

**Austin Public Health
Community Services Division/Neighborhood Services Unit
Strategic Plan
2020 -- 2024**

Introduction

In 2015, the US Department of Health and Human Services Department issued Information Memorandum No. 138 establishing organizational standards for Community Action Agencies (CAAs) who receive Community Services Block Grant funding. To ensure all CAAs began working toward meeting these standards, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs requested documentation of approval of the Strategic Plan by the CSBG Advisory Board, in addition to specific Goals, Objectives, Strategy, Outcome and Output Measures included in the Strategic Plan.

Austin Public Health's Community Services Division/Neighborhood Services Unit (NSU) serves as the CSBG Community Action Agency for Travis County. The NSU uses CSBG funding as the primary source of support for the services provided by the Department's six (6) neighborhood centers, including the Montopolis Community Center, a new permanent site, and three (3) outreach locations. In 2020, NSU also expanded services two to additional satellite locations in the Rundberg neighborhood and far East Austin.

Austin Public Health has its own strategic plan. NSU submits a specific strategic plan for the work supported by CSBG through its Neighborhood Centers to meet TDHCA's expectations.

2020 has been a year to remember due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The NSU continues to adapt to unpredictable circumstances and the predictable needs of our neighborhood center's communities. The Community Development Commission continues to serve as the required CSBG Advisory Board.

To develop the Strategic Plan for the work supported by CSBG through its Neighborhood Centers, several internal strategic planning sessions were conducted with 35+ employees which identified priorities to be addressed in the next five years. Moving forward, we will continue to work with Department leadership to ensure this Strategic Plan works hand in hand with the basic needs of our community.

II. Purpose

TDHCA's Strategic Planning Guide cites several key factors that have served as our purpose for our strategic planning efforts:

- To meet CSBG program requirements and CSBG grant purpose to address the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and empower low-income persons to become self-sufficient
- To demonstrate participation of low-income individuals in CAAs activities.
- To produce decisions and actions that guide the organization's program operations
- To help prioritize efforts and determine the allocation of resources
- To improve effectiveness and efficiency through agreed upon strategies and goals

III. Mandates

During the internal strategic planning sessions, we reviewed the various mandates that the Neighborhood Centers are expected to meet. Among them are:

CSBG and TDHCA Mandates

- To reduce poverty
- To revitalize low-income communities
- To empower low-income families and individuals to become self-sufficient
- To meet organizational standards
- To provide case management to our clients
- To transition 43 clients out of poverty each year

City of Austin Values and Expectations

The City of Austin has set forth core values (**PRIDE**) for all employees:

Public Service and Engagement

- We will partner with one another and with our community to provide the best service possible.

Responsibility and Accountability

- We take responsibility for achieving results and hold ourselves accountable for our actions.

Innovation & Sustainability

- We actively seek out good ideas that have a lasting, positive impact on our work, our community and our environment.

Diversity & Inclusion

- We recognize and respect a variety of perspectives, experiences and approaches that will help us achieve our organizational goals.

Ethics and Integrity

- Our actions will maintain the trust and confidence of the public and the organization.

Austin Public Health also sets forth expectations for performance through an annual business planning process. These business plan goals help us measure our performance and determine how well the services we are providing meet the needs of our community.

IV. Austin Public Health - Department Mission, Vision, Core Purpose

Vision

Everyone will have an optimal quality of life, health and well-being.

Mission

To prevent disease, promote health, and protect the well-being of all.

Core Purpose

- Prevent illness, injury, and disease;
- Promote community-wide wellness, preparedness, resiliency, and self-sufficiency;
- Protect the community from environmental and health hazards; and
- Strengthen collaborations and build new partnerships to advance health in all policies.

III. Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

During our staff development meeting staff were introduced to the Strategic Planning process. During this meeting, staff met in as a large group and in small groups to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for the Neighborhood Centers. Following is a summary of these discussions:

Strengths

- Interdisciplinary Team Approach
- Customer Service- Positive Client Feedback
- Diversity of Staff
- Collaboration with Partner Agencies
- Teamwork
- Food Access Programs
- Community Development Commission (CSBG Advisory Board)
- Experienced & Educated Staff
- Supportive Leadership
- Free Services
- Training (Ongoing & Relevant)

Weaknesses

- Lack of Social Media Presence
- Promotion/Outreach
- Funding/Budget
- Lack of Opportunities for Stress Relief for Staff – Training Opportunities
- Website
- Lack of services for re-entry clients

Opportunities

- Find Satellite Locations to provide NSU services
- Collaborate with Prison Release Programs
- Outreach
- Coordination of Services with Other Agencies
- Wraparound Services
- Increase Community Outreach (especially to high schools/colleges, outlying areas)

Threats

- National Budgets/Funding
- Gentrification
- Economy
- Undocumented clients fearful of applying for services
- Limited Resources
- Policies & Procedures (lengthy & complicated)
- Political Climate/Legislation (Ongoing changes at the Federal, State and Local Level)

Key Strategic Issues Identified

From this discussion, the leadership team of the Neighborhood Centers met and developed the key strategic issues. As part of our discussion and selection of these key strategic issues, we identified and considered which items we could impact within the span of our control at a Neighborhood Services Unit level.

During the CSBG Community Needs Assessment, key findings included both the growth of Austin's population, and the increased cost of living in Austin/Travis County, especially in the urban core. Discussions with Austin Public Health Leadership have been initiated to develop both short- and long-term plans for ensuring that services are being offered where persons with low-incomes reside, as many people can no longer afford to reside in the areas where current Neighborhood Center facilities are located.

The five key strategic issues that have been selected to address in our strategic plan are:

1. Increase program outcomes
2. Ensure compliance with CSBG eligibility requirements
3. Improve marketing/outreach and education to the community
4. Promote and support employee wellness & employee career development and retention efforts
5. Improve coordination and communication between programs and community partners

IV. Goals

Strategic Plan Goals are documented in TDHCA's required excel format.