



## **ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY-OF-LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20240319-011**

Date: March 19, 2024

Subject: Recommendation on the FY 2024-25 Budget related to Austin Public Health  
Immigrant Legal Services

Motioned by: Commissioner Satyajeet Dodia

Seconded By: Commissioner Zahra Shakur Jamal-Hassan

### **Austin Public Health Immigrant Legal Services**

#### **Description**

The Asian American Quality-of-Life Advisory Commission (AAQoL) strongly recommends continued funding for the Austin Public Health (APH) Immigrant Legal Services program in the FY 2024-25 budget. This program plays a critical role in supporting the well-being of Austin's immigrant population.

APH Immigrant Legal Services currently has 2 contracts in place for American Gateways and 1 contract in place for Catholic Charities, all of which are set to expire at the end of the current fiscal year. The recent closure of Refugee Services of Texas has further reduced options for legal immigration assistance available in the community for refugees, many of whom are from Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Currently, we are aware that American Gateways does not have sufficient resources to serve those needing immigrant legal services and has a waitlist. We strongly recommend continued funding for the APH Immigrant Legal Services program at a level that allows it to meet the growing needs of Austin's immigrant population.

Contractors for this program provide critical legal assistance to immigrants in Austin. The program helps immigrants navigate the complex legal system, with a focus on areas like citizenship, deportation defense, and access to public benefits.

#### **Recommendation**

Ongoing funding of \$700,000 is recommended to continue services currently being provided along with a suggested \$150,000 increase to meet community legal needs from the closure of nonprofits serving refugees in our community.



## Department

Austin Public Health (APH)

## Alignment with Council Strategic Priorities

Government that works for all; Equity of City programs and resource allocation; Safety: Fair administration of justice

## Vote: 12-0

For: Chair Hanna Huang, Vice Chair Sarah Chen, Commissioners Satyajeet Dodia, Padmini Jambulapati, Anna Lan, Pierre Nguyen, Sabrina Sha, Zahra Shakur Jamal-Hassan, Nayer Sikder, Seonhye "Sonny" Sin, Luan Tran, and Lily Trieu

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Commissioners Mohsin Lari and Kuo Yang

Attest:

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Eric Anderson, Staff Liaison