



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Human Rights Commission

Recommendation Number 20200729-003a: Recommendation to Address Under-banking by Allowing City Libraries to Perform Limited Financial Services

WHEREAS, Under-banking is a serious detriment to working people's ability to build and grow wealth; and,

WHEREAS, Online banking services and digital commerce are becoming increasingly ubiquitous; and,

WHEREAS, The inability to participate in digital commerce can directly impact one's quality of life, financial and employment prospects; thus negatively impacting one's access to human rights; and,

WHEREAS, Public institutions, such as the United States Postal Service, have previously provided limited banking services to the public; and,

WHEREAS, The entrance of a public enterprise with more affordable rates stimulates competition in the private sector; and,

WHEREAS, The definition of what public libraries are able to lend to the public has previously been expanded (i.e. DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, etc.); and,

WHEREAS, Libraries are currently, in effect, depositories of a kind; and,

WHEREAS, Exclusion from banking services has been a studied and documented symptom of institutional racism and sexism; and,

WHEREAS, The right to Social Security is guaranteed by the 22nd Article of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights; and,

WHEREAS, We are now facing unprecedented financial consequences due to COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, It is in the public interest to create a department within a publicly trusted institution dedicated to the financial success and prosperity of all Austin residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Human Rights Commission recommends the Austin City Council to investigate ways to charter the Austin Library System as a state bank to provide basic, free-to-access, financial services to include but not limited to: fee-free ATM services, checking and savings accounts with online access, debit card services, fee-free overdraft protection, etc.