



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017

Commission on Immigrant Affairs

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:

- (1) advise the city council on issues of common concern to immigrants, particularly in the areas of health and human services, education, and the demographic makeup of the Austin immigrant community;
- (2) monitor requirements of federal, state, and local immigration, welfare and other laws that affect immigrants, and recommend to the city council actions to maximize the benefits to local immigrants under existing laws and to minimize the adverse impacts to local immigrants under the laws;
- (3) promote recognition of the contributions of the foreign-born to the economic and cultural vitality of Austin; and
- (4) promote the availability of, and promote accessibility to, local educational, economic, legal, and social resources for immigrants.

1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.

We continued to struggle with quorum in the 2016-2017 year, but we were able to meet quorum towards the end of the year at all of our meetings. As such, the Commission was able to hold meetings and carry out business. This was possible because expectations for Commissioners were reiterated and all seats on the Commission were filled for the first time in about one year.

In addition, over the 2016-2017 year, there were major changes at both the national and state levels regarding immigration enforcement, which meant we had to change the focus of our work. We continued to focus on the work outlined in the Welcoming City Report, but after the November elections, we narrowed our focus to the areas of Public Safety, Children in Schools, and Civic Engagement.

In our meetings, we had presentations by:

- Maria Arabbo, AISD District Refugee Family Support Specialist (items 1, 2 and 4 of mission)
- Kimberly Maddox, Austin Health and Human Services Department, regarding budget process
- members of the Austin Police Department (item 1 of mission)
- Bryon Oaks, Chef Equity Officer (items 1, 2 and 4 of mission)
- representatives from Texas Here to Stay Coalition (item 4 of mission)
- Faye Kolly of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, on Texas legislative issues (item 2 of mission)
- Massam Marawi of Syrian American Refugee Aid (item 1, 2 and 4 of mission)
- Matt Simpson of the ACLU, on Texas legislative issues (item 2 of mission)

We arranged for a meeting between immigrant advocates and the APD to discuss the U visa certification process, and to work together to come up with ideas to strengthen the process (items 2 and 4 of mission)

We made the following recommendations to City Council:

- That APD not arrest people for no driver's license as part of the Vision Zero plan, Recommendation 20161121-004B (item 1 of mission)
- That APD not deny U visa certifications because the Statute of Limitations had passed, Recommendation 20160109-005A (item 1 and 2 of mission)
- That the City Council provide funding to legal services organizations assisting immigrants (item 1 and 2 of mission)
- That the City proceed on a municipal ID program, including assigning a program administrator and funding a feasibility study (items 2 and 4 of mission)

During 2017, we moved from City Hall and held our meetings in the Districts, to encourage community members to participate in Commission meetings. Community participation in meetings has increased. (items 1, 2, 3 and 4 of mission)

We published two quarterly newsletters, in which we presented statistical information on issues relating to immigration and highlighted the stories of local immigrants (items 1 and 2 of mission)

We have developed our Commission Facebook page, where we announce our meetings and share articles of interest regarding immigrants and immigration issues, especially as they relate to Austin (items 2 and 3 of mission)

2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

They do, as outlined above.

3. *List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year:*

First, continue the work of each individual workgroup established by the Commission in order to streamline recommendations to City Council and relevant City agencies.

Second, determine if the Commission can make connections between agencies serving immigrant and refugee populations, in order to better serve the immigrant population and to save resources.

Third, continue to improve community outreach through social media, continue community based meetings in each individual City Council District during 2017, and increase community participation in meetings.

Fourth, better support the Commission's mission statement to "promote recognition of the contributions of the foreign-born to the economic and cultural vitality of Austin."