



**HISPANIC/LATINO QUALITY OF LIFE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION 20240326-10  
Language Access**

Date: March 26, 2024

Subject: FY24 Budget Recommendations

Motioned By: Commissioner Silva

Seconded By: Commissioner Galvan

**Recommendation**

All City of Austin residents should be able to participate in City Council and Quality of Life commission meetings regardless of language. The Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission recommends hiring full-time city clerk interpreters to ensure equitable access to participation in meetings.

**Description of Recommendation to Council**

- Prioritize hiring of and maintain funding on-site full-time Spanish language interpreters
- Allocate funding for grassroots organizations to help educate the community about interpretation services available at the City of Austin Council and commission meetings
- Provide Spanish language interpretation services at Quality of Life Commission meetings either by hiring new staff or outsourcing via contractors and/or language line

**Rationale:**

Currently, people wishing to participate in City Council and Quality of Life commission meetings and who need an interpreter, must request an interpreter 48 hours in advance. Unfortunately, this policy isolates community members who are not English speakers. Some residents are unaware of this policy, and they show up to the meeting expecting to participate. However, they are unpleasantly surprised to find out that an interpreter is not available, and they will not be heard.

This extra step of requesting an interpreter also causes some people to decide not to participate in meetings. People may decide not to put in a request to participate because they are still unsure if they will be able to attend. This policy pushes them to decide to forgo participation because they are unsure if they will make it to the meeting that day. English speakers are able to decide at the last minute to participate in a meeting. This process should not isolate members of our community. Having on-site full-time interpreters will ensure all residents have accessibility to City Council meetings.

Last year, \$100,000 was allocated in an amendment to fund a full-time position within the Communications and Public Information Office to provide Spanish interpretation services during Council meetings. The position has not yet been filled.

**Vote: 8-0**

For: Commissioner Neri, Commissioner Silva, Commissioner Afifi, Commissioner Vargas, Commissioner Perales, Commissioner Castañeda, Commissioner Galvan, Commissioner Jackson Jr.

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Commissioner May, Commissioner Maldonado

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Afifi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda Afifi, Chair