



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION #: 20220328-004c7**

Date: March 28, 2022

Subject: Community Health Navigators

Motioned By: Fang Fang

Seconded By: Vincent Cobalis

COMMUNITY HEALTH NAVIGATORS

DESCRIPTION

The AAQoL Advisory Commission would like to recommend that the City increase funding for community health navigator (CHN) services.

CHNs are providing an essential service for Austin's Asian community, which has language access needs spanning multiple communities. Since the pandemic hit Austin in March of 2020, the demand for CHNs has spiked. One-time grant funding has helped meet these needs and allowed for the availability of services in multiple Asian languages, including Arabic, Burmese, Chin Tedim, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Nepali, Hindi, and Vietnamese. As these one-time funds expire, essential services to vulnerable communities may cease to exist.

Navigating the healthcare system can be a challenging task for native English speakers. For non-native English speakers, this challenge can be near impossible to overcome. Yet, accessing adequate health care services, is an essential service that some may say is a basic human right. Community health navigators assist Austin's non-native English speakers schedule appointments, fill out required paperwork, apply for and understand health insurance benefits, and many more essential services.

Austin's Asian community is diverse with many non-native English speakers. The lack of language access services isolates many Austin residents, preventing them from participating in civic life, which can lead to feelings of isolation. The lack of language access services is especially acute when dealing with healthcare. The inability to access adequate diagnoses and care can lead to a multitude of poor, but in many cases preventable, outcomes.

One-time Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) funding through Texas A&M University has allowed the City's current service provider to hire three additional CHNs focused on COVID-19 outreach. These CHNs have expanded the services provider's language portfolio to include Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, and Vietnamese speakers. This one-time funding is set to expire on December 31, 2022. The Commission requests funding to cover the remainder of FY 2023 (January 1 to September 30) so that these critical services can continue.

Cost is \$112,500.

DEPARTMENT

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ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Health & Environment: Healthy conditions among individuals (absence of unhealthy conditions);
Accessibility to quality health care services, both physical and mental.

VOTE

For: Kirk Yoshida, Fang Fang, Vince Cobalis, Hanna Huang, Sarah Chen, Azra Siddiqi, Meena Mutyala,
Zahra Shakur Jamal-Hassan, and Kuo Yang.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Pramod Patil, Pooja Sethi, and Salimah Shamsuddin.

Attest: Jeremy Garza, Staff Liaison, Equity Office:

x Jeremy Garza