



Recommendation to Council

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

(20260324-016): Emergency Cultural Arts Funding for Latino Artists

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, The City of Austin redesignated all cultural funding programs in 2022 with the following equity impact and mission statement, that will prioritize:

“Applicants that are representative of, serve, and are accountable to communities that are at immediate risk of cultural erasure and displacement within Austin and/or have been institutionally marginalized and under-funded by the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division. This may include applicants that directly serve Black/African American, Native American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander communities or LGBTQIA+ and/or disability communities.”

WHEREAS, from 2023- 2026, City staff and community stakeholders have documented a significant number of severe inequity issues relating to outreach, eligibility determination, language access, and funding allocations to Spanish-speaking, Latino, Hispanic, Chicano, and Immigrant-focused arts organizations and creative individuals; and

WHEREAS, the recent FY26 cultural arts funding process has significantly excluded Spanish-speaking, Latino, Hispanic, Chicano, Immigrant-focused arts organizations, and creative individuals due to:

- A new eligibility intake process
- Repeated lack of outreach
- An inflated scoring system due to high number of English-speaking applicants
- Disproportionate City staff response time in Spanish
- Continued wrong Spanish translations

WHEREAS, The City of Austin’s Spanish-speaking and Latino arts ecosystem has been critically destabilized this FY26 by the following economic deficits of the cultural arts funding exclusions, as of March 24, 2026:

- 2 Latino heritage festivals that lost the ability to receive Heritage Project funding for a cumulative total of up to **\$300,000**;
- 14 arts organizations that lost the ability to receive ELEVATE funding for a cumulative total of **\$560,000**;
- and 9 individual artists that lost the ability to receive a cumulative **\$240,000**
- Totaling approximately **\$1,200,000** in funding that was lost.

WHEREAS, Austin’s Hispanic / Latino artists and creative workers are central to the City’s cultural identity, economic vitality, and national reputation as a progressive City for art, culture, and creative expression; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hispanic Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission with the support of the Spanish-Language / Hispanic / Latino / Latinx /Chicano arts community, urges the Austin City Council to support, through the City’s Stabilization Fund, a one-time allocation of **\$1.5 Million Dollars** to fund impacted Spanish-speaking and Latino arts organizations, Hispanic arts groups, and creative individuals that were excluded in the FY26 ACME funding cycle.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that FIRST PRIORITY will be given to: Spanish-language applicants negatively impacted by the inaugural FY26 ACME Cultural Arts Funding Cycle, specifically, organizations, arts groups, and/or individual artists that:

- Were wrongfully denied access to applications due to the newly-established eligibility intake process
- Were forced to abandon their applications due to inadequate and negligent Spanish-language translations that went unfixed by City Staff
- Were unable to submit an application due to the severe disproportionate response-time from ACME and Long Center staff
- Were denied funding due to the inflated score minimum of FY26, having received the same or higher score than their previously funded application.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that SECOND PRIORITY will be given to: Spanish-language and Latino / Hispanic cultural arts organizations, groups and individuals that have attempted to access the City’s Cultural Arts Funding Programs for the past 10 years without success, due to the continued inequity in the City’s overall process.

Date of Approval: March 24, 2026

Record of the vote: 7-1

Motioned: Vice Chair Ramos

Seconded: Commissioner Morales

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

Against: Commissioner Castañeda

Absent: Commissioners Peña and Moya Fábregas

Attest: *Nekaybaw Watson*, Staff Liaison