



CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Disabilities Commission

February 8, 2024

Re: Budget Funding and Accessibility-Related Services, FY2025

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council:

To further improve access to government services for people in the community, the Disabilities Commission requests Management and City Council support the following proposed new decision items for the FY2025 Budget:

1. **Dedicating Sidewalk Inconvenience Fees to Maintenance and ADA Sidewalk Projects.** The Commission requests that all sidewalk inconvenience fees collected by the City, or an amount equivalent thereto, be dedicated solely for sidewalk maintenance and accessibility-related projects on City sidewalks and be added to the annual budget for these items.
2. **ADA Symposium Training for DEI Officer.** Annual funding to send the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer to the national ADA Symposium for training and an opportunity to meet with national leaders on accessibility in government services.
3. **Centralized and Dedicated Fund for Employee Accommodations.** Rather than rely on Departments independently being responsible for funding its employees' accommodations, the Commission requests the City consider implementing one centralized accommodation fund. The benefit of this is to avoid conflicts between Departments and its employees for the costs of accommodation. While such a fund is not a standard practice, it is more commonly being recognized as a best practice for employee accommodations.
4. **First Responders and Disability Awareness Training.** This training is for staff to learn new skills or as a refresh on how to respond appropriately to situations when encountering individuals with disabilities, challenges faced and how to overcome them, as well as training on the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Commission is aware of training through the state in partnership with Niagara University, as well as the national ADA symposium.
5. **Dedicated full or part-time ADA Coordinator.** Council consider funding for a full or part-time ADA Coordinator. Or perhaps more immediately, cover the financial costs needed to provide protected time for the current ADA Coordinator.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jacque Sample
Chair, Disabilities Commission