



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Human Rights Commission

Recommendation Number: 20260323-008: Budget Proposal for Small Business Support:
Advancing Human Rights Through Economic Opportunity

WHEREAS, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes every person's right to free choice of employment, protection against unemployment, and remuneration sufficient to ensure an existence worthy of human dignity — rights that extend to the sustainability of small business ownership as a livelihood; and, (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23)

WHEREAS, the Austin City Code charges the Human Rights Commission to promote equal treatment and opportunity for all residents, which includes equitable access to economic resources and protection from conditions that threaten the financial stability and dignity of Austin business owners and their employees; and, (Austin City Code § 2-1-148)

WHEREAS, small businesses in the Austin metro area account for 48.1 percent of local employment, represent 99.8 percent of all businesses in Texas, and accounted for 84 percent of the state's annual job growth in 2024, making their economic resilience a matter of direct public and human rights concern; and,

WHEREAS, job growth in the Austin-Round Rock area slowed to just 0.7 percent in 2025, the slowest pace of all major Texas cities, while rising commercial rents have forced the City to modify its Business Expansion Program to address accelerating small business displacement across Austin neighborhoods.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission urges the Austin City Council to allocate \$25,000 to the City's Small Business Division to establish an economic impact fund providing grants and forgivable loans to Austin small businesses facing economic hardship.

Date of Approval: March 23, 2026

Motioned By: Vice Chair Zeidan

Seconded By: Commissioner Aslam

Vote: 8-0

For: Chair Duhon, Vice Chair Zeidan, Commissioners Aslam, Davis, Kirsh Pozen, Krueger, Morgan Avitia, Oliva-Martínez

Against: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Off the dais: None

Absent: Commissioners Igram, Khawar

Attest: *Ryan Sperling*
(Ryan Sperling, Staff Liaison)