



## Resolution #41 Update: An Intergenerational Day Center Initiative in Austin

Health and Human Services Committee  
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## Executive Summary

### Background

This report addresses a serious problem in the City of Austin— the growing need for co-located affordable housing and supportive services. Specifically, there is a glaring gap in intergenerational services and adult day care for low-income seniors. Austin City Council adopted a resolution (item #41) with directions to pursue measures described in our previous research regarding implementation of the initiative.

In spring of 2019, recommendations were outlined in an *LBJ School Report Building an Intergenerational Metropolis* for a three-year pilot at the RBJ campus and a feasibility study to estimate the renovation, facility transition, and recurring costs at a city-owned property. These results would determine the viability of the space and services for the proposed center <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/65188>

Since then a follow-up study was conducted during the summer of 2019 to examine intergenerational models that exemplify best practices for an Intergenerational Day Center (IDC) for the City of Austin. An IDC is designed to bring residents of generations together – infants and young children, and seniors – to benefit from easy access to health and social services all located in one place. An IDC provides respite for working parents who are juggling care for both a child and aging parent. Research demonstrates positive effects on bridging generational gaps. Such programs reduce ageism and loneliness, while increasing both seniors' level of social engagement, as well as younger people's level of empathy. The majority of Americans agree and believe that the government should invest in programs that bring older adults together with young people, especially those with little income and serious health problems,

The prototype, based on a public-private partnership, offers an adult day health center for low-income seniors and a child care program for low-income family households. In addition to intergenerational programming for children and for seniors our larger vision encompasses an IDC that supports other critical services for aging in place. The Center would consist of specialty referral services for mental health screening and e-consults to improve access to specialty expertise for IDC participants who have limited options in mobility and prefer timely advice. By



also including home assessments and “wrap-around” services, an IDC creates a “safe” place to grow old in the community.

## **Results**

Based on an analytic literature review of 105 intergenerational programs (Generations United), we selected four age-friendly cities (Bryan-College Station, TX, Waco TX, Los Angeles, CA, and Columbus, OH) for a case analysis of key characteristics that determine a successful model. As part of this evaluation, we conducted interviews and held meetings with Directors of such operating facilities and programs to identify strengths and challenges of establishing an IDC public-private partnership.

The findings revealed that an IDC (1) fosters learning for both generations; (2) reduces social isolation, ageism, and depression, and increases overall health and mobility for seniors in adult day centers; (3) helps parents care for both a child and an aging parent; and (4) promotes cost-efficiency because both age groups share space and programs that prevent competition for funding. Two of the four IDCs developed partnerships with local universities and medical centers to create research and training opportunities for future healthcare professionals seeking careers in aging, gerontology and medicine. Interviews with providers underscored the community's vision for additional affordable housing for low-income seniors in East Austin. The respondents stated that they found services linked to integrated health and an IDC to be the most important service delivery model.

## **Bottom Line**

The project will roll-out in three main phases, with an initial cost of \$465,000 for operational expenses covered by non-profit partners who have provided letters of support and commitment. In the first phase, a feasibility study will identify the most ideal city-owned building for locating the IDC. In phase two, the IDC will introduce adult day services serving a pool of 6,076 seniors and require approximately 2,675 square feet of space, including outdoor space for a senior playground. Phase three involves adding a child care center for 25 children aged 18 months to four years old. This requires 2,725 square feet of indoor space and 3,500 of outdoor space. A final evaluation will entail identifying ways of evolving the IDC prototype to scale across the City.