



Recommendation to Council

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

(20260324-014): Latino Arts & Cultural Community Navigator Program

WHEREAS, approximately 32% of Austin’s population identifies as Hispanic or Latino ¹; and

WHEREAS, 31% of Austinites speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish the predominant language spoken in the City ²; and

WHEREAS, Austin has a long history of systemic racism and racial inequity that continues today. Throughout history, communities of color have been excluded, marginalized, and discriminated against as a result of City policies and practices. This history was reinforced by segregationist policies throughout the 20th century affecting a range of Austin venues, including schools, public parks, and commercial businesses, among others, and

WHEREAS, Spanish-speaking cultural arts organizations and individual artists continue to face inequitable access to Cultural Arts resources and services as a result of systemic and racial inequity, but also due to evolving City policies and the implementation of new procedures that fail to be culturally responsive and do not adequately address language access; and

WHEREAS, The City of Austin’s Latino and Spanish-speaking community continues to voice the need for culturally-sensitive assistance, including and not limited to:

1. Application navigation
2. Access to Spanish-language contracts and grant agreements
3. Accurate, culturally competent Spanish translations of all application materials
4. Equitable panel review processes that account for better language access
5. Inclusion of bilingual and culturally competent grant panelists
6. Workshops and information sessions conducted fully in Spanish by native Spanish speakers, and promoted simultaneously alongside English-language materials
7. Post-award support in Spanish, including reporting and compliance assistance
8. Transparent communication regarding funding decisions in both languages

WHEREAS, the City of Austin launched a pilot program for Community Navigator Partner in 2021 to assist offering support to small businesses, nonprofits, and creative individuals impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

WHEREAS, a Community Navigator refers to an organization that has specialized knowledge and can assist artists with connecting to a web of support, resources, and information. These connections allow artists to grow and thrive.

WHEREAS, there was no Spanish-language or Latino/Hispanic-focused Community Navigator selected in the 2021 cohort; and

WHEREAS, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission passed a budget recommendation in April 2024 to Increase Funding for Community Navigators in the Economic Development Department's Arts Funding Programs; and

WHEREAS, The City of Austin's Latino and Spanish-speaking arts community lost the opportunity to receive or apply for an estimated \$1.2 Million dollars in cultural arts HOT TAX funding out of the \$24 Million+ awarded during the recent FY26 funding cycle; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Equity Office was created in 2016 to advance equity in all aspects of City operations ³; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission recommends the implementation of a Latino Arts & Culture Navigator Program for FY26- FY27 and beyond, and that this role be housed within the City's Equity Office for cross-departmental coordination and community alignment with ACME and other City departments related to cultural arts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the responsibilities of this role include, but are not limited to, assisting in the coordination of City cultural arts funding and resource services, supporting community education, facilitating navigation and referral pathways, and working in partnership with nonprofit and community-based organizations that provide related services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission recommends an initial allocation of \$125,000 to support program coordination, community partnerships, training, and educational activities associated with this pilot effort, with the possible budget recommendations:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the program be focused on education, navigation, coordination, and social-harm prevention, leveraging nonprofit and community partners where appropriate.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission requests an evaluation following the pilot period, including participation levels, coordination outcomes,

service referrals, and community partner feedback, to inform future program development and potential expansion.

Date of Approval: March 24, 2026

Motioned: Commissioner Galvan

Seconded: Vice Chair Ramos

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