

Briefing Note

Subject: Request for Funding for Hearing Assistive Listening Devices

Executive Summary

The theatre recently installed a hearing loop system to enhance the auditory experience for patrons with cochlear implants and hearing aids. However, a gap in service for patrons with hearing difficulties who do not use these devices has been identified. Currently, there are only two handheld assistive listening devices available, which proved insufficient during recent events with larger groups of senior patrons. To better serve the theatre audience and ensure inclusivity, the Theatre is requesting funding to purchase additional handheld devices. The cost for two kits (10 devices total) is approximately \$5,000.

Background

Accessibility and inclusivity are core values of the theatre. The hearing loop system installed last year significantly improved the experience for many patrons with hearing impairments. However, theatre patrons have identified a critical need for more handheld assistive listening devices to accommodate those patrons who do not have hearing aids or cochlear implants. During recent events, several seniors were unable to fully enjoy the performances due to a shortage of these devices.

Current Inventory and Usage

- **Existing Equipment:** 2 handheld assistive listening devices.
- **Recent Event Feedback:** Several seniors reported difficulty hearing during performances due to a lack of available devices.
- **Average Attendance:** Many events attract a significant number of senior patrons, indicating a consistent need for additional devices.

Proposed Purchase

To address this issue, theatre staff propose purchasing two additional kits of handheld assistive listening devices. Each kit includes:

- 5 handheld devices
- 1 recharging stand

Total Cost: \$2,500 per kit

Total Funding Requested: \$5,000 for two kits

Benefits

1. **Enhanced Accessibility:** Ensures all patrons, regardless of whether they have hearing aids, can enjoy performances.

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2. **Inclusivity:** Supports the Town's commitment to providing an inclusive environment for all audience members.
3. **Improved Patron Experience:** Reduces frustration and enhances enjoyment for patrons with hearing difficulties.
4. **Community Support:** Demonstrates the Town's dedication to accommodating the needs of our diverse community, particularly our senior patrons.

Budget and Justification

Itemized Costs:

- **2 Kits of Handheld Devices:** \$2,500 each, totaling \$5,000

These devices are essential for providing an inclusive experience and accommodating all patrons. The investment will ensure the theatre can adequately serve groups and avoid situations where patrons are left without the necessary equipment.

Conclusion

Staff respectfully request the Town Accessibility Committee to approve funding of \$5,000 for the purchase of two kits of handheld assistive listening devices. This will significantly improve the ability to serve all patrons, particularly those with hearing difficulties who do not use hearing aids or cochlear implants.

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Date: June 7, 2024

Received By:

Title:

Date:

Administration Follow Up:

Notes indicating outcome, i.e approved to proceed, recommended report for a report for Council, R&P or DMT, etc.