



Annual Internal Review

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

African American Resource Advisory Commission **(Official Name of Board or Commission)**

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) **is:** *to advise the City Council on issues related to the Quality of Life (QOL) for the City's African American community, and recommend programs designed to alleviate any inequities that may confront African Americans in social, economic and vocational pursuits, including: health care; housing, including affordable housing, home ownership and homelessness; entertainment opportunities for professionals and students; employment; and cultural venues, including museums, theaters, art galleries and music venues. The Commission also advises the Council on matters related to the African American Cultural and Heritage Facility and the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center.*

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.

In continued support of our mission, the 15-member African American Resource Advisory Commission (AARAC), during the 2019-20 year, improved upon its commitment to involve and support the City's African American community through open dialogue, meaningful conversations, community wide announcements and information sharing, and engaging more community leaders in our monthly meetings.

Our effort this year was focused on a variety of issues and concerns, all of which we believe had an immediate impact on the African American community. Our Commission again this year expended a great deal of time and energy on the research and development of our comprehensive recommendation for the FY21 City of Austin budget. This year worked closely with City of Austin Equity Office to collect and document concerns from members of the African American community. Through our budget recommendations this Commission continues to

address persistent and increasing deficits for African Americans in each of our six focus areas: health care; housing, including affordable housing, home ownership and homelessness; entertainment opportunities for professionals and students; employment; and cultural venues, including museums, theaters, art galleries and music venues. As a result of our collaborations with other QOL Commissions and the honest and valuable input we received from the community, non-profit leaders and African American service providers during our monthly meetings and through presentations by City of Austin Department leaders, the AARAC anticipates the availability and use of significant financial investments focused on improving the QOL of African Americans in the City of Austin FY21 budget.

During the 2019-20 year the AARAC continued to discussed many critical issues with community and City leaders that directly affect Austin and the African American community such as: Police oversight, racial profiling and excessive/lethal use of force, health (mental and physical) related to COVID-19 pandemic including testing, Strategic Mobility initiatives, Intergovernmental relations between Texas Legislature and City of Austin, affordable housing, early childhood development, homelessness, substance abuse and recovery, criminal justice reform and reentry, gentrification, the Sobering Center, Boy Scouts of America, 2020 U.S. Census, African American Genealogy, swimming lessons and pool access, childhood development and education, and the preservation of African American culture and heritage in Austin.

The AARAC in 2019-20 raised our voice and made our position known through the discussion and passing of recommendations to City Council concerning: African American health (Support of Human Rights Commission and COVID-19 Equity in Food and Testing), Culture (Creative Space Project), Safety (APD Response to Resistance Policy), Economics (Family Independence Initiative).

In 2019-20 the AARAC continued to appreciate and depend on the incredible partnership and support provided by the City of Austin Economic Development Department and the Equity Office. Throughout this time period we received updates and reports from many City departments including: City Manager's Office, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, City Demographer, Human Resources, Neighborhood Housing, District 1 Council Member and Staff, Austin Fire Department Chief and Staff, Austin Police Department Chief and Staff, Millennium Youth Entertainment Center, Austin Public Library, Carver Museum, African American Cultural and Heritage Center, Arts Commission, Music Commission and Austin Water.

Like all Boards and Commissions, the AARAC adjusted to meeting virtually in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 on in-person meetings. During this time period we also experienced the change of several commissioners. Even with these challenge our Commission continued to be engaged with the community, City of Austin Departments and community leaders and partners.

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

During the 2019-20 calendar year, the AARAC's actions were compliant with the Commission's Mission Statement. During this calendar year the AARAC restructured our working groups so they more accurately represent the initiatives detailed in the City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023.

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

The major goals and objectives of the AARAC for the new calendar year will continue to be developed while addressing the many disparities and issues facing the African American community related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The AARAC will continue to focus on areas of inequity and inequality in the African American community, including the sufficient allocation of funds and resources that will help to reduce the number of disparities in areas of health, housing, employment and economic and educational opportunities. The AARAC will continue to collaborate with agencies, non-profits, service providers, the City of Austin, the faith community and others to increase the number of preventive measures and opportunities available to the African American community. The AARAC will remain faithful to our mission and consistently provide guidance to the City Council on ways the City of Austin can support and lead in these efforts. There are many unknowns going into the new calendar year. The AARAC will prioritize developing our budget recommendations for FY22 early in the 2021 calendar year.

Submitted,

Daryl Horton
Chair, African American Resource Advisory Commission