



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Early Childhood Council

20220412-2biii: Recommendation related to community engagement for APH social service contracts

WHEREAS, the Strategic Direction 2023 identifies GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR ALL as a strategic outcome that includes believing that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical and innovative; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the City of Austin established an Equity Office to focus on advancing equity in all aspects of City operations; and

WHEREAS, the Equity Office works across all City departments and with major institutions, non-profits, and other community organizations working in Austin to build capacity and leadership in working from a racial equity lens; and

WHEREAS, a June 2018 report regarding the implementation of the Equity Assessment Toolⁱ identified weaknesses in community engagement by City departments but also strengths within Austin Public Health which “Uses formal processes to gather community feedback, including: focus groups, client surveys, public meetings, stakeholder groups, consulting with social services contractors and quality of life”; and

WHEREAS, principles of equitable public engagement (premised on the belief that everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that will affect their life) include providing equitable financial compensation to individuals and communities with lived experience, valuing their time and expertise in planning and implementationⁱⁱ; and specifically, for early childhood systems, centering parent voice in developing recommendationsⁱⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, among major U.S. metro areas, Austin saw the 12th biggest increase in the cost of living from 2010 to 2020, according to a new analysis of federal data^{iv}; and

WHEREAS, “Care work is vital to individual, household, and economic stability. Unfortunately, this highly demanded and demanding work is deeply undervalued and undercompensated. The care workers who allow those in their care—and their families—to flourish are paid persistently low wages with few employer benefits.”^v

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Early Childhood Council encourages the Austin City Council to consider requirements in City-funded social service contracts that:

- Include opportunity for community and client voice and input by requiring community and client engagement and feedback in the development and implementation of programs and services; and
- Provide a stipend to compensate for community member and client participation in planning and implementation of programs; and
- Include Cost of Living Increases for social service contracts for staff; and
- Allow agencies to request funding to cover the cost of increased community and client engagement and that the City increase funding to accommodate community and client engagement, when possible

Date of Approval: April 12, 2022

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 9 – 0 vote

Attest: _____



¹ <https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/pio/document.cfm?id=300307>

² <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/community-voice-expertise>

³ <https://earlysuccess.org/allies-convene-to-share-tips-and-best-practices-for-centering-parent-voices/>

⁴ <https://austin.culturemap.com/news/city-life/02-01-22-austin-spike-in-cost-of-living-filterbuy-aus/>

⁵ <https://www.epi.org/publication/higher-wages-for-child-care-and-home-health-care-workers/>