

# A Playbook for Black Austin Activism

SUMMER 2020



June 5, 2020

Dear Black people in Austin,

I am certainly not trying to speak for any particular part of Austin's Black community. I do want to speak directly to you, however. Possibly, even compel you to action.

Most of my life has been spent engaged in the fight for justice – thanks to the legacy I received from my parents and theirs. I have been a vocal advocate to empower the leadership of Black women in politics, marched against wars and for peace, run campaigns, organized Black college students, fought for better wages and working conditions for the working poor, and helped nonprofits strategically fundraise – most of this work was done while running a PR business over the past 25 years. As a result, I have deep respect for and knowledge of the Black community – locally and nationally. For the city where I live, which is Austin, TX, I want to connect the dots for Black people.

In light of the recent killing by police of George Floyd, we must harness our heightened energy. Let's use our activism to secure immediate changes, which will give us the courage to sustain our focus for the long road ahead.

This is not an attempt to comprehensively address all of the issues facing our community. Nor is it an attempt to usurp Black leadership that is already on the forefront of these issues. It merely reflects what I know. I feel compelled to suggest in writing a specific series of steps as a playbook that Black people can follow, as well as refine and adapt, based on their interests, passion and experience.

I am happy to accept factual edits and revisions to update this document. I also am open to ideas for improvement and inclusion in future editions – but you can go poke holes somewhere else, please. Also, for others outside of Austin's Black community who want to use this playbook, feel free, or write one that works for your community to address white supremacy.


At the end of the day, I am a mother of three young Black men. My heartfelt desire is to create a better community for them to live their lives. So, I also offer this playbook as it springs forth from the love a mother carries for her children and for a better tomorrow. My hope is that collectively we can better the future for all of our children.

Love y'all,

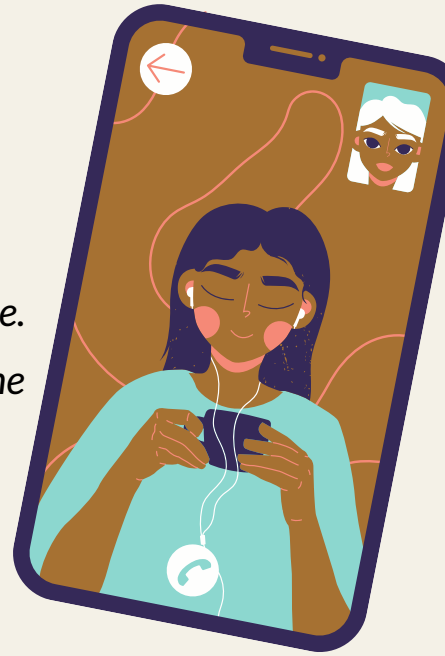
 Shuronda Robinson

# Take Action

*Here is a list of actions to take this summer to address White supremacy and inequities in Austin head on. You can use this as a guide for specific steps that Black people can follow this summer.*

*Wherever you see a  , there is a simple action you can take.*


*You can share this playbook with others. Feel free to refine and adapt this document, based on your interests, passion and experience. (Also, please point out any factual errors and make suggestions for the Fall edition.)*



## June 2020

### Celebrate Black Music Month

Support KAZI FM **Black Music Month** has been officially recognized since 1977. Five years later, KAZI FM was founded and is the oldest community station in Austin.

 During Black Music Month, please make a donation to [KAZI 88.7 FM](#), a Black-run community radio station.

KAZI is a listener-supported, non-commercial community radio station, staffed almost entirely by volunteers who work together out of a sense of commitment and concern for our community. KAZI's mission is to reach and provide educational programming and information with special emphasis on media access for the African American community and other groups previously unserved by existing radio stations in Austin.

KAZI was the dream of the late Dr. John Warfield, professor of African American Studies at the University of Texas.

(Source :KAZIFM.com)

# June 2020

## Push for an Anti-Racist Superintendent Who Will Finally Close the Black Student Achievement Gap

Austin ISD is the largest school district in Central Texas. It has more than 5,800 Black students, which makes up nearly 6% of the population. The district recently started a search for its new leader. Currently, the district is facing a financial crisis, even after closing four predominately Black and Hispanic schools in 2019. Also, Black students are not achieving academic excellence across the board.

### Suggested criteria for the new superintendent:

- Able to achieve excellent academic outcomes for Black students and a proven track record of turning around/improving academic outcomes in an urban district
- Demonstrated success in implementing anti-racist policies and practices within a white supremacist culture
- Be committed to eliminating barriers to equity for students, teachers, and community (such as magnet school application processes)
- Experienced in successfully managing the complexities of a large, urban school district

(Source: East Austin Coalition for Quality Education)

### Ways to give your input:

Complete the superintendent survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WX3PL2W>

Find your school board trustee and reach out to them about the criteria you want to see in the next superintendent:

<https://www.austinisd.org/board/members>

To learn more about the superintendent search go here:

<https://www.austinisd.org/board/superintendent-search>



# June 2020

## Call for Diversion of Funding from APD to Benefit the Black Community and Improved Community Policing

Let's use the annual City budget discussions on how much to fund the Austin Police Department as part of the City of Austin's budget process to swiftly address ways to root out the racism Black people face from police. There are two important steps for this action to ensure that Black people are no longer brutalized and killed by police. The Mayor of the City of Los Angeles announced on June 3, 2020, plans to cut \$100-150 million from their police budget to reinvest in communities of color. This is the bold leadership and policy direction Austin needs to follow to repair the harm done by police to the Black community.

(Source: Austin Justice Coalition, NAACP National and Austin Chapter)

**URGENT: Sign up to speak at the Thursday, June 11 City Council meeting no later than 12 noon on Wednesday, June 10, and watch the City Council meeting. Call 3-1-1 to find out how to sign up.**

**Step 1) Let's show our collective support for a new era of anti-racist community policing in Austin.**

MEASURE Austin, a Black-led organization that works to empower people impacted by data disparities and the accompanying narrative, defines community policing as: *the public's means to mitigate crime and build relationships with its stakeholders and residents: whereby the police become an equal stakeholder in the process of community policing as opposed to simply an enforcer of law.*

# June 2020



**TAKE COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS POLICE BRUTALITY:** Have your community organization, church, or civic group vote to [adopt this resolution](#). Then send it to the Mayor and Austin City Council in support of reforms to policies for the Austin Police Department.

Submit your adopted resolution by email [here](#) no later than June 30, 2020. Also, between now and July call to voice your concerns to the City Manager, Mayor, and your City Council member by dialing 3-1-1. If you don't know who your Councilmember is the 3-1-1 ambassadors can look it up for you.

## **Step 2) Participate in the City Council Meetings to Voice Your Support for Reforms to the Austin Police Department.**

Your tax dollars fund the Austin Police Department. How much funding the APD receives and what is it used for is determined by the City Manager as directed by the Mayor and Council. You can make a difference by voicing your demands and concerns about the next City budget, which will be developed and debated between now and the end of August. The City Council normally meets every Thursday. *Due to COVID-19, these meetings are being held online.*

You can also advocate for other issues and programs that are important to you for funding in the 2020-2021 City of Austin budget.

Take a look at the [African American Quality of Life](#) report for issues and projects the Black community decided was important for the City of Austin to focus upon.

# June 2020

## Support Black Artists' Expression of COVID-19

Support the work of Black artists to give voice to those most affected by COVID-19. This project is a collaboration of the Carver Museum and Six Square and is supported by the City of Austin Equity Office. "High Signs & Beacons" calls on artists, poets, scholars, and writers of African descent to ground his moment and visualize a collective future. Applications are due June 22.

(Source: Six Square – Austin's Black Cultural District)

♥ If you are a Black artist or someone who wants to support this effort, [click here.](#)

## Celebrate Juneteenth

On June 19, 1865, all enslaved Africans in America were finally free, some 30 months after the Emancipation Proclamation. That makes Texas' Juneteenth holiday a sacred day of freedom for Black people in America.

[Learn about Juneteenth](#) from Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (or others) and write a short essay or film a video about how you are continuing the fight for freedom for Black people.

♥ Post your Juneteenth essay or video on your social media platform with the hashtags #JuneteenthATX and #ClarityAboutWhatMatters so that I can track it.




# June 2020

## Register to Vote, Get a Mail-in Ballot

Yes, there's an election for the Democratic and GOP primary runoffs and several local seats.

Here are the key dates:

 **Last day to register to vote: Monday, June 15.** Your application must be received in the [Voter Registrar's office](#) or postmarked at least 30 days before an election for you to be eligible to vote in that election.

(Source: Texas Secretary of State)

**In-person early voting: Monday-Friday, June 29-July 10**

**Last day to request a ballot by mail** (received, not postmarked): **Thursday, July 2.**  
Here is the link to complete the [form online](#).

### Voter Registration Contacts

Travis County

Tax Assessor-Collector

Bruce Elfant

P.O. Box 1748 Austin 78767

512- 854-9473

Williamson County

Elections Administrator

Christopher J. Davis

301 S.E. Inner Loop, Suite 104, Georgetown 78626

512-943-1630






# June 2020

## Talk to Our District Attorney About How She's Handling Police Brutality Cases

Here are a few talking points you can use to communicate with our District Attorney, Margaret Moore. When she was first elected, she created a civil rights division to bring focus and scrutiny to police shootings involving African Americans and Hispanic residents.

 Find out how DA Moore is using this moment to address additional criminal justice reforms by asking these questions:

- How has the killing of George Floyd and Mike Ramos at the hands of the police changed your view on police brutality?
- What procedural or strategic changes are you making to make it easier to successfully prosecute police officers who unnecessarily harm or kill Black people?
- How should we hold you accountable?

You can reach District Attorney Margaret Moore by calling here: [512.854.9400](tel:512.854.9400).

Also, find out more about the other candidate, [Jose Garza](#), who is running against Moore. Garza was endorsed by the Black Austin Democrats.

# July 2020

## Vote on Election Day: July 14

If you are over 65, have a disability, or will not be in your county on election day, make sure you submit a request for a mail-in ballot by July 2. Here is the link to complete the [form online](#).

**Election Day** is Tuesday, July 14. In-person **Early Voting** is Monday-Friday, June 29-July 10.

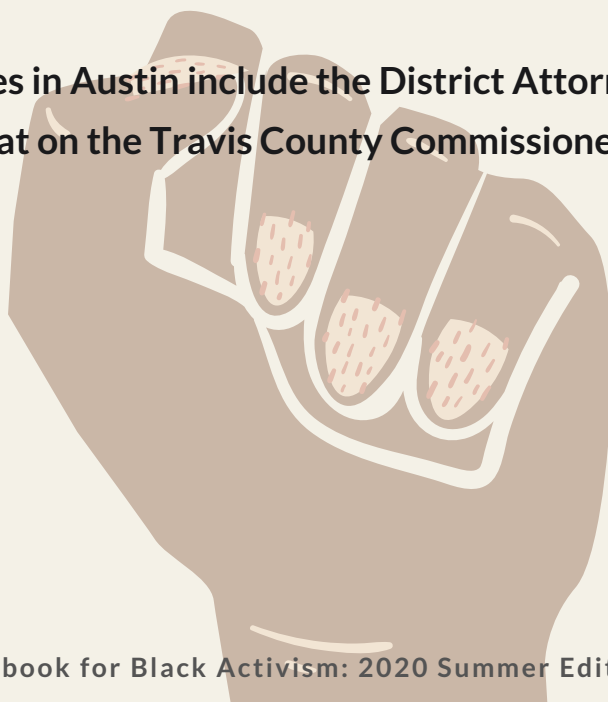


**Vote on during Early Voting or on Election Day, July 14.**

Find out more about the Black elected official who is running for the U.S. Senate. Royce West is in the Democratic Party primary for the U.S. Senate to run against John Cornyn in November.

West serves as a Texas Senator from Dallas who has passed laws in Texas to reform public education, strengthen hate crime laws, and improve public safety. Find out more about [Senator Royce West here](#).


**Other important races in Austin include the District Attorney, County Attorney, and the Precinct 3 seat on the Travis County Commissioners Court.**



# July 2020

## Influence the City of Austin Budget

According to a recent report by the Austin City Manager Spencer Cronk, the City will face an \$8 million budget shortfall. Let's protect the funding for programs, organizations, and initiatives that benefit Austin's Black community. We also need to continue to use the budget process to address changes to the Austin Police Department, see pages 3-4.

 **Keep voicing your demands and concerns for inclusion in the next City budget.**

### City Budget Process - Council Work Sessions

August 20 & 29 (and September 4)


Watch these sessions to stay informed on how the issues you care about are progressing and continue to reach out to the City Manager, Mayor, and City Council members.

### Budget Public Hearing:

August 22 & 28 Sign up and testify!

### Budget Adoption:

September 10

 **Give your input on the City of Austin budget  
here: <https://www.speakupaustin.org/budget-2021>**

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# August 2020

## Influence the City of Austin Budget

Keep up with the City of Austin budget process by watching the August 20 and 29 City Council Work sessions. City Council members and the City Manager will discuss elements of the budget.



Give your input here: <https://www.speakupaustin.org/budget-2021>

## Take the Census

Starting on August 11, Census workers will begin knocking on doors of households that have not completed their forms. Don't let that be you, ok?



If you haven't filled out the Census, do it now: <https://my2020census.gov/>

The Census is important because it determines how congressional boundaries are drawn and how federal money is allocated to Austin and other communities.

According to the Census website: *The results will show where communities need new schools, new clinics, new roads, and more services for families, older adults, and children.*

The results will also inform how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding is allocated to more than 100 programs, including Medicaid, Head Start, block grants for community mental health services, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP.



# August 2020

## Start Preparing for the November Elections

The Black community should be gearing up for the November 2020 elections. COVID-19 will continue to impact how we approach voting. My sense is that we are going to need young people to work at polling locations, since it is typically retirees who play that role, and *we must continue to protect our elders from coronavirus.*

Think about all of the issues that are important to you. Find candidates and causes you can support. Get deputized to register people to vote and start registering them.

 [Sign up here to take online training](#) to be able to register people to vote.

**ONGOING ACTION:** Throughout the summer months, please continue to support a [Black business](#) affected by COVID-19, protests, riots, and/or looting.

## September, October and November: Stay Tuned.

## The Next Playbook for Black Activism will be released in mid-August.



# Resources

Resources City of Austin African American Quality of Life

Initiative: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/african-american-quality-life>

NAACP-Austin Chapter Deaths by APD Use of Force: <http://www.naacpaustin.com/use-of-force-deaths-in-atx.html>

Austin Mayor's Task Force on Systemic Racism

Report: <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=274706>

US Office of Civil Rights – Police Use of Force

Report: <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018/11-15-Police-Force.pdf> Joint Report: [https://joplin3-austin-gov-static.s3.amazonaws.com/production/media/documents/Final\\_-1.28.2020\\_Racial\\_Profiling\\_Report.pdf](https://joplin3-austin-gov-static.s3.amazonaws.com/production/media/documents/Final_-1.28.2020_Racial_Profiling_Report.pdf)

City of Austin Budget Overview: [https://assets.austintexas.gov/budget/19-20/downloads/2020\\_Proposed\\_Budget\\_Snapshot.pdf](https://assets.austintexas.gov/budget/19-20/downloads/2020_Proposed_Budget_Snapshot.pdf)

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, City Officials Cutting \$100 Million-\$150 Million From LAPD Budget, Funds To Be Reinvested In Communities Of

Color <https://deadline.com/2020/06/los-angeles-mayor-eric-garcetti-city-officials-cutting-100-150-million-from-lapd-budget-funds-to-be-reinvested-in-communities-of-color-1202950811/?fbclid=IwAR3n1uTLCMMEIVnWC5YcakxyCD1JNfHqYYIKYARGg6RGYSCszvxUkvM9A-s>

<https://deadline.com/2020/06/los-angeles-mayor-eric-garcetti-city-officials-cutting-100-150-million-from-lapd-budget-funds-to-be-reinvested-in-communities-of-color-1202950811/?fbclid=IwAR3n1uTLCMMEIVnWC5YcakxyCD1JNfHqYYIKYARGg6RGYSCszvxUkvM9A-s>

<https://deadline.com/2020/06/los-angeles-mayor-eric-garcetti-city-officials-cutting-100-150-million-from-lapd-budget-funds-to-be-reinvested-in-communities-of-color-1202950811/?fbclid=IwAR3n1uTLCMMEIVnWC5YcakxyCD1JNfHqYYIKYARGg6RGYSCszvxUkvM9A-s>

**Give light and  
people will find  
the way.**

**-Ella Baker-**