

AAQoL Budget Recommendation #1 – Mental Health Education, Outreach, and Service Provision

Recommendation Description

This recommendation would create a mental health outreach, education, and service campaign targeted to the Asian Pacific Islander (API) community in the City of Austin. The campaign would focus on (1) reducing the stigma of mental health issues within the API community, (2) identifying mental health issues, (3) collecting data about mental health issues within the API community and the need for mental health services, and (4) connecting people to mental health support systems.

This budget recommendation seeks to expand the capacity of existing Austin Public Health (APH) outreach/education contracts to target the API community. APH staff has indicated that a mental health outreach and education campaign could be accomplished within existing funds.

This budget recommendation also seeks to expand the capacity of existing APH contracts to provide services such as direct mental health services to the API community and telehealth services in Asian languages. The AAQoL Advisory Commission is requesting \$200,000 to fund the increased capacity.

CM Recommended Budget Result

\$200,000 is included in the proposed budget. However, it is combined with expansion of access to affirming mental health therapy for the LGBTQIA+ community.

AAQoL Budget Recommendation #2 – Transportation to City Events Pilot

Recommendation Description

This recommendation would create a pilot program to provide transportation of socially-isolated residents to Asian American Resource Center (AARC) events as well as other city events. The pilot program would pick up individuals and groups from areas of the city with high concentrations of Asian Americans. The pilot would utilize existing City resources, where feasible. The pilot program would provide transportation to up to 10 AARC/City events in FY 2020 that are open to the public and would also test pick up alternative pick-up/drop-off locations consisting of homes and apartment complexes in different parts of the city.

The proposed pilot seeks to expand the capacity of transportation services to the AARC, which is currently only provided through the Senior Meals Program. It is intended that three to four of the pilot program events be Senior Meals Program events so that AARC can test different pick-up/drop-off sites to reach people that don't normally participate in the program and to gather data to improve service delivery. The pilot will also include at least one cross-cultural event with PARD's Senior Transportation Program.

The pilot would use the current AARC 11-passenger van as well as PARD Transportation vehicles, which are available for use on evenings and weekends. For events that take place during the week, rentals vehicles are available from the Facilities Department at a cost of ~\$51/day. Because PARD Transportation staff and the AARC driver are at capacity, the pilot would need temporary drivers at a cost of ~\$15/hour. AARC staff have stated that they can handle the coordination effort for events at the AARC. These tasks including advertising that transportation services are available, intake of requests, scheduling drivers, and data gathering. PARD Transportation has been asked to coordinate two to three city events held at other locations.

Discussions with PARD Transportation and AARC staff indicated that a pilot program of 10 events could be accomplished at a cost of ~\$6,500. The cost includes the temporary drivers, fuel, Facilities Department vehicle rentals, and a minimal amount of maintenance.

CM Recommended Budget Result

\$6,500 is included in the proposed budget.

AAQoL Budget Recommendation #3 - Install room divider for AARC Ballroom

Recommendation Description

This recommendation would fund the installation of a room divider for the Asian American Resource Center (AARC) Ballroom based on the original Phase 1 Master Plan to accommodate increased demand for mid-sized meeting space.

The divider would provide more flexibility in meeting the needs of the community. It would provide different space options for different activities. Additional staff was hired in 2019, including a full-time permanent Marketing Rep, putting AARC in a better position to identify new groups and offer more options for event collaboration and other programs.

The cost to purchase and install the divider is estimated to be \$200,000.

CM Recommended Budget Result

This item does not appear to be funded in the proposed General Fund budget. However, funding is anticipated to be included in bond funding for the Asian American Resource Center.

AAQoL Budget Recommendation #4 - Create an Immigrant Affairs Office with at least one full-time staff person

Recommendation Description

We recommend that the City of Austin create an Immigrant Affairs office with at least one full-time staff member. This office would act as a central location for information about city services and programs that are available to immigrants. It would also be tasked with outreach to the various immigrant

communities to build trust and collect feedback about the City and how its programs and departments are serving the immigrant community. This effort would increase efficiency by creating a “one stop shop” for community members and for departments that have questions/concerns about how their services and programs are being accessed by immigrants in Austin and help avoid any duplication of services. It also would make City services and programs more effective by ensuring that immigrant community members are aware of those services and programs and create a direct line for feedback regarding their experiences with said services. The office would increase equity by ensuring that the voice of a vulnerable population is elevated, and it would also bring the City of Austin to parity with the other Texas major cities, which are already serving their immigrant communities through an established Immigrant Affairs office.

CM Recommended Budget Result

Funding in the amount of \$100,000 is included in the proposed budget for Equity Office Immigrant Services Staffing (Business Process Specialist) to serve the immigrant community through policy and staffing services.

AAQoL Budget Recommendation #5 – Budget Object Codes for Translation and Interpretation Services for All City Departments

Recommendation Description

The AAQoL Advisory Commission recommends that all City Departments budget a certain amount in the new Translation and Interpretation object codes that would force Departments to make an assessment of their need for translation and interpretation services. That assessment will be evaluated as those object codes are used to record expenses during the year, improving accuracy in future years. If no budget is included in these object codes, Department staff may be unaware that they exist and tracking of those expenses would be compromised.

In recent years, the City has focused on increased awareness of the importance of language access to meet community needs. The Language Access Coordinator was created. The City website is language accessible. Vendors have been identified to translate documents and the City is working on identifying certified language interpreters for Department use. There are new budget codes for Translation and Interpretation services. The recommendation is for Departments to use these new codes to plan for translation and interpretation services.

This recommendation can be accomplished within existing funds.

CM Recommended Budget Result

This item did not include a funding request.