



RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

African American Resource Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number: 20260414-002: Support of American Gateways in the FY 2026-2027 Budget

Date of Approval: April 14, 2026

Fund **American Gateways** at their Full Year 2026 request of \$750,000 total (\$570,000 core + \$150,000 supplemental).

Description of Recommendation to Council:

We recommend the City Council maintain American Gateways' funding at current levels. A cut could result in the loss of a staff member and significantly reduce capacity to meet the community's growing need for immigration legal services. Currently, American Gateways receives more than 100 requests per week from individuals and families seeking legal guidance, support, and advocacy.

American Gateways is one of the only organizations in the region providing immigration legal services grounded in a pro se (self-help) model, with additional support including "Know Your Rights" sessions and family planning services. They deliver critical legal and educational support that ensures immigrants, particularly those most at risk, including Black immigrants, can safely navigate the immigration system.

Rationale:

- **Crucial, Irreplaceable Services:** American Gateways is one of the only providers in Austin offering free and low-cost immigration legal services to vulnerable populations.
- **High Demand:** Weekly requests for help exceed 100, showing the overwhelming demand for legal advocacy and information.
- **Disproportionate Impact on Black Immigrants:** Black immigrants face compounded barriers due to racial and immigration enforcement systems. Funding American Gateways helps mitigate these harms.

- **Proactive, Scalable Approach:** Their hybrid model—offering both direct services and legal education—maximizes reach and efficiency.

Alignment with AARAC Mission/Vision/Values:

This funding directly supports AARAC’s mission to advance racial equity in Austin by preserving essential services for immigrant communities, particularly Black immigrants. American Gateways provides culturally responsive, community-driven legal support that aligns with AARAC’s vision of justice, empowerment, and sustained local oversight. Defunding would compromise immigrant safety and contradict our shared values of equity, access, and accountability.

Motioned By: Vice Chair Parsons

Seconded By: Commissioner Dozier

Vote: **9-0**

For: Chair Anderson, Vice Chair Parsons, Commissioners Davis, Dozier, Harden, Hayes, Linder, Rudd, Smith

Absent: Commissioners Eugene, Horton, Jackson, Loyde, Ross, and Weisberg

Attest: *Nekaybaw Watson*, Staff Liaison