



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Human Rights Commission

Recommendation Number 20220304-002a: FY 2022-23 Budget Recommendation

WHEREAS, the Human Rights Commission of the City of Austin (“Commission”) advocates on behalf of human rights for all people in the City of Austin (“City”); and

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted Strategic Direction 2023, including the strategic outcomes of Economic Opportunity and Affordability; Mobility; Safety; Health and Environment; Culture and Lifelong Learning; and Government That Works for All; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Inclusion Committee hosted Budget Engagement Community Forums to receive feedback from the community on budget priorities, and to help ensure an inclusive and transparent budget process that incorporates resident and stakeholder feedback to ensure community priorities are being met;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission recommends the City Council to give careful consideration to the following Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Proposals:

DO NOT TOUCH THE FUNDING PRESENT OR FUTURE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**
- 2. DIRECT CASH ASSISTANCE FOR RENT OR ANY OTHER PURPOSE**
- 3. QWELL COMMUNITY GRANT TO CONDUCT DATA COLLECTION FOR LGBTQIA+ WELL BEING; THIS GRANT IS CONTRIBUTED TO THE LGBTQ QUALITY OF LIFE STUDY--\$500,000 GRANT WILL EXPIRE SOON AND \$300,000 WILL BE REQUESTED TO CONTINUE**
- 4. THE CITY OF AUSTIN EQUITY OFFICE AND VACANT POSITIONS FUNDS FROM THE VACANCY SAVINGS**
- 5. THE CITY OF AUSTIN OFFICE OF POLICE OVERSIGHT AND VACANT POSITIONS FUNDS FROM THE VACANCY SAVINGS**

- 6. AUSTIN PUBLIC HEALTH AND VACANT POSITIONS FUNDS FROM THE VACANCY SAVINGS**
- 7. ANY AND ALL MAC FUNDING**
- 8. ANY AND ALL FUNDING FOR THE CARVER MUSEUM**
- 9. GRANT FUNDING FOR THE AMERICAN GATEWAYS PROGRAM; MUST PROVIDE \$460,000 IF NOT MORE FOR THEIR NEW GRANT REQUEST**

Public Safety

- I. Continue funding to other social service agencies and non-police crisis intervention programs.
- II. Establish a bonus incentive program for officers that maintain a professional record clear of abuse of force allegations.

Health and Environment

- I. Community approach for health care navigation and support: Resources exist for specific communities, but coverage is not consistent across all constituencies.**
- II. The City of Austin should provide coordination/oversight to ensure resources are equitable and address gaps.**
- III. Outreach and Navigation: Digital Access: Includes wifi, devices, and training. Need to address different needs for seniors, kids in school, adults working from home, people with disabilities and/or who are homebound, people who need access to healthcare (e.g. telehealth), access to workforce development/job postings, etc. Targeted interventions specific to each community are needed.**
- IV. The City should include these recommendations in their digital inclusion strategic plan (TARA “Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs”).**
- V. Funding should be provided for programs to enroll inmates released into the community in health care coverage insurance plans.**

Economic Opportunity, Culture, & Affordability

- I. Public Utilities: Citizens of Austin should not be financially responsible for power and water they did not have; set aside financial resources from the Mayor’s strike fund to cover these costs.
- II. Allow citizens of Austin to pay the costs of any increased utility bills caused by the storm in installments without penalty so that their economic impact is minimized.
- III. The City should implement stable and affordable housing and transit, especially for large low income families not just single small units.
- IV. Funding for legal assistance for immigrants.
 - AMERICAN GATEWAYS PROGRAM

- V. Operational funding for nonprofits supported financially by the City of Austin.
- VI.
- VII. Increase economic opportunities, access to capital, small business support, and transit in East Austin.
- VIII. Address the need for digital access for seniors and low income neighborhoods, including public libraries, senior centers, wifi hotspots.
- IX. Provide ADA compliant access for people with disabilities (transportation/accessible and affordable housing).
- X. Provide funding for repairs and more funding for rental assistance to prevent homelessness.
- XI. Explore the creation of worker owned cooperatives.
- XII. Provide funding for training to transition to new employment in careers with sustainable living wages to provide economic stability.
- XIII. Provide funding for multigeneration programs and workplaces e.g. pathways to career and education for parents in low-income families, internship opportunities for seniors.
- XIV. More funding and support for existing cultural districts and community centers across all districts (Six Square Black Cultural District, LGBTQIA+ resources, Latino Cultural District, and Representation of Asian Arts and Culture).
- XV. Provide RISE funding beyond the pandemic; continue to fund the equivalent of the 25 million dollar rental assistance program.
- XVI. Increase support for interpreters, translation, multi-lingual emergency response including Asian languages.
- XVII. Provide funding to pathways to education and careers for people without documentation
- XVIII. Provide and set aside emergency funds for natural and other catastrophes that impact the City of Austin.
- XIX. Extend the eviction moratorium and provide funding for rental assistance to those in need.
- XX. Use funding to establish equity districts: Public/Private Partnerships where tech companies are asked to contribute funds to equity efforts in the city.

Affordability and Resiliency:

- Early Childhood Council: Maintain existing funding for early childhood programs and services through Austin Public Health
- For affordable housing: For families in Austin, child care is the second highest cost behind housing <https://data.austintexas.gov/stories/s/rt9q-qkym>
 - 90% of children under age 6 from households experiencing poverty are children of color
 - Request - affordable housing is built for/accessible for families (not just individuals, sufficient bedrooms for children)
 - Request: Incentivize/support co-location services like child care program within affordable housing developments
- LGBTQ QoL: Focus on senior housing, homeless/displaced youth support, expanding awareness of anti-discrimination protections/reporting processes.

○ It does us no good to do all of this work if the people who told us what they needed to improve their quality of life cannot afford to live here, it isn't safe for them to live here, or if they're discriminated against so much they relocate.

● Commission on Seniors New Request: Financial Support for Volunteer Ride Programs. Access to transportation continues to be a top concern for older adults. Ride share services may be too costly for older adults. Ride shares do not always accommodate riders who need assistance getting to and from a vehicle or who need a wheel chair or walker transported. PARD provides rides for older adults, but their services are limited. Volunteer ride services, such as Drive a Senior, Chariot and Capital City Village transport older adults to medical appointments and shopping. Most rides are given by volunteers driving their own cars. Some of the agencies also have vans and/or have small funds to cover the cost of a ride share if no volunteer is available. However the demand for rides exceeds the capacity of these organizations. The request is for an RFP to expand ride options for older adults.

● Commission on Seniors New Request: Transitioning 9 temporary Community Healthworkers positions to permanent positions focused on persons experiencing homelessness APH positions focused on persons experiencing homelessness. Additional request: at least one of those positions focus on the needs of older adults.

● Commission on Seniors New Request: Homelessness Prevention—Rental and Utility Assistance. Agencies serving older adults report that they are receiving an increasing number of requests for rental and utility assistance. Request to expand funding for these programs. Also look into the suggestion made at the 2/16 Townhall of the mismatch between rents based on % of Austin's ever increasing MFI and seniors on fixed incomes that are not increasing at the same pace.

● Commission on Seniors, support for continued funding: Senior Tax Exemption Outreach. Current budget includes \$20,000 for outreach to ensure older adults are receiving the over 65 property tax exemption to reduce their property taxes. The exemption is not given automatically, the homeowner must apply for it. Data suggests that many older adults are not receiving the exemptions they are entitled to. The additional exemptions are one tool to reduce displacement. Commission on Seniors would like this small program to continue.

Access and Engagement:

Commission on Seniors, new request: Quality of Life Survey of Seniors. There has never been a proper quality of life survey of older adults. Nearly 10 years ago then Mayor Leffingwell's task force conducted a survey as part of the Mayor's Task Force on Aging. However, 77% of respondents were white and this survey did not break down findings by race, ethnicity, or gender identification. Austin continues to have a fast growing population of seniors and pre-seniors. The Commission is seeking updated information about the community and granular information about the needs of diverse populations of older adults.

Commission on Seniors new request: One FTE to assist the Age Friendly Plan Coordinator. After several years of making the request the City Manager recommended and council approved the hiring of an Age Friendly Program Coordinator. The role of the coordinator is to work across departments in implanting the Age Friendly Action Plan.

The coordinator also meets with service providers and community organizations serving older adults. Both the pandemic and the winter storm highlighted the importance pandemic and the winter storm highlighted the importance of this role. The coordinator served on the emergency management team for both events and was a crucial link in getting information and resources out to both agencies and older adults in the community. As the population of older adults in Austin continues to grow, the city should put greater resources into serving this vulnerable population.

Commission on Seniors New Request: Transition 6 Admin Assistants at community centers from temporary to permanent. Support for a PARD request. Currently have temporary employees \$250K for 6 positions.

Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission New Request: Equitable Funding for the Carver. The Carver is underfunded when compared to the AARC (\$100K to \$200K less) and MACC (~\$400K less). According to Laura Esparza, this is due to two temporary positions that were moved to FTEs but never funded. PARD does not have the funds to accomplish this. Additional funding would be used for temps, commodities, and contracts. This item is supported by the Commission on Seniors.

Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission New Request: PARD Technology Upgrade.

Public Safety and Health:

Commission on Seniors, support for continued funding: Community Health Workers for older adults. The program was funded for 3 years at \$125,000/year and serves older adults at one Foundation Communities site. APH is supporting continued funding RFP in <https://www.austintexas.gov/article/rfp-2022-003-community-health-workers> to request funding for an additional site.

Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission

Continued or expanded funding: Immigrant Legal Services. AAQoL Advisory Commission, along with the Commission on Immigrant Affairs, has supported funding for immigrant legal services over several of the past budget cycles. The city currently contracts with American Gateways for this work. American Gateways was recently approved for city ARPA dollars and is currently trying to get Travis County to do the same.

Winter Storm Related: City Emergency Response Team :

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/homeland-security-andemergency-management/get-involved>

Seniors Recommendation on cold weather shelters

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=376216>

Seniors Recommendation on Emergency preparedness and response:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=364054>

Other:

- LGBTQ QOL: SOGI+ Data Collection
 - Ensuring that sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex demographic data is collected as part of the City's standard demographic data sets to avoid the need for repeated QOL studies.

Date of Approval: March 4, 2022

Record of the vote: 6-0; Chair Davis motion, Commissioner Garry Brown second. Voting in favor were Chair Davis, Vice Chair Casas, Commissioner Brienzi, Commissioner Garry Brown, Commissioner Caballero, and Commissioner Griffith. Commissioner Areche, Commissioner Breckenridge, Commissioner Jamarr Brown, Commissioner Museitif, and Commissioner Weigel were absent.

Attest: _____ *Jonathan Babiak*

Jonathan Babiak, Staff Liaison