



# **City of Austin**

# **Economic Recovery and**

# **Resiliency Framework**

**Promoting a More Equitable, Competitive,  
and Resilient Austin Economy**

Economic Recovery Strike Team  
March 2021

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## Letter from Spencer Cronk, City Manager

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Dear Fellow Austinites,

Since March 6, 2020, when the initial local emergency was declared, City of Austin staff has responded swiftly and thoughtfully to the COVID-19 pandemic. While our primary focus continues to be protecting the health and welfare of our community, we also administered new programs and services to alleviate the financial impacts caused by the pandemic. City staff administered financial assistance programs that distributed millions of dollars to families, workers, small businesses, and non-profits; developed robust meal services for food-insecure individuals and households; and launched public support programs for unemployed and underemployed workers.

As we prepared to shift our focus from response to recovery, City staff and community residents worked together to identify a bold, visionary, and actionable framework to usher Austin's economic revival. This Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework serves as our roadmap to ensure we achieve economic prosperity for all. Each opportunity included in this framework will help reinvigorate our local economy by creating more pathways to economic mobility and security, increasing access to permanent quality jobs, supporting our strong arts and entertainment ecosystem, fostering more entrepreneurship and small business development, and fortifying our local economy to withstand the impacts of future economic shocks.

We remain mindful that we cannot return to the pre-pandemic status quo. Racial equity and inclusion will continue to be at the forefront of our recovery efforts. We will work diligently to ensure factors like a person's race, ethnicity, zip code, and language spoken at home will not continue to serve as a predictor of economic success and mobility. We are committed to addressing historic inequities and economic disparities so that no community gets left behind as Austin moves forward.

Of course, this is uncharted territory for everyone. There are many unknowns about the future. Thus, we will conduct ourselves with the same adaptive philosophy that is a foundational part of the Austin Strategic Direction 2023. We will learn and adjust from our successes and failures as we pursue these opportunities, and we will openly share the knowledge we acquire along the way. We will constantly strive for better along this journey.

I have no doubt that our City and its residents will emerge from this pandemic with a more equitable, competitive, and resilient economy. Thank you for your strength, patience, and dedication as we navigate this unprecedented time together.

Spencer Cronk  
City Manager  
City of Austin

## Letter from Veronica Briseño, Chief Economic Recovery Officer

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Dear Austin community,

I am honored to have served alongside many City and community members in response to the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. From launching new City services to witnessing countless community-led philanthropic activities, Austinites rallied together in innovative and creative ways to support one another through this crisis.

When City Manager Spencer Cronk asked me to lead a new Economic Recovery Strike Team in March 2020, our goal was to mitigate the immediate and long-term economic impacts from the pandemic. Collectively, City of Austin departments launched 12 financial assistance programs since the onset of the pandemic, which collectively distributed more than \$115 million to individuals, non-profit organizations, and businesses that were financially impacted by COVID-19.

The Economic Recovery Strike Team also created new services to help workers, small business owners, and non-profit leaders overcome the unprecedented challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These services included creating a new website ([ATXrecovers.com](https://www.atxrecovers.com)) as a one-stop location for the community to find information about recovery grants and services; launching a confidential and no-cost 24-hour mental wellness support line to provide short-term counseling for Austin workers and families; and facilitating more than 1,022 hours of no-cost virtual business training, educational events, and coaching to empower entrepreneurs and local businesses.

Furthermore, the Economic Recovery Strike Team prepared this framework after facilitating more than 125 stakeholder engagements with Austin residents, local business owners, and City staff. Each engagement allowed Strike Team members to listen and learn about the real challenges experienced by local business owners, employees, residents, and City staff. Dozens of community members volunteered their time to share personal accounts of the pandemic's impact on their businesses, jobs, and families. These volunteers also offered their perspective on the types of assistance needed to help communities and businesses survive the pandemic and to become more resilient.

I am sincerely grateful for every volunteer and City staff member that participated in the economic recovery conversations. And I am appreciative of every Austinite who takes the time to read this framework and provide feedback through our [SpeakUp Austin! webpage](#).

The Economic Recovery Strike Team believes this Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework responds to the issues and opportunities identified by members of our community, and we are committed to working with Austinites to ensure implementation of this framework yields positive outcomes for all. We will journey together through the uncertain future, and together we will triumph over this tragedy.

Veronica Briseño  
Chief Economic Recovery Officer  
City of Austin

## Acknowledgements

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The City of Austin would like to thank the following City staff and community members for providing input that informed the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework.

### CITY OF AUSTIN ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRIKE TEAM

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**Stephanie Hayden-Howard**, Director, Austin Public Health, City of Austin

### ECONOMIC RECOVERY EXPERTS PANEL

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**Jon Hockenyo**s, TXP, Inc.  
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### COVID-19 INDUSTRY FOCUS GROUPS

#### Cross-Sector Focus Group

**Alyssia Palacios-Woods**, Austin Young Chamber  
**Ben Ramirez**, World Affairs Council of Austin  
**Brad Spies**, South by Southwest  
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**Jane Hervey**, Boss Babes  
**Laura Huffman**, Austin Chamber of Commerce

**Mayra Huerta**, Workers Defense Project  
**Michele Van Hyfte**, Downtown Austin Alliance  
**Paulette Gibbins**, Urban Land Institute Austin  
**Tam Hawkins**, Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce  
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**Tina Cannon**, Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce  
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### **Personal Service Focus Group**

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**Blair Smith**, Dirty Dog  
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**Dr. Paul Pearce**, Pearce Plastic Surgery  
**Eloisa Alvarez**, It's Cleaning Time  
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**JD Blackwell**, Wedding and Event Planning  
**Jon Reed**, All Saints Tattoo

**Jose Buitron**, Jose Luis Salons  
**Laura Bruce**, Mi Casa es Tu Casa  
**Lauren Irizarry**, Betty Lash  
**Lena Boatright**, Henna Arts  
**Michael Portman**, Bird's Barbershop  
**Romy Parzick and Ryan Parzick**, Fuerte Fitness  
**Sonja Corbin**, SC4Kids Salon  
**Stuart King**, King-Tears Mortuary  
**Tiffany Wilson**, 29 Eleven Salon

### **Manufacturing Focus Group**

**Caren Kelleher**, Gold Rush Vinyl  
**Colleen Halbrook**, JOSCO Products  
**Ed Latson**, Austin Regional Manufacturers Association

**Michele Glaze**, Samsung  
**Sam Alexander**, Concept 2 Consumption

### **Experience Sector Focus Group**

**Al Duarte**, Cinco de Mayo; Dies y Seis  
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**Brian Almaraz**, Coconut Club  
**Brian Leto**, Cadence  
**Bridget Portier**, Visit Austin  
**Cathy McDonald**, The Paramount and State Theater  
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**Cindy Lo**, Red Velvet Events  
**Clark Beacom**, Austin FC  
**Cody Cowan**, Red River Cultural District  
**Colleen Fischer**, ACL Live / Moody Theater  
**Dan Carroll**, High Five Events  
**David Baldry**, SoundCheck Austin  
**David Grice**, RACEWorks  
**Drew Hayes**, Austin Sports Commission  
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**Laurel White**, Bunkhouse / Fair Market  
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**Maria Rodriguez**, Austin Gay and Lesbian Pride Foundation  
**Mercedes Feris**, Method Three Events  
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**Nikki McCullough**, Fat Bottom Cabaret  
**Paulette Gibbins**, Urban Land Institute (creative space taskforce)  
**Rebecca Reynolds**, Music Venue Alliance  
**Rod Nielson**, Big House Sound  
**Ryan Garrett**, Stubb's B-B-Q  
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**Regina Estrada**, Joe's Bakery  
**Sharon Mays**, Baby Greens  
**Sharon Watkins**, Chez Zee  
**Susana Vivanco**, Lima Criolla Peruvian Restaurant

### **CITY OF AUSTIN DEPARTMENT SUPPORT**

Austin Center for Events  
Austin Code Department  
Austin Energy  
Austin Public Health  
Austin Resource Recovery  
Austin Transportation Department  
Austin Water  
Center of Excellence and Innovation  
City Manager's Office  
Communications and Public Information  
Corridor Program Office  
Development Services Department  
Economic Development Department

Equity Office  
Financial Services Department  
Homeland Security and Emergency Management  
Housing and Planning Department  
Intergovernmental Relations Office  
Law Department  
Office of Sustainability  
Parks and Recreation Department  
Public Works Department  
Resiliency Office  
Small and Minority Business Resources Department

## Executive Summary

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The City of Austin's Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework features 45 opportunities to foster a more equitable, competitive, and resilient post-pandemic economy. These opportunities were identified during more than 125 stakeholder engagements with various groups, including an Economic Recovery Experts Panel, several COVID-19 Industry Focus Groups, Austin residents, and City employees. The Economic Recovery Strike Team grouped the opportunities into seven categories: Civic Innovation, Communication Enhancement, Employee and Business Assistance, Financial Support, Government Service Procurement, Health and Mental Wellness, and Public Infrastructure. Read about each opportunity below and provide feedback through the [SpeakUp Austin! webpage](#).

### **CIVIC INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- Develop partnerships to secure enhanced COVID-19 testing and tracking resources, and support vaccine distribution to historically marginalized groups.
- Establish formal pathways for City of Austin staff to receive and review innovative ideas.
- Facilitate the creation of financial services for unbanked individuals, creatives, business owners, and entrepreneurs.
- Formalize resiliency efforts for future disasters.
- Launch an Austin Community Challenge that engages residents, creatives, employees, and employers in a process of co-creating solutions for local problems.
- Support research to reduce the risk of infection at large and live events.

### **COMMUNICATION ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Announce grants from a centralized City source.
- Continue creating educational resources for reopening businesses.
- Create a communications tree for important COVID-19 updates and announcements.
- Create a communications tree for small businesses to receive notifications regarding permitted festivals and events.
- Launch campaigns promoting workforce development opportunities and available jobs.
- Standardize messaging to stakeholders and business patrons.

### **EMPLOYEE AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

- Assist local creatives with streaming content from local arts and cultural organizations.
- Collaborate with partners on workforce development to prepare Austinites for jobs in current and new industries.
- Continue providing workshops and one-on-one coaching to help business owners, entrepreneurs, and creatives adapt their business models.
- Create an Austin Tool Lending Library that allows individuals to access tutorials and borrow equipment at little to no cost.
- Develop a local artist registry to foster more opportunities for Austin's creatives.
- Enhance access to affordable and quality childcare.
- Facilitate stronger mentorship opportunities for business owners.
- Facilitate the creation of business cooperatives.



- Support existing advocacy efforts and the development of creative coalitions, which empower creative sector professionals to cross-promote their work and collaborate on common issues.
- Offer workforce development scholarships to unemployed or underemployed individuals who commit to work locally in their trained field or sector.
- Provide households with tools and resources to grow their own foods.
- Foster collaboration between Austin-based businesses to share goods and services.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Provide additional financial assistance to individuals, households, employees, businesses, and non-profit organizations.
- Incentivize adaptations to produce innovations and improvements to commercial sites, which benefit employees and customers.
- Continued dedicated relief and recovery fund for Live Music Venues.
- Temporarily reduce or waive certain City permits and fees for businesses that are reopening safely.

## **GOVERNMENT SERVICE PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Enter into a City of Austin master supplier agreement for COVID-19 rapid testing.
- Increase the amount of City of Austin procurement to small and/or local businesses.
- Procure food from local restaurants and businesses to feed food-insecure Austin individuals and families.

## **HEALTH AND MENTAL WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES**

- Continue providing enhanced mental wellness resources for Austinites.
- Continue providing housing and meals to COVID-19 patients experiencing homelessness.
- Offer safety trainings to business owners and creative professionals, and create a safe reopening certification program for local businesses.
- Continue promoting existing health regulation requirements in combination with masking and social distancing as an initiative that consumers can easily recognize.
- Research and invest in automated contact tracing technology.

## **PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- Collaborate with government agencies and community partners to close the digital divide.
- Continue permitting parking spaces and outdoor spaces for other usage.
- Expedite affordable housing development
- Expedite sidewalk and bike route development to enhance equitable access to goods and services.
- Expedite temporary rezoning to activate underutilized spaces.
- Flexible timing restrictions for marathons and other outdoor events.
- Leverage public works and transportation projects to offer short-term employment and economic security to Austinites.
- Permanently extend and expand the Healthy Streets program which provides safe options for people to use low-traffic areas for activities.
- Repurpose City properties to offer short-term benefits for local business owners and creatives.

## **Strategic Anchors - Values that Support Quality of Life in Austin**

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Strategic Direction 2023 serves as the foundation for the City of Austin’s approach to economic recovery and resiliency. These values are the lens through which the City continues to pursue economic prosperity for all members of our community.

### **Equity**

The City of Austin staff recognizes racism and inequality exists at various levels: personal, institutional, structural, and systemic. City staff will pursue these opportunities with a lens of racial equity and healing.

### **Affordability**

The Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework identifies opportunities to increase economic mobility and affordability so that Austinites, families, businesses, and all generations can thrive.

### **Innovation**

In the wake of these unprecedented times, City staff are committed to collaborating with the community to create new solutions as we recover from COVID-19 and become more resilient against future emergencies.

### **Sustainability and Resiliency**

These opportunities help protect Austin’s quality of life now, while enhancing the capacity of our communities to survive and thrive during any difficult time that may come.

### **Proactive Protection**

The City of Austin embraces the dual responsibility of responding to the current crisis and using lessons from this emergency to prevent future problems before they arise.

### **Community Trust and Relationships**

City staff recognize that community trust must be earned, and that our city can make more progress when we all work together towards advancing economic recovery efforts.

## COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Austin's Economy

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Austin's economy fared better during the pandemic than many cities in the state and nation. That is because several local industries were not devastated by the pandemic, such as manufacturing, financial activities, technology, and real estate. Additionally, the Austin Chamber of Commerce reported that 135 businesses announced relocations and expansions in Central Texas last year. Those business decisions resulted in 21,335 new jobs in the region, including 15,897 new jobs in Austin. These factors contributed to Austin's unemployment rate remaining below state and national averages throughout the pandemic.

Yet, this outlook does not reflect the reality for tens of thousands of Austinites who lost their jobs during the pandemic. Austin's unemployment rate spiked in April 2020 and remains higher than pre-pandemic levels (see Chart 1). The rise in unemployment disproportionately impacted Black and Hispanic/Latino workers, who accounted for 44.5 percent of individuals filing for unemployment assistance since the start of the pandemic. Unemployment also disproportionately affected women, as six percent more women than men experienced unemployment since April 2020. These inequitable impacts deepen pre-pandemic economic disparities between people of color and women compared to non-Hispanic white men.

It is important to note that Black and Hispanic/Latino employees who continued working since the pandemic's onset were over-represented in industries that do not offer benefits like paid sick leave and worker's compensation. As a result, these employees were at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 and less likely to take a COVID-19 test. For example, the Hispanic/Latino labor force is over-represented in Austin's construction industry. The lack of employee protections in this industry was a key factor in the higher-than-average rates of COVID-19 clusters among Hispanic/Latino construction workers in Summer 2020.

Chart 2: Sum of Claims by Standard Occupational Classification Since March 2020

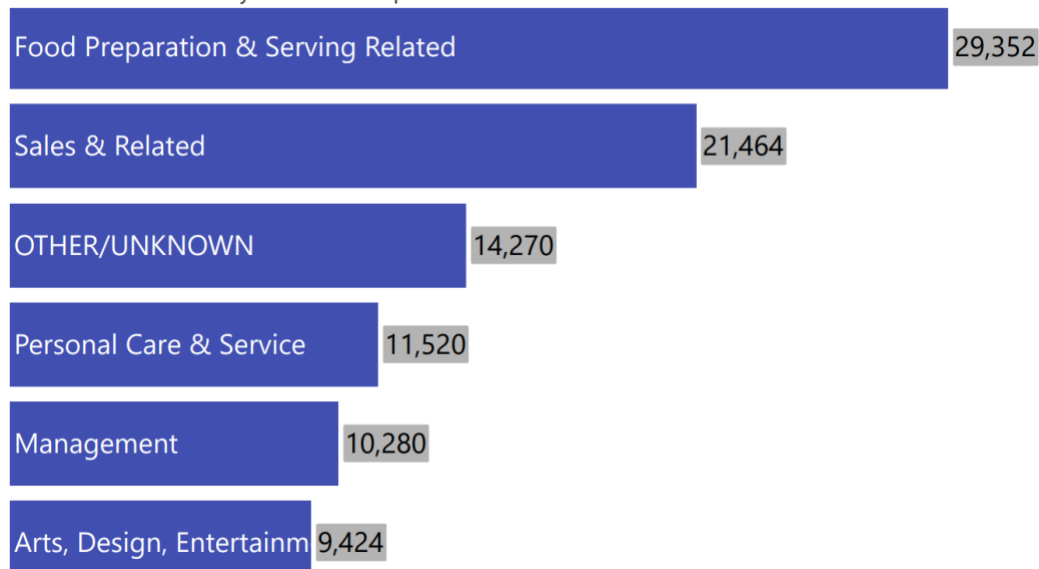


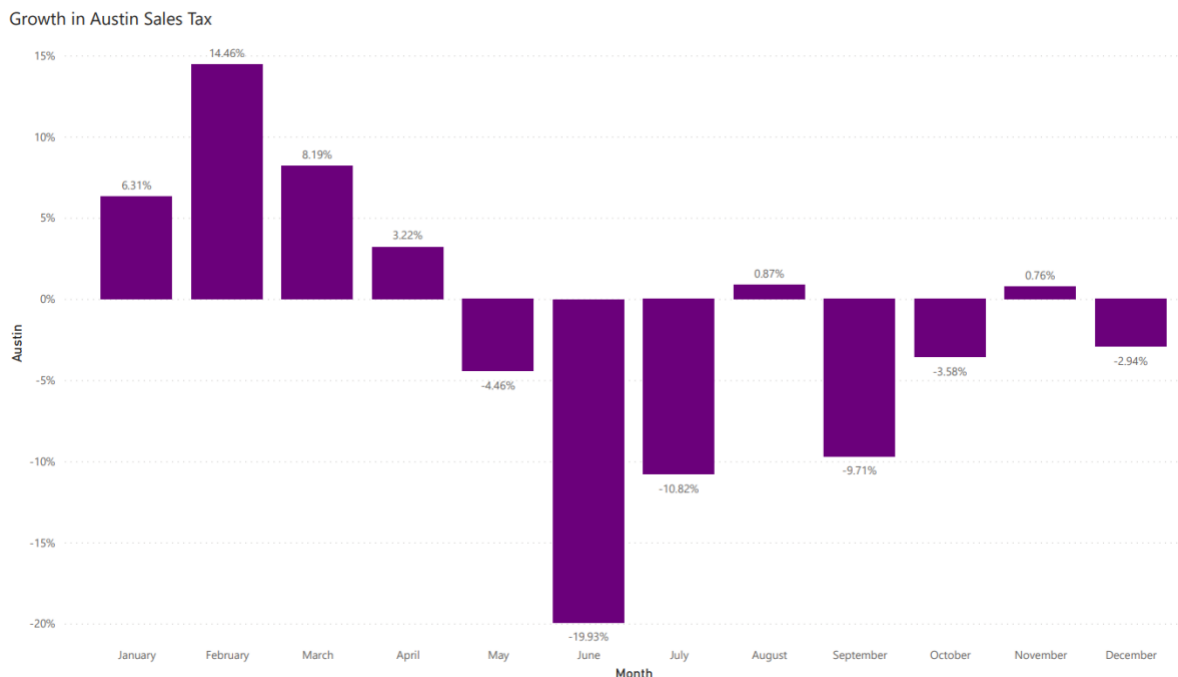
Chart 2 shows that industries like food preparation, sales, and personal care experienced some of the greatest job losses since March 2020. Businesses in each of these sectors had declining revenues due to less face-to-face interactions and reduced consumer spending. Leisure, hospitality, and creative

industries also experienced revenue and job losses – driven in large part by a drastic decline in tourism. Cancelled events and conventions, public safety travel restrictions, and travelers’ fears of contracting COVID-19 influenced tourists’ decisions to cancel their trips. Data from [Austin-Bergstrom International Airport’s Airport Activity Reports](#) shows total airline passenger traffic from January 2020 to November 2020 was 62.5 percent lower than the same period in 2019. The reduction in visits to Austin meant fewer occupied hotel rooms in 2020, which will have a negative effect on local Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenues.

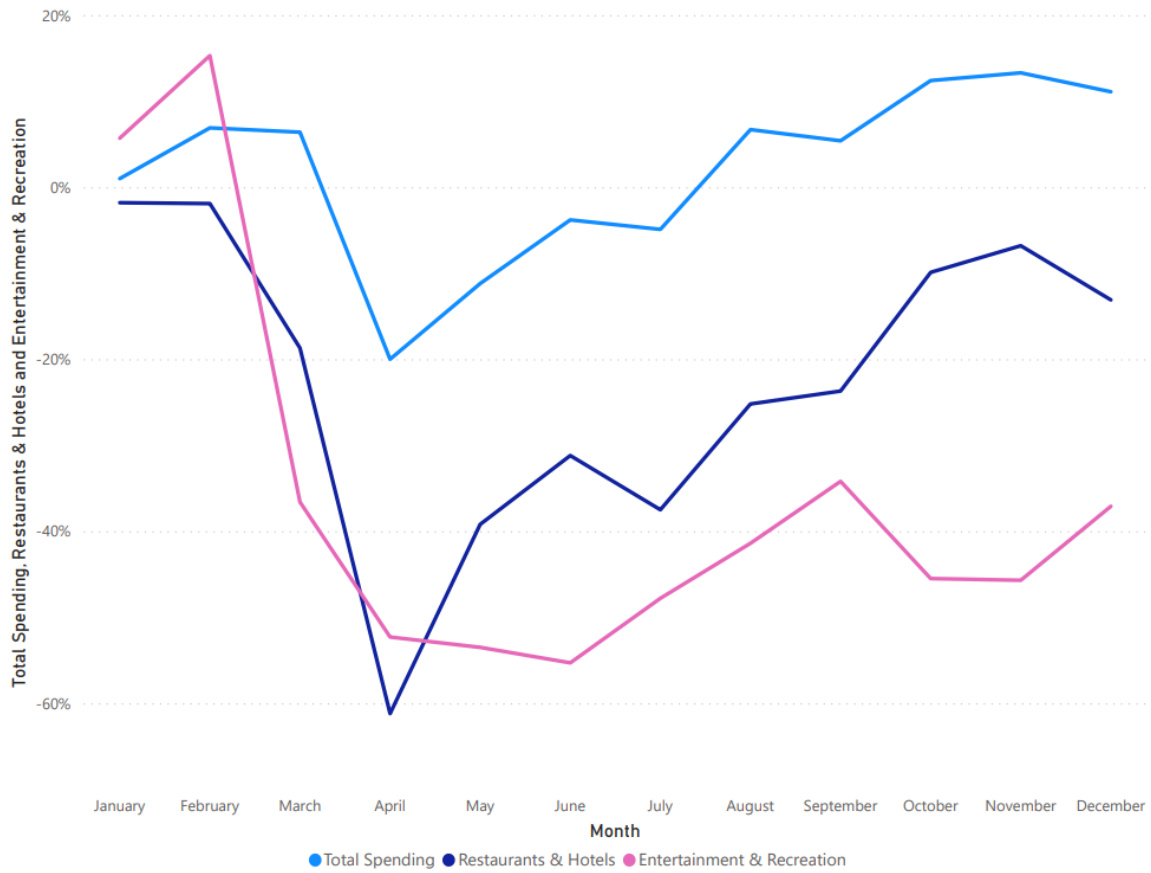
Like job losses, businesses owned by entrepreneurs of color were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce estimated that 41 percent to 50 percent of local black-owned businesses would not survive the pandemic. The Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce reported a drastic decrease in its members’ revenues and an increase in threats towards Asian-owned businesses, which were driven by racist and xenophobic sentiments due to the association of COVID-19 with China.

These ongoing trends are producing a “K-shaped recovery” in Austin. Certain parts of the local economy are already recovering from the pandemic, while other parts continue to struggle. Employees with salaried jobs and the ability to work remotely are less likely to experience job interruptions than hourly employees who work in businesses that cannot easily transition to internet-based operations. Similarly, businesses in industries that do not depend on face-to-face interactions or discretionary spending are experiencing job and revenue gains while those in industries that depend on in-person interaction, travel, tourism, and discretionary spending continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic’s economic impact.

One bright spot in Austin’s economic forecast is that consumer spending is improving. Using local sales tax revenues as a proxy for consumer spending, Chart 3 shows that sales tax collections have improved since reaching its lowest point in June 2020. Additionally, data from the Opportunity Index shows consumer spending is improving across all sectors (see Chart 4). Increased consumer spending – as well as the ongoing mass distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine – is good news for Austin’s hardest hit businesses and their employees. As the public health crisis lessens and consumer confidence grows, business owners and their employees should expect their financial situations to improve.



Change in Consumer Spending Since January 2020



City staff will publish more detailed economic indicators to the City’s [SpeakUp Austin! webpage](#). This information will allow the public to track how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the local economy. The data will focus on information related to employment, business health, housing, childcare, and social services. City staff will update the economic indicators every quarter.

# Austin Economic Support Initiatives

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The City of Austin launched 12 financial assistance programs since Mayor Steve Adler's initial local emergency declaration in March 2020. Collectively, these programs distributed more than \$115 million to support Austin families, non-profits, and businesses impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, City staff collaborated with community organizations to begin new supportive services (i.e. mental health hotlines, business coaching, etc.) to help residents, workers, small business owners, and non-profit leaders overcome the unprecedented challenges caused by the pandemic. Below are summaries of many of the programs and services announced since March 2020.

## FINANCIAL PROGRAMS

### **Austin Childcare Provider Relief Grant**

[The Austin Childcare Provider Relief Grant](#) distributed \$6.1 million in grants to 199 childcare providers, including home-based providers. Recipients used these funds for payroll, rent relief, operational costs, and other eligible COVID-19 related expenses.

### **Austin Creative Space Disaster Relief Program**

[The Austin Creative Space Disaster Relief Program](#) distributed \$987,943 in grants to 32 live music venues, performance spaces, art galleries, arts-focused non-profits, and individual artists facing temporary or permanent displacement. Recipients used these funds for commercial rent and to defray rent hikes, property acquisition costs, and other space-related needs such as facility improvements or displacement-related expenditures.

### **Austin Creative Worker Relief Grant**

[The Austin Creative Worker Relief Grant](#) distributed \$3.3 million in grants to over 1,866 creative sector workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients used their one-time grants for expenses such as rent, bills, groceries, and other COVID-19 related expenses.

### **Austin Economic Injury Bridge Loan Program**

[The Austin Economic Injury Bridge Loan Program](#) distributed \$645,000 in short-term, low interest loans to 19 small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients used their loans to pay for expenses like rent, payroll, and debt. City staff used a portion of Austin's federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act allocation to forgive these loans.

### **Austin Legacy Business Relief Grant**

[The Austin Legacy Business Relief Grant](#) is distributing \$5 million to support and sustain Austin businesses that have operated continuously for at least 20 years. These funds protect Austin's cultural and economic ecosystem by supporting longstanding local businesses that contribute to Austin's unique identity.

### **Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund**

[The Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund](#) is distributing \$5 million to support and sustain local live music venues until they can safely reopen. These funds protect Austin's cultural and economic ecosystem by supporting live music venues that contribute to Austin's international appeal.

### **Austin Music Disaster Relief Fund**

[The Austin Music Disaster Relief Fund](#) distributed \$1.5 million in grants to 1,500 performing musicians impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients used their one-time \$1,000 grant to offset lost income because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant**

[The Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant](#) distributed more than \$6 million in grants to 365 non-profit organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds reimbursed non-profits for certain expenses incurred between March 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Austin Relief of Emergency Needs for Tenants (RENT)**

[The Relief of Emergency Needs for Tenants \(RENT\) Program](#) distributed \$15.2 million to assist 4,828 households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds provided up to six months of full rent payment for income-eligible Austin renters who experienced a COVID-19-related income loss.

### **Austin Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE)**

[The Relief in a State of Emergency \(RISE\) Fund](#) distributed \$29 million in direct financial assistance and direct relief services to 196,386 households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds were used for rent, utilities and other financial assistance required for persons affected by COVID-19.

### **Austin Small Business Relief Grant**

[The Austin Small Business Relief Grant](#) awarded \$18.6 million in grants to 964 small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds reimbursed small businesses for certain expenses incurred between March 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Austin Utility Bill Relief Programs**

Austin Energy and Austin Water are committed to ensuring customers have uninterrupted access to utility services. The utilities contributed more than \$24 million to assist residential customers needing payment assistance. Customers experiencing hardships due to COVID-19 can get immediate utility bill help through the [Customer Assistance Program \(CAP\)](#) and [the Financial Support Plus 1 Fund](#).

## **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

### **Austin Civilian Conservation Corps**

[The Austin Civilian Conservation Corps](#) helps Austinites who were financially impacted by COVID-19 earn income, serve their community, and gain skills that can lead to strong new careers.

### **Austin Mental Wellness Support Line**

The City of Austin partnered with Alliance Work Partners to create a confidential and no-cost 24-hour mental wellness support line to provide short-term counseling and support to Austin workers and families whose mental health was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. [Visit the City of Austin COVID-19 Mental Wealth Resources webpage](#) for additional information about mental wellness services.

**Healthcare Access Program**

The City of Austin partnered with Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM) to provide access to affordable health care for Austin's low-income, underinsured working musicians through the [Healthcare Access Program](#). This partnership supported Austin musicians by offering year-long comprehensive coverage that includes access to mental health care.

**Small Business Virtual Coaching**

The Economic Development Department's Small Business Division provided more than 1,022 hours of no-cost virtual business training, educational events, and coaching to empower entrepreneurs and local businesses. [Visit www.smallbizaustin.org](http://www.smallbizaustin.org) for additional information about these services.

**Trash Fee Waivers**

The Austin City Council adopted [Ordinance No. 20200409-061](#), which waived unstickered extra trash fees for the period from March 23, 2020 until the Mayor's Stay Home – Work Safe Order is lifted, or until otherwise directed by City management.

**Utility Disconnection Moratorium**

The Austin City Council adopted [Ordinance No. 20200409-083](#), which approved a moratorium on city utility disconnections, waived city utility late fees, extended the deadline for commercial and multifamily energy audit and benchmark reporting, reduced certain city electric and water rates, and expanded eligibility for the city utilities' customer assistance program to include individuals experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Deferred City Property Tenant Payments**

The Austin Convention Center, Austin Public Library, and City Hall are providing rent deferment programs and renegotiating lease terms for retail and restaurant tenants. The deferment plans include monthly rent, late rent, and operating expenses, such as utilities and maintenance. Initially, there were three deferred phases.



# Public Health and Economic Recovery

Austin’s economic recovery begins with public health. The Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework will follow the COVID-19 Risk-Based Guidelines established by Austin Public Health (APH). These guidelines identify five distinct stages of risk, from the lowest threat (Stage 1) through the most serious (Stage 5). The guidelines do not change local Orders and Rules or regulations for businesses; they are guidelines for individual actions and behaviors based on levels of risk of exposure in the community. The risk level recommendations are different for those who are at higher risk for severe complications and death from COVID-19. [Visit the COVID-19 Risk-Based Guidelines webpage](#) to review APH’s recommendations for lower-risk and higher-risk individuals during each stage.

Some of the opportunities included in this framework cannot be pursued until Austin enters a specific stage of the COVID-19 Risk Based Guidelines. City staff will continue to monitor local health risks and provide recovery resources to individuals and businesses based on real-time needs.




## COVID-19: Risk-Based Guidelines

	Practice Good Hygiene	Maintain Social Distancing	Wear Facial Coverings	Higher Risk Individuals Aged 65+, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart, lung and kidney disease, immunocompromised, obesity			Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/ Shopping	Recommended Business Capacity
	Stay Home If Sick			Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/ Shopping				
	Avoid Sick People									
<b>Stage 1</b>	•			Greater than 25		Except with precautions	Gathering size TBD		100%	
<b>Stage 2</b>	•	•	•	Greater than 10		Except as essential	Greater than 25		75%	
<b>Stage 3</b>	•	•	•	Social and greater than 10	•	Except as essential	Social and greater than 10		50 - 75%	
<b>Stage 4</b>	•	•	•	Social and greater than 2	•	Except as essential	Social and Greater than 10	•	25 - 50%	
<b>Stage 5</b>	•	•	•	Outside of household	•	Except as essential	Outside of household	•	Contactless options only (i.e. curbside, delivery)	

Use this color-coded alert system to understand the stages of risk. This chart provides recommendations on what people should do to stay safe during the pandemic. Individual risk categories identified pertain to known risks of complication and death from COVID-19. This chart is subject to change as the situation evolves.


# Economic Recovery and Resiliency Opportunities

Each opportunity in the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework contains an icon indicating the resources City staff and community partners will need before the opportunity can be pursued. The symbols in the Feasibility Legend indicate whether opportunities require third party partnerships, a City program or policy change, and/or additional federal stimulus or dedicated funding.

Feasibility Icons	
	Requires more federal stimulus or dedicated stimulus
	Requires City program or policy change
	Requires 3 <sup>rd</sup> party partnerships

Additionally, each opportunity is associated with one of the [Strategic Direction 2023 outcome areas](#): Economic Mobility and Affordability, Mobility, Safety, Health and Environment, Culture and Lifelong Learning, and Government That Works for All. Aligning the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework opportunities to the Strategic Direction 2023 strategic outcome areas ensures this framework helps every Austinite thrive in the post-COVID-19 economy.

## CIVIC INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

**Develop partnerships to secure enhanced COVID-19 testing and tracking resources, and support vaccine distribution to historically marginalized groups.** 

Enhanced COVID-19 testing and tracking ensures individuals who test positive can receive care earlier. Leveraging current partnerships with local universities, health care experts, and philanthropy to identify and procure COVID-19 testing and tracking tools (i.e., rapid at-the-door testing, automated contact tracing, etc.) can help slow the spread of COVID-19, lower local hospitalization rates, and reduce deaths. Partnership could also help the City ensure vaccines are distributed equitably, especially in communities that are historically marginalized, disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and or have a greater prevalence of underlying conditions that enhance the severity of the virus. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health and Environment.

**Establish formal pathways for City of Austin staff to receive and review innovative ideas.** 

There are many local social entrepreneurs, start-up organizations, and businesses working to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. City staff can support these individuals and entities by creating a formal process to review and support innovative ideas that align with City priorities. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Facilitate the creation of financial services for unbanked individuals, creatives, business owners, and entrepreneurs.** 

Low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant communities have less access to mainstream financial services, which leaves these communities at greater risk for financial insecurity during crises. Expanding partnerships with local community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and organizations to create non-predatory financial services will improve the financial security of households and businesses in these communities. Additionally, these financial services could teach financial literacy, help improve credit

scores, and create new opportunities for wealth-building. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Formalize resiliency efforts for future disasters.**



Many of the strategies that Austin and other cities used to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 were learned from prior global health emergencies, such as SARS (2003), H1N1 (2009), and Ebola (2014-2016). Institutionalizing lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic will ensure that the City and community remain prepared to respond and recover from future public health emergencies. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Launch an Austin Community Challenge that engages residents, creatives, employees, and employers in a process of co-creating solutions for local problems.**



Community Challenges are municipal grant programs that provide resources to residents, community groups, businesses, schools, and non-profit organizations to make physical improvements to their neighborhoods. Launching Community Challenges builds strong neighborhoods through community participation, stewardship, and shared responsibility. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Support research to reduce the risk of infection at large and live events.**



Reopening large and live events requires proper tools and technology to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Funding COVID-19 research could help to expedite the identification of new solutions and technologies for holding events in a safe setting. New technology must be used in conjunction (not substitution) with healthy behaviors like handwashing, mask wearing, and cleaning and disinfecting high traffic areas. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health & Environment.

## COMMUNICATION ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Announce grants from a centralized City source.**



Stakeholders can more easily find reliable information and important updates from a centralized source. It is important to note that “centralized source” means a centralized information source, not a singular communication platform. Communication platforms must continue to be tailored to specific stakeholder groups. Examples of communication platforms include one-stop websites, verified social media accounts, and text message notifications. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Continue creating educational resources for reopening businesses.**



City staff have consistently created fact sheets, social media graphics, and posters containing educational messages about COVID-19. These documents are available at [AustinTexas.Gov/COVID19](https://AustinTexas.Gov/COVID19) in multiple languages. The educational resources are available at no-cost, and they are intended for printing and sharing. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Create a communications tree for important COVID-19 updates and announcements.**



A communications tree (or phone tree) is a tool for coordinating phone calls to share important information. One or a few persons at the top of the tree start the process by contacting a list of people, who then pass the message to another group of people. The process continues until everyone on the tree is contacted. Using communications trees could help City staff more rapidly share important COVID-19 updates to stakeholders. Additionally, communications trees can be used after the COVID-19 pandemic when City staff has other notifications and/or emergency announcements to share with the public. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Create a communications tree for small businesses to receive notifications regarding permitted festivals and events.**



A communications tree (or phone tree) is a tool for coordinating phone calls to share important information. One or a few persons at the top of the tree start the process by contacting a list of people, who then pass the message to another group of people. The process continues until everyone on the tree is contacted. City staff could use communications trees to notify small business owners of upcoming cultural events and festivals for which the business owners could apply to be a local vendor. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Launch campaigns promoting workforce development opportunities and available jobs.**



Many Austinites remain unemployed because of business closures or reduced operations. City staff can support these workers by partnering with community organizations to promote local workforce development opportunities that prepare unemployed persons for existing employment opportunities. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Standardize messaging to stakeholders and business patrons.**



Standardized messaging helps avoid confusion and mitigates the spread of misinformation. City staff should continue to use clear, concise, and consistent messaging to increase the likelihood that stakeholders review and retain accurate information. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

## **EMPLOYEE AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Assist local creatives with streaming content from local arts and cultural organizations.**



Helping local creatives stream live performances to public audiences will not only produce income-generating opportunities during COVID-19, but also equip performers and venue operators with an additional revenue source that can be used in future years. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Culture and Lifelong Learning.

**Collaborate with partners on workforce development to prepare Austinites for jobs in current and new industries.**



Many Austinites remain unemployed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborating with workforce development partners and industries to create and scale more workforce development programs will prepare Austinites for current and future job opportunities. Workforce development programs should be designed to meet the needs of residents, especially residents in communities that are most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Continue providing workshops and one-on-one coaching to help business owners, entrepreneurs, and creatives adapt their business models.**



Technical assistance workshops and coaching sessions will help local business owners, entrepreneurs, and creatives learn new skills and resources so they can thrive in a post-COVID-19 economy. Potential workshops include leveraging next generation technology, complying with COVID-19 guidelines, understanding business structures, and consideration/evaluation of various funding models. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Create an Austin Tool Lending Library that allows individuals to access tutorials and borrow equipment at little to no cost.**



Tool lending libraries allow individuals to borrow equipment at little to no cost, such as livestreaming cameras, tripods, sound equipment, construction drills, and sawhorses. Tool lending libraries should be designed to accommodate the needs of residents that would otherwise not be able to access the materials provided through the tool lending library. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Culture and Lifelong Learning.

**Develop a local artist registry to foster more opportunities for Austin’s creatives.**



Local artist registries connect local creatives (i.e. musicians, artists, performers, etc.) with arts enthusiasts, local companies, and individuals that want to hire a creative. This tool is especially valuable for creatives with little or no current exposure to opportunities. A local registry could produce immediate benefits for creatives that experienced financial losses due to COVID-19. Additionally, it could serve as a valuable tool for exposure and employment in a post-pandemic economy. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Culture and Lifelong Learning.

**Enhance access to affordable and quality childcare.**



Childcare is a critical part of the City’s economic recovery, and parents with young children comprise a large share of the local workforce. Collaborating with organizations to support childcare providers – both financially and with technical assistance – will reduce operational disruptions for childcare providers, foster more affordable and quality childcare programs, support child growth and development, and help parents return to the workforce. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Facilitate stronger mentorship opportunities for business owners.**



Business mentorships help less-experienced business owners learn from experienced business owners, expand social networks, and generate more business leads. Collaborating with local chambers, business associations, and organizations to establish a business

mentorship program could help small business owners that are struggling to maintain their operations because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mentorship programs could continue to be used after the pandemic as a way to foster a stronger, more resilient local economy. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Facilitate the creation of business cooperatives.**



A cooperative is a private business organization that is owned and controlled by the people who use its products, supplies, or services. Cooperatives can improve the living and working conditions for employees since they are user-owned. Cooperatives make decisions that balance the need for profitability with the welfare of their members and the community. Providing technical assistance for individuals interested in forming cooperatives could address systemic issues that disadvantage low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant communities. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Support existing advocacy efforts and the development of creative coalitions, which empower creative sector professionals to cross-promote their work and collaborate on common issues.**



Austin's creative community significantly contributes to Austin's attractiveness to tourists, workers, and companies. Creative coalitions empower local creatives to organize events and resources to support members of the creative. Creative coalitions also allow creative sector professionals to cross-promote their work and collaborate on common issues. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Culture and Lifelong Learning.

**Offer workforce development scholarships to unemployed or underemployed individuals who commit to work locally in their trained field or sector.**



Some workforce development programs have direct and indirect costs, like tuition and required materials. These costs can hinder low-income residents from participating and improving their job prospects. Financial assistance would greatly support individuals' ability to participate in workforce development programs, especially ones leading to apprenticeships, employment, licensure, or job skill enhancement. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Provide households with tools and resources to grow their own foods.**



Food insecurity greatly increased in the months following the COVID-19 pandemic. The rise in food insecurity was due to households not being able to afford food, temporary food shortages due to surge buying, and pre-existing food access inequalities that disproportionately affected communities of color, immigrant communities, and low-income communities. Expanding seed lending programs, offering more training courses on at-home food cultivation, and allowing residents to borrow tools and supplies will empower more households to grow their own food. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health and Environment.

**Foster collaboration between Austin-based businesses to share goods and services.**



A business-to-business sharing model allows businesses exchange services (not money) to meet their needs. Through this model, business owners can access services and products they likely would not be able to afford. For example, a local chef and a graphic designer may

decide to exchange services rather than pay for each other's services. In this scenario, the local chef receives a new design for a website while the graphic designer receives a meal. This model can be very beneficial to small business owners, especially those with less cash reserves and access to credit. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

### **Provide additional financial assistance to individuals, households, employees, businesses, and non-profit organizations.**

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to financially impact many households and local businesses. Some communities and business sectors will continue to experience financial difficulties after pandemic subsidies. Ongoing funding will help individuals, employees, and households meet their basic needs (i.e., food, housing, sanitation, childcare, etc.) and support businesses that continue to experience major revenue decreases. Funding could be prioritized for communities and businesses that were already experiencing worse economic outcomes before the pandemic, including communities of color, immigrant communities, low-income communities, and businesses owned by a person of color. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.



### **Incentivize adaptations to produce innovations and improvements to commercial sites, which benefit employees and customers.**

Empty and underutilized commercial spaces oftentimes can be repurposed for better use. Commercial spaces can also be improved to promote environmental sustainability. Municipal incentives like rebates could help property owners complete space adaptations such as repurposing office space to offer childcare for employees, installing higher-quality ventilation systems, and developing affordable housing units. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.



### **Continued dedicated relief and recovery funding for Live Music Venues.**

Live music venues strengthen Austin's cultural and economic ecosystem, and they contribute to Austin's international appeal. Continuing programs like the Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund would support live music venue operators, which have been closed since the cancellation of South by Southwest in 2020. This opportunity could only be implemented if City staff identifies revenues to offset negative budget impacts to departments. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Culture and Lifelong Learning.



### **Temporarily reduce or waive certain City permits and fees for businesses that are reopening safely.**

Reducing or waiving fees could help businesses that are struggling to reopen or operate at reduced capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This opportunity would be implemented if the City could identify revenues to offset negative budget impacts to departments. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.



## GOVERNMENT SERVICE PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### **Enter into a City of Austin master supplier agreement for COVID-19 rapid testing.**



A master supply agreement is a contract between the City and another party consolidating two or more agreements into one harmonized agreement. A master supplier agreement with a lab that can rapidly test for COVID-19 could reduce costs for the City and allow individuals with COVID-19 to receive treatment more quickly. If a master supplier agreement fostered improved public health outcomes, then the result may allow certain sectors to reopen or expand operations sooner. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

### **Increase the amount of City of Austin procurement to small and/or local businesses.**



City departments spend millions of dollars on goods and services annually. The City can maximize procurement from local businesses and communities by extending policies mandating departments to obtain goods and services from locally-based vendors. This would increase the amount of money recirculating through the local economy, help local businesses retain jobs, and reduce the environmental impacts of transporting goods into Austin. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health and Environment.

### **Procure food from local restaurants and businesses to feed food-insecure Austin individuals and families.**



City staff and community partners launched multiple food services in the wake of COVID-19. These services provided tens of thousands of meals to households and persons experiencing homelessness. As these programs continue, City staff and community partners should evaluate opportunities to procure more food from local sources. Buying food from local vendors provides additional revenues to Austin-based restaurants, farmers markets, grocers, and other food businesses that may be impacted by COVID-19 capacity and service restrictions. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

## HEALTH & MENTAL WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES

### **Continue providing enhanced mental wellness resources for Austinites.**



Improved access to mental wellness resources is critical for Austinites affected by unemployment, school closures, food access challenges, and other stressors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many mental wellness providers also assist individuals with a broad range of needs – from navigating substance abuse to receiving legal aid. Call 512-472-4357 for immediate support. The line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health and Environment.

### **Continue providing housing and meals to COVID-19 patients experiencing homelessness.**



City programs serving meals to COVID-19 patients experiencing homelessness has helped mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Continuing this program would allow individuals experiencing homelessness to recover in a safe environment. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health and Environment.



**Offer safety trainings to business owners and creative professionals, and create a safe reopening certification program for local businesses.**



Safety trainings for employers and creatives could mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19, especially in settings where individuals may be gathered for goods, resources, and experiences. Safe reopening certification programs acknowledge local businesses that demonstrate a commitment to following COVID-19 health and safety regulations. The certification program would help restore consumer confidence, especially in sectors that were most financially impacted by the pandemic. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health and Environment.

**Continue promoting existing health regulation requirements in combination with masking and social distancing as an initiative that consumers can easily recognize.**



These promotions would help establish a base level of safety understanding and raise consumer confidence. Specific campaigns could be targeted to individuals attending events, supporting local businesses, and dining at local restaurants. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Health and Environment.

**Research and invest in automated contact tracing technology.**



Contact tracing is a key part of the City's campaign to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Supporting the development and usage of automated contact tracing technologies can expedite retracing a person's movements and notifying individuals who encounter a COVID-19 positive person. Because these tools have inherent biases (requiring access to smartphones, technological fluency, etc.), the City could play a role to ensure that the implementation of automated contact tracing technology is equitable and inclusive of all communities. These technologies would also enhance the City's preparedness for future pandemics.

## **PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Collaborate with government agencies and community partners to close the digital divide.**



The shift to online learning, working, and training disenfranchises many low-income families and communities that do not have access to reliable Internet. While temporary solutions are deployed (i.e., wi-fi school bus services), permanent infrastructure investments are necessary to address this resource gap. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Government That Works for All.

**Continue permitting parking spaces and outdoor spaces for other usage.**



Expanding programs like "Shop the Block" could help businesses offer their goods and services while remaining compliant with current and future health and safety orders. This opportunity could also allow businesses to expand green infrastructure installations, which would support the City's environmental sustainability efforts. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Mobility.

**Expedite affordable housing development.**



Expediting affordable housing production (i.e. community land trusts) could help mitigate the displacement of Austinites due to rising costs of living. This opportunity could be tailored to meet the needs of low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant communities. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Expedite sidewalk and bike route development to enhance equitable access to goods and services.**



As more Austinites work from home, investing to make neighborhoods more accessible by walking, biking, or using public transit will improve access to businesses, jobs, and training opportunities. This opportunity could also support the Vision Zero initiative by reducing the number of fatalities and serious injuries on Austin’s roadways. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Mobility.

**Expedite temporary rezoning to activate underutilized spaces.**



Space activations could spur economic opportunities for small businesses and communities. Some space activations might require temporary rezoning to comply with City policies. Expediting temporary rezoning could remove an administrative hurdle for communities and organizations seeking to repurpose underutilized spaces. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Mobility.

**Flexible timing restrictions for marathons and other outdoor events.**



Relaxing timing restrictions on the length of street closures would allow for staging of marathons in groups, which would avoid large "start line" issues. Flexible timing could also help to ensure large events (i.e., sporting events) are conducted in a safe manner. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Mobility.

**Leverage public works and transportation projects to offer short-term employment and economic security to Austinites.**



Short-term construction projects can offer employment opportunities to unemployed residents. The skills learned to complete construction projects could also be leveraged as an economic security strategy for Austinites. Additionally, residents can be trained and hired to provide ongoing maintenance of new infrastructure. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

**Permanently extend and expand the Healthy Streets program which provides safe options for people to use low-traffic areas for activities.**



The Healthy Streets program promotes physical and mental health and provide safe options to access jobs and services. Extending and expanding this program will allow more Austinites to use low-traffic streets more comfortably in their neighborhoods for activities like walking, wheelchair rolling, running, bicycling, shopping, dining, and more with enough space to maintain physical distance. This opportunity could also support the Vision Zero initiative by reducing the number of fatalities and serious injuries on Austin’s roadways. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Mobility.

## Repurpose City properties to offer short-term benefits for local business owners and creatives.



City-owned properties like parking lots and empty spaces could be temporarily repurposed so small business owners and creatives can use these spaces to sell goods or provide artistic experiences. Aligns with Strategic Direction 2023 Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

## Monitoring Austin's Economic Recovery

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City staff will publish and update economic indicators related to the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework's opportunities to the City's [SpeakUp Austin! webpage](#). This information will allow the public to track how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the local economy. The data will focus on information related to employment, business health, housing, childcare, and social services.

Below is a summary of some of the key indicators that City staff will monitor. Strategic Direction 2023 also includes various indicators and performance measurements assessing to what degree specific outcomes are being achieved. [View the strategic measures online at AustinTexas.Gov/StrategicPlan](#).

### Opportunity Index

- Business open rate
- Job postings by industry and skills
- Revenue by industry
- Small business revenue by industry
- Time away from home (i.e., travel to work, retail/restaurants, grocery, transit, etc.)

### Municipal Sales Tax Collections

- Sales tax collections for the City of Austin
- Sales tax collections for other Central Texas cities

### Employment data

- Job counts and growth by major industry for the Austin metropolitan area
- Unemployment rates
- Wage data and hiring patterns

### Real Estate

- Average rents (residential and non-residential)
- Occupancy rates (residential apartments and non-residential commercial space)
- Commercial space under construction and net absorption

## Conclusion

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The Economic Recovery and Resiliency Framework represents the beginning of a new chapter in Austin's COVID-19 response. As the City prepares for economic recovery and resiliency, the Economic Recovery Strike Team is incredibly grateful for all the time and input shared by members of the Economic Recovery Experts Panel and COVID-19 Industry Focus Groups. The Strike Team also thanks the numerous City staff and other stakeholders who helped to inform and review these 45 opportunities.

The Economic Recovery Strike Team recognizes that the journey ahead does not end when Austin's economy arrives at its pre-pandemic condition. Rather, economic recovery and resiliency efforts must achieve more equitable and inclusive outcomes than the ones that existed before March 2020. City staff are committed to deliberately addressing the systemic challenges that have disadvantaged communities of color, immigrant communities, and low-income communities for generations. Austinites will know when this challenge is met when a person or business' economic outlook is no longer defined by their race, ethnicity, zip code, net worth, or language spoken at home.

The Economic Recovery Strike Team also recognizes the increasing importance of continuing to partner with residents, nonprofit organizations, local businesses, civic and business associations, and government agencies to ensure no members of our community are left behind as Austin moves forward. The duration of the journey to recovery is unknown, and the amount of time it will take for some to heal from the stress, financial losses, and trauma caused by COVID-19 cannot be estimated. However, the City and community must continue working together as one to achieve not only quick wins, but more importantly transformational initiatives that can help facilitate healing and restoration.

To that end, the Economic Recovery Strike Team invites all members of our community to help further evaluate the 47 opportunities included in this framework. Community members who are interested in helping to pursue these opportunities and foster a more equitable, competitive, and resilient post-pandemic local economy can [visit the SpeakUp Austin! webpage](#) to learn how to get involved in the recovery and resiliency efforts.