



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board

June 29, 2015

The Honorable Steve Adler, Mayor  
Members, Austin City Council  
301 W. Second Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mayor Adler and Council Members:

The Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board (SFPB) appreciates its relationship with the City of Austin to support the goal of equitable access to nutritious, local food for all Austin residents. A healthy population is a prosperous one that can effectively contribute to the city's economic future.

The SFPB works closely with staff at the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department (ATCHHSD) Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Program (CDPC) to coordinate efforts in increasing healthy food options across Travis County through evidence-based interventions. Such interventions have been critical in addressing costly and preventable diet-related chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and arthritis.

For the FY16 City of Austin budget, the ATCHHSD Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Program is requesting \$429,000 to support five staff positions and additional programming. The SFPB wholeheartedly supports this funding request, as it will continue to promote healthy behaviors through policy, systems, and environmental change, particularly among groups experiencing health disparities.

This funding request is significantly less than what is desirable to provide needed health interventions in a population the size of Travis County. Previously, this program received funding through the Centers for Disease Control Community Transformation Grant (CTG). However, this grant was eliminated in the federal FY14 budget. The CDPC then received one-time funding from the City of Austin, but still saw a reduction from ten staff members to four.

The ATCHHSD's interventions are key to the future health of Travis County. Below are some of this year's past accomplishments:

- The Capital Area Food Bank and the City of Austin's Neighborhood Centers increased SNAP outreach and enrollment efforts to reduce food insecurity.
- Funding was awarded to Capital Area Food Bank to increase food distribution including local farm products to social service providers.

- The Double Dollar Incentive program for SNAP and WIC recipients was expanded at all SFC's farmers markets that accept SNAP and WIC benefits.
- Technical assistance was provided to local restaurants to achieve St. David's Healthy Restaurant Certification.
- A framework was developed for a healthy children's restaurant menu program.
- Technical assistance was provided to ACC, UT, Central Health and the Mayor's Health and Fitness Council's Business Group on Health to implement healthy food guidelines including food procurement, vending machine policy, and healthy meetings.
- The department is collaborating with Go Austin Vamos Austin and St. David's Foundation to implement a Healthy Corner Store pilot initiative in 78744 and 78745 neighborhood.
- Diabetes Self-Management and lifestyle classes were provided, including nutrition education in community settings with focus on high risk populations.
- The Plan4Health Grant application and implementation was coordinated. The Plan4 Health project includes a food system planning tool kit and an active transportation encouragement program in the Rundberg area.
- The department implemented the Coordinated Approach to Child Health Early Childhood (CATCH EC) program in four child day care center locations. CATCH EC is an evidence-based program that provides introduction to classroom based gardening and nutrition, encourages healthy eating, and integrates motivated walk, run, jump, dance and whole body movement while playing and having fun. Efforts included training, curriculum and equipment to ensure sustainability.
- A Farm to Work program was implemented on HHSD main campus at Levander Loop.
- The department coordinated the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) including Access to Healthy Food and Chronic Disease Focus on Obesity priority areas.
- The department contributed its profile to the State of Food System Report.
- Implementation of the Imagine Austin Healthy Austin Priority Program was coordinated.

Again, the SFPB supports the CDPC in its funding request so that critical programs such as the ones above can be implemented and expanded. Thank you for your attention to this request. We stand ready to continue our work with the City of Austin and Travis County to ensure healthy food access for all residents.

Sincerely,



Kathy Green

Chair, Austin/Travis County Sustainable Food Policy Board