



**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION
AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION
Recommendation number: 20170606-05A**

WHEREAS, the African American Resource Advisory Commission (the "Commission") is authorized by Austin City Code § 2-1-101 to advise the City Council on issues related to the quality of life for the City's African American community; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is specifically authorized to recommend programs designed to alleviate any inequities that may confront African Americans in social, economic, and vocational pursuits, including (1) health care; (2) housing, including affordable housing, home ownership, and homelessness; (3) entertainment opportunities for professionals and students; (4) employment; and (5) cultural venues, including museums, theaters, art galleries, and music venues; and

WHEREAS, African Americans account for 8% of the population in Travis County and 21% of those booked in Travis County jail and one fourth of African Americans in Travis County live below the federal poverty threshold. According to Austin Public Health, African American residents also have the highest rates of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and only 26% of African American adults over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's degree which contributes to lower household incomes for this demographic.

WHEREAS, the Commission has focused its FY18 budget recommendations around the City Council's strategic outcomes and the need to address the educational, health, and economic disparities in the African American community. These strategic outcomes align with the recommendations from the Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities findings and the Commission's priorities.

WHEREAS, the Commission supports these recommendations and the City of Austin's efforts to address the needs of the African American community.

Be It Resolved,

1.

The Commission recommends that the City of Austin specifically invest \$3,500,000 to address disparities and inequities in the African American community around economic opportunity and affordability, health, cultural learning and opportunities, and safety.

2.

The City of Austin invest \$1,500,00 to provide economic opportunities in the African American community around job training programs in the areas of technology, STEM, and healthcare.

3.

The City of Austin collaborate with the Austin Independent School District and higher education institutions to develop a pilot program establishing a direct pipeline of African American high school seniors to college/university.

WHEREAS, according to City of Austin data, the unemployment rate of African Americans was 10.5%, in 2014 and has steadily increased. The unemployment rate among African Americans in Austin is almost 4 times higher than the lowest percentage.

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the City of Austin properly invest to address this inequity. The investment of these dollars will result in a specific return, employment among African American Austinites and reduction in the unemployment rate. The goal here is not only to provide employment opportunities and economic development to African Americans, but also to help rebuild and maintain the African American community in Austin.

Be It Resolved,

4.

The Commission recommends that \$750,000 be allocated to provide healthcare outreach and services within the African American community in Austin. A portion of the allocated be specifically earmarked for partnerships with community organizations or entities providing mental health services in African American communities at no cost or sliding scale to residents.

5.

\$1,000,000 be allocated to increase cultural and learning opportunities to African Americans in the City of Austin. Increasing educational opportunity and educational success for African Americans is one way to bridge the economic divide and increase access to opportunity.

WHEREAS, the U.S. President's Council on Jobs and Economic Effectiveness found that 3.3 million jobs go unfilled because the potential workforce does not have matching skills or training, and that by 2020 there will be 1.5 million too few college graduates to meet employers' demands.

Be It Resolved,

6.

The Commission recommends that \$250,000 be allocated to address safety concerns in the African American community in Austin.

7.

The City of Austin invest dollars into summer enrichment programs for African American middle and high school students which provide broad range of educational experiences, programs which empower and provide at risk students resources to build their self-esteem, confidence, positive peer relationships, and employment through mentorship and other resources.

8.

That the City of Austin invest dollars in nonprofit organizations which provide employment, housing, career development, and educational assistance to African Americans who have been previously incarcerated.

WHEREAS, this recommendation by the Commission for the investment of \$3,500,000 in support of improving the quality of life of African Americans specifically align with City Council's Strategic Outcomes and the Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,
THAT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION, IN
SUPPORT OF ADDRESSING THE RACIAL DISPARITIES AND INEQUITIES IN THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN AUSTIN STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT
THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE REQUEST OF \$3,500,000.**

I affirm this recommendation was approved by the African American Resource Advisory Commission.

Vote: 9 – 1

Abstain: Commissioner Clifford

Absent: 5 - Commissioner Dr. Chiquita Eugene, Commissioner LaTisha Anderson, Commissioner Tam Hawkins, Commissioner Miriam Conner, and Commissioner Aaron Whatley



Daryl Horton
AARAC Commission Chair



Date