



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Magdalena  
Carrasco

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** June 15, 2021

**APPROVED:**

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**SUBJECT: OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES AND WELCOMING  
SAN JOSE PLAN 2021-2024**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Accept the status report and direct City Staff to:

1. Direct the Office of Race and Equity to coordinate with SJPD, Non-Profits, such as Nextdoor Solutions/Bill Wilson Center, YWCA, and other government agencies to ensure that our immigrant community impacted by domestic violence, human trafficking, sex trafficking, and sexual orientation discrimination gain access to the necessary support and intervention services.
2. Develop a strategic and comprehensive dialogue with the local immigrant community to help further understand self identification terms and have a greater engagement around the term 'Latina/o/x'.
3. Direct the Office of Race and Equity in the WSJ Plan to keep anti-Blackness language and add anti-hate language. With the rise of hate crimes against our Asian immigrant community, it is critical to include language that will protect our communities against those who inflict harm.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2015, the San José City Council made it a top priority to protect immigrants living and working in the City of San José, especially our undocumented immigrants. The role of the office became even more important as a result of Donald Trump winning the 2016 election.

President Trump's rhetoric of anti-immigration manifested when he became President as he immediately called for separation of children, coordinated raids, and banned mixed status immigrant families from getting necessary benefits during our most tragic moment in history, the COVID-19 pandemic. Ironically, many of the essential workers which allowed for others to shelter in place, keep the lights and keep food on the table, all the while risking their own safety on a daily basis, were immigrants. A USC study found that, "Latino/a immigrants of working age are 11 times more likely to die from Covid than US born men and women who are not Latino/a."

According to New Americans in San José, "Immigrants make up over 68 percent of all agriculture workers, over 62 percent of all food processing workers, nearly 50 percent of all restaurant and food services and 43.5 percent of healthcare workers in San José."

The Office of Immigrant Affairs, under the Office of Race and Equity, is strategically poised to deliver potentially lifesaving resources to our most vulnerable members of the immigrant community, and bridge communication among stakeholders and providers. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that at least 12.3 million people are victims of forced labor at any given time, 2.4 million of whom toil in forced labor as a result of trafficking. The U.S. Department of State estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year. However, these numbers do not include the many individuals trafficked within U.S. borders. The Center for American Progress stated that, "LGBTQ unauthorized immigrants account for 17 percent of anti-LGBTQ hate violence survivors." They too need resources and cannot be marginalized further, especially in San José. We must welcome them with open arms.

Navigating the pathway to residency is complex, costly, and not without risk. According to Elizabeth Martin, from [www.womenslaw.org](http://www.womenslaw.org), a U Visa typically takes 4.5 years to obtain. During the processing, a U Visa applicant does not have legal status and is always subject to deportation, adding to the stress and trauma of their experience. Women, children LGBTQ+ refugees are especially vulnerable when facing the complexities of violence and human trafficking on U.S. territory or abroad. The collaboration between OIA, the Santa Clara County's Domestic Violence Council, and other stakeholders included but not limited to; SJPD, SIREN and other agencies can prove to be a powerful support system.

We want to make sure that our stakeholders and our immigrant community have an opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue. Words matter and self identification is empowerment. We must ensure that as we move forward as the 10th largest city that we are inclusive of the diversity of the city, which includes both ethnicity and non-binary/gender nonconforming populations. I recommend directing city staff to have greater engagement from our immigrant community, since the understanding of the term 'Latina/o/x.' is imbedded in generational and educational understandings. Lets allow for safe space to self-identify.

Real change begins with us. We need to include anti-hate and anti-Black language in our Welcoming San José plan because Black Americans and immigrants have historically and systematically denied dignity, humanity, and justice. We must demand this for Black Americans and Black immigrants who face daily racism and injustices that could be fatal. It requires us to first confront the ways that we ourselves have been complicit in anti-Blackness and also have difficult conversations within our communities.

Lastly, we cannot ignore the malicious attacks on our Asian community that has surged since the beginning of the pandemic. An attack on our Asian immigrant community is an attack on our entire immigrant community.

Now with a seemingly friendlier administration in president Joe Biden we must expand the priorities and work plan of the Director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs.