

FY 2026-2027 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Public Health;

CBQ NO.: 60

REQUESTED BY: (District 3) José Velásquez

DATE REQUESTED: Monday, July 27, 2026 11:35 AM

DATE POSTED: Tuesday, August 4, 2026

REQUEST:

Could you please provide additional details on the elimination of the 2 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) of the Stat Clinical Diagnostic Unit in the FY26-27 budget, such as: how long these positions have been vacant (if applicable), if all sexual health testing will discontinue at Austin Public Health (APH), how the community will be informed of changes to these services, and how the chosen contracted service provider will be supported during this transition of services?

RESPONSE:

The elimination of the two vacant medical technologist Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions in the STAT Clinical Diagnostic laboratory will not discontinue sexual health testing services provided by Austin Public Health (APH). Sexual health testing will continue through the RBJ Sexual Health Clinic and APH's mobile testing and field operations.

The medical technologist positions are hard to fill. To maintain operations, the reduction of this staffing will require \$30,000 in funds realized through salary savings to expand existing contracts with reference labs.

This transition will expand current use of existing laboratory contracts to send specimens collected through APH clinical operations. The external reference laboratories include Clinical Pathology Laboratories, the Texas Department of State Health Services, and Quest Diagnostics.

One of the eliminated positions was filled for only a few months before becoming vacant in July 2025. The second position has been vacant since July 2024.

APH will communicate any operational changes to patients and community partners through its standard communication channels to ensure continuity of services. APH will continue working closely with its contracted laboratory providers throughout the transition to support uninterrupted testing services and maintain timely processing of laboratory specimens.