

FY 2026-2027 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Austin Parks & Recreation;

CBQ NO.: 68

REQUESTED BY: (District 3) José Velásquez

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

DATE POSTED: Saturday, August 1, 2026

REQUEST:

\$171,000 is reduced from supplemental programs for youth camps and senior centers. Could you please list the names of these programs, where these programs were conducted, the number of community members served, and the length the program has existed in the city?

RESPONSE:

The Lending Library program enhances recreation offerings across Austin Parks and Recreation facilities by providing a variety of enrichment programs and activities. These offerings support youth and senior programming through recreational, social, and educational experiences, including health and fitness, arts and culture, nature, and STEM activities. Eliminating the Lending Library program would not reduce participation in existing recreation programs but would alter the supplemental enrichment activities currently provided through the program.

Established in 2015, the Lending Library program was created to expand access to specialized enrichment activities for underserved youth who historically had limited access to programs offered at facilities such as the Dougherty Arts Center, Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, Asian American Resource Center, Austin Nature and Science Center, Camacho Activity Center, and the George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center. By bringing these and similar programs directly to neighborhood recreation facilities, the Lending Library provides participants with specialized experiences that may require expertise beyond the scope of general recreation staff.

The Lending Library serves as an equitable enrichment resource by expanding access to free, high-quality STEM, arts, cultural, cooking, music, nature, and fitness programs. It supports under-resourced communities, including many communities of color, by reducing economic and transportation barriers and bringing specialized programming directly to neighborhood recreation facilities.

All Community Recreation Centers, Therapeutic Recreation Centers, and Summer Playground locations (30 sites total) participate in the Lending Library program. The program offers two seasonal catalogs (October–May and Summer) that supplement existing after-school, summer, and senior programming with a variety of enrichment activities, resulting in more than 10,000 participant opportunities annually. These offerings are delivered through contracted instructors and specialized temporary Parks and Recreation staff. Each catalog includes a variety of enrichment opportunities for participating sites to register for, with programs scheduled until available capacity is reached.

Please see below for an example of the current summer program offerings:

Summer Session Lending Library Enrichment Programs		Community Members Served
Sample Classes		
<i>External Vendor Providers</i>		
B Tru Arts	Dance Infusion, BoomBox Hero: Hip-Hop Fu Dance	240
Wicked Workshop	Explore Architecture, Castle & Creatures, Aquitecture: Floating Buildings & Hydro-Cities, Super Mario	200
Dance Waterloo	Balance Point, Flash & Flare, Storytelling through Dance Making (<i>no summer</i>)	288
Idea Labs/ALG Enterprises	Engineering in Motion, Slime Lab	384
All Rhythms	Percussion of the World	288
Mad Science	Brixology, STEM Odyssey, Crayola World of Design, Fantastic Forces	432
Planting Seeds	Jr. Crime Scene Detectives, Engineering	192
Notes 4 Notes	Music Lessons, Editing, and Producing	126
Nexplore	3-D Printing, Robocoding	192
Athletes Global	Youth Drones	192
Bright Star Children's Theatre LLC	Once Upon a Time: Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk	400
First Tee Golf	Golf lessons	480
Bridge Lacrosse	Lacrosse	672
Austin Rowing Club (summers only)	Rowing	1056
Mad Science	STEM Odyssey	192
<i>Internal Providers</i>		
Emma S Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center	Activities include: painting, sculpture, theatre, music, nature play, or dance/movement (<i>no summer – 1,032 other seasons</i>)	
Dougherty Arts Center	Learning from the Masters and Textile Expressions; Ceramics, Digital Art, Screen Printing	768
Totally Cool Totally Art	Improv for Seniors (<i>no summer – 528 other seasons</i>)	
Park Rangers	Backyard Bass, Slacklining, Archery, Birding	216
Healthy Promotions	Art, Music, Cooking, Pickleball	4624
Total		10,942