



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022

Commission on Immigrant Affairs

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:

- (A) advise the city council on issues of common concern to immigrants, particularly in the areas of health and human services, education, and the demographic makeup of the Austin immigrant community;
- (B) monitor requirements of federal, state, and local immigration, welfare and other laws that affect immigrants, and recommend to the city council actions to maximize the benefits to local immigrants under existing laws and to minimize the adverse impacts to local immigrants under the laws;
- (C) promote recognition of the contributions of the foreign-born to the economic and cultural vitality of Austin; and
- (D) promote the availability of, and promote accessibility to, local, educational, economic, legal, and social resources for immigrants.

Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

Here are the major actions during the 2021-2022 year:

1. We worked with Austin Police Department to streamline the U-Visa process with their department and invited Chief Chacon to sit down with the Commission on his vision for the department to improve relations with the immigrant community.
2. We continued to work on enhanced library cards with Austin Public Library and how to best move the program forward.

3. Dr. Ruth Wasem with the LBJ School of Public Affairs presented her finalized report on immigrant integration in Austin and offered some recommendations for steps the City could take to address equity and accessibility in multiple areas of work.
4. We formed Working Groups based on the recommendation by Professor Wasem's report. These included: Office of Immigrant Affairs, Naturalization and civic involvement, Workforce development and entrepreneur resources, Affordable housing and neighborhood preservation, and Access resources and community hubs
5. Had a presentation from Assistant City Manager Rey Arellano with updates from Reimagining Public Safety Task Force by City of Austin
6. Made Budget [Recommendation](#) - 20220307-2d1: Development of Immigrant Affairs Office
7. Made Budget [Recommendation](#) - 20220307-2d2: Increase in Legal Services Funding
8. Made Budget [Recommendation](#) - 20220307-2d3: Fund Refugee Health Screening Clinic
9. Made Budget [Recommendation](#) - 20220307-2d4: Creation of Summer Camps in Spanish or Dual Language Summer Camps to Support A.I.S.D.'s English Learner and Dual Language Learner Population
10. Annual Office Elections: Juan Vences-Benitez elected Chair and Krystal Gomez as Vice-Chair
11. Invited the County Attorney's office to speak with the Commission on the U-Visa process at the County and steps we can take forward to streamline this process.

Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

Our actions complied with the mission statement

List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

Our goals for FY 2022-2023 will build on the recommendations from Professor Ruth Wasems to the Commission. These goals are:

Priority Area #1: Leadership and Governance

1. Formally establish and staff an office charged with immigrant affairs and incorporation. Cities that are serious about immigrant incorporation generally have an office focused on immigrant affairs. If Austin wishes to follow through on our additional recommendations and other immigrant incorporation initiatives, it will

need an administrative home to coordinate and oversee these efforts. Peer cities and nearby Texas cities offer various approaches to structuring such an office.

Priority Area #2: Civic Engagement and Inclusivity

1. Continue to support naturalization with additional resources and available coursework aimed at the English language proficiency and civics education required to qualify for naturalization
2. Develop initiatives to encourage civic participation across all communities.

Priority Area #3: Economic Prosperity and Job Growth

1. Explore policy options to remedy its comparative low wages in key sectors of the economy
2. Continue to collaborate with its public and private universities and colleges and other non-governmental organizations to deliver workforce development programs
3. Ensure information about requirements for starting businesses are accessible in immigrant communities. Any public policies that aim to improve the economic standing of low-wage workers and aspiring entrepreneurs would improve economic prosperity for all Austin residents, native and foreign born.

Priority Area #4: Livability

1. Continue to leverage all the policy tools available to develop and preserve affordable housing
2. Ensure that immigrant neighborhoods are factored in—and immigrant voices included—as priorities are set and plans are executed.

Priority Area #5: Community Resilience

1. Use community and neighborhood risk factors that encompass immigrant populations to identify at-risk parts of the city
2. Locate assets and resources for people who are most vulnerable in places convenient and appropriate
3. Establish community hubs as public spaces that bring agencies and neighborhood groups together to provide specialized services agilely as needs ebb and flow.