



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Roosevelt Weeks, Director of Libraries *Roosevelt Weeks*

DATE: April 27, 2022

SUBJECT: Response to Fiscal Year 2022 – Fuentes Budget Rider 4 – ETJ Library Program

On August 11, 2021, the Austin City Council adopted Ordinance No. 20210811-001, adopting the City of Austin Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 beginning on October 1, 2021 and ending on September 30, 2022. As part of budget adoption, the City Manager was directed to determine the feasibility of an interlocal agreement with Travis County to waive library fees for children under the age of 6 residing in the ETJ.

The Austin Public Library is committed to equity and to ensuring that all members of the Austin community have equal access to Library programs and services. This is especially important for the children and youth who reside outside of the city of Austin and within Travis County. Numerous public library systems around the country have recognized the challenge that economic barriers pose for access to library materials and services, and this is especially true for our youngest library users. The Austin Public Library has continuously sought ways to remove these barriers and close the opportunity gap for these users.

Prior to Fiscal Year 2021-22, only individuals, including children, who lived within Austin's full purpose jurisdiction were entitled to receive a full access library card free of charge. Children and families living outside of the full purpose jurisdiction, including the ETJ, were still facing an economic barrier to full access use of the Austin Public Library in the form of a non-resident card fee.

The Austin Public Library began looking for ways to remove this barrier for children by creating the Library Cards for All Students Program in 2019. To date, the Austin Public Library has successfully partnered with the Austin Independent School District, the Del Valle Independent School District, Austin Achieve Public Schools, and Austin Montessori School to offer a full purpose Student Library Card to all students enrolled in those schools.

In December 2020 (Fiscal Year 2020-21), the Library Commission made a recommendation to Austin City Council regarding support for equitable access to Austin Public Library resources for students by requesting that Council eliminate non-resident library card fees for

students who did not reside in Austin but did reside in Travis County. Building off of that recommendation, the Austin Public Library submitted a change to the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Fee Schedule as part of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Proposed Budget process that provides an exemption from the Non-Resident User Fee for non-resident children who are currently enrolled in any school within Travis County. On August 11, 2021, the Austin City Council approved Ordinance No. 20210811-002, adopting the City of Austin 2021-22 Approved Fee Schedule with that change. As a result of that action, beginning October 1, 2021, the non-resident fee is not applicable for any child/student who is enrolled in any school in Travis County – including private school, daycare, charter and home school students – until completion of high school.

If you should have any questions in these regards, please do not hesitate to contact me at 512-974-7444.

XC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Stephanie Hayden-Howard, Assistant City Manager