



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020

Commission on Immigrant Affairs

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

- (A) 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;
- (B) 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;
- (C) promote recognition of the contributions of the foreign-born to the economic and cultural vitality of Austin; and
- (D) 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.

Here are the major actions during the 2019-2020 year:

- 1) We worked towards opening an Immigrant Affairs Office. We submitted a budget proposal and our chair testified before Council in support of that proposal. We submitted a recommendation that the position be funded at a higher salary and with more authority, Recommendation 20190805-5C. We then heard from the Equity Office regarding plans for the position, drafted considerations for a job description, and two of our commissioners served on the interviewing committee. The new Immigrant Affairs officer has started,

and she has presented at one of our meetings. We have advised Council that the City should work to create an Immigrant Affairs Office and not just place all the responsibility on one position, with Recommendation 20200422-002A2.

- 2) We participated with Cities United for Action, including attending their National Convening in Seattle and participating in their national and state conference calls and planning efforts and coalition building. The new Immigrant Affairs officer can now continue with this work.
- 3) We participated in the Joint Inclusion Committee, including joining with them on budget recommendations and requesting their support for the creation of the Immigrant Affairs position
- 4) We continued to participate with the volunteer community liaison program with APD, partnering with the Austin Bar Association's Immigration and Civil Rights Section, in which we reviewed 5 requests from the community about denials of requests for U visa certifications. In three of those cases, APD determined the denial was in error and issued the certification.
- 5) We participated in the Immigrant Services Network of Austin
- 6) We had a briefing from Houmma Garba and Binh Ly regarding the Serving Austin's Immigrant Community report
- 7) We had a presentation from Brion Oaks and Amanda Jasso of the Equity Office requesting our input on the creation of the job description for the new immigrant affairs officer position
- 8) We had a briefing from APD's Lt. Christina Chomout, Victim Services Manager Kachina Clark, and Immigrant Liaison Sadot Azzua about U visa certifications
- 9) We heard presentations from Rebecca Lightsey of American Gateways, Alexandra Minnaar of RAICES, APD LGBT Liaison Christian Mendoza regarding the SAFE PLACE program, Saeed Azadi and Holly Eades regarding refugee health programs, Justin Estep from Catholic Charities, and Rocio Villalobos our new immigrant affairs officer.
- 10) We hosted a community budget forum, and developed 5 budget recommendations, recommendations 20200422-002A1 and -002A3, 20200504-2c and 20200504-3a
- 11) We passed a recommendation that the immigrant affairs officer position be funded at a higher level, recommendation 20190805-5C, and recommended that Council continue to develop an immigrant affairs office, recommendation 20200422-002A2

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

Our actions complied with the mission statement

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

- a) We will work with the Equity Office and the Immigrant Affairs office to support the work of the Immigrant Affairs officer

- b) We want to establish our presence in the immigrant and refugee community and encourage members of the community to bring items of concern to us by holding community forums, once it is safe to do so
- c) We will continue to increase and expand our participation in community coalitions, so that community groups and agencies can bring items of concern to our attention
- d) We will support the Immigrant Affairs Officer's participation in statewide and national conversations with organizations like Cities for Action and Welcoming America to improve the situation for immigrants in Austin
- e) We will continue to participate in the budget process