



ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION < >

Date: July 18, 2017

Subject: Systemic inequity works to exclude Asian Americans

Motioned By: < >

Seconded By: < >

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the City develop budget policies and initiatives that address institutional racism and systemic inequity that works to exclude Asian Americans.

Description of Recommendation to Council: Asian Americans were such a small part of the overall Austin population that they were not accounted for in a meaningful way in the City's budget. Now, as the fastest growing population in Austin/Travis County, and representing approximately 8% of the City's population, Asian Americans have reached critical enough numbers to be recognized as a population that needs services. However, the City has not recognized that the base budget must be realigned to take into account its failure to provide services to an entire community of its residents. The City's perspective must change from one that views the needs of Asian Americans as something that requires additional funds to one that views the needs of Asian Americans as requiring a realignment of the existing base budget. In 2017, Council attempted to address these inequities through "one-time" funding measures. This response fails to recognize the gravity of the problem and seeks to place a band-aid over a gaping wound. The 2018 budget must not have the same approach or the same result.

Rationale:

A survey of various departments has shown that Asian American, limited English proficiency populations have often never received City services and that the City and the traditional non-profits that receive grants from the City have historically failed to serve these residents. This is an inherent structural inequity that must be addressed. The Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities was formed to help identify and address exactly these types of issues, and a member of our Commission who is on the Task Force has helped us to do just that. To be clear, Asian Americans pay taxes in the City of Austin, but many Asian Americans with limited English proficiency, including seniors and low-income residents, are not receiving services directly or indirectly from the City through the base budget. Our Commission believes that this must change and the change must occur with this budget cycle. In July, the Commission submitted budget recommendations that can begin to help address these inequities and the barriers to service faced by Asian American residents and continue the movement toward a more inclusive City. Our Commission's work is supported by the City's Equity Office and we are working with the Equity Office to help City departments understand and implement measures to realign department budgets. These recommendations should be incorporated into the City's base budget for 2018 and **we ask that the City Council direct City Management to develop**

policies and initiatives that address these systemic inequities in coordination with the Chief Equity Officer and our Commission.

We thank you for your consideration and ongoing support of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

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