



# EDUCATE, CONNECT, AND ENGAGE

Class of 2016

Hispanic Austin Leadership  
Civic Engagement Team

ISABEL RAYA

DIANA TAVERA

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## Mission

*The HAL Civic Engagement Team aims to educate, connect, and therefore engage Austinites.*

Focusing on educating the young Latino community of the role and opportunities available in the city government by connecting them to City Council and committees' issues that directly and/or indirectly impact the community exhorting them to become engaged at an early age.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Several city ordinances and propositions are often passed without an uproar or opposition. This lack of even representation from diverse groups of citizens can be caused by various factors.

Some Austinites yearn for changes but may be in need of resources, knowledge, or empowerment. So it is crucial to connect them with the appropriate department, data, and teams so that they are able to collectively tackle those issues most important to them.

Through our research, we were able to uncover that various Austinites don't feel they have accessibility to information whether it be due to difficult messaging style/techniques, lack of knowledge on how city hall functions, or what meetings and agendas are available to the public.

I think that there are various ways to get people engaged but they must be aware of debates, meetings, and workshops going on in the city. It's a shame that the only way they are aware of specific events going on in the community is because it happened to be on their television later that evening. Which doesn't allow them to be a part of the dialogue that took place earlier that day and essentially ensure their voice is heard. We must explore various avenues to disseminate data to the community since they have exposure to different mediums and are reached differently.

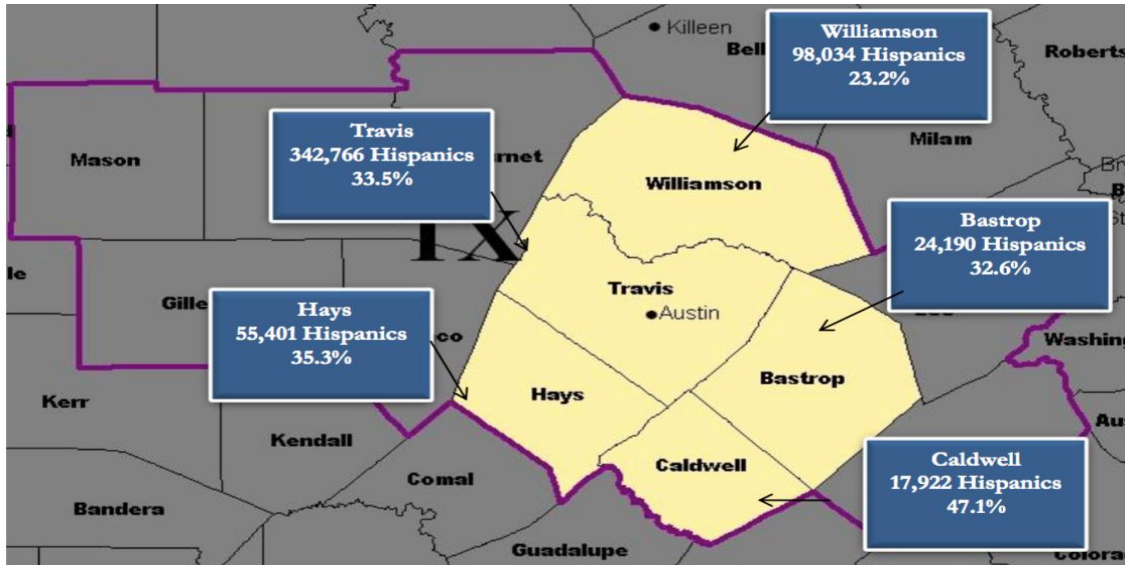
Our team feels that we must educate individuals and connect them to the appropriate resources/representatives. This in turn, enables individuals to become engaged in various issues facing the community.

## PROJECT NEED

Civic engagement promotes the quality of life in our community, through both political and non-political processes. For Hispanics it means working together to make a difference in the civic duty of our community by developing a combination of knowledge and values. As residents of Travis County, it is our duty to motivate our community to participate and become active; so that way we may address public policy issues affecting our daily lives.

In order to speak as a united voice, we need to acknowledge and embrace the differences within our community. Therefore, the bonds we create when we tackle previous public policy issues will still be present when it's time to focus on another issue pertaining to poverty, labor rights, education, etc. If individuals in the Hispanic community feel as if they have been ignored, they will be less likely to engage politically in the future. We need all Hispanics to see the value in speaking up for themselves; not sitting back and allowing others to speak on their behalf.

The table below demonstrates that Travis Counties Hispanic population has increased to 34% over the past ten years. Travis County Latino population growth accounts for 58% of the total County growth. Additionally, 34% out of the 58% is accounted by the young Latino population between the ages of 18 to 25 years old. (exhibit 1)



However, Hispanic civic participation remains at the same rate and below average despite population increase. According to data in the areas with 80% plus Hispanic population only 500-1000 voted during the 2014 Mayor’s race (exhibit 2).

## ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS

Based on the gaps discovered through quantitative data and a wide array of interviews conducted with community leaders we were certain we wanted to work with young Hispanic students. We brainstormed and came up with some groups to contact in hopes of collaboration.

One of those groups was the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at St. Edward’s University which is dedicated to serving the higher education needs of migrant students. Most of these scholars are first-generation college goers, who often have experienced disruptions throughout grade school while migrating with their families to work in various seasonal occupations. The underlying goal of CAMP is to help migrant students transform their lives, and the lives of their families, by obtaining their college degree and contributing to the greater good of their communities.

Project Manager, Isabel Raya is a former scholar of the CAMP program. Previous event programming experience she has conducted with CAMP students facilitated this initial Educate, Connect, and Engage program request (exhibit 3). We are truly grateful to the CAMP staff for their openness to collaboration with our team and ultimately allowing us to reach and educate some of their scholars on city government and civic engagement.

## PROGRAM

The civic engagement team held a two-session program which focused on exhorting young Austinite Latinos in getting civically aware and involved in our local government (exhibit 4).

Session one was held on Wednesday, April 6, 2016 at St. Edwards University. The focus of the first session was to educate youth on the process of getting involved in the City of Austin. We also navigated the city website so they can find their corresponding council member and how to access council committee agendas. Our team provided a demonstration to participants on how to register to testify during City Hall hearings. Participants also learned how to prepare their own three-minute testimony and they were ready to exercise their three-minute testimonies. At the end of the first session, participants gained an understanding of the importance of public awareness and participating in our local government.



Session two was held on Wednesday, April 13, 2016 at St. Edwards University (exhibit 5). We provided a brief history lesson on the council history and on Latinos that made an impact by being civically engaged in city government. The focus of the second session was a Latino council member panel. Attendees were able to ask council members questions regarding their personal background, community initiatives, and how they can become engaged as students. At the end of the second session, participants felt empowered by council members, because they were able to relate to them and understand their leadership role in the community. Participants felt heard and therefore, increased the likelihood of them engaging in future sessions because they felt empowered through active participation. Participants had become aware of the importance of being educated, connected, and engaged in Austin.



## IMPACT & SUSTAINABILITY

Educate, Connect, and Engage participants were given a survey to fill out prior to gauge their initial knowledge and understanding of the information we would cover throughout the sessions (exhibit 6). The survey questions gathered their educational background and were focused on civic engagement. These questions asked if they knew who their local elected city officials were, amongst other critical questions to see if students were informed. At the final session we distributed the same survey with an additional component that also served as a feedback loop (exhibit 7). Based on the data collected from the post survey there was an increase of awareness and overall drive to engage in various issues facing their communities.

Through the sessions CAMP scholars became more informed about various critical issues that affect Austinites and their lives in Austin as students. They were curious about the various topics presented and were yearning to continue being fueled with rich information. They were taught a new method to communicate their stance on various issues or concerns they may have and that was through testifying at City Council sessions. Participants were especially thrilled to meet, listen, and ask questions to the council members. Through this interaction participants were able to have an essence of who these elected officials were and how their own backgrounds and beliefs were similar. The council members approachable demeanor facilitated participants to establish a relatable perception of them. Ultimately, leading to participants having the confidence to seek out individuals in seats of power to ensure their voices are heard. In conclusion, the data and resources we provided participants have empowered them to have a positive and lasting impact in their own communities.

The College Assistance Migrant Program has agreed to adopt this program. They are considering integrating it in their scholars monthly meetings. We have provided CAMP staff the foundation needed to execute the sessions and will be of assistance in any way. Additionally, we have secured two private donors who have committed to financially support the Educate, Connect, and Engage programming for the next four years. These donors also have in an interest in providing oversight and other resources.

Although initial efforts have proven to be successful, the story of civic engagement in Austin is never ending. The Educate, Connect, and Engage message will carry on through the continued education of young latinos, connection to services and resources, and engagement by becoming active citizens and contributors for the betterment of Austin, Texas.

## THE HAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TEAM

### **Isabel Raya**

Isabel Raya primarily resided in California for grade school and completed her high school years in Texas; she comes from a migrant farm work background and adapted to being “on the move” at an early age. She is more than certain that she wouldn’t have the passion and drive she has today if it weren’t for the various people that have served and continue to serve as role models in her life.

She considers the experiences obtained throughout her career thus far to be extremely diverse. Isabel has studied abroad in France and Japan; as a result of those two experiences, she picked up



International Business as a third major to complement her existing Business Administration and Marketing major. She's had the opportunity to participate in a leadership program in Washington D.C. while doing marketing/promotions for a federal agency. She has participated in domestic and international community service trips; enhancing her passion to travel, learn, collaborate, and grow with diverse groups. Today she continues to be the VP of Collegiate Relations for Delta Sigma Pi, leadership committee member for the St. Edward's Alumni Chapter and CAMP alumni association, YHPAA member, volunteer at the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and serves as an Ambassador and on various committees within the organization. Past employers include the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Consulate General of Mexico in Austin, BACR, PetersGroup Public Relations, Illuminas Global, and the United States Bureau of the Census.

### **Diana Tavera**

Diana is an immigrant that came to the United States from Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico. She is a first generation college graduate and currently works at The Tellez Law Firm, an immigration law firm in Austin, where she focuses on removal proceedings and asylum cases. Diana is also co-founder of the Human Rights Community Organizing Project with the Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, a project dedicated to developing and increasing leadership in the immigrant community. She has worked with the Overton Group in Austin as a parent coordinator in the program dedicated to enhancing Spanish and English language proficiency in the community, helping students learn about each other's cultures and parents to get involved in their children's education. Diana was formally trained as a Social Justice Interpreter with the Austin Language Justice Collective, which made her even more aware of the importance of language access in her community to advance social justice.

### **Felipe Chavez**

Felipe provides management and customized personal banking assistance to help clients build, manage, preserve, and transition their personal finances. He works with individuals to analyze the appropriate strategies for personalized, customized implementation to succeed financially. He continuously reviews with his team to help clients fine-tune and adjust their financial plan on an ongoing basis, as well as account for life-changing situations.

With experience that encompasses corporate, entrepreneurial and advisory settings, he is able to understand the needs of a wide range of clients. He enjoys the building relationships side of the business, but is people-driven, which is why he became a Branch Manager for Wells Fargo, Fiesta In-Store. He has been actively serving his community through different programs and events since joining Wells Fargo 10 years ago.



## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

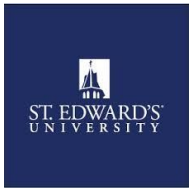
CONTRIBUTOR	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	TOTAL
St. Edwards University	Facility Use for Sessions	Donation	\$450
Wells Fargo Bank	Tablet Donation for Student Raffle	Donation	\$100
AT&T	Cell Phone Donation for Student Raffle	Donation	\$100
Arcos Multimedia Group	Logo Design	Donation	\$199
Amanda Garibay	Flyer Design	Donation	\$150
Hispanic Austin Leadership	Dinner for Civic Engagement Sessions	Expense	\$130
Hispanic Austin Leadership	Raffle Items	Expense	\$31
HEB	Gift Card Donation for Student Raffle	Donation	\$25
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>\$1,185</b>





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success and final outcome of this project required a lot of guidance and assistance from many people. We were extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the following partners and key leaders in the community to increase young Latina/o civic engagement in local government.



St. Edward's College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) who welcomes 35 CAMP students per school year with an all costs paid their freshman year. These students are first generation in their family to attend college, therefore, CAMP has a support team for them and the family. CAMP's partnership allowed us to work with our target population, young Latina/os. Our mission aligned with CAMP's vision for students to make a difference in their community.

Our gratitude goes out to all those who took the time to submit their perspectives, thoughts and suggestions as we explored and executed our project. These individuals set perfect examples of civic engagement in our community:

Victor Ovalle, Geronimo Rodriguez, Larissa Davila, Marion Sanchez, Susana Alamanza,  
Mike Martinez, Johnny Limon, Judge Sarah Eckhardt, Doug Matthews, and Esther Reyes

A special appreciation to the Latino councilmembers who made a part of our project possible with their presence, encouragement and role modeling for our participants as they develop their passion and interest in civic engagement:

Delia Garza, Councilmember District 2  
Greg Casar, Councilmember District 4

Our team was extremely honored to have strong leaders and advisors who motivated our team when we faced obstacles and ultimately facilitated us fostering relationships with key stakeholders in the community. As well keeping us grounded and on track for execution.

Deisy Jaimes, Senate Democratic Caucus  
Cruz Correa, CASA of Travis County

We want to also thank AT&T, HEB, and Wells Fargo for donations as we executed our project.

# CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS

*GILBERT CONTRERAS, ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY*

*ESTHER, YAICONO, ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY*

*DEISY JAIMES, SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS*

*CRUZ CORREA, CASA OF TRAVIS COUNTY*

*ALEXANDRA LANDEROS, COUNCIL MEMBER GARZA*

*SHELBY ALEXANDER, COUNCIL MEMBER CASAR*

*MIKE MARTINEZ, FORMER CITY OF AUSTIN*

*DOUG MATTHEWS, CITY OF AUSTIN*

*JOHNNY LIMON, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST*

*SUSANA ALMANZA, PODER*

*JUDGE SARAH ECKHARDT, TRAVIS COUNTY*

*LARISSA DAVILA, BCO CONSULTING GROUP*

*GERONIMO RODRIGUEZ, SETON*

*VICTOR OVALLE, CITY OF AUSTIN*

*MARION SANCHEZ, CITY OF AUSTIN*

*MATTHEW CHUSTZ, CITY OF AUSTIN*

*DAVID MATUSTIK, CITY OF AUSTIN*

*SARA TORRES, TASK FORCE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT*

*ESTHER REYES, UT PHD CANDIDATE*



APPENDIX

EXHIBIT 1:

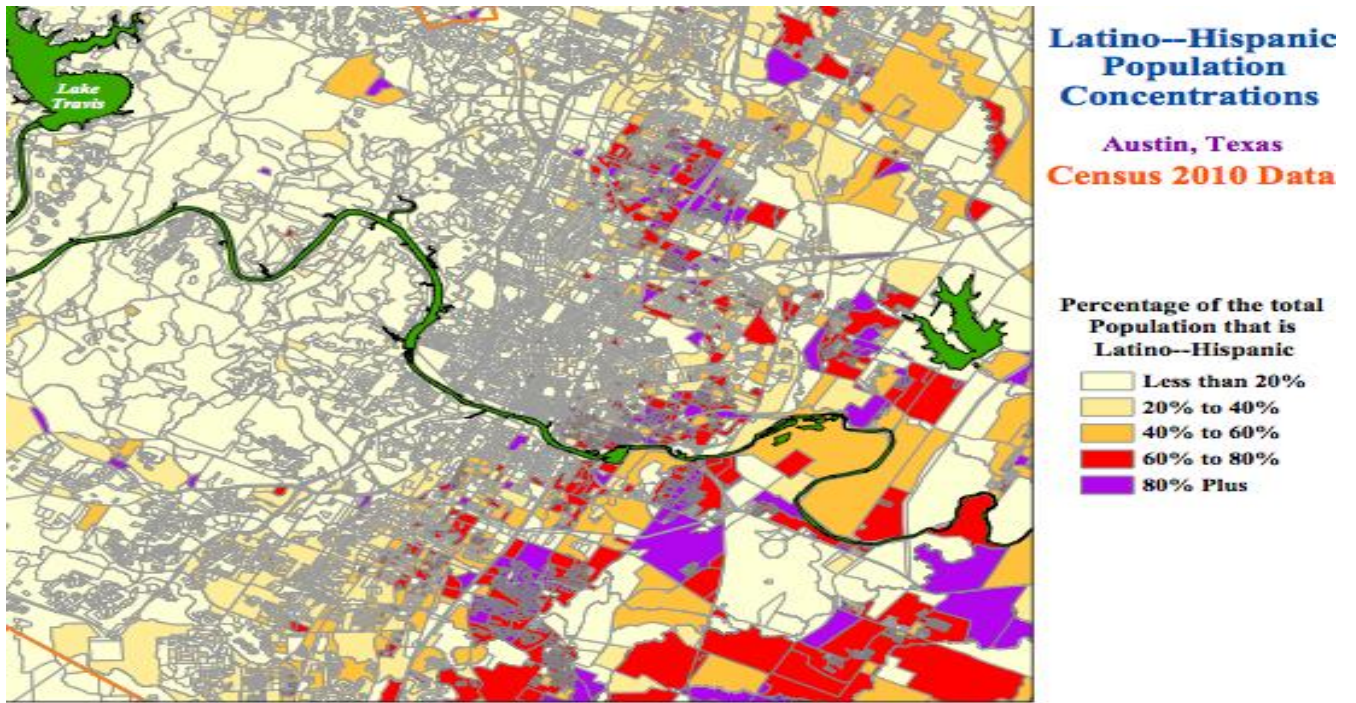


EXHIBIT 2:

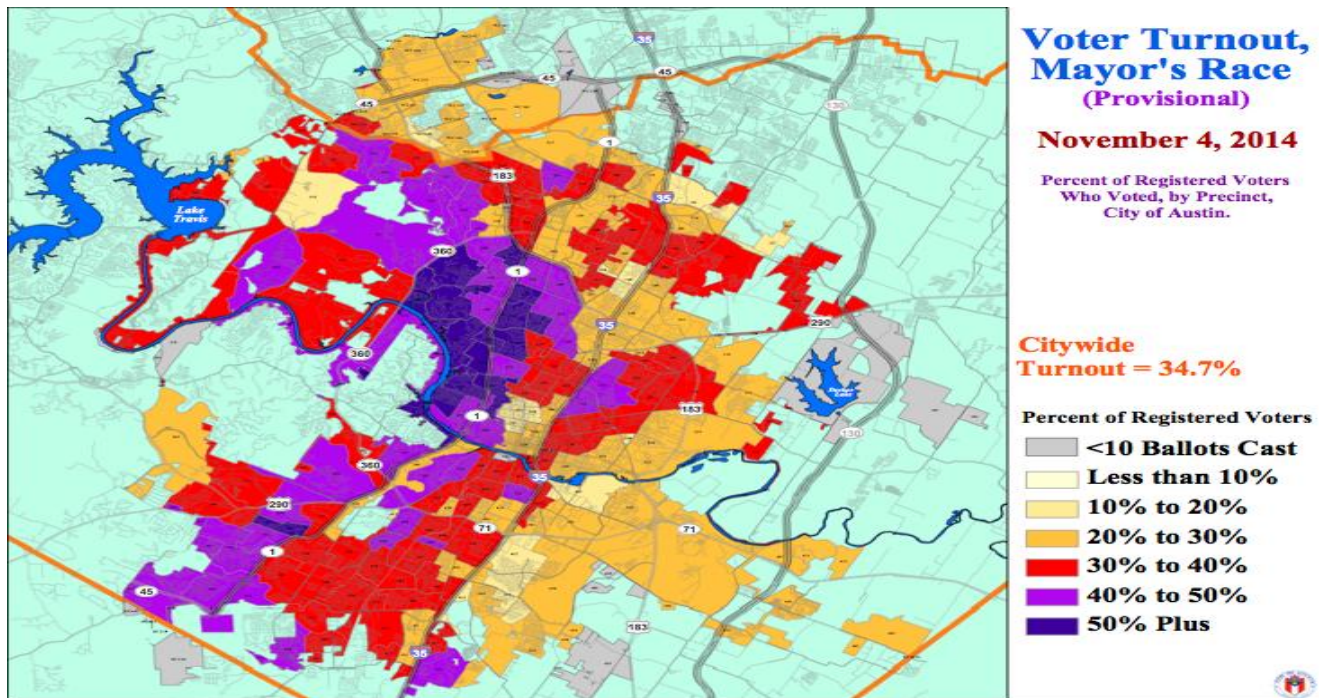




EXHIBIT 3:



January 15, 2016

Dear Esther Yacono,

We are contacting you in hopes that some of the CAMP students at St. Edward's University can be participants in our *Hispanic Austin Leadership* (HAL) project. The HAL program is sponsored through the *Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*; our team's focus is on **Civic Engagement**. We have met with various leaders in Austin to help identify the needs of the Hispanic community and how they can be addressed. Our goal is to increase the number of young Latinos in the community who are educated, connected, and engaged in City government.

We are hoping to partner with you by creating a three session educational program. This program would focus on providing awareness and tools on how your students can become involved within city government. Below you can find the details of our proposed project.

**Project Details:**

o **Groups:**

- 20 East Side Memorial High School students
- 20 St. Edward's University CAMP Scholars

o **Recruitment:** Flyer mentioning incentives of meeting Latino council, dinner, and tablet raffle.

o **Sessions:** *Three sessions; each two hours in duration.*

- **Session 1:** Assessment and survey. We will conduct assessment of how much students know about getting involved in the City of Austin. The survey will allow us to pair them to a specific interest group, therefore enabling them to carry out a personal project throughout the sessions.
- **Session 2:** A panel discussion with Latino council members at city hall and tour. Also, logistics navigation (parking validation, registering and department services.)
- **Session 3:** Training on how to testify in front of council and commissions and how to find meeting information/agendas. Practice testifying in mock scenario based on interest group. Raffle and post assessment.

Something to note is that all sessions with the exception of the city hall tour will be at St. Edward's University. We look forward to hearing what your thoughts are on this; please feel free to contact via email or phone if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Also, we are more than willing to do an in-person meeting.

Thank you,

Isabel Raya

Civic Engagement Team

Hispanic Austin Leadership

Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Felipe Chavez, Deisy Jaimes, Isabel Raya, Diana Tavera

EXHIBIT 4:

Become more involved with the Austin community and government!



H.A.L. Program presents an educational series on

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Sponsored through the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

### SESSION 1:

**Wednesday, April 6**

6:30-8:30p

St. Edwards University  
Carter Auditorium (JBWS186)

Agenda:

- Assessment: *How much do you know about getting involved in the City of Austin?*
- Instances when community participation made an impact in city policy
- Instruction on how to develop a three minute testimony

Mock Testimonies;  
Learn how to register

**RAFFLE!**  
Prizes to include:  
Tablet  
Gift Cards

Speak with  
City of Austin  
Hispanic  
council members



*Dinner will be provided*

### SESSION 2:

**Wednesday, April 13**

6:30-8:30p

St. Edwards University  
Fleck 305

Agenda:

- Panel discussion: Latino council members
- Practice testifying in mock scenario based on interest group(s)
- Question and answer session
- Raffle and post assessment

EXHIBIT 5:

Become more involved with the Austin community and government!



H.A.L. Program presents an educational panel on  
**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**  
*Sponsored through the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*



**Sabino Renteria**



**Delia Garza**



**Greg Casar**

Wednesday, April 13  
6:30-8:30p  
St. Edwards University  
Fleck 305

**RAFFLE!**  
Prizes to include:  
Tablet  
Gift Cards

*Dinner will be provided*

Speak with  
City of  
Austin  
Hispanic  
Council





EXHIBIT 6:

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_



Are you a first generation college student in your family?      Yes      No

Do you have plans to go to graduate school?      Yes      No

Do you know where City Hall is located?      Yes      No

Who is the current Austin mayor?

- A. Mike Martinez
- B. Steve Adler
- C. Greg Abbott
- D. Gus Garcia

Who represents you on City Council? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some reasons to go to City Hall?

- A. Testify
- B. File complaints
- C. Meet with your councilmember
- D. All of the above

How can you impact policy? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

True      False      There is no minimum age to testify in front of City Council.

True      False      You have to be a U.S. Citizen to testify to a committee or Council.

How does a proposition become a law? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do passed propositions (city laws) affect you?

Extremely affect me    Somewhat affect me    Neutral    Somewhat doesn't affect me    Doesn't affect me at all

What are the needs of your community? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you could change something in your community, what would you change? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you keep up with local news? (Please state specific sources if applicable)

TV \_\_\_\_\_ Radio \_\_\_\_\_ Web \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile App \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBIT 7:**

How would you rate the programs level of effectiveness.

Extremely effective    Somewhat effective    Neutral    Somewhat not effective    Not effective at all

What recommendations do you have towards the Educate, Connect, and Engage Program? What else would you have liked to learn about the city? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

After this session how are you hoping to become more involved or aware? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_