

**RESOLUTION NO. 20220127-051**

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the challenges experienced daily by historically marginalized communities (including, but not limited to the geographically isolated, people living with disabilities, etc.); and

**WHEREAS**, the disparate outcomes during the pandemic for low-income families could have been significantly lessened if there was equitable access to additional health care/insurance, technology, and economic opportunity in our community; and

**WHEREAS**, Central Health formed the Central Health Equity Policy (CHEP) Council in 2015 to address health disparities in Travis County; and

**WHEREAS**, the CHEP Council launched the Pandemic Equity Committee in December 2020 to assess health outcomes related to the pandemic and develop recommendations to help ensure that decision-making regarding the City's preparedness, disaster response, and post-disaster community healing and recovery meaningfully accounts for existing and emergent challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, following months of research and discussion, the Pandemic Equity Committee developed recommendations that center equity in the disaster preparedness, response, and healing process; and

**WHEREAS**, these recommendations include addressing disaster preparedness by centering equity in the City of Austin Emergency Operations Plan, making it an evergreen document and improving data collection; developing a standard operating procedure (SOP) to ensure funds are allocated towards stipends and training that helps the community better understand how the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) works; developing an SOP for communications to be

translated into Spanish, the five most spoken Asian languages and any additional languages that may be required; updating the Hazard Risk Index; considering a long-term goal to establish a dedicated emergency funding stream for providers during a disaster; developing and reviewing after-action reports about previous Central Texas disasters to determine what lessons can be gleaned, including civil unrest in the Hazard Risk Index; including an SOP that uses Social Vulnerability Index and 211 data as baseline data; developing localized emergency response plans for those neighborhoods/areas including working cooperatively with stakeholders in those areas; and identifying an independent party of diversely selected individuals who will review and assess the EOC's response; and

**WHEREAS**, disaster response can be improved by designating a council-approved diverse community panel who will be activated at the beginning of a disaster to inform the process at the highest level of the Incident Command System and engaging behavioral scientists through Central Health, Austin Public Health and the EOC; and

**WHEREAS**, during the November 4, 2021 Austin City Council meeting the office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management presented a briefing on the City's After Action Report related to Winter Storm Uri; and

**WHEREAS**, the Winter Storm Uri after-action report recognized that the storm disproportionately impacted vulnerable populations; and City departments worked to address needs, but there were gaps in planning and operations for unhoused, elderly, lower-income residents, and other vulnerable populations; and

**WHEREAS**, the after-action report recommends to codify the role of the Austin Equity Office in Emergency Operations Center operations and emergency and continuity of operation plans; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Austin Strategic Direction 2023 “Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs, and values are recognized;” and

**WHEREAS**, these recommendations should be implemented by the EOC in collaboration with the community; and

**WHEREAS**, it is critical to ensure that future disaster responses include the most vulnerable; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The Austin City Council supports the recommendations outlined by the Pandemic Equity Committee and wishes to receive updates from the EOC and the Committee on their progress.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations, which shall include:

- (1) Formalize the role of the Austin Equity Office in Emergency Operations Center operations and emergency and continuity of operation plans, as recommended by the after-action report, and

- (2) Explore how an advisory panel might be formed to reflect and serve as the community's voice to provide input to City management regarding emergency management response and provide recommendations to council within 90 days of this resolution.

**ADOPTED:** January 27, 2022

**ATTEST:**

  
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Myrna Rios  
City Clerk