



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY-OF-LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION #: 20230321-007**

Date: March 21, 2023

Subject: Immigrant Legal Services

Motioned by: Commissioner Sarah Chen

Seconded by: Commissioner Hanna Huang

**IMMIGRANT LEGAL SERVICES**

**DESCRIPTION**

The Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission would like to recommend that the City provide on-going 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.

The city's FY 2022-23 budget included one-time Budget Stabilization Reserve Funds in the amount of \$250,000. The Commission respectfully recommends that \$250,000 be included in the FY 2023-24 budget on an on-going basis.

Cost is \$250,000 ongoing.

**DEPARTMENT**

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**ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

Safety: Fair administration of justice

VOTE

For: Kirk Yoshida, Kuo Yang, Vincent Cobalis, Fang Fang, Mohsin Lari, Meena Mutyala, Hanna Huang, Pramod Patil, and Sarah Chen.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Lily Trieu, Anna Lan, Zahra Shakur Jamal-Hassan, and Azra Siddiqi

Attest: Jeremy Garza, Staff Liaison, Equity Office

x: Jeremy Garza