



20 into law, which authorizes \$2 trillion in federal economic relief through housing and  
21 public health programs, as well as direct financial assistance and additional  
22 unemployment benefits to individuals; and

23 **WHEREAS**, even the pre-pandemic economic equilibrium left many Austin  
24 residents struggling to support themselves and their families, living paycheck-to-  
25 paycheck, and the economic shock currently unfolding leaves these residents more  
26 vulnerable than ever; and

27 **WHEREAS**, the mission statement in the City of Austin’s Strategic Direction  
28 2023 highlights the values of economic opportunity and equity, which are echoed  
29 throughout the numerous outcomes, indicators, anchors, and strategies that guide the  
30 City’s priorities and governance; and

31 **WHEREAS**, the City of Austin’s Austin Public Health, Equity Office, and other  
32 City departments have worked to implement and fund equity grant programs, driven by  
33 community needs and designed to support work on-the-ground reaching specific  
34 populations; and

35 **WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Austin passed Ordinance No.  
36 20200326-090 and Resolution Nos. 20200326-091 and 20200326-092, each of which  
37 respond to needs of Austin residents amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic,

38 and open a path toward relief in housing, economic strain, and utility expenses during  
39 this crisis; and

40 **WHEREAS**, finding multiple, direct pathways to relief is critical in this  
41 extraordinary time, including those that empower Austinites to make decisions that are  
42 best for themselves and the well-being of their families; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

44 The Council authorizes the City Manager to utilize previously unbudgeted funds  
45 to expand social services contracts with existing providers and execute new emergency  
46 contracts as needed in order to provide immediate direct services and assistance that are  
47 equitably focused, temporary, and for vulnerable Austinites impacted by the COVID-19  
48 pandemic with minimal administrative costs or delay. Relief in a State of Emergency  
49 (RISE) funding will target relief and services to be provided in April, May, and June of  
50 2020, unless otherwise extended by Council. Funding in an amount not to exceed \$15  
51 million, pursuant to a budget amendment approved by Council, is intended to be  
52 distributed to the community to the best of the City's ability as follows: half in in one  
53 phase to provide immediate relief in April, 2020, and the second half in another phase  
54 in May, 2020.

55 Authorized funds will be used to provide equitable relief, and social service  
56 provider recipients of funds should prioritize those Austinites and communities that have

57 dire economic needs that are not being met and/or cannot be met by government  
58 programs such as direct financial assistance under the CARES Act or unemployment  
59 insurance. The City Manager is directed to utilize the most restrictive funds (e.g., CDBG  
60 funds) prior to tapping General Fund dollars for any of the purposes described below.

61 Funds will be distributed per the guidelines below.

62 **Goal**

63 The needs of vulnerable Austin families must be supported during this crisis to  
64 prevent noncompliance with local public health orders and to protect public health by  
65 mitigating the spread of COVID-19. The Council's goal is to get relief to Austinites  
66 impacted by the pandemic, as quickly as possible, with a particular focus on populations  
67 considered lower-income and vulnerable, and who may either be ineligible for other  
68 forms of assistance and/or other forms of assistance are not sufficient or timely to meet  
69 their basic needs. This funding is to be used to supplement, but not supplant funding  
70 from the State and the Federal governments. RISE relief can be achieved by expanding  
71 the capacity and reach of community-based organizations that may already be in  
72 partnership with the City of Austin, but may also require new partnerships with  
73 specialized providers with existing models to reach particular populations in new ways  
74 that meet impacted families where they are. Services and direct assistance should target  
75 populations who are traditionally marginalized or typically face additional barriers to

76 enrolling in assistance programs, such as, but not limited to, language barriers. Services  
77 and assistance should be distributed by providers that have a history of trust and success  
78 in reaching communities of color, the LGBTQ+ community, immigrant communities,  
79 and other historically marginalized communities.

## 80 **Funding Distribution**

81 Half of allocated funds will be distributed to qualified service providers offering  
82 direct relief services to Austin residents. “Direct relief services” include programs  
83 designed to:

- 84 • Improve food access;
- 85 • Provide rental or mortgage assistance;
- 86 • Provide assistance with necessary bills, such as utility bills to enable children to  
87 attend school remotely;
- 88 • Assist with medical expenses;
- 89 • Assist with the purchase of diapers and baby formula and other child-care  
90 expenses;
- 91 • Assist survivors of domestic violence;
- 92 • Case management; or
- 93 • Other direct relief services provided by community-based organizations to assist  
94 individuals and families in meeting basic needs and alleviating hardships.

95 The remaining portion of allocated funds will be distributed as direct financial  
96 assistance to eligible Austin residents by one or more qualified organizations with an  
97 operational model acceptable to the City. For the purpose of RISE funding, “direct  
98 financial assistance” refers to legally allowable transfers or other one-time payments,  
99 such as pre-paid debit or credit cards, provided to individuals through service providers  
100 to assist with basic living expenses consistent with the existing framework established  
101 by APH to ensure that the City has mechanisms in place to properly account for the  
102 funds. Council directs that direct financial assistance is finite and limited as a response  
103 to the COVID-19 pandemic, but should be distributed as immediately as possible to  
104 individuals and families in need.

### 105 **Eligibility for Relief**

- 106 Service providers will determine the eligibility of clients, prioritizing those who:
- 107 • Meet broad eligibility standards for Austin Public Health grant programs, such as  
108 a family income at or below 200% of federal poverty income guidelines;
  - 109 • Have experienced a significant hardship or loss of household income related to  
110 the COVID-19 pandemic, which may include those who have experienced a  
111 reduction in income, layoffs or furloughs, or who have taken unpaid leaves of  
112 absence from work due to school or daycare closures, the need to care for family

113 members, or the need to remain quarantined after possible COVID-19 exposure;  
114 and

- 115 • Are ineligible for other forms of significant governmental relief (such as the  
116 CARES Act) or are receiving such relief in a limited or delayed manner that does  
117 not meet their needs.

118 Eligibility for, or enrollment in, other means-tested benefits programs, such as SNAP or  
119 Medicaid, may be considered as a substitute for income or demonstration of need, but  
120 this standard may not be required for RISE eligibility. Requests for documentation of  
121 eligibility may not impose an unnecessary burden on those applying for relief services  
122 or direct financial assistance and may not unnecessarily delay the approval and  
123 distribution process.

124 Community-based organizations who work directly with vulnerable populations  
125 understand the needs in these communities, and as such, these requirements are not to  
126 be interpreted as limiting the pool of recipients who are in need, as long as the eligibility  
127 criteria in use are consistent with Council's goals.

## 128 **Service Providers**

129 The City Manager is authorized to negotiate and execute amendments to existing  
130 social services contracts with service providers who will use the funds to expand the  
131 number of people served well beyond the existing populations currently served by

132 organizations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis. These  
133 providers may subcontract with other organizations to expand capacity to provide these  
134 services.

135 The City Manager is also authorized to negotiate and execute new emergency  
136 contracts, to be executed pursuant to the City's emergency contracting procedures, with  
137 social service providers who currently reach vulnerable populations that are historically  
138 marginalized and any new contracts necessary to meet the Council's goals for the RISE  
139 fund. The City Manager is authorized to streamline the administrative process so that  
140 funds can be distributed as quickly as possible to those in need, including issuing waivers  
141 or modifications of liability or providing other forms of insurance requirements for  
142 community-based organizations that can provide these relief services or the direct  
143 financial assistance, but that are unable to meet increased insurance requirements.

144 Organizations with minimal or low administrative costs, with the ability to  
145 conduct outreach in the target populations, who have the capacity to distribute services  
146 and assistance efficiently and quickly, should be prioritized.

147 Compliance with the following standards is required of all service providers:

- 148 • Providers will be responsible for providing the City with such reporting as they  
149 currently have in place, to include aggregate descriptive data about aid recipients



150 and their communities, as well as schedules of distribution and other regular  
151 reporting;

- 152 • Providers must be able to employ a mechanism to audit all expenditures;
- 153 • All data must be secured, and personally identifiable information must be  
154 protected, pursuant to City of Austin guidelines and applicable law; and
- 155 • Accessibility options, such as prepaid debit cards or gift cards, should be  
156 considered and made available for clients who are not able to receive ACH  
157 transfers with suitable controls as are currently utilized by organizations that  
158 contract with APH.

159 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

160 The City Manager is directed to work with Travis County to partner to provide  
161 an extension of funding or an expansion of services as needed.

162 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

163 The City Manager will provide Council an update on the implementation of  
164 this resolution by April 23, 2020.

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168 **ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Jannette S. Goodall  
City Clerk

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