



Kate Harrison  
Councilmember, District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 11, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Harrison, Councilmember Bartlett

Subject: Referral to the June 2023 Budget Process to Increase Capacity for Berkeley Community Media

RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$54,000 to the June, 2023 budget Process to increase personnel funding for Berkeley Community Media (BCM), advancing two current part time employees to full time.

CURRENT SITUATION, EFFECTS, AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

BCM is funded through the City of Berkeley's IT Department and the Berkeley Rent Board. Between these two entities, BCM receives \$253,000 per year (\$231,000 from the IT Department and \$22,000 from the Rent Board). Before 2006, Berkeley Community Media (BCM) had five full-time employees with full health, dental, and vision coverage and one part-time employee. Between 2004 and 2006, the IT department cut BCM's funding by 15% and has not increased it since. In 2016, the Rent Board increased BCM's budget from \$20,000 to \$22,000 a year; this additional \$2,000 is the only funding increase BCM has received in 18 years despite inflation increasing 57% in that same period. As a result, Berkeley Community Media now only has one full-time employee and only two of its eight employees are eligible for healthcare.

Fortunately, BCM has a team of dedicated individuals who work hard to maintain a vibrant community with limited funding, but not without personal and financial strain. BCM staff has experienced a hardship of carrying out programming, administrative, and educational duties with only one full time employee. To continue maintaining the existing programming at its full capacity, many part time employees must donate volunteer hours. Inadequate funding limits BCM's programming and detrimentally affects students who, as a result of strained resources, have less access to services. By increasing its staff budget, BCM will be able to provide more stable staffing with adequately paid experts, dedicated to providing our community with a unique and equity driven service.

BACKGROUND

BCM is Berkeley's Public, Education and Government community media center,

specifically designed to address the needs of Berkeley residents. BCM's primary mission is to enhance the transparency of local government and civic affairs and provide residents of Berkeley an opportunity to produce media and share it with their community.

While there are a handful of other community-based media programs in the Bay Area, BCM is uniquely positioned to serve Berkeley. It is the only mission driven and equity centered media company in Berkeley. BCM films City Council meetings as well as Rent Stabilization Board and ZAB meetings, enhancing the transparency of local government. It provides coverage for city events such as the North Berkeley Senior Center re-opening, the Milvia Bike Path ribbon cutting, the digital kiosks in Downtown and the street renaming for Kala Bagai Way.

BCM provides an opportunity for local residents to share their stories by participating in media classes and a community of individuals who are available to aid with development and production. BCM has its own local television station, allowing community members the opportunity to air programs from painting shows to films, to local news coverage. Its location in the Maudell Shirek building, Berkeley's Old City Hall, makes it accessible to a diverse population of people by public transportation in the heart of Berkeley. It has also invested in local community organizations and partners such as the Dorothy Day House, the Women's Daytime Drop-in Center, St Mary's Center, La Peña Cultural Center, Berkeley Symphony, and Luna Dance Studio and produces and airs live and taped coverage of diverse local arts, educational, and cultural events, including the World Music Festival, Holocaust Remembrance Day, forums featuring Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Mark DeSaulnier on race relations and Congresswoman Lee and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley's forum titled, "A Dialogue on Women of Color Running for Office."

Finally, BCM makes creative education and expensive arts equipment accessible to those who otherwise may not be able to afford it by providing critical training in production, editing and podcasting and periodically offering master classes from industry expert and access to professional equipment. BCM offers a membership program to anyone interested in advancing their video editing and production skills and provides a 50% membership discount to Berkeley residents at \$60 a year. A membership offers access to a high-quality production studio, media lab, field equipment, unlimited classes and workshops and the ability to submit programs to BCM's local television station.

Individuals who are unable to pay membership fees or class costs, may volunteer their time through internship opportunities. BCM also hosts a youth and Berkeley High School internship program, training students in cinematography, video editing, special effects as well as media literacy and analysis. It hosts industry professionals to speak to students about career paths and how skills they learn at BCM can be professionally applicable.

As a Public, Education, and Government (P.E.G) access television station and production facility, BCM provides affordable and accessible media services, training,

and access to high-quality film production equipment, for filmmakers, amateur television producers and youth from Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality, BCM’s mission is to provide a voice to Berkeley’s most under-resourced and underrepresented communities.

It has a membership of more than 83 diverse producers and supporters. Nearly 30% of those who reported demographic information are people of color, and 20% have an income level of \$25,000 or less; 53% of members identify as female. BCM’s bylaws specify that it recruits and supports members who reflect Berkeley’s community, including people of color and disabled persons. Its Board of Directors reflects this commitment to diversity, with 27% identifying as Black and Latinx, 45% identifying as female, 18% identifying as persons with disabilities, and 18% identifying as LGBTQ.

**Overview of Proposed Staffing Costs**

BCM’s current personnel budget totals \$268,000, 83% of its annual \$323,000 budget. The additional \$54,000 would allow BCM to offer much needed cost of living adjustments (COLAS), add hours to existing employees, and provide healthcare for two employees (bringing the number receiving healthcare to three). The budget referral, totaling \$54,000, is comprised of four distinct financial needs.

Category	Annual Amount
Employee raises	\$12,200
Additional employee hours	\$27,400
Additional payroll	\$3,000
Healthcare	\$11,200
Total cost allocation	\$54,000

Employee raises would range from a 1.2%-2.4%, increasing hourly compensation from \$20.00-\$28.00/hour to \$20.48-\$28.34/hour.

Four employees would be compensated for some of their additional work hours. Two employees will gain three and four hours respectively per week. Two employees will gain eight paid hours per week, making them eligible for healthcare benefits.

**FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION**

\$54,000 to stabilize BCM’s staff budget.

Referral to the June 2023 Budget Process to Fund an Increase in Staff Hours for  
Berkeley Community Media

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Not applicable.

CONTACT PERSON

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