



**JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE (JIC)
RECOMMENDATION 20240228-006
Transparent Hiring in Executive Leadership**

Date: February 28th, 2024

Subject: Joint Endorsement of the Asian American Quality-of-Life Recommendation 20240220-007
Transparent Hiring in Executive Leadership

Motioned by: Commissioner Serita Fontanesi

Seconded by: Commissioner Morgan Davis

RECOMMENDATION:

The Joint Inclusion Committee recommends that City Council members continue to direct the City Manager to cultivate a transparent and coordinated process of hiring executive leadership positions within the City of Austin, including the roles of the City Manager and Directors.

DESCRIPTION OF RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is committed to upholding good governance principles, including transparency and public accountability; and

WHEREAS, recent instances of five leadership positions, transitioning from interim to permanent without public notification and feedback, based on the City's organizational chart released in September 2023 and January 2024, have raised concerns about transparency and fairness in the hiring process; and

WHEREAS, additional questions remain regarding the efficacy of the grouping of strategic offices such as Equity, Sustainability, Civil Rights, Innovation, Small Minority Business Resources and Resilience, most which operate with interim or acting leadership and three under one acting director; and

WHEREAS, Interim City Manager Jesús Garza, in a memo dated January 30, 2024, addressed these concerns by acknowledging ongoing communication with Council Members and outlining his plans for key personnel hires within the next 90 days; and

WHEREAS, while the City Manager has discretion over hiring and organizational structure, the many appointed and newly created executive leadership positions since late 2022 has caused significant community and negative news concern; and

WHEREAS, a transparent and inclusive hiring process fosters public trust, attracts qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds, and ensures a deliberate selection of the best individual for the job;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE JOINT INCLUSION COMMITTEE:

1. Strongly urges City Council to direct the City Manager to properly and meaningfully reinforce the authority of the Strategic Offices of Equity, Sustainability, Civil Rights, Innovation, Small Minority Business Resources and Resilience as equals alongside other City Departments with Director information listed in the City's organizational chart;
2. Advises the City Council to adopt a policy requiring the City Manager to prioritize public listing and a competitive application process for executive leadership positions, including positions only open to internal hires;
3. Recommends that City Council considers requiring new City Manager leadership provide them with more frequent or regularly scheduled executive staffing and leadership updates including discussion of new leadership positions, executive hiring plans, and planned changes to strategic offices under the City Manager's Office;
4. Requests that the Human Resources Department provide the Joint Inclusion Commissions with a report breaking down current interim, acting, and vacant City leadership positions and plan for corresponding departments or offices to fill them with permanent positions.

RATIONALE:

A transparent and inclusive hiring process for leadership positions benefits the City of Austin in several ways:

- **Increased Public Trust:** Open and accessible hiring procedures foster public trust in the City's leadership and decision-making.
- **Attract Qualified Candidates:** A competitive process attracts a wider pool of qualified individuals, including those from diverse backgrounds, thus, enriching the selection pool.
- **Best Qualified Candidate Selection:** A transparent process ensures that the best qualified individual is chosen for the job based on their qualifications and experience, not through internal politics or hidden agendas.

The Joint Inclusion Committee urges the City Council to swiftly implement these recommendations to ensure a transparent, fair, and inclusive hiring process for all leadership positions in the City of Austin.

Vote: 9-0


For: Commissioners Serita Fontanesi, Sonny Sin, Julie Glasser, Richard Bondi, Melissa Ortega,

Eliza Gordon, Amanda Afifi, Morgan Davis, and Jennifer Powell.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Commissioner Melissa Taylor (off the dais).

Attest: _____


Alejandra Mireles
Staff Liaison to the Joint Inclusion Committee, The Equity Office