



## RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number: [20260324-008]: Budget for Legal Services

**Date of Approval: March 24, 2026**

### **Recommendation:**

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has a long-standing commitment to being a welcoming, inclusive, and diverse community that values all of its residents, regardless of immigration status; and

WHEREAS, immigrants contribute significantly to the cultural, social, and economic fabric of Austin, but despite these contributions, many immigrants face significant barriers to accessing legal services; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed a budget that increased ICE's annual budget and dramatically expanded immigration detention capacity, intensifying enforcement in communities across the country, including Central Texas; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that immigrant communities obtain accurate advice and assistance, and the absence of reliable legal information has led some immigrants to cancel travel plans, avoid applying for citizenship, and miss court hearings, outcomes that compound harm to families and the broader community; and

WHEREAS, we continue to hear from the community that legal services funding is crucial, and local service providers report that new client intake has surged since 2025, with current demand outpacing available resources; and

WHEREAS, the people most impacted by the rapidly changing immigration policy landscape and the erosion of federal legal aid are low-income immigrants, who have the fewest resources to navigate an increasingly complex and high-stakes system; and

WHEREAS, many immigrants in Austin who need access to counsel cannot afford attorneys, especially those facing removal proceedings; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin funds legal services for low-income immigrants who are Austin residents, and there continues to be a significant unmet need;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission recommends funding immigrant legal services at \$750,000 total.

Motioned By: Commissioner Perales

Seconded By: Commissioner Castañeda

Vote: 8-0

For: Chair Afifi, Vice Chair Ramos, Commissioners Castañeda, Flores, Galvan, Perales, Morales, Ruiz

Absent: Commissioners Peña and Moya Fábregas

Attest: *Nekaybaw Watson*, Staff Liaison