is engaged in to advancing equity by addressing disparities in fines and fees without compromising public safety. The fines and fees impact communities differently, disproportionately effecting minority and low-income residents. The project embeds equitable changes for all pets, and owners, helped by DAS. Reclaiming fees should not be a barrier for pets returning to caring and loving homes. The project is providing a new perspective on equity within fines and fees and is working in collaboration with NLC to enable understanding of the unique challenges of residents of color and low-income, as well as to, increasing alternative methods to the reclaim fees. The Dallas team collaborative effort has been able to explore financial inclusion of services and programs, engage in peer learning, and share Dallas' comprehensive and cross collaborative approach to addressing disparities.

On November 9, 2022, the City of Dallas (COD) submitted the application for the 2022 Cities Addressing Fines and Fees (CAFFE) Initiative to focus on address inequities in Dallas Animal Services' (DAS) pet fines and fees. COD prepared an application that meet the needs of the DAS vision to work with the National Leagues of Cities (NLC) to understand the public's needs reclaim fees. Equity is a strong core value of City of Dallas. The City of Dallas is part of the eight cities selected cities including Birmingham, AL; Las Vegas, NV; Maywood, IL; Montgomery, AL; Pueblo, CO; St. Louis, MO; and Washington, DC. These cities were selected for the 2023 CAFFE Cohort to address the impacts of municipal fines and fees on residents.

On October 25, 2023, the NLC provided a Memorandum of Understanding to the City of Dallas communicating that the NLC intended to grant \$30,000.00 in implementation grant funds to the City of Dallas in addition to the \$10,000.00 planning grant, with a total amount not to exceed \$40,000.00. This is to support the second phase of the CAFFE project. This Initiative Implementation Grant Funding is related to the Notice of the CAFFE second cohort where the City of Dallas is implementing a pilot program focused on addressing pet fines and fees for its residents.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS)

On June 25, 2024, the Quality of Life, Arts, & Culture Committee voted for approval this resolution to be recommended for City Council’s consideration and adoption.

FISCAL INFORMATION

Fund	FY2024	FY2025	Future Years
NLC - Cities Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably (CAFFE) Initiative Grant Fund	\$40,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

OWNER

National League of Cities (NLC) for the Cities Addressing Fines and Fees Equitably (CAFFE)