



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

Recommendation Number: (20190412- 2)

Recommendation for FY20 Budget Funding for the Downtown Austin Community Court

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) is to collaboratively address the quality of life issues of all residents in the downtown Austin community through the swift, creative sentencing of public order offenders. The Court seeks to hold people responsible while also offering help to change behavior; and

WHEREAS, DACC Case Management team aims to end homelessness by providing comprehensive, long term services to individuals experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, The Homeless Outreach Street Team or HOST is an innovative and collaborative initiative that operates in the Downtown and West Campus area. HOST proactively reaches out to individuals living on the streets to help them connect to needed services (including through DACC) to get back on their feet and reach their full potential; and

WHEREAS, the DACC is an integral part of the continuum of care provided by an array of local non-profits, and substance abuse and mental health providers. The DACC provides much-needed services to individuals experiencing homelessness through HOST referrals, judicial referrals, and peer referrals; and

WHEREAS, Austin City Council endorsed the Austin's Action Plan to End Homelessness, and the recommendation from the National Alliance to End Homelessness regarding the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless, ARCH Redesign and other planning strategy documents have all identified the need for additional housing resources and supportive services; and

WHEREAS, homelessness is identified as a strategic outcome indicator in Austin's strategic direction, and was identified by City Council the top priority for the city strategic plan; and

WHEREAS, 3116 households are known to be homeless and seeking housing at this time and the 2019 Point in Time count found 2255 people experiencing homelessness which was a five percent increase over 2018;and

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the cases scheduled by the DACC Case Managers involve defendants who are experiencing homelessness. In fiscal year 2018, 4,184 cases were filed in the DACC. 1,371 of these cases involved 431 defendants experiencing homelessness, 33% of all the cases filed; and

WHEREAS, data shows that community programs addressing the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness are running at capacity, demand for these services exceeds the supply; and

WHEREAS, due to case management capacity, since FY 2017, the DACC has maintained a waitlist for individuals seeking case management services; that list currently includes 63 individuals; and

WHEREAS, the DACC has requested additional resources in order to meet the increasing demand for programs and services to assist Austin's most vulnerable citizens in stabilizing their lives to the benefit of the entire Austin community; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports the DACC's request for additional funds to increase its case management capacity and housing resources to continue providing needed services to its clients and the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board encourages the Austin City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means in order to fund solutions to address homelessness in Austin.

Date of Approval: April 12, 2019

Record of the vote: (Unanimous on a 7-0 vote)

Attest: _____



(Staff or board member can sign)