

# Memo

To: Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission

From: René LeBeau

Date: October 3, 2018

Re: Funding for translated candidate introductions

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## **Overview**

The Democracy Voucher program first launched in 2017. During and following the launch, staff received feedback from community-based organizations (CBOs) and Seattle residents, including limited-English communities, elderly populations, and those with limited access to the internet. One of the common barriers to voucher participation is the limited information about candidates running in Seattle's elections prior to the primary election and limited information in languages other than English.

Given 2017's early January launch date, Seattle residents did not yet have traditional information resources such as the pamphlet and video voter guide, which are made available mid-July.

The launch date for 2019 is now February 12, but this is still months ahead of traditional candidate information. Candidates need access to voucher funds early in the election cycle, and residents need access to candidate information early in the cycle.

## **Request**

In line with the program's goal to increase the number of Seattle residents who contribute to local candidate campaigns, the SEEC staff requests funding to create a resource for residents to learn about all of the Seattle candidates and to encourage participation within the Democracy Voucher program.

The SEEC staff requests a budget of approximately \$61,500 to create a resource for Seattle residents, essentially a 150-word introductory statement provided by candidates when they begin filing reports with our office that will be translated and available in 15 languages. The budget includes estimates for translation costs, community review of the materials to ensure accuracy of the translations, marketing to distribute the resource, and community liaison outreach to directly inform communities. We anticipate CBOs who are awarded outreach contracts will also inform community members of this new resource.

## Budget Estimates

Activity	Estimated Budget
<b>Translations and Community Review</b> - 150 words in 14 languages for 50 candidates	\$51,500
<b>Media</b>	\$5,000
<b>Community Liaison outreach</b>	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	\$61,500

## Benefits

- Provide a resource to educate residents about all candidates prior to the primary election.
- Provide translated resources for candidates to use in community to encourage participation among all Seattle communities.
- Encourage use of vouchers before the primary and general election to help support campaigns
- Provide a printed resource for those who do not have access to the internet to learn about candidates ahead of the voters' pamphlet.
- Respond to community and resident feedback by supplying candidate information early and in language.
- Provide a resource for opt-in participants to learn about candidates. Voter pamphlets are only automatically mailed to households with a registered voter.