



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff 

From: Jenny LaCoste-Caputo, Deputy Director, Austin Communications & Engagement 

Date: June 22, 2026

Subject: **Staff Response to Civic Engagement Opportunities (Resolution No. 20240502-065)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a final response to [Resolution No. 20240502-065](#), which called for increased civic engagement in each City Council district, the identification of needs or additional resources for existing engagement programs, and the enhancement of user-friendly and accessible online engagement tools.

The City of Austin has achieved this directive by expanding its civic education, youth engagement, and digital infrastructure to support equitable and impactful public participation. This response provides a report on the status and evolution of priority initiatives named in the resolution:

- [CityWorks Academy](#)
- [SpeakUp Austin](#)
- [Youth Initiative Programs](#)
- [Customer Assistance Program \(CAP\)](#)

CITYWORKS ACADEMY

[CityWorks Academy](#) continues to serve as a cornerstone of civic education in Austin. Launched in 2009, the Academy is a 12-week leadership and learning experience that connects community members with City departments, services, and decision-makers through immersive programming. In 2024 we debuted a multilingual outreach strategy, translating recruitment materials into eight languages, supporting broader participation citywide. Each session included live interpretation services and a child-friendly space. Graduates of the program have formed an active alumni group that consistently volunteers with City departments and participates in community initiatives.

SPEAKUP AUSTIN

[SpeakUp Austin](#) serves as the City's central hub for online engagement and hosts a wide range of tools, including surveys, comment forms, event listings, and interactive maps. In 2025 alone, SpeakUp Austin supported more 141 projects, reached over 20,000 participants, and generated more than 200,000 individual survey responses and comments. The platform includes accessibility features such as responsive design, accessibility tools, and multiple languages. Austin Communications & Engagement

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provides tailored support and technical training to help departments fully leverage SpeakUp Austin and other digital tools.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

The City's investment in civic engagement extends to Austin's youngest residents through Austin Economic Development's [Youth Initiatives Office](#), which offers multiple year-round youth leadership and internship programs. Examples include:

- **Austin Youth Council:** Made up of over 80 high school students from all 10 districts who meet monthly to discuss policy issues affecting Austin youth, host guest speakers from City departments, and plan community service projects
- **AustinCorps:** A partnership with Austin ISD that combines classroom curriculum on local government with hands-on experience in City departments
- **Austin Public Health Internships:** Combines classroom curriculum on public health with hands-on experience within the many different divisions of Austin Public Health
- **Emerging Leaders Summer Internship Program:** A public-private partnership with the City of Austin, Bank of America, and the Quality-of-Life Foundation offering paid internships that develop leadership skills.

CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP) – Support for Utility Customers

The [Customer Assistance Program \(CAP\)](#), administered by the City of Austin Utilities and Austin Energy, provides a suite of support services for community members experiencing financial hardship, serious medical conditions that require working utilities, or other vulnerabilities. The City of Austin Utilities participates in 45+ outreach events each year to ensure CAP programming reaches the community and that customers. The City also hosts the annual Community Connections Resource Fair, a free event that connects limited-income customers with valuable community resources.

CONCLUSION

The City of Austin has made significant strides in fulfilling the directives outlined in [Resolution No. 20240502-065](#) by expanding and modernizing its civic engagement infrastructure. From neighborhood conversations to digital platforms, youth leadership development to multilingual, accessible public input tools, and customer assistance programs, these efforts represent the City's commitment to a participatory democracy that reflects the full diversity of Austin and addresses community needs. Austin Communications & Engagement continues to strengthen its civic engagement framework, which includes multiple programs and partnerships to deepen civic participation across all districts.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jenny LaCoste-Caputo, Deputy Director of Austin Communications and Engagement, at jenny.lacostecaputo@austintexas.gov.

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