



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number: (20200410-3a): COVID-19 Minority Small Business Aid

WHEREAS, immigrant-owned businesses in 2019 employed 8 million Americans; and

WHEREAS, about 3.2 million immigrants ran their own businesses, making up one in every five entrepreneurs in the country; and

WHEREAS, in Texas in 2018 there were: 389,455 immigrant entrepreneurs and 635,942 employees at immigrant-owned firms; and

WHEREAS, in the Austin Metro Area in 2017 we had 25,037 immigrant entrepreneurs; and

WHEREAS, local small businesses continue to shape and influence the local economic landscape of our city. Unlike other businesses, many local small Latino minority/women-owned businesses continue to face market and financial barriers and discrimination. People of color continue to earn less than their white counterparts and are routinely subjected to predatory lending and higher interest rates, which impairs their ability to raise traditional capital and financing. Much of these disparities are documented in previous City of Austin disparity study reports; and

WHEREAS, to date, there are gaps in the proposed loan programs recommended by the City that do not serve/support many Latino own businesses and/or our immigrant owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission's purpose is to advise the City of Austin on Latino/Hispanic American quality of life;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission requests that Austin City Council:

1. Expand scopes of work, tasks and deliverables with existing service provider contracts with Trade Associations and Chambers in an effort to expand the City's efforts to support local small businesses, enhance communications, outreach and resources including, but not limited to the following:
 - Expand and provide additional bilingual technical support and advocacy to local small firms to address and resolve potential procurement, contract and/or payment resolutions with Prime contractors and/or the City of Austin; and

- Expand and provide bilingual technical assistance, consultation and support to local small, minority owned construction/consulting firms interested in seeking and submitting SBA loan requests; and
- Expand and provide additional bilingual outreach and communications to local, small firms access City/Community information, resources during the COVID-19 pandemic to support their businesses; and
- Apply an across the board flat contract increase to all services providers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

- Allow for the electronic submission of invoicing and fast track payments; and
- Fast track payment on invoicing for all consultants/contractors working on City of Austin projects; and
- Fast track payment/release of retain-age where appropriate; and
- If possible, provide signature micro loans not based upon SBA, CDBG and/or federal standards because it is well documented that Latino owned businesses are subjected to predatory lending, discrimination and/or simply don't qualify; and that borrowers' personal information is protected against discrimination and harassment due to their status, race or socioeconomic background.

Date of Approval: April 10, 2020

Record of the vote: 8-0

Attest: 

(Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission Staff Liaison)