



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 25-1634, **Agenda Item #:** 5.

9/11/2025

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of an agreement with the Colorado River Alliance to provide educational and engagement activities related to protecting the Texas Colorado River and supporting its long-term viability as the primary source of Austin's water supply for a term of four years for a total contract amount not to exceed \$400,000. Funding: \$100,000 is included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operating Budget of Austin Water. Funding for remaining contract terms is subject to availability in future budgets.

Lead Department

Austin Water.

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$100,000 is included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operating Budget of Austin Water. Funding for remaining contract terms is subject to availability in future budgets.

Prior Council Action:

November 21, 2024 - Council adopted the 2024 update to Water Forward: Austin's Integrated Water Resource Plan, which supports a sustainable and equitable water future for Austin's next 100 years, as well as updates to the Drought Contingency Plan and Water Conservation Plan.

For More Information:

Inquiries should be directed to Vicky Addie, Austin Water Program Coordinator, 512-972-0332, vicky.addie@austintexas.gov.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

August 20, 2025 - Recommended by the Water and Wastewater Commission on an 8-0 vote with three absences.

Additional Backup Information:

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) requires the City to have a program of continuing public education and information regarding water conservation as part of the City's Water Conservation Plan. Additionally, a best management practice identified for implementation of Austin Water resource plans is to expand the reach of Austin Water's public outreach and education about water conservation through partnerships with community organizations. In support of these objectives, Austin Water maintains a partnership with the Colorado River Alliance (Alliance), dating back to 2015, to support educational outreach activities. The current agreement, near its expiration, between Austin Water and the Alliance is updated periodically to review the services provided by the Alliance and identify financial support needed from Austin Water.

The Alliance is responsible for management of the Texas Colorado River Mobile Learning Experience, a traveling, interactive science classroom which utilizes hands-on activities and interactive exhibits to teach middle school students about vital environmental science concepts such as point-source pollution, water conservation, and natural resource protection in alignment with Texas Essential Skills (TEKS) requirements.

The updated agreement will provide funding to support the Alliance's traveling educational program, complementing Austin Water's need to provide public education around Water Forward and Water Conservation Plan goals. The Alliance's educational program will now include performances by Austin Water's own Dowser Dan (designed for pre-K through 5th-grade audiences), who shares the importance of conserving and protecting our precious water resources. The mobile classroom will also be utilized as a feature at a broader range of community events, supporting the expansion of the Alliance's Youth Environmental Stewardship Program.

Additionally, Austin Water will seek opportunities to identify a permanent site for the Mobile Learning Experience and collaborate with the Alliance to develop a strategic plan for ongoing outreach activities beyond 2029.