COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Joint Inclusion Committee

Recommendation Number: 20260325-018: Increasing In-Language Communications

WHEREAS, federal civil rights guidance under Title VI requires recipients of federal financial assistance to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency, underscoring that language access is a foundational equity practice for publicly funded services[1]; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights provides guidance and resources regarding limited English proficiency (LEP) obligations and language assistance as a means of ensuring equal access to services[2]; and

WHEREAS, Texas Health and Human Services policy guidance addresses nondiscrimination and limited English proficiency, reflecting statewide expectations that programs ensure access for LEP individuals[3]; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Language Access Policy establishes that City departments must provide meaningful access to City programs, services, and information through translation and interpretation so residents can communicate with the City in the language in which they are most comfortable[4]; and

WHEREAS, the City's Language Access Plan (2025) describes a coordinated, citywide approach to language access services and expectations for departments' implementation and ongoing improvement[5]; and

WHEREAS, the City Auditor's Language Access Follow-Up highlights the importance of consistent, effective execution of language access services across City operations to ensure equitable access for residents with limited English proficiency[6]; and

[1] Federal Register :: Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, April 18, 2002
[2] Limited English Proficiency (LEP) | HHS.gov Civil Rights
[3] 3400, Nondiscrimination and Limited English Proficiency | Texas Health and Human Services, October 29, 2025
[4] Language Access Policy | AustinTexas.gov
[5] Austin Language Access Plan 2025
[6] City of Austin, Office of the City Auditor Language Access Follow-Up May 2023

WHEREAS, the City's iSpeak Austin resources provide residents information about language access services and how to request them, reinforcing the City's commitment to in-language access[7]; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2012) emphasizes inclusive civic participation and engagement, which depends on communications that are accessible to Austin's diverse communities[8]; and

WHEREAS, Austin City Council has recently reaffirmed its commitment to improving outcomes for older adults through Age-Friendly Austin efforts, which necessarily require effective outreach and communications to older adults across communities[9]; and

WHEREAS, a recent City of Austin Older Adults Quality of Life study found that Asian American older adults represented approximately 20% of the study sample but 31% of caregivers in the study and are more likely to experience social isolation than the overall older adult population[10]; and

WHEREAS, the same study found that Asian American and Native American/Alaskan Native groups comprise larger portions of the older-adult caregiving population than of the overall older-adult population, and caregivers requested multilingual information sharing and culturally diverse programming[11]; and

WHEREAS, the same study found that Latino/Hispanic older adults (among others) requested that the City remember the rich linguistic diversity of Austin's older-adult populations when conducting communications, and the study findings support expanding Spanish-language digital literacy programming and proactive Spanish-language communications[12]; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends the Austin City Council direct the City Manager, recognizing current City budget constraints, to expand and standardize in-language communications for older adults and older-adult caregivers in a manner intended to have low or no fiscal impact, utilizing existing City language access policies, translation contracts, communication channels, and staff resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to prioritize providing all (both digital and printed materials) City communications affecting older adults and caregivers in multiple languages—including Spanish and, based on findings from the Older Adult Quality of Life study, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, and Braille—with priority given to communications regarding benefits access, emergency assistance, health information, transportation, fraud prevention, and other essential City services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to ensure that departments designing communications and programming for older-adult caregivers are mindful of Austin's linguistic diversity and conduct

---

[7] iSpeak Austin | AustinTexas.gov

[8] Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan June 15, 2012

[9] APH Staff Response to Resolution 20250605-084

[10] 2025 Quality of Life Study, Austin Asian American Older Adults At-A-Glance, page 1

[11] 2025 Quality of Life Study, Austin Caregivers At-A-Glance, page 2

[12] 2025 Quality of Life Study, Austin Latinx Older Adults At-A-Glance, page 1

multilingual outreach regarding caregiver supports, including respite care and related resources, utilizing existing community partnerships where feasible.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to expand Spanish-language digital literacy programming and proactively provide City communications in Spanish and other high-demand languages through existing City programs and community partners to improve access to City information and services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to identify and implement operational improvements that can be accomplished with minimal or no additional fiscal impact, such as multilingual communication templates, consistent language-assistance notices on outreach materials, and coordinated use of the City's existing language access services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Inclusion Committee recommends the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to provide a brief annual update to Council, shared with the Joint Inclusion Committee, summarizing actions taken to improve in-language communications for older adults using existing reporting mechanisms and resources.

Date of Approval: March 25, 2026

Motioned By: Commissioner Alvizo **Seconded By**: Commissioner Laake-Stanfield

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)