



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Dr. Eric Johnson, Assistant City Manager on behalf of Ed Van Eenoo, Chief Financial Officer *CAF*

FROM: Kerri Lang, Director, Office of Budget and Organizational Excellence *KL*
Kim Olivares, Director, Financial Services Department *KSO*

DATE: September 9, 2025

SUBJECT: **Items 6 and 28 on the September 11, 2025 City Council Agenda**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding two items on the September 11, 2025 City Council agenda. Items 6 and 28 seek authorization to expand the City's research partnership program through agreements with six regional colleges and universities.

Background

In 2020, the City launched an interlocal agreement (ILA) for higher education research with The University of Texas at Austin (UT) which created a standardized framework for applied research, technical assistance, and student collaboration. The program has since grown into a robust model with 52 projects across 23 departments completed or underway, representing more than \$8.45 million in value, with an additional \$1+ million in new projects in development.

This work has supported strategic planning, community engagement, data analysis, and workforce development. It has also fostered student involvement through class projects, internships, and capstones, strengthening the pipeline of future public-sector professionals.

Program Expansion

Items 6 and 28 will build on the foundation established with the UT ILA and extend the framework to five additional regional institutions:

- Austin Community College
- Texas State University
- Huston-Tillotson University
- St. Edward's University
- Concordia University Texas

Together with UT, these institutions of higher learning will form a regional research network to broaden access to expertise, encourage multi-institution collaboration, and enhance the City's role in community collaboration and strategic thinking.

Item 6 seeks approval to execute three ILAs with the following public institutions: UT, Texas State University, and Austin Community College. Item 28 seeks approval to execute contracts with the following private institutions: Huston-Tillotson University, St. Edward's University, and Concordia University Texas. The combined authorization is up to \$12 million over five years, with projects funded by departments using existing or budgeted resources.

Expanding this program offers several benefits:

- The use of standardized agreements will streamline project initiation, allowing departments to move from idea to implementation in weeks rather than months, and ensure transparency and impartiality through the application of consistent processes across all participating institutions.
- The expansion encourages projects that involve multiple institutions, creating opportunities for college students to engage directly with City projects, supporting and connecting academic learning with civic priorities.
- The program is designed to deliver measurable public impact, aligning research with the Citywide Strategic Plan and supporting equitable outcomes for the community.

These agreements will provide departments with streamlined access to a regional network of academic partners beginning in Fiscal Year 2025–2026. Budget and Organizational Excellence will continue to support the program by coordinating processes, facilitating collaboration, and tracking results.

If you have additional questions, please contact Daniel Culotta, Assistant Director of Budget and Organizational Excellence at daniel.culotta@austintexas.gov.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
Corrie Stokes, City Auditor
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk
Judge Sherry Statman, Municipal Court
CMO Executive Team
Department Directors