



BOARD / COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Joint Inclusion Committee

Recommendation Number: (20260325-004): Expansion and Empowerment of the Community Liaison Office

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has committed to equity-centered public safety strategies that prioritize trust-building, accessibility, accountability, and culturally competent engagement with historically marginalized and minoritized communities; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Inclusion Committee, in coordination with the LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Commission, the Asian American Quality of Life Commission, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission, the African American Quality of Life Commission, the Commission for Women, and other advisory bodies, has received consistent feedback from community members regarding gaps in communication, transparency, responsiveness, and trust in interactions with law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, immigrant communities and other vulnerable populations have identified fear of retaliation, deportation consequences, language access barriers, and lack of anonymity as significant obstacles to engaging with law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, strengthening and elevating the Community Liaison function from a primarily public information role to a core accountability and community engagement division within the Austin Police Department is necessary to ensure sustained trust-building, transparency, and culturally competent public safety practices; and

WHEREAS, the proposal recommends structural elevation of the Community Liaison Office to report directly to the Chief of Police or a designated Assistant Chief, or alternatively to explore housing the function under the Office of Equity and Inclusion to ensure independence and public trust; and

WHEREAS, the proposal further recommends assigning both a civilian liaison and a sworn officer liaison for each major minoritized community, including but not limited to LGBTQIA+, Black/African

American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Women, thereby providing residents the option to engage with either a civilian or sworn representative; and

WHEREAS, formalizing liaison responsibilities within official job duties, performance evaluations, training structures, and reporting systems is necessary to ensure consistency, sustainability, and accountability; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of dedicated public communication pathways, anonymous reporting options, language access services, and culturally appropriate outreach materials is essential to building durable community trust; and

WHEREAS, meaningful reform requires measurable performance metrics, structured engagement with City Commissions and the Joint Inclusion Committee, and a formal feedback mechanism requiring written responses from APD leadership to commission-issued policy memos;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to allocate one-time implementation funding in the amount of **\$80,000** to support the expansion and elevation of the Community Liaison Office consistent with the Community Liaison framework previously adopted and agreed to by the Austin Police Department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that implementation funding support the following activities:

- Formal designation of both civilian and sworn liaison roles for each major minoritized community, including but not limited to LGBTQIA+, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Women
- Development and delivery of structured training programs covering cultural competency, religious sensitivity, de-escalation practices, hate crime reporting, immigrant community protections, and language access standards
- Establishment of dedicated public communication infrastructure, including multilingual contact pathways and secure, anonymous reporting options
- Formalization of liaison responsibilities within job descriptions, performance evaluations, and departmental procedures
- Creation of measurable performance metrics and a standardized reporting structure for regular engagement with City Commissions and the Joint Inclusion Committee

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding be contingent upon implementation consistent with the agreed-upon Community Liaison framework, including structural elevation of the function within APD leadership and clear accountability mechanisms.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that APD provide a public progress update to the Joint Inclusion Committee and relevant commissions within six months of funding allocation, including implementation status, training completion, engagement metrics, and identified next steps.

Date of Approval: March 25, 2026

Motioned By: Commissioner Thakkar

Seconded By: Commissioner Alvizo

Vote: 10-0

For: Vice Chair Bondi, Commissioners Alvizo, Benson, Castaneda, Chang, Laake-Stanfield, Kanawati, Oliva-Martínez, Parsons, Thakkar

Against: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Off the dais: None

Absent: Chair Afifi, Commissioners Bullard, McNary, Melendez

Attest: *Ryan Sperling*

(Ryan Sperling, Staff Liaison)