

## IMPACT STATEMENT

**Legislation title:** \*Authorize a Special Appropriation grant agreement with Street Roots in an amount not to exceed \$11,850 to expand its vendor zine project (Ordinance)

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**Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:**

Street Roots is a non-profit corporation seeking support for its bi-annual zine project, complementing its weekly newspaper, which is purchased by vendors for 25 cents, who then sell each newspaper for \$1.00

Street Roots' vendors have been meeting as a creative writers group for several years, and then began its bi-annual zine project in winter 2015. The zine is a 32-page publication that is written entirely by vendors and then sold by the vendor community to earn extra income. Each zine is purchased by vendors for \$1.00 and sold to the public for \$4.00.

Street Roots exists to provide people who are experiencing poverty, mental and physical disabilities and other forms of bias and oppression the opportunity to create an income for themselves. At the same time, a community is formed to provide people with a sense of place and connection. Everyone is welcome at Street Roots as long as they abide by simple rules, which include being inclusionary. The community extends to the public – many of whom purchase the newspaper. With each sale, not only does a financial transaction occur but also an interaction occurs between two people who very likely would never connect with each other in other circumstances.

The zine is an example of the mission of the organization being achieved. All of the writing is produced by vendors who are either homeless or experiencing extreme poverty – a group whose voices are not represented in the published world. Over half of the vendors are people of color, and a majority of the vendors have a physical or mental disability. The contributors to the zine reflect the vendor community.

Vendors and volunteers composed the zine editorial committee with Street Roots staff to determine which pieces will be published in the zine. Vendors also actively edit the final product. Vendors who do not typically participate in community-building activities have submitted work for the zine.

An example of the voices shared is *On My Concrete Bed* by Achilles Corelleone:

No matter where I go, I never feel that I belong  
I long for the days when I had a home.  
Time and fate have had their toll on me  
Unable to work due to injuries  
A cold sidewalk is where I lay my head

Is that where they'll find me when I'm dead?  
 People look down on me with disgust or pity  
 As if this is where I choose to be.  
 I would not wish this life on anyone  
 Please don't think I'm having fun.  
 If I could swap places with them for an hour or two  
 They'd be glad they're not in my shoes  
 Yes I get social security due to many disabilities.  
 It's not enough to put a roof over my head  
 So the cold ground is what I dread  
 When I'm finally dead,  
 Will it be on my concrete bed?

**Financial and budgetary impacts:**

Funding for this grant is available in the FY2016-17 budget in the General Fund Special Appropriations.

**Community impacts and community involvement:**

The Street Roots vendor zine project meets the goal of equity and inclusion. Common experiences for people living on the streets or in extreme poverty are the lack of a voice, community or purpose. The zine project provides all three to some of our city's most vulnerable, as well as educating the reader about their experiences. The zine and the Street Roots newspaper are two of only a handful of publications in Portland to consistently feature people of color and their perspectives.

The zine is filled with vendors expressing their experiences living on the streets, often with mental illness and other disabilities. Contributor Maddy Brown-Clark wrote: "It was all like a bad dream but I was wide awake. I had no medication and the shelters were so full. No one would let me use the toilet or charge up my electric wheelchair. It was like I wasn't even a human being."

**Budgetary Impact Worksheet**

**Does this action change appropriations?**

- ☐ YES: Please complete the information below.  
☒ NO: Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount