

Item No. 78
6/26/2014
Initiated by Councilman
Martinez
Late Backup

RESOLUTION NO. 20140626-078

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Health and Human Services Department (HHSD) funds programs including disease prevention & health promotion, maternal child & adolescent health, environmental health services, support services, social services contracts, and other critical community needs; and

WHEREAS, social service contract funding needs will fluctuate depending on the availability of federal and state grants, the current local poverty level, population growth, and a variety of health and wellness metrics that may shift with the state of the economy and accessibility of services; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin currently invests more than one-third of the HHSD budget in social services contracts which are awarded through a competitive process to nonprofits to address basic needs, behavioral health, child & youth needs, community planning, HIV needs, homelessness, and workforce development; and

WHEREAS, investment in social services reduces the City's near and long-term cost burden for emergency services and helps build a local workforce; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Austin/Travis County EMS spent 2,717 hours transporting individuals primarily due to alcohol or drug abuse resulting in ambulance charges of approximately \$2.4 million, and according the Texas Department of State Health Services 2013 Q4 Behavioral Health Databook, the average cost for substance abuse prevention is approximately \$15 per person and \$1,600 for treatment; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin determines the need for the number of police officers based on population, and is committed to maintaining a minimum of two officers for every 1,000 residents; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Fire Department uses a standard of coverage performance measure to ensure a basic level of services with a goal of 90% of service requests taking 8 minutes or less from the time a call is received to the time a fire truck arrives on site; and

WHEREAS, overall social service contract funding levels are not currently based on any measurable standards that reflect the needs of the community, and would more accurately address critical needs if the minimum funding level was based on a predictable metric; and

WHEREAS, the Council could make a more informed decision during the upcoming budget cycle if a study was conducted to determine whether existing funding levels are appropriate to address the current needs in the community; and

WHEREAS, any consideration of current funding levels for HHSD and social service contracting should include a review of peer cities' funding levels and best practices for similar programming; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed develop a recommendation regarding whether the current funding levels for the Health and Human Services Department and social service contracting are sufficient to meet the needs of the community, incorporate studies of best practices and funding levels of similar programs by peer cities in the recommendation, incorporate an assessment of the return

that is yielded to the City by greater investment in the prevention, intervention, and treatment services provided by the social services sector, and provide a report to Council with findings no later than August 21, 2014.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to explore options for potential metrics that could determine a minimal level of funding for the overall Health and Human Services Department budget and the funding level dedicated to social service contracting in future budget cycles that could use any combination of factors including the local poverty level, unemployment, population growth, and other local health and wellness metrics.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to provide a progress report for recommendations regarding potential metrics to determine the minimum funding level for the Health and Human Services Department and social service contracting to the Council Public Health and Human Services Subcommittee by September 30, 2014, and bring final recommendations to Council for consideration no later than November 20, 2014.

ADOPTED: June 26, 2014 **ATTEST:** _____
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk