



***HISPANIC/LATINO QUALITY-OF-LIFE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES***

The HISPANIC LATINO QUALITY OF LIFE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION convened a REGULAR meeting on TUESDAY, JANUARY 23rd, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. CST, in CITY OF AUSTIN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS ROOM #1101 – CITY HALL (301 W. 2ND STREET; AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701).

Chair AMANDA AFIFI called the HISPANIC LATINO QUALITY OF LIFE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION Meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance:

Amanda Afifi (Chair)

Daniela Silva

Dulce Castaneda

Board Members/Commissioners in Attendance Remotely:

Vanessa Maldonado

Ivanna Neri (Co-Chair)

Jesus Perales

Leonor Vargas

Eliza May

Commissioners Absent:

Kevin Jackson

Sharon Vigil

Staff in Attendance:

Equity Office, Community Services Program Coordinator – Alejandra Mireles

Office of City Clerk, Business Process Specialist – Christi Vitela

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

The first ten speakers signed up prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

1. ANN GASS, from Housing Authority shares with Commission a follow up from a presentation to the Commission last year regarding the redevelopment of the Santa Rita Courts

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the COMMISSION'S REGULAR MEETING on DECEMBER 19th, 2023. Silva 1st/Castaneda 2nd
The minutes from the meeting on 12/19/2023 were approved on COMMISSIONER DANIELA SILVA's motion, COMMISSIONER DULCE CASTANEDA'S second on an 8-0 vote. (Absent: Commissioner Kevin Jackson; Off dais: Commissioner Sharon Vigil).

STAFF BRIEFINGS

2. Marion Sanchez, Manager Communication and Public Information Office. Update on CPIO's progress from City Auditor's Language Access Audit.
MARION SANCHEZ and HOUMMA GARBA [present the slide deck](#) to the Commission. Marion shares with Commission that she understands what it is like to be an immigrant and that she/Houmma are there to provide an update. Houmma shares with Commission that she is very excited that there is a workgroup on the Commission and would like to support the language access workgroup. The two share that each COA department has a single point of contact for responsibility for language access so that each department is engaging itself in creating and implementing the language access plan. CPIO is there to support each department. There is an internal webpage full of resources for city staff and council. CPIO shares with the Commission that it has created standards for interpretations that includes a scope of work for vendors, similarly for translation services. They also work on staff training through federal requirements; to let COA staff know know what is available and what they are looking for/requirements. Through a monthly bulletin, CPIO shares monthly training, resources, how to ask for help, compliance with language access (title vi) requirements. CPIO shares with Commission that the department's goal is to have 100% of 16,000 COA trained. MARION and HOUMMA share with Commission the Community interpreting training opportunity through the Shared Voices Program (24 hour training; that includes a test; and they are a resources). COMMISSIONER DULCE CASTANEDA asks to follow up question if the training is optional and how many languages are represented? As of right now, five different languages (Spanish is the largest, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Arabi, French, German, and Czech.) Is there a stipend? The COA staff receive a stipend because they have passed a test for providing a direct service. Shared Voices – verbal/written/ do not have a stipend; have been trying to align HRD.
3. Housing Department Presentation & Discussion on Community Needs and Priorities for Federal Funding to Inform FY 24-29 Consolidated Plan (Housing Staff: Chris Duran, Senior Research Analyst; Julie Smith Community Engagement Specialist; Jamey May, Housing & Community Development Officer; Austin Public Health Staff: Akeshia Johnson-Smothers, Program Manager III)

Will work on making the [presentation short](#). Really appreciate the commission's community feedback on the federal funding. Discussion on federal funding sources. Department expects to receive around \$14 million again this year; Community development block grant -a broad grant – can serve housing, public needs, and economic development. HOPWA – collaboration with APH; 5 year consolidated plan has increased lasting impact; annual action plan, CAPER (that is like a report card). Decisions being made are reaching out to 35 groups over the next few months to give this presentation. Slide deck includes what the department has heard from the community. Includes that needs are rapid, accessibility, immediate, build wealth and stability. Not just getting folks into the home but maintaining/supporting; also includes childcare/ down payment/ issues about trust. HUD Grants completed over 3,017 projects from \$13 million. Feedback can be given starting on February 5th, at <https://www.speakupaustin.org/mycommunityneeds> COMMISSIONER ELIZA MAY asks a follow up question, different programs – take the federal government, what is the department's approved budget? Answer includes general obligation bonds/general funding sources (from the general fund we have for FTE and rent) also has a housing trust fund (council approves every year - \$13 million that is used for grants, loans for developers, partnerships). Approximate \$75 mill; project connect partnership - \$300 mill for anti-displacement efforts.

COMMISSIONER ELIZA MAY asks a follow up question, what is the estimate, what is the approximate of person's needing housing in the city of Austin (number of people could come from different places). Answer includes ECHO's partnership does an assessment and a physical account the latest estimate is about 6,000 individuals (these are just unhoused) which is different from cost/debt burden – the eco housing is under strain currently.

COMMISSIONER LEONOR VARGAS asks a follow up question, if the department's engagement is with organizational employees or the people the services are given to? Answer includes, in the past it has been just employees, but the community engagement specialist is moving towards engaging with the community; the data that is here is in 2019 and it is still happening in 2024 and sometimes what the commissioners are hearing from city staff is not reflective of what is happening to community members.

COMMISSIONER LEONOR VARGAS asks a follow up question, and what about language access because the Commission has heard community feedback that sometimes the COA surveys are not manageable even after they have been translated. The Department thanks the Commission for the feedback.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Jon Yates and Leigh Wyatt, Scout Executive/CEO of Capital Area Council Boy Scouts. City of Austin's Boy Scouts participation updates and request for collaboration for future Commission action.
Begins by thanking Commissioners, for the opportunity to speak and all organization to be here, [to share this presentation](#).

Michael files is director of equity and inclusion; are here because of a conversation with a commissioner and would like feedback on how they can adequately reflect the community they serve; They serve 15 counties in central Texas; providing leadership opportunities to apply learning outside; the program provides extremely benefit and that is why it is crucial that they are reaching – being culturally sensitive. Tripling bilingual staff, changes to materials, and still are not where they want to be. The greatest motivation is not growing for just the number's sake – but, it has never been more important for these connections.

COMMISSIONER IVANNA NERI thanks Jon for coming and asks several follow up questions, do you have bilingual staff and what are the stipends for camping; if money is the issue, they are dedicated to supporting; How can the commission support the program. Answer includes guiding people to the website or to guide people to call the office.

COMMISSIONER DULCE CASTANEDA thanks Jon for the work the organization is doing to expand its reach to Latino youth and appreciate the work you are doing.

COMMISSIONER AMANDA AFIFI asks a follow up question about the outreach to schools, and answer includes that the organization is working to connect with 90% of central Texas schools, including 72 school districts.

COMMISSIONER LEONOR VARGAS thanks Jon for presentation and asks a follow up question about, what about community programs, is the organization working with to create partnerships – thoughts of any organizations that are serving youths; specifically, like the HACA residents really want these programs on sight and having the community members as program leaders would be helpful for outreach. Jon thanks the Commission for the feedback.

5. Luis Acosta from College Access Program (CAP). Update and request for possible recommendation from Commission.

Luis Acosta thanks Commission for having him and CAP back, [with this presentation](#)

Mr. Gavin Fernandez, who is present to support CAP, shares that the students from Akins, East Side Memorial, part of this is to work on a pipeline to college; Partnership with ROTC, and DVISD. And the more they need \$ for administering and tracking; 94% of them are in college; Video. CAP provides college experience – living in a dorm; classes; to Spanish speaking students. Have had 2,500 students apply – majority come from low income, 88% are from Travis County; high need for continuous support for students going into college and then when they are in college; different workshops and different types of support. Would like to provide more scholarships (for college); parent workshops. Presentation expands on budget specific, Commitment event. Budget is for continuous support and future support; mimic college experience; and pay for staff – currently they are on a volunteer basis. Currently funding comes from: Southwest keys; LULAC (\$25K pledge); Valentine's Day event that would like to raise \$30K and then they are requesting \$425K from City; Mr. Fernandez added that this would also support mental health services; including race training (video)

COMMISSIONER DULCE CASTANDEA asks a follow up question, if CAP is a part of the College Action Network. Answer includes when CAP was founded 2019, this program was adapted the program virtually 2021; its partners include UT partners with Equity for 10 years, and UT Charter school.
COMMISSIONER LEONOR VARGAS thanks CAP for their service to the community.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

6. Discussion and possible action to write a recommendation to support a ceasefire in Gaza. **COMMISSIONER DANIELA SILVA** gives the Commission background information on the Recommendation, including that Human Rights Commission has approved one and the African American Resource Advisory Commission is working on one.
COMMISSIONER IVANNA NERI asks which City Council members to have submitted a resolution and answer is 2, 3, and 9 (CM Fuentes, Velasquez, and Qadri).
COMMISSIONER DULCE CASTANEDA shares with Commission that she understands the issue at hand and is struggling with what the commission is doing with these recommendations and COMMISSIONER DANIELA SILVA responds that the feedback is appreciated.
COMMISSIONER ELIZA MAY requests for a commitment to have all draft recommendations and packet for Commission ahead of time and STAFF LIAISON ALEJANDRA MIRELES agrees.
COMMISSIONER DANIELA SILVA reads Recommendation into the dais and edit request is made to replace the word resolution with recommendation.
COMMISSIONER ELIZA MAY requests edit on Recommendation to add the word “some” and remove the word “extreme.”
RECOMMENDATION PASSES on COMMISSIONER IVANNA NERI’s motion, COMMISSIONER DANIELA SILVA’s second, on a 6-1 vote (Absent: Commissioner Kevin Jackson and Sharon Vigil; Off the dais: Commissioner Vanessa Maldonado).
7. Discussion and possible action to write a recommendation that would support funding and programing for Spanish speaking artists and performers.
No updates at this time.
8. Review and discuss the scope of all current working groups, including adding/removing members to the workgroups.

WORKING GROUPS/COMMITTEE UPDATES

9. Budget & Policy Priorities Workgroup – updates from the last workgroup meeting on issues related to the FY23-24 and policy matters pertaining to their assignment (Budget & Policy Priorities Workgroup Members: *Commissioners Amanda Afifi, Sharon Vigil, Jesus Perales, Dulce Castañeda, and Leonor Vargas*).

No updates at this time.

10. Language Access Workgroup – Updates on the newly formed workgroup on issues pertaining to their assignment (Language Access Workgroup Members: *Amanda Afifi, Dulce Castaneda, Vanessa Maldonado, Daniela Silva, and Hector Ordaz*)

No updates at this time.

11. Public Safety & Immigrant Affairs Workgroup – Updates from the workgroup on issues pertaining to their assignment (Public Safety & Immigrant Affairs Workgroup Members: *Dulce Castaneda, Leonor Vargas, and Sharon Vigil*)

No updates at this time.

12. Arts and Culture Workgroup – Updates from the workgroup on issues impacting Spanish speaking artists and performers. (Arts and Culture Workgroup Members: *Ivanna Neri, Leonor Vargas, Ana Laura de Santiago, Norma del Torro, Priscilla Cortez, and Luis Ordaz*)

No updates at this time.

13. Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC) – General update and discussion on the coalition building work of the Committee. (*JIC Primary & Alternate Representatives: Amanda Afifi and Ivanna Neri*)

No updates at this time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Discussion and possible action item on a recommendation on the treatment of immigrants on the people on the border.

Discussion and possible staff briefing on behalf of SB4

Regular February Meeting for Community Input on Budget Recommendations

ADJOURNMENT: 8:28 pm

The minutes were approved at the FEBRUARY 27th, 2024 meeting on COMMISSIONER JESUS PERALES' motion, COMMISSIONER LEONOR VARGAS' second on a 7-0 vote (Absent: Commissioners Vanessa Maldonado, Ivanna Neri, Sharon Vigil, and Eliza May).