



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION #: 20220328-004c6**

Date: March 28, 2022

Subject: Immigrant Legal Services

Motioned By: Fang Fang

Seconded By: Vincent Cobalis

IMMIGRANT LEGAL SERVICES

DESCRIPTION

The AAQoL Advisory Commission would like to recommend that the City increase funding for immigrant legal services.

Travis County is experiencing an urgent need for immigrant legal services for low-income immigrants. The latest US Census data shows that 17.8% of the total population of Travis County is foreign born. Many of these individuals are low-income and do not have full legal status. Stress, fear, and heightened anxiety are constant companions for those in the immigrant community without legal status. Anxiety regarding deportation, family separation, and securing gainful employment are widespread concerns.

Although many of these immigrants have a pathway to legal immigration status, they do not have the ability to secure it. Navigating a complex and opaque immigration system to secure legal status is often impossible without legal assistance and is cost-prohibitive to many low-income Austin/Travis County residents.

Funding is needed to provide dedicated immigrant legal services to low-income Asian immigrants and others in Austin to address the large number of individuals seeking services for deportation defense and consultations. The immigrant Asian population in Austin is diverse and has specific language access needs, and, without additional funding, low-income individuals will not be able to access the protection and services they need. Additional ongoing funding in the amount of \$100,000 would provide 50 one-on-one consultations to Asian immigrants as well as take on full representation of one new immigrant case per month. Outreach and education to the immigrant community could also be increased by five additional events.

Cost is \$100,000 ongoing.

DEPARTMENT

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ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Safety: Fair administration of justice.

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