



**JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE (JIC)  
FY23-2024 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION 20230322-011  
HEALTH PRIORITY – COMMUNITY HEALTH NAVIGATORS**

Date: March 22, 2023

Subject: Joint Endorsement of the Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission's FY23-24 Budget Recommendation 20230321-008: Community Health Navigators (JIC Health Priority)

Motioned by: Commissioner Jennifer Powell      Seconded By: Commissioner Rebecca Austen

---

ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY-OF-LIFE ADISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20230321-008

JOINTLY ENDORSED RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL ON FY23-2024 BUDGET

The Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC) collectively endorses the Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission's recommendation that Austin City Council increase funding for community health navigator (CHN) services. CHNs are providing an essential service for Austin's Asian community, which has language access needs spanning multiple communities. Since the pandemic hit Austin in March of 2020, the demand for CHNs has spiked. One-time grant funding has helped meet these needs and allowed for the availability of services in multiple Asian languages, including Arabic, Burmese, Chin Tedim, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Nepali, Hindi, and Vietnamese. As these one-time funds expire, essential services to vulnerable communities may cease to exist.

Navigating the healthcare system can be a challenging task for native English speakers. For non-native English speakers, this challenge can be near impossible to overcome. Yet, accessing adequate health care services, is an essential service that some may say is a basic human right. Community health navigators assist Austin's non-native English speakers schedule appointments, fill out required paperwork, apply for, and understand health insurance benefits, and many more essential services.

Austin's Asian community is diverse with many non-native English speakers. The lack of language access services isolates many Austin residents, preventing them from participating in civic life, which can lead to feelings of isolation. The lack of language access services is especially acute when dealing with healthcare. The inability to access adequate diagnoses and care can lead to a multitude of poor, and in many cases preventable, outcomes.

During the pandemic, a Texas A&M COVID contract supported a local provider in the hiring three bilingual Community Health Navigators that served the Arabic, Chinese, and Vietnamese speaking communities. The expiration of the funding period has resulted in less 150 clients and no dedicated bilingual CHN for the Chinese speaking community.

The Commission recommends that the city provide an additional \$150,000 in one-time funding to support navigation services for language specific communities no longer being covered after the lapse of one-time grant funding. These communities demonstrated a growing need for language supported navigation services.

Cost is \$150,000 one-time.

#### DEPARTMENT

Austin Public Health

#### ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Health & Environment: Healthy conditions among individuals (absence of unhealthy conditions); Accessibility to quality health care services, both physical and mental.

#### ROLL CALL VOTE: 7 – 0

For: African American Resource Advisory Commission: Gregory Smith  
Commission for Women: Rebecca Austen  
Commission on Aging: Amy Temperley  
Early Childhood Council: Raul Alvarez  
Hispanic/Latino Quality-of-Life-Resource Advisory Commission: Amanda Afifi  
LGBTQ+ Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission: Charles Curry  
Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities: Jennifer Powell

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Commission on Immigrant Affairs: Juan Vences-Benitez  
Human Rights Commission: Idonna Griffith  
Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission: Hanna Huang

Attest: Jeremy Garza, Staff Liaison, Equity Office:

x Jeremy Garza