
Recommendations to Council

Services for Survivors of Violence and Violence
Prevention Workgroup
Reimagining Public Safety Task Force

Work Group Members

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Guiding Working Group Values

01

Survivor
Centered



Individuals, families,
& communities
most impacted by
violence

02

Healing Justice



Invest in non-
carceral
resources for
healing

03

Systems
Accountability



Let those who
need it lead it

04

Culturally
Affirming



Anti-racism work
is anti-violence
work

05

Trauma
Informed



Adopt universal
precautions for
trauma

Survivor Services & Violence Prevention: An Expanding Circle



Approach: Augment Victim Services with a proliferation of community -based services that do not require survivors to have contact with the criminal legal system.

CommunityRooted Safety Grant Program

Establish a permanent grant fund of at least \$350,000 per year for community - based organizations to implement, expand, or support promising initiatives that focus on:

- Safety and Immediate Well-being
 - Examples: Crisis Intervention & Victim/Survivor Emergency Funds
- Healing and Repair from Harm
 - Examples: Transformative Justice Circles, Healing Circles, and Pod-mapping
- Prevention - Planting Seeds for Violence-Free Futures
 - Examples: Economic Empowerment, Culturally Rooted Parent/Family Support, and Community Defense Zones

Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) Model

Through the Office of Violence Prevention, provide \$1 million in funding for the creation of a Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) to provide:

- Free, culturally responsive, trauma-informed therapy and case management for survivors of violence without regard to involvement with the criminal legal system or immigration status; and
- Services tailored to survivors who are traditionally underserved by existing systems.

Sex Worker Outreach Services

Provide \$460,000 first year, then \$260k annually to fund sex worker outreach services by and for sex workers. Including but not limited to:

- Survey about violence within the community to strengthen the data available - \$200k
- Peer support programming (bad date list, paid peer mentorship) and mutual aid - \$75k
- Street outreach and harm reduction - \$80k
- Public health campaign against stigma for sex working, unhoused, and drug using populations - \$30k
- Cultural competency trainings for legal / medical /social service providers in Austin - \$75k

Community-Based Economic Services

Expand access to emergency financial assistance such as the Bridge to Safety by:

- Directing City funds to at least 5 additional community -based partners who can distribute flexible emergency financial assistance without requiring criminal legal system involvement.
 - \$75,000 per year, per site, for direct financial assistance x 6 (1 current, 5 additional) agencies = \$450,000
 - Dedicate additional funds for fund administration & distribution support, and/or for FTE/PTEs if agencies staff distribution themselves x 6 (1 current FTE, 2 additional) = \$225,000
- Providing free and deeply reduced CapMetro passes for distribution by community -based partners.
 - 100-150 passes per year, per site

CommunityBased Housing

- Create a subsidy program to incentivize landlords to rent at reduced and stabilized rates to low income trans people of color - \$500,000 per year
- Fund a community housing trust to serve Black trans individuals who are survivors of state and interpersonal violence - \$600,000 per year
- Increase and diversify funding for survivor housing support - \$15 million per year
 - Rent subsidies
 - Crisis/emergency housing
 - Hotel Safety Net programs such as Survive 2 Thrive
 - Food vouchers

Community-Based Upstream Prevention

In the next two fiscal years, fund at least 3 upstream violence prevention initiatives that are delivered through schools or community -led youth and family support organizations.

- Funding Recommendation: \$500,000 per year
 - \$75,000 per FTE
 - \$25,000 minimum for program supplies and direct support to participants
 - \$20,000 per location, for expanding site -based and/or extracurricular programs

Internal City of Austin Survivor Healing

\$360,000 annually to expand the EMDR training program, currently housed with Victim Services, and provide free access to other culturally -resonant healing modalities.

Internal City of Austin Safety for Sex Workers

- Stop arresting individuals for prostitution and solicitation, release those currently held on these charges, and dismiss charges and expunge the records of those previously convicted.
- Advocate to end Phoenix Court and instead refer individuals to local sex worker outreach and harm reduction programs, with increased funding to to increase capacity of alternative programs.
- Follow a Baltimore-style model of stopping the prosecution of minor crimes to create a safer environment for most marginalized members of Austin's communities.

Internal City of Austin Independent Police Oversight

- Relocate the Office of Police Oversight from the City Manager's office to an independent Office of Police Oversight comparable to the City Auditor.
- Empower the OPO to respond to the experiences of victims of police violence by granting OPO full authority and access to City and APD administration.

Internal City of Austin Mandated Reporting

- Reevaluate and revise APD policies on mandated reporting, specifically the current practice of reporting to DFPS whenever responding to survivors with children.
- Meaningfully engage with Victims Services and the Equity Office in reviewing and reshaping policies on mandated reporting, as current practices disproportionately and negatively impact survivors of domestic violence and their families and communities.

Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

- We recommend that once the OVP is fully funded and staffed, the OVP support and sustain the work of the RPSTask force going forward by:
 - Convening a core leadership team, anchored by the Reimaging Task Force, with the addition of survivors, families, and young people in the neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by violence to guide pilot site location, program design, implementation, and testing using shared data and outside technical assistance;
 - Develop a unified messaging campaign to increase awareness and build political will; and
 - Work with data and IT experts to initiate planning and development of an integrated cross-sector data platform .

Public Health Functions for Violence Prevention



OVP Funding Recommendations

- \$500,000 for the OVP and outside TA to facilitate a community-led strategic design process rooted in the principles of racial justice, inclusivity, transparency, self-determination, participatory decision-making, and collective healing.
- \$500,000 to build local capacity to assess, monitor, and utilize violence-related data from a variety of sources beginning with the creation of a multidisciplinary Homicide Review Team.
- \$2 million in immediate funds to implement, monitor, and evaluate community-based pilot strategies, such as Cure Violence and Hospital Based Violence Intervention, to interrupt the cycle of community violence in the neighborhoods most impacted by police violence.

Victim Services Recommendations

- The VS Manager should report to the Assistant City Manager over public safety or the APD Police Chief, and be included in executive and command staff meetings with regular access to the APD Chief for communication and collaboration.
- APD's budget should reflect the value VS adds to the department.
 - For example, VS salaries should be competitive and not depreciated by cutting benefits or replacing needed positions with temporary positions.
- VS staff should coordinate with outside TA to deliver training on VS role, trauma -informed response to survivors, case studies, role plays, and victim rights, with emphasis on interacting affirmatively with survivors representative of Austin's diverse communities.
 - 30 hours of training time (currently 16 hours) for cadets;
 - 2 hours yearly training for patrol officers; and
 - Inclusion in Field Training Officer training and recertification

Victim Services Recommendations, continued

- APD should move to a model where each Sexual Assault survivor has the option to speak to a patrol officer, a VS counselor, or both, with the counselor being the first point of contact (either by phone or taking the lead on the scene), so that the survivor will know what the counselor can offer and their options regarding reporting.
- Victim services collaborate with the Equity Office and community stakeholders to implement opportunities put forth by the Community + APD Equity Assessment Series: Austin Police Department, Victims Services Division Report.
 - Development of concrete equity standards and assessment processes;
 - Development and implementation of training modules on critical race issues as part of recruiting, training, orientation and onboarding processes; and
 - Collaboration with Equity Office and community to develop and implement specific accountability metrics for ensuring equitable practices.