



# Hispanic Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

## FY26-27 Budget Recommendation Titles

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### RECOMMENDATION 1:

**Latino Arts and Culture Community Navigator Program** **\$125K**

- Increase funding and social resources to ensure appropriate language accessibility for AACME Cultural Arts Funding Cycle, specifically in Spanish
- Ensure funding is proportional to representation of community

### RECOMMENDATION 2:

**\$10K**

**Spanish-language Contracts for City of Austin Cultural Arts Contractors**

### RECOMMENDATION 3:

**\$1.5 Million**

**Emergency Funding for Latino Cultural Artists**

*Possible alternate names for the recommendation:*

**Emergency Cultural Arts Grants for Latino Artists**

### RECOMMENDATION 4:

**\$6 Million**

**Capital Improvement Funding for the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican  
American Cultural Center - Phase 2**

### RECOMMENDATION 5:

**\$1 Million**

**Funding for the Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) at the Emma S.  
Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center**

*Possible alternate names for the recommendation:*

**Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American  
Cultural Center**

**Reestablishing the Latino Artist Residency Program (LARP) at the Emma S. Barrientos  
Mexican American Cultural Center**

### RECOMMENDATION 6:

**\$50K**

**Explore alternative funding resources for Cultural Arts, specifically  
state legislation that would increase the 15% HOT Tax fund cap for  
funding programs**

**BOARD / COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**  
**Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission**

**Recommendation Number: (20260324-XXX)**

**Latino Arts & Cultural Community Navigator Program**

**WHEREAS**, approximately 32% of Austin’s population identifies as Hispanic or Latino <sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, 31% of Austinites speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish the predominant language spoken in the City <sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin has a long history of systemic racism and racial inequity that continues today. Throughout history, communities of color have been excluded, marginalized, and discriminated against as a result of City policies and practices. This history was reinforced by segregationist policies throughout the 20th century affecting a range of Austin venues, including schools, public parks, and commercial businesses, among others, and

**WHEREAS**, Spanish-speaking cultural arts organizations and individual artists continue to face inequitable access to Cultural Arts resources and services as a result of systemic and racial inequity, but also due to evolving City policies and the implementation of new procedures that fail to be culturally responsive and do not adequately address language access; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Austin’s Latino and Spanish-speaking community continues to voice the need for culturally-sensitive assistance, including and not limited to:

1. Application navigation
2. Access to Spanish-language contracts and grant agreements
3. Accurate, culturally competent Spanish translations of all application materials
4. Equitable panel review processes that account for better language access
5. Inclusion of bilingual and culturally competent grant panelists
6. Workshops and information sessions conducted fully in Spanish by native Spanish speakers, and promoted simultaneously alongside English-language materials
7. Post-award support in Spanish, including reporting and compliance assistance
8. Transparent communication regarding funding decisions in both languages

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin launched a pilot program for Community Navigator Partner in 2021 to assist offering support to small businesses, nonprofits, and creative individuals impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**WHEREAS**, a Community Navigator refers to an organization that has specialized knowledge and can assist artists with connecting to a web of support, resources, and information. These connections allow artists to grow and thrive.

**WHEREAS**, there was no Spanish-language or Latino/Hispanic-focused Community Navigator selected in the 2021 cohort; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission passed a budget recommendation in April 2024 to Increase Funding for Community Navigators in the Economic Development Department's Arts Funding Programs; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Austin's Latino and Spanish-speaking arts community lost the opportunity to receive or apply for an estimated \$1.2 Million dollars in cultural arts HOT TAX funding out of the \$24 Million+ awarded during the recent FY 26 funding cycle; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin Equity Office was created in 2016 to advance equity in all aspects of City operations <sup>3</sup>; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission recommends the implementation of a Latino Arts & Culture Navigator Program for FY 26-27 and beyond, and that this role be housed within the City's Equity Office for cross-departmental coordination and community alignment with ACME and other City departments related to cultural arts.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the responsibilities of this role include, but are not limited to, assisting in the coordination of City cultural arts funding and resource services, supporting community education, facilitating navigation and referral pathways, and working in partnership with nonprofit and community-based organizations that provide related services.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Commission recommends an initial allocation of \$125,000 to support program coordination, community partnerships, training, and educational activities associated with this pilot effort, with the possible budget recommendations:

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the program be focused on education, navigation, coordination, and social-harm prevention, leveraging nonprofit and community partners where appropriate.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission requests an evaluation following the pilot period, including participation levels, coordination outcomes, service referrals, and community partner feedback, to inform future program development and potential expansion.

**Date of Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Record of the vote:**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Staff or board member can sign)*



**BOARD / COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**  
**Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission**

**Recommendation Number:** (202601XX-XXX)

**Spanish-Language Contracts for City of Austin Cultural Arts Contractors**

**WHEREAS**, approximately 32% of Austin’s population identifies as Hispanic or Latino; and

**WHEREAS**, 31% of Austinites speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish the predominant language spoken in the City<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Austin began accepting Spanish-language applications for cultural funding programs in 2023 and subsequently awarded Spanish-language applicants; and

**WHEREAS**, the Long Center—the City of Austin’s third-party contractor responsible for administering Cultural Arts Funding programs and processes—continues to decline the need to provide Spanish-language contracts to Spanish-speaking applicants who were awarded funding, citing that such provision is not required under its current agreement with the City of Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Austin’s Spanish-speaking arts community has had to step in and act as translators for awarded applicants for the past 3 cultural arts funding cycles;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Hispanic Quality of Life Commission recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager and ACME to amend the Long Center’s Cultural Arts Funding Management Contract to ensure the provision of Spanish-language contracts to all Spanish-speaking applicants awarded funding, in order to promote equitable access and language inclusion.

**Date of Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Record of the vote:**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Staff or board member can sign)*

**BOARD / COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**  
**Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission**

**Recommendation Number: (20260324-XXX)**

**Latino Arts & Cultural Community Navigator Program**

**WHEREAS**, approximately 32% of Austin’s population identifies as Hispanic or Latino <sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, 31% of Austinites speak a language other than English at home, with Spanish the predominant language spoken in the City <sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin has a long history of systemic racism and racial inequity that continues today. Throughout history, communities of color have been excluded, marginalized, and discriminated against as a result of City policies and practices. This history was reinforced by segregationist policies throughout the 20th century affecting a range of Austin venues, including schools, public parks, and commercial businesses, among others, and

**WHEREAS**, Spanish-speaking cultural arts organizations and individual artists continue to face inequitable access to Cultural Arts resources and services as a result of systemic and racial inequity, but also due to evolving City policies and the implementation of new procedures that fail to be culturally responsive and do not adequately address language access; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Austin’s Latino and Spanish-speaking community continues to voice the need for culturally-sensitive assistance, including and not limited to:

1. Application navigation
2. Access to Spanish-language contracts and grant agreements
3. Accurate, culturally competent Spanish translations of all application materials
4. Equitable panel review processes that account for better language access
5. Inclusion of bilingual and culturally competent grant panelists
6. Workshops and information sessions conducted fully in Spanish by native Spanish speakers, and promoted simultaneously alongside English-language materials
7. Post-award support in Spanish, including reporting and compliance assistance
8. Transparent communication regarding funding decisions in both languages

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin launched a pilot program for Community Navigator Partner in 2021 to assist offering support to small businesses, nonprofits, and creative individuals impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**WHEREAS**, a Community Navigator refers to an organization that has specialized knowledge and can assist artists with connecting to a web of support, resources, and information. These connections allow artists to grow and thrive.

**WHEREAS**, there was no Spanish-language or Latino/Hispanic-focused Community Navigator selected in the 2021 cohort; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission passed a budget recommendation in April 2024 to Increase Funding for Community Navigators in the Economic Development Department's Arts Funding Programs; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Austin's Latino and Spanish-speaking arts community lost the opportunity to receive or apply for an estimated \$1.2 Million dollars in cultural arts HOT TAX funding out of the \$24 Million+ awarded during the recent FY 26 funding cycle; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin Equity Office was created in 2016 to advance equity in all aspects of City operations <sup>3</sup>; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission recommends the implementation of a Latino Arts & Culture Navigator Program for FY 26-27 and beyond, and that this role be housed within the City's Equity Office for cross-departmental coordination and community alignment with ACME and other City departments related to cultural arts.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the responsibilities of this role include, but are not limited to, assisting in the coordination of City cultural arts funding and resource services, supporting community education, facilitating navigation and referral pathways, and working in partnership with nonprofit and community-based organizations that provide related services.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Commission recommends an initial allocation of \$125,000 to support program coordination, community partnerships, training, and educational activities associated with this pilot effort, with the possible budget recommendations:

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the program be focused on education, navigation, coordination, and social-harm prevention, leveraging nonprofit and community partners where appropriate.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission requests an evaluation following the pilot period, including participation levels, coordination outcomes, service referrals, and community partner feedback, to inform future program development and potential expansion.

**Date of Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Record of the vote:**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Staff or board member can sign)*



**BOARD / COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**  
**Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission**

**Recommendation Number: (20260324-XXX)**

**Capital Improvement Funding for the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center - Phase 2**

**WHEREAS**, The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center serves as a central hub for Latino arts, culture, and community engagement in the City of Austin and is the only cultural arts facility of this magnitude in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center provides vital cultural programming, educational opportunities, and performance space for Austin's Latino/Chicano/Immigrant artists, organizations, and the community at large; and

**WHEREAS**, The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center is the only Latino / Hispanic cultural arts center in the City of Austin – serving the approximately 32% of Austin's population that identifies as Hispanic or Latino; and

**WHEREAS**, There were critical architectural, design, and equipment aspects of The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center's Phase 2 renovations that were value-engineered out of the original master plan; and

**WHEREAS**, these eliminated features limit the cultural centers' overall community impact and renders the facility impractical and ineffectual; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council Resolution No. 20221208-068 directed the City Manager to:

1. Proceed with the construction of the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center WITHOUT a reduction in the scope of proposed work, and develop an estimate of the resulting funding gap for inclusion in the next applicable City of Austin General Obligation Bond Program.

**WHEREAS**, correcting these critical features is imperative to the success of the grand reopening of the City's only Latino / Hispanic Cultural center; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission has recognized capital improvements at the cultural center as a priority for sustaining and growing Latino arts programs;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to allocate \$6,000,000 (Six Million Dollars) in funding for the completion of Phase 2 capital improvements, and/or items that were value engineered out of the original Phase 2 master plan at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that recommended capital improvements may include, but are not limited to:

- Building and facility upgrades to ensure accessibility and ADA compliance
- Improved lighting, sound, and audiovisual systems for performance and exhibition spaces
- Renovation and addition of rehearsal, classroom, and gallery areas to meet the needs of artists and the community
- Enhanced safety measures, including fire, security, and emergency systems

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Commission recommends prioritizing upgrades that directly support artist residency programs, public arts events, community workshops, and cultural heritage programming;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Commission requests ongoing reporting on the implementation of Phase 2 improvements, including timelines, budget expenditures, and outcomes to ensure accountability and community benefit.

***Date of Approval:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Record of the vote:***

***Attest:*** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Staff or board member can sign)*

**BOARD / COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**  
**Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission**

**Recommendation Number:** (20260324-XXX)

**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.

**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:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Record of the vote:***

***Attest:*** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Staff or board member can sign)*

**BOARD / COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**  
**Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Advisory Commission**

**Recommendation Number:** (20260324-XXX)

**Explore alternative funding resources for Cultural Arts, specifically state legislation that would increase the 15% HOT Tax fund cap for funding programs**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Austin relies in part on Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds to support cultural arts programs, which are essential to the city's economic vitality, cultural diversity, and tourism sector; and

**WHEREAS**, current legislation limits HOT fund allocation to cultural arts programs to a 15% cap, restricting the ability of the City to fully support local artists, organizations, and cultural initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, increased funding flexibility could enhance equitable access to resources for underrepresented artists and culturally specific programs, including Latinx, Indigenous, and other historically marginalized communities; and

**WHEREAS**, alternative funding strategies, including advocating for state legislation to raise the HOT tax allocation cap, could provide sustainable and expanded support for Austin's arts ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission has identified increased investment in cultural arts as a key priority to ensure long-term vitality and resilience of local arts organizations;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission recommends that the City Council direct the City Manager and appropriate staff to explore alternative funding strategies for cultural arts, including pursuing state legislative opportunities to increase the HOT tax allocation cap beyond the current 15%;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that these efforts should prioritize equitable access and support for underrepresented artists and organizations, strengthening Austin's cultural ecosystem and community engagement;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Commission requests reporting on the outcomes of these exploratory efforts, including potential legislative strategies, financial projections, and anticipated impacts on local arts programs.

**Date of Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Record of the vote:**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Staff or board member can sign)*