



Recommendation to Council

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

Recommendation 20260324-018: Funding for the Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

WHEREAS, Latino artists in Austin continue to face systemic barriers to sustainable artistic careers, including limited access to paid residency opportunities, space, and institutional support; and

WHEREAS, Austin's Latino community represents approximately **33% of the population but receives only 9% of cultural funding**, reflecting a significant structural inequity in access to resources, infrastructure, and long-term sustainability, and

WHEREAS, the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center has historically served as a vital cultural hub for Latino arts, heritage, and community engagement in the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board Recommendation (20180110-0E4) objected to the implementation of an Artist Access Program (LAAP) at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center ; and

WHEREAS, the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board Recommendation (20180110-0E4) regarding the Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) proposed new residency programs directed the City Manager to explore and support the development of culturally responsive residency opportunities at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, reflecting community priorities, increasing access for Latino artists, and strengthening the Center's role as a bridge between the City of Austin and the community; and

WHEREAS, the Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) previously provided critical resources, visibility, and professional development opportunities for Latino artists across disciplines; and

WHEREAS, the discontinuation of LARP has created a gap in equitable access to City-supported residency programs for Latino and culturally rooted artists; and

WHEREAS, artist residency programs are a crucial tool to help local artists, nonprofits, and creatives continue to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic instability; and

WHEREAS, investing in culturally specific programs supports the preservation, evolution, and visibility of Latino cultural practices, including dance, music, visual arts, and interdisciplinary work; and

WHEREAS, community stakeholders and artists have expressed a strong need for dedicated space, funding, and institutional support to develop new work and engage with the public; and **WHEREAS**, the reestablishment of LARP would strengthen Austin’s cultural ecosystem by fostering community engagement, supporting local artists, and increasing access to culturally relevant programming; and

WHEREAS, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission has identified investment in Latino arts infrastructure and opportunities as a key priority;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to reestablish and fund the Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission recommends an initial allocation of \$1,000,000 to support the Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, including program coordination, artist stipends, community partnerships, training, and educational activities associated with the residency, with possible budget recommendations including but not limited to:

- Paid stipends for participating artists across disciplines
- Dedicated rehearsal and creation space for resident artists
- Public presentations, performances, or exhibitions of new work
- Community engagement activities such as workshops, open rehearsals, and artist talks
- Professional development resources for resident artists
- Administrative and program coordination costs
- Marketing, outreach, and promotion to ensure broad community access and participation
- Accessibility accommodations to ensure equitable participation for all artists and audiences

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission recommends the allocation of funding to support artist stipends, program administration, space usage, and public programming associated with the residency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the program be designed to support multidisciplinary Latino artists, including but not limited to dance, music, theater, visual arts, and culturally rooted practices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the program prioritize accessibility and equity by ensuring that opportunities are available to emerging, mid-career, and established Latino artists from diverse backgrounds.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Commission requests an evaluation of the program following its initial implementation, including artist participation, community engagement outcomes, and overall impact, to inform future funding and expansion.

Date of Approval: March 24, 2026

Motion: Vice Chair Ramos

Second: Commissioner Perales

Record of the vote: 7-0

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

Off Dais: Chair Afifi

Absent: Commissioners Peña and Moya Fábregas

Attest: *Nekaybaw Watson*, Staff Liaison