

FY 2026-2027 BUDGET QUESTION

Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Communications & Engagement;

CBQ NO.: 73

REQUESTED BY: (District 3) José Velásquez

DATE REQUESTED: Monday, July 27, 2026 11:34 AM

DATE POSTED:

REQUEST:

On January 2nd, 2026, a memo titled “Televising Quality of Life Commissions” outlined the cost of televising all Quality of Life commissions would cost \$25,000 in additional staff time. Other support services, such as interpretation services were not included in the estimate. Could you please provide an updated ongoing estimate, including other support services?

RESPONSE:

For all 12 Quality of Life (QOL) Commissions, the estimated cost to proactively televise and provide “other support services” would be \$157,680. This estimate assumes that:

- All commissions can be accommodated in an ATXN appropriate meeting room;
- ATXN staff is available to record or broadcast all 12 QOL meetings for an annual cost of approximately \$23,760;
- Each QOL commission receives one Tier 1 interpreter (\$5,580 per commission) **and** American Sign Language interpretation (\$5,580 per commission) for an annual cost of approximately \$133,920;
- QOL Commission meetings last an average of 2 hours; and
- Average number of meetings per commission per year is 12 meetings.

As a slightly lower-cost alternative, assuming the interpretation service is provided by an automated captioning tool, the estimated cost would adjust to \$133,020 annually for all 12 QOL commissions. Automated interpretation can be provided at \$42,300 annually for all 12 QOL commissions, but is not appropriate for ASL.

Automated captioning software provides live captions and spoken-language interpretation for all Tier 1 and Tier 2 languages, plus approximately 55 additional languages, for \$150 per meeting hour, regardless of the number of supported languages used during the meeting. Participants access interpretation using their own smartphone or tablet, and Austin Communications & Engagement is able to provide iPads for participants who do not have access to a personal device.

Consistent with the [January 2, 2027 memorandum](#), please keep in mind:

- Staff have experienced challenges securing qualified interpreters for ASL and Tier 2 languages.
- Simultaneous interpretation requires two interpreters per language for the duration of the meeting. Costs increase with each additional language.
- All Quality of Life Commission agendas currently provide contact information to request specific language interpretation services.