City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 25-1637, **Agenda Item #:** 6.   9/11/2025

Posting Language
Authorize negotiation and execution of interlocal agreements with Austin Community College, Texas State University, and the University of Texas at Austin to provide higher education research, consulting, and technical assistance for five years in an amount not to exceed $12,000,000 divided among the institutions. Funding in the amount of $2,400,000 is available in the operating budget of various City departments. Funding for the remaining years is contingent upon available funding in future budgets. Related to Item #28.

Lead Department
Budget and Organizational Excellence.

Fiscal Note
Funding in the amount of $2,400,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 operating budget of various City departments.

Funding for the remaining years is contingent upon funding in future departmental budgets.

For More Information:
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Additional Backup Information:
These interlocal agreements will allow enable the City to formally engage regional academic institutions, Austin Community College, Texas State University, and the University of Texas at Austin as strategic partners in applied research and technical collaboration aligned with Citywide Strategic Plan priority areas. This will enable departments to access a wide range of expertise and support, such as community-based research, student-led projects, program evaluation, and policy advisory services. Projects will be scoped, initiated, approved, and funded by City departments on an as-needed basis through a flexible and equitable framework.

This effort builds on the successful research collaboration model established through the City's longstanding interlocal agreement with The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin). Expanding this model to additional institutions will provide new capacity and open pathways for broader regional participation, innovation, and insight. Each of these institutions brings unique strengths, deep community relationships, and academic expertise that support City goals.

The City's research partnership with UT Austin has resulted in a multitude of impactful projects over the last five years. These collaborations have shaped public-facing services, guided internal strategy, and elevated Austin's profile as a data-smart city. Beyond formal research projects, these partnerships have also supported a wide range of activities such as student capstone and class projects using City data, faculty advising, technical workshops, shared data analysis, grant collaboration, and ongoing knowledge exchange, all of which contribute to a more connected and future-ready civic ecosystem.

Expanding this framework to additional universities will broaden the City's access to talent and resources and strengthen the regional innovation ecosystem. This expansion will support workforce development, create new opportunities for grant alignment, and build a cohesive, multi-institution partnership model, establishing the

City as a leader in civic-academic collaboration.

These agreements are designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency across all participating universities. This new partnership model makes things more efficient by using a repeatable process instead of one-time deals. With organized steps, City staff can easily find partners, use faculty expertise, and start projects that match their goals. The process is now more centralized, clear, and collaborative, cutting down the time from idea to action from months to just weeks.

If this contract is not approved, the City will not have a diverse group of local universities to collaborate with on important projects that align with City goals.