




TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Stephanie Hayden 
Interim Director, Austin Public Health

DATE: August 11, 2017

SUBJECT: City of Austin Membership in the SAFE Cities Network

The purpose of this memo is to provide a status update on the Vera Institute of Justice's, SAFE Cities Network grant application. On June 8, 2017, City Council approved a request by Austin Public Health to submit a proposal to the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) in response to the SAFE Cities Network Request for Proposals. The Vera solicitation included one-time catalyst funds to support immigrant deportation legal defense as well as the opportunity for cities to join the SAFE Cities Network.

Austin Public Health received notification that we were selected as one of twelve communities across the country to join the SAFE Cities Network and receive one-time grant funds. In response to the Austin Public Health proposal, Vera will award \$100,000 to American Gateways to provide deportation defense legal services. American Gateways is a local non-profit organization with significant experience in immigrant removal defense. They were one of the two legal service providers included in our proposal. They work out of Austin with additional offices in San Antonio and Waco. Vera chose American Gateways to receive the catalyst funds based on their long-standing work providing removal defense for immigrants and their strong reputation in this arena. American Gateways will receive grant funding and in-kind support from Vera.

The City of Austin has been invited to join the SAFE Cities Network. A City staff member will represent Austin by participating in conference calls and in-person meetings. The SAFE Cities Network will establish a public communications strategy, implemented by Vera. The SAFE Cities Network webpage will include the following Mission Statement, approved by all members, who will be listed on the webpage:

SAFE Cities Mission Statement:

The SAFE (Safety & Fairness for Everyone) Cities Network is a diverse group of local jurisdictions from around the country committed to due process and providing legal representation to immigrants in deportation proceedings and keeping communities strong and safe.

The Network:

- *Supports local communities in protecting the well-being and rights of all residents;*
- *Shows a strong commitment to due process and fairness in our justice system, and representation of immigrants in removal proceedings, with a priority for those who are detained;*
- *Aspires to a "universal representation" model that serves all categories of immigrants in removal proceedings; and*
- *Commits to providing public dollars for removal defense.*

Vera plans to list on their SAFE Cities Network website all selected communities that sign off on the SAFE Cities Mission Statement and accept grant funds. This posting of the mission statement and participating cities is planned for this month. A press release and official launch of the SAFE Cities Network is planned for November 2017.

If you have any questions feel free to give me a call at 512-972-5010.

CC: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager
Sara Hensley, Interim Assistant City Manager
Brie Franco, Officer, Intergovernmental Relations
Adrienne Sturup, Acting Assistant Director, Austin Public Health