



JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION 20200422-02B

Date: April 22, 2020

Subject: Support of Commission on Immigrant Affairs Budget Request on Funding of Immigrant Legal Services

Motioned By: Crawford

Seconded By: Orlowski

Recommendation

The Joint Inclusion Committee supports the Commission on Immigrant Affairs Budget Request on Funding of Immigrant Legal Services

Description of Recommendation to Council

See attached.

Rationale:

The Joint Inclusion Committee strengthens connections between City boards and commissions concerned with quality of life in Austin and advises the City Council on issues pertaining to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This resolution furthers equity, diversity and inclusion.

Vote

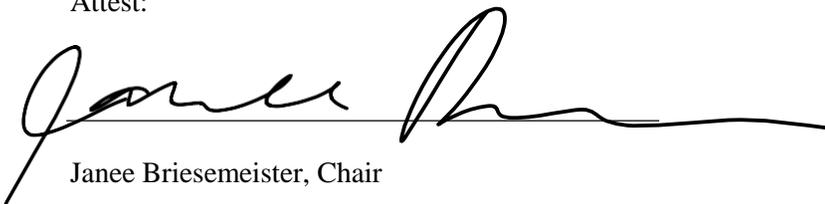
For: Briesemeister, Austen, Solis, Crawford, Stanton, Curry, Orlowski

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Weigel, Jones

Attest:



Janee Briesemeister, Chair

Legal Services Funding passed by Commission on Immigrant Affairs on 4/22/20

1) What did you hear from the community? We heard that legal services funding is crucial, and that there is still unmet need

2) What problem are they addressing? Helping immigrants who need access to counsel, and cannot afford attorneys. This is especially so for immigrants facing removal proceedings.

3) How does the problem show up? Who is most impacted? In a time of increased enforcement, more people are at risk of being placed in removal proceedings. In a time of increasingly restrictive immigration policy, people have more need of legal representation, as it's become very complicated, and the risks of completing applications incorrectly are extremely high. Those most impacted are low income immigrants.

4) Is there funding dedicated to address this problem? yes

5) which department administers it? Public Health

6) How much funding? One vendor receives \$210,000, one vendor receives \$70,000

7) Which organization is funded? How long have they been funded? American Gateways and Catholic Charities

8) How is success measured? Number of people served

9) what are the impacts? Who is served? Outcomes? Where are the gaps? Are there demographics?

There is a need for increased funding. Immigrants often work in the service industry and are being hard hit by the COVID-19 situation. To compound that, if they do not have work authorization, they are not eligible for unemployment, and if at least one person in the family does not have a social security number, the family is not eligible for the stimulus payment. This leaves immigrant families in a significantly worse situation than other Austin families at this time. Meanwhile, immigration rules continue to get more restrictive, so the need for legal representation increases. In fact, the President just tweeted that he would suspend all immigration, which puts immigrant families in Austin in dire need of representation.

10) How do we solve for the problem? We should add funding. With an additional \$130,000, Catholic Charities can hire an attorney to represent people in removal proceedings pro bono. With an additional \$100,000, American Gateways can continue to represent families already benefiting from city funds, and also double the number of new cases they can take.