



**JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE (JIC)
FY23-2024 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION 20230322-009
HEALTH PRIORITY – LGBTQIA+ AFFIRMING MENTAL HEALTHCARE**

Date: March 22, 2023

Subject: Joint Endorsement of the LGBTQ+ Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission’s
FY23-24 Budget Recommendation 20230313-4: Budget for LGBTQIA+
Affirming Mental Healthcare (JIC Health Priority)

Motioned by: Commissioner Amanda Afifi Seconded By: Commissioner Charles Curry

LGBTQ+ QUALITY-OF-LIFE ADISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20230313-4

JOINTLY ENDORSED RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL ON FY23-2024 BUDGET

WHEREAS, the City of Austin’s 2021 LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Study identified that the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown metropolitan area had the 3rd largest percentage of LGBTQIA+ people in the United States, with about 5.0% or 90,000 people identifying as LGBTQIA+; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has an estimated 250-person waitlist for LGBTQIA+ adult and youth- focused mental health services; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin’s 2021 LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Study found that respondents are at high risk for serious mental health issues, including 42% for depression and 12% for suicidal ideation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin’s 2021 LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Study respondents reported having to put off getting health-related services in the past 12 months because of cost with dental care (29%), mental health care (21%), medical care (18%), and gender affirming care (9%) among the top services avoided due to cost; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin’s 2021 LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Study respondents were asked about how they rate their overall mental health since the pandemic, more than half (52%) of the 1,882 respondents rated their mental health as fair, poor, or very poor, a sizeable increase in mental health concern; and

WHEREAS, more than half (53.5%) of respondents in the Austin-based QWELL Community Foundation’s 2020 survey rated their mental health as poor or fair; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2022 Austin Public Health Community Health Assessment there exists significant mental health needs including stigma and limited access to mental health care. Among Travis County residents, the suicide rate was 12.2 deaths per 100,000 population and highest among males (18.5 deaths per 100,000 population) and White residents (17.1 deaths per 100,000 population) in 2016- 2020. In 2020, a higher percentage of females (33.0%) compared to males (20.9%) reported poor mental health, and the prevalence of poor mental health days has increased by 7 overall for both genders. In the same year, a higher percent of Hispanic/Latino adults (31.5%) reported poor mental health compared to White (26.3%) and Black/African American (22.9%) adults. In 2020, the highest proportion of adults experiencing poor mental health was seen among adults aged 18-29 (32.6%) and 30-44 years of age (34.3%); and

WHEREAS, the Trevor Project’s 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that more than half (52%) of transgender and nonbinary youth seriously considered suicide in the past year and 1 in 5 attempted suicide. Homelessness was an area of concern and disproportionate among LGBTQIA+ youth, people of color, and, more specifically, queer, and transgender people of color. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of LGBTQ youth reported experiencing homelessness or housing instability at some point in their lives — and those who did had two to four times the odds of reporting depression, anxiety, self- harm, considering suicide, and attempting suicide compared to those with stable housing. Between 2020 and 2021, the Trevor Project saw a 150% increase in crisis contacts from LGBTQ youth in Texas seeking support; and

WHEREAS, there are increasing numbers of legislative attacks on the LGBTQIA+ community, especially youth, with over 400 bills introduced across the United States in 2023 legislative year. Forty-five of those bills, are currently under consideration in Texas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC) collectively endorses the LGBTQ Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission’s recommendation that the Austin City Council direct \$400K annual funding (in addition to the current \$100K annual funding through equity contracts) for culturally appropriate free or low cost LGBTQIA+ affirming mental healthcare. Additionally, we recommend the LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commissioners be included in drafting the scope of work for the request for proposal process.

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